

## THE ONLY TWO CONSTANTS

In life there are some unexpected, unfortunate, and unwanted events that can drastically change your life forever. We see it daily in the news; it is the substance of the proverbial grapevine; it is the stuff from which drama is born, and each time we dodge it we breathe a sigh of relief and give thanks that it didn't happen to us. Is it any wonder, then, that so many of us fear change that we oftentimes not only pray fervently against it, but when it does come we face it with fear and trepidation? I know that there might be some out there who actually embrace change and even seek after it, but I most certainly am not one of them! I was raised in a very insecure and volatile home, so I longed for the security and constancy of the routine, as it allowed me some measure of control. I lived in fear of unwanted change to the point of worrying myself sick with ulcers at age 4, again at age 8, and then found myself on the verge of a nervous breakdown at age 22. I realize I may be more on the extreme end of the spectrum in this, yet even those who have experienced a more secure upbringing than mine still tend to long for the security of the status quo. Small changes can be unsettling enough, but unbidden or drastic changes can be downright scary. Can you relate to this? I have lived in the same city all my life. I have held my current position for 24 years. I do not like change, and therefore seldom seek it or embrace it. Nonetheless, it seems that change has a way of finding me, despite all my efforts to avoid it. And do you know why? Perhaps like me you've come to the shocking realization that change is one of the constants of life: in other words, there is no avoiding it! Change happens whether we like it or not, whether we want it or not. Rather than counting the ways you can try to control it and keep it out of your life, you can simply count on it being a part of your life.

When I first came to the realization of this unpleasant fact of life I found it to be most unsettling. All my efforts to avoid unwanted change and to maintain the status quo had been and always would be for naught. So how does this 'security-driven heart' face a future whose only constant is change? I found only one way, one hope, and that was to cling to the only other Constant in life. We live in a world that changes minute by minute, but the Creator of this world is changeless: He is the same yesterday, today, and always. (Mal.3:6; Heb.13:8) The God of the universe is a God of consistency. The universe he created remains consistent because it operates within the parameters of the laws that He set forth. There are so many God-ordained laws that we take for granted: gravity, seasons, time, the earth's orbit, and the laws of reproduction, to name but a few. Can you imagine life without these? Even though magical worlds like that found in the Harry Potter books are delightful to imagine and read about, they would be nightmarish to live in because you could not trust that anything is what it seems. Is that cat really a cat or a person posing as a cat? God is an orderly, precise, and law-abiding God as His creation clearly reveals. So why does such a God allow, and at times even ordain the trauma of change in His children's lives? Why does He sometimes allow things to go so awry in His children's lives that it seems like the universe is spinning out of control and that our God is powerless to stop it? As always, the fact remains that God's love dictates that in all things He seeks our very best, meaning that everything He allows into our lives has been filtered through His fingers of love. (I Cor.10:13) It will all work for our good if we

let it. As with most experiences in life the attitude by which we view the change will determine if it will work for us or against us. If I see this difficult change as a curse, then I will never get beyond this change to see how God can work it for good in some way. I will continually stumble over it, never being able to find a way to get over it or beyond it. But if I take God at His word and trust that good can come from this difficulty, then I will be able to see the miraculous way that He alone can take that which appears to be completely negative, hurtful, and even heartbreaking, and work it into a positive addition to my life: a blessing in disguise, so to speak. You see, our God is not a God of subtraction, but of addition and multiplication. I know this for a fact, as I have experienced it numerous times. Lately it has been in the area of lifestyle changes due to health issues. Even though my life has become more and more marginalized due to physical limitations and pain, in contrast, my soul and spirit have become freer. In having to rely on others more to do simple tasks that I used to be able to do for myself, I have had to face my pride, my self-sufficiency, and humble myself time and time again. This has forced me to trust God more and to learn to rest in Him, in His will for my life. With many activities no longer physically possible for me, I've come to realize more and more what the truly important things in life are. Life has become simpler because it's easier to find the balance between the physical and spiritual realms. Not only has this caused my faith to grow enormously, but consequently my relationship with Christ. It has given me a greater empathy for people, especially for the hurting. I would not go back nor trade these joyous blessings born of difficult changes for anything.

Our attitude towards difficult things, such as change, trials, heartache, etc. is a barometer of our faith, revealing our level of trust in God. My attitude towards change revealed that my faith was rather anemic, weakened by the fear that continued to haunt me from my childhood. Fear and faith cannot co-exist. So God in His mercy and love allows opportunities for us to learn to let go of our fears and to put our trust in Him: to give us the rest we long for that leads to His promise of a peace that surpasses understanding. (Phil.4:7) This peace is like being in the eye of a storm, that place of refuge and respite from all the churning chaos of this fallen world. God will not allow our lives to remain static as this leads to stagnation, thereby becoming a breeding ground for every crippling mental, emotional, and spiritual ailment known to mankind such as depression, anger, indifference, isolation, addictions, indulgence, and even spiritual death. Thus change is a constant in this world, a constant in our lives. God uses change to break up the fallow ground of our heart so that the seed of God's Word will find fertile soil to bring our faith to the maturity needed to bear the fruit of righteousness, peace, joy, and love. We will face a countless number of changes in our lifetime; some wanted and some unwanted; some expected and some unexpected; some minor and some major; some easy and some seemingly unbearable. Yet, changes no longer need to be feared or become the defining factor of our lives because there is another Constant in life that transcends them all, that allows us to rise above them and watch with awe as our God faithfully fulfills His promise to redeem them by working them all for good to those who trust Him enough to do so. (Rom.8:28)

Prayer:

Lord God, I confess that at times I let fear of change override my faith in You. Lord, please help me to get my eyes off myself and my circumstances and onto You. Help me choose to believe and trust in, not only Your promise to work all things for good, but also Your ability to do so. I ask this in Christ's Name and for His sake, Amen.

Follow Up:

Commit to memory the Scriptures given so as to be able to use them to combat fear when it rears its ugly head seeking to undermine your trust in God and consequently derail your walk of faith.

Challenge:

For an amazing example of God's promise to work everything for good, read the Old Testament story of Job\* to see how God redeemed his seemingly unbearable losses.

\*(see chapters 1-3 & 40-42)

For Further Study:

Psalms 27:13-14; Isaiah 40:28-31; 41:10; 46:4, 9-11; 54:10; Romans 5:1-5; 8:28-39; Hebrews 13:5-6; 20-21; I Peter 1:3-9; Jude 24-25

*By Debbie Amble...2007*