

Prophet: 8 Steps of Transition That Can Bring You Redemption

When you find yourself in any kind of transition, especially a prolonged one—like the one we are currently experiencing from the COVID-19 virus—it can seem too hard to bear.

You just do not think you will make it. You wish you could go back to the way things used to be before all of this pain started.

The pressure can be intense, and you feel squeezed from every side, stripped, unprepared.

Yet a time of transition is taking you somewhere. Although the passage is narrow, it is taking you from a place of confinement to a place of enlargement.

To keep from stalling, you need to let go of the past and allow yourself to propel forward.

In my own personal life, while going through nine years of cancer, losing my wife, the loss of income and the swirl of living life in a public goldfish bowl, I repeatedly heard these words: Let go.

By gifting and calling, I could seek the Lord for prophetic words to encourage others, and He would speak to me. But when I sought Him for a word for myself, all I heard from the Holy Spirit was “Let go.”

For at least five years, I had to go through an Isaac experience (Gen. 22); I had to be willing to lay everything on the altar.

God tested my faith to the limit. I felt I hardly had anything

left to surrender, and sometimes, out of sheer obedience, I did just let go.

I found out that letting go is healthy. Surrender is not the same as defeat; it just means relinquishment of familiar ways.

If I were going to be able to enter into the new phase of my life, I had to let go not only of unhealthy patterns, but also of the old, familiar things that were good, such as my marriage.

Even the good can sometimes be an enemy of the best.

What Really Is Transition?

I used to think that transition was an abnormal state, but I found out it is completely normal.

I used to think that if I could only get through a difficult season of transition, I would be home free. Well, guess what? When you get through one transition, there will be another one waiting for you. We need to be realistic about it.

In literature, a transition is the bridge between one theme or chapter and the next. It is helpful. It gives you perspective on what will be coming in the near future, and it builds on what came before. So if you feel you may be coming to the end of a chapter of your life and entering into a time of transition, it means there is something new for you just over the horizon.

That knowledge builds hope.

How you respond during a time of transition is all-important.

Years ago, a wonderful mentor told me that what happens to you is not as important as *how you respond* to what happens to you.

Are you going to keep moving forward, or are you going to let your fear of the unknown hold you back?

Are you going to make excuses for yourself, or are you going to press through the emotional storms until you reach the other side?

Sometimes you may feel that change has hit you like a ton of bricks because life as you knew it has ended. But if you pay attention, you can find hope in unlikely places.

For example, the words of Job 14:7 seemed new to me when I found them. I do not know where that verse was hiding during those many times of discouragement. "For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease." I am so glad the Holy Spirit directed me to this verse, and I wish I had seen it or knew it before because it is such a clear portrayal of hope.

If there is hope for a tree, there can be hope for me. As long as the roots are intact, the tree can grow anew, and so can I.

This is true not only for trees that get chopped off at ground level but also for fruit-bearing trees and vines that get pruned, sometimes drastically, in order to increase their health and yield.

Right after a pruning, the tree or vine might not look too great. But remember what Jesus said: "And every branch that bears fruit, He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2b).

The trees that bear the most fruit are the ones that we prune from top to bottom.

8 Redemptive Steps of Transition

I want to redeem "transition" from its place as a dirty word in your vocabulary.

I want to help you redeem the whole process so that you will be able to find your way through this drastic time of change with hope.

I can identify at least eight steps in the process of transition and change:

1. **A desire for change stirs.** You may not be strongly aware of this step, although you may recognize in retrospect that you had developed a longing for something different. Sometimes you just may feel somewhat bored with your life, and you want something different, something more.
2. **A new level of revelation comes.** Your desire for change spurs you to search your heart and to seek God, asking yourself: What do I really want? Inspiration begins to come. A new concept may occur to you, or your search may renew an old dream.
3. **Your present vision adjusts.** The new begins to replace the old, and you become willing to make changes in your life. You start to look at life through a fresh lens; you get a new perspective, and it alters your vision.
4. **You receive grace.** You position yourself humbly under the mighty hand of God where you will have the ability to receive His grace. By recognizing that you cannot achieve anything by your own efforts, you learn to rely on His grace.
5. **Grace heals your past issues.** God's grace brings healing to any number of pertinent unresolved issues, and you begin to see some benefit in the midst of your suffering. What you are going through is turning out to be worth something, and your hope grows.
6. **You grasp a new identity.** In this new season, what role does God want you to play? In relation to others, will you be a leader, a follower, a boss, an employee, a friend, a parent, a spouse? Will you be active, or is God putting you on pause? Your basic identity in Christ will stay the same, but something new will always enhance it. You cannot live just on yesterday's laurels; keep moving!
7. **You have strength to overthrow your new enemies.** With

the combination of God's grace and your new identity, you will have a surge of fresh energy. Your strength will renew like that of an eagle (Isaiah 40:31). New challenges—enemies—will come along with your transition to a new place in life but God will give you strength to meet them.

8. **You grasp your new identity.** You stride into your new land with confidence, and you secure it. This may take a while, but you will get there if you persevere. One little step at a time is all it requires.

The whole process depends on trust.

Are you trusting God? Or are you trusting yourself, your circumstances or other people?

Of course, the goal is to put your trust in God alone because He uses every transition to make you more like Him.

That is the essence of what Paul wrote: "But we all, seeing the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, as in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Lift Your Eyes and Keep Moving Forward!

One of the keys for moving forward through a time of transition is to get your eyes off yourself and your often miserable circumstances.

I know that can be much easier to say than do, but it happens by your choosing it, with God's grace.

You need to follow Paul's advice and keep your eyes on heaven. This means no navel-gazing.

As long as my chin is on my chest, all I can contemplate is myself. But if I lift my gaze toward God, I am transformed in the process.

As the psalmist wrote, "I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from where does my help come?" (Ps. 121:1).

Look up! Suddenly, His beauty strikes you, and you are amazed. Lord, you are wonderful! You are my Redeemer. I don't always understand You, but I trust You with all my heart. I love You. I want to lift my eyes to You in worship, even in the midst of these unresolved internal conflicts. I lay them at Your feet.

I think of the old chorus: "Turn your eyes upon Jesus/ look full in His wonderful face/ and the things of earth will grow strangely dim/ In the light of His glory and grace."

I hope what I have learned from my life's experiences become keys of hope for you as we go through this change of life together!

A Prayer to Change

Father, I believe that in Christ all things are possible! Old things do pass away, and new things do come. Take my life and shape it into the next phase of purpose and destiny. Give me the grace needed for letting go of the old to embrace the process of change and to be prepared for the new. Plant desires within me that overcome the obstacles of the past. Heal me. Shape me. Make me into a person who reflects the radiance of the glory that takes me from one transition to the next. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. {eo}

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