



Trusting God Through The Changing Seasons Of Your Life
God's Mission For Each Season

Ecclesiastes 3:1

1 To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:
NKJV

In the early years of our marriage and ministry, my late wife Debbie began to say to this to other people when they were going through a difficult time,

“Just remember, this is only for a season.”

We all experience changing seasons in our life. With each new season there are new and unexpected challenges to trusting God. In each new season our faith in God needs to grow and change with new insights into who God is and how He wants us to trust Him. In this series of messages we will explore God's Word and see what God says to us during these different seasons.

From bible stories and stories of my changing seasons, I will be sharing how I have experienced God and how you can experience Him in your life by trusting Him through the changing seasons of your life.

We will specifically cover these seasons of our life.

1. Trusting God during lean times
2. Trusting God in times of loss
3. Trusting God in times of prosperity

In this message, we will learn God's mission for each new season and learn how we cooperate with God's mission.

Jesus made His mission known to His disciples at both the beginning and the end of their time together.

Matthew 4:19

19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."
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Matthew 28:18-20

This growth process is also called sanctification. (1 Thess. 4:3-5).

1. God uses the changing seasons of our life to develop our faith in Him and His promises. (James 1:2-4)
2. God uses the changing seasons of our life to develop our love for God and for others. (2 Cor. 1:3-7)

As we cooperate with God, our ministry to others expands. God's mission is fulfilled.

This is the way the Apostle Paul viewed every changing season in His life.

2 Cor 4:11-12

11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you. NKJV

William Carey and Adoniram Judson had greater success as missionaries when they went through some unexpected changes in their lives.

Since Debbie passed away and I started a new season in my life, our church has baptized more than twice as many people than we did the previous ten years before her death. I have personally experienced a greater passion for sharing the gospel and I have experienced greater power.

How do we cooperate with God through the changing seasons of our life?

This series of messages will be meaningless and offensive to you if you have not accepted God's mission for your life as your mission for your life. Jesus called it casting pearls before swine or casting what is holy to dogs. (Matthew 7:6). Swine don't appreciate pearls and dogs don't appreciate what is holy. Church members who are not on mission for Christ do not appreciate messages on Spiritual growth and how God uses the changing seasons of our life to fulfill His mission in our life. You will not cooperate with God.

But for those of you who have accepted God's mission as your mission, let's begin.

First, there are some truths about faith that you must understand for your faith in God to grow through the changing seasons of your life.

- Faith in God pleases God. (Hebrews 11:6)

Hebrews 11:6

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

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The word please means to gratify entirely.

It pleases God so much that He devoted an entire discourse in Hebrews to commend those who trusted Him.

- Faith in God is a gift from God.(Ephesians 2:8)

Ephesians 2:8

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
KJV

Faith in God is the result of the revelation of God. No one would believe in God without a revelation from God.

The revelation of God is given to sinners. It is undeserved. No one deserves a revelation from God

- Faith in God is believing God is.(Hebrews 11:6)

Hebrews 11:6

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

KJV

Believing that God is means to believe God exists. God has provided the revelation of His existence through creation and man's conscience.

But faith in God also means to believe in who God is. When God revealed Himself to Abraham and his descendants the nation of Israel, He revealed Himself as Jehovah. Jehovah means I am. It means that He exists without any assistance or source outside of Himself. It means that He has always been and He always will be. It means that He is the source of life for everything else that exists.

After revealing Himself as I am or Jehovah, God then revealed to Abraham and his descendant's different aspects of who He is. He revealed His character or nature. Throughout their history He would reveal something new to them about Himself and who He was committed to be to them. He gave Himself last names like Jehovah Nissi, Jehovah Shammah, Jehovah Ropha, and Jehovah Jireh. He knew they could not trust Him if they did not know Him. Faith in God is believing that God is and that He is committed to be who he is to you.

- Faith in God is believing the promises of God(Hebrews 11:1)

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

KJV

- Abraham could not have faith that He would become a great nation until he received a promise from God.
- Joseph could not have faith that God would use Him to preserve his family until He received a promise from God.
- Moses could not have faith that God would deliver Israel from Egypt until He received a promise from God.
- David could not have faith that he would be the king of Israel or that one of his descendants would always be on the throne of Israel until he received a promise from God.

- Habakkuk could not have faith to rejoice and joy in the Lord until he received a promise from God.

If we believe that God is, God uses the changing seasons of our life to develop our knowledge of His promises and faith in His promises. These changing seasons motivate us to seek to know Him and His promises.

Promises of God come in two forms.

1. Personal

Not everyone was promised what was promised to Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David, the nation of Israel, or the 12 apostles. But God has personal promises for everyone who believes that He is.

2. General

General promises are promises for everyone that believes that He is.

