

Change: Our Unwelcome Benefactor

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:24, 25).

AN HONEST LOOK AT OUR LIVES WOULD INDICATE THAT WE HAVE BENEFITED FROM CHANGE. Many, perhaps most, of the best things in our individual characters are creative adaptations to changes we were forced to accept earlier in our lives. The loss of a job and the resultant move to another city, for example, required adjustments in our attitude that we would not have made otherwise. And ever since, we’ve benefited from that attitude alteration.

Yet we resist change. Because of the uncertainty of the future and the possibility that change may entail pain and personal loss, we not only resist it, but we fear it. If change is our benefactor, it is an unwelcome one. It’s somewhat like surgery: whatever good it may do for us, we don’t like it and we don’t look forward to it.

Inside our “comfort zone,” there is much ease — but little growth. Sometimes ease is what we need, of course, but if all we ever had was ease, we would not grow. As good as growth is, however, we would rarely give up our ease in order to grow. Most of the time, we have to be goaded in the direction of growth by changes that are forced upon us from the outside.

From the Christian’s standpoint, change and its attendant trials can be seen to produce endurance and a deeper faith. “My brethren,” James wrote, “count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (James 1:2, 3). Abraham is the great example of how this works. If it had been up to him, he probably wouldn’t have chosen to leave his home in Ur. But having endured that unexpected change faithfully, he knew more about trusting God than he could have learned in a hundred years back home (Hebrews 11:8-16).

Reaching forward requires a willingness to embrace change. It is silly to say that we want to get better and stay comfortable at the same time; we can’t stay put and still move forward. And since change will come to us all, our choice is simply a choice of attitude: will we resist change and make ourselves miserable, or will we accept it with gratitude for the good things it makes possible?

“Change is the nursery of music, joy, life, and eternity” (John Donne).

- Gary Henry – WordPoints.com, submitted by Pam Lenza