

If God Doesn't Change, Why Should I?

When my little girls were learning to walk, I paid close attention to their progress.

Around the age of 10 months or so, they were both very close to walking. Each one could stand up on her own and take several steps. My wife and I would often sit on the floor and coax them to walk back and forth between us.

But oddly enough, even though they were fully capable of walking, they inevitably preferred to crawl. They knew they weren't going to tip over when they crawled. They knew they could get where they were going on their hands and knees, and, well, I guess they lived by the motto, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

And why not live by that motto? I often live by it, as I'm sure you do too. It's wisdom. Common sense. Street smarts. If something is working, why change it? After all, who knows what the outcome might be?

But God likes to move us out of our comfort zones. I hate that about God. He likes to mess with my happy. Why can't He just let me live near the line of contentedness and stay there?

I'm not good with change. My wife will inform you of this fact. She, on the other hand, loves change. She wants to change the comforter on our bed every time the weather changes. And it's not simply a lighter comforter for the summer and a thicker, warmer comforter for the winter.

No, she wants to change the comforter just because she enjoys change. She's obviously more like God than me. I'd rather have the same comforter for the next 10 years. Let me get used to it. Let me enjoy the smell. Changing the comforter makes the

bed seem foreign, and every time I go to bed with an unfamiliar comforter, I feel like an alien in a strange new world.

I hate change so much, for me it's like bedtime for a 2-year-old. It's my arch nemesis—the Joker to my Batman; the Tom to my Jerry; the Hatfield to my McCoy. Change is bad. Change is very, very bad.

But often faith *requires* change, and change *requires* faith.

Faith requires change because it forces me to realize my shortcomings. I like to believe I am more than good enough. I want to believe I'm the best. In fact, I have a nasty desire to always feel I'm the best, no matter what the situation.

It's easy to see my shortcomings when I shank a ball 50 yards off the fairway. But it's more difficult to realize my *spiritual* shortcomings. It's not easy to see my inability to forgive. It's not easy to pick up on my jealous feelings. It's not easy to realize my own selfishness and greed. But when I do realize such things—or more appropriately when God slaps me in the face with the truth—I am *required* to change.

Did I mention that I hate change? I'd like to buy into the idea that I'm perfect. I like to tell my wife that I'm perfect. She has yet to truly believe my claim, and neither have I, really. But I'll keep trying to convince her—and God.

It seems, then, that God doesn't want me to get comfortable with who I currently am. Every time I start to settle in and relax, He sends something to stretch me. He shows me my shortcomings and makes it very clear that I've yet to arrive. He won't let me sit for long; there's always another challenge and another test. There's always more growth needed, more maturing needed, more stretching needed.

Change requires faith because I must believe that God's way is better than my own.

And to get to such an understanding, we have to 1) believe in God and His way, and 2) trust that His ways are better than our own. This is not an easy task, so change requires faith.

My daughters, with our coaxing, eventually got tired of crawling, began walking and then running. Now they wonder why they ever crawled at all—and so do I. We can go back to what's comfortable or familiar, or we can allow God to stretch us and take new steps of faith. Which is it for you?

✖ *Adapted from Dear God, We Need to Talk by Darren Schalk, copyright 2014, published by Passio, Charisma Media/Charisma House Book Group. This book helps you explore your toughest questions about God. It tackles everything from family issues to God's sovereignty in a delightfully witty and honest way. It will leave you with more confidence in God's power, His wisdom and His direction for your life. To order your copy click on this link.*

Prayer Power for the Week of 4/21/2014

This week, allow God to stretch you and venture on to take new steps of faith. Realize that you are not your own, and trust Him to guide your life and direct your steps. Ask Him to provide divine appointments for you where you can be a carrier of His love and presence. Follow up those connections with prayer and tangible support.

Join with others to bless those who are hurting from losses incurred by natural disasters, war or crime. Continue to pray for revival to spread throughout our nation and around the world. Pray that believers would unite in prayer and purpose and set their priorities to reflect God's agenda for this generation. Follow scriptural admonition to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and for all those who lead and have authority over us. (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Ps. 37:23; Ps. 122:6; 1 Timothy 2:1-4)