

Our Hope for Change

I've found that we can learn so much about the Lord by examining His many names found in the Bible. Each one reveals a unique aspect of His character along with a very specific promise for our lives.

When we get to know God—*really know Him*—it fills us with hope and confidence because we realize He's greater than any situation we will ever encounter. Understanding God's character and incredible love for us allows us to relax and trust Him in every area of our lives.

The Bible says He is *Jehovah Jireh*, which means "Your Provider" (Gen. 22:14). He's *Jehovah Rapha*, "Your Healer" (Ex. 15:26) and *Jehovah Shalom*, "Your Peace" (Judg. 6:24).

The Lord is also referred to as *Jehovah M'Kaddesh*, which means "The Lord who sanctifies you" (Lev. 20:8, AMPC). This literally means He is the God who changes us. It's so encouraging to know we don't have to change ourselves, because when we try to change on our own, it only produces frustration and struggle.

Philippians 2:12-13 (AMPC) says, "Work out ... your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling. ... [Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

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You see, when you begin a relationship with Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside you. Now you have great things on the *inside*, but they need to be "worked out" to the *outside*. We need to learn how to think right, talk right and treat other people the way we should. And we can only do it

through God's strength and help.

As the Holy Spirit begins to bring conviction in different areas of our lives, we become aware of things that need to change. When this happens, the Lord doesn't want us to feel guilty and condemned. He simply wants us to have the attitude that says, "God, I know that You're right and I'm wrong, and I want to change in this area. I trust You to help me change."

The truth is you can actually enjoy your life while God is changing you. You don't have to feel bad because you're not perfect or even worry about trying to change yourself.

I'll be honest: It took me a while to learn this lesson. I remember when the Holy Spirit began convicting me about talking too much. Instead of asking the Lord to change me and relying on His grace and strength, I took matters into my own hands. I decided I was going to fix it. So I went home and didn't say anything at all. As a result, I ended up feeling depressed, and everyone kept asking me what was wrong. Needless to say, it was a frustrating experience!

First Thessalonians 5:24 (AMPC) says, "Faithful is He Who is calling you [to Himself] and utterly trustworthy, and *He will also do it* (emphasis added) [fulfill His call by hallowing and keeping you]."

I love this! Out of His great love, God not only shows us what needs to change, but this verse says He will also *do it*. As we draw closer to the Lord through reading His Word and talking to Him in prayer, He transforms us from the inside out and makes us more like Him. Our part is to cooperate with God and do the things He puts in our hearts to do.

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For example, years ago when the Lord was teaching me about

walking in excellence and integrity, I began feeling convicted about little things like putting my grocery cart away in the store parking lot. During those times, I had a choice. I could either leave the cart out in the middle of nowhere or I could obey God and go the extra mile to put it where it belonged.

The Lord also constantly dealt with me about how I treated my husband, Dave.

I remember wanting to start an argument one day and the Holy Spirit whispering to my heart, "You don't need to say anything." Sometimes it meant letting Dave think he was right—even if I knew he wasn't. I can still feel the pain of trying to keep my mouth shut.

These may seem like small things, but every time you obey God and do what's right—even when it hurts—you grow spiritually and become more like Jesus. And as you represent the character of Christ to the world, people will want what you have and be drawn to you to know more about God.

Friend, the Lord has an amazing plan for your life. He not only desires for you to be with Him in heaven, but it's also His will for you to have a great life here on Earth! I encourage you to seek God and spend time in His Word. Ask Him to change you and help you become everything He has created you to be.

As you do, the Lord will be faithful to transform you into His image—and help you experience a greater, more fulfilling life than you ever imagined.

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