John 3:16-17

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

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Romans 10:9

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

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- Faith in God means fulfilling the conditions of the promise.

With every promise, personal or general, to experience the promise there is a condition that we must meet to receive the promise.

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Once we understand the promise, we exercise faith by meeting the condition. This is why faith in God and obedience to God are connected throughout His Word. The greatest treatise on this in the book of James.

James 2:19-26

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble!
20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.
25 Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?
26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
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Faith in the promise=Obedience to the condition of the promise

Whenever you are going through a changing season, trusting God means to seek the promise of God and to exercise faith in God's promise by fulfilling the condition of the promise.

- Faith in God is a character quality(2 Peter 1:5)

2 Peter 1:5-9

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;
6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;
7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.
8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.
KJV

You develop character through the experiences of life. The changing seasons of our life are opportunities to develop faith by exercising faith. Each new season is an opportunity for our faith in God to grow.

As our faith grows, we grow spiritually. Our love grows. We become more like God. Our ministry expands.

(My stories of how God used lean times to develop my faith in His promises, develop my love for others, and expand my ministry.)

When my late wife Debbie and I first married in 1977, we had a savings account and things were good. It was a season of prosperity. During the first year of our marriage, things got even better because of an inheritance I received from my father after his death.

At that time, I believed that God is but I did not trust in God for our financial needs. I even knew His promises but I did not fulfill the conditions. I was not exercising faith in God. I was not obedient to His Word.

I made some very unwise investment decisions in the 3rd year of our marriage and we lost all of our savings. Then I made another unwise decision at the beginning of the 5th year of our marriage that put us 24k in debt.

God used this lean time motivate me to seek Him. This is what He said to me.

Matthew 6:24-34

24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat? or, what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

KJV

Malachi 3:8-10

8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this, "Says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.

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God used that lean time to show me how greedy I was, my lack of faith in God, and my lack of love for others.

I decided I would repent and trust God and fulfill the conditions of His promises in our finances and with our possessions. We gave all of our possessions to God and we began to tithe to our local church.

We actually started giving above 10% because I wanted to make up for what I had failed to do in the past.

Debbie passed away 25 years after we made that important decision and for those 25 years, things were lean.

We had 8 children.

I am the pastor of an inner city church in one of the poorest areas of OKC.

We lived from pay check to pay check.

We put money in an emergency fund for car repairs but we did not have funds for vacations or retirement.

My 8 children would tell you that it was rare for us to go to out to eat except to Mazzio's on Sunday night. We could feed everyone for 20 dollars and the drinks were free.

But as we trusted God and fulfilled His conditions to receive the promise. God fulfilled His promise to us in some wonderful ways.

- The landlord story
- The car story
- The gifts stories
- 1. The Dorrows
- 2. Mike Mullet's mom
- 3. The man who needed his cycle repaired
- The trips stories
- 1. The Mission trips
- 2. The trip to Hawaii
- 3. The trip to Colorado
- The house story
- The CHA Story

Before Debbie passed away, she said to me, "I have had a great life." That really broke my heart because I wished that I could have done so much more for her. But the truth is she was right. We both had a great life though times were lean because God was faithful and fulfilled His promises. Together we experienced God and I would not trade it for any amount of money or worldly pleasure.

What is this season of your life?

- Is this a lean time?

Financially

Physically

Relationally

- Is this a time of loss?

- Is this a time of prosperity?

Will you cooperate with God? Will you let Him...

Develop your faith

Purify your heart

Expand your ministry to others

is a character trait just like patience. Having a lot of patience does not mean that you have a supply of patience within you that you tap into when you need it. Having a lot of patience simply means that patience is what characterizes your responses to life in most situations.

The same can be said for faith. Having a lot of faith means that trusting God is what characterizes your life in most situations.

To develop patience in our life, God allows us to go through a lot of trying situations.

To develop faith in our life, God allows us to go through lean times.

So if we want to grow in faith we need to take advantage of these lean times when they occur. They are times of trial in which God wants to develop faith in us.

Apparently, some of us require a lot of work.

Faith is also like patience in that it is connected to obedience to God's Word.

There was a time in my life when I never trusted God during the lean times. When I was growing up and things were lean I trusted in my Dad. I went to him with what I needed and wanted. I don't recall very many times that my Dad said no.

If there was something that I wanted and I did not believe he would give it to me, I would steal from Him.

This was before I met Christ. I was a thief.

After I became a Christian when I was 17, I had to learn how to trust God rather than my Dad during lean times.

Relationally, I did not have a lot of friends. I did not have very many friends in the church. I felt lonely even at church.

When you are going through a lean time relationally, what does God want you to

God uses lean times to develop our faith in Him.

God uses lean times to purify our hearts.

God uses lean times to expand our ministry to others.