

An Immutable God in the Midst of Change

by Carrie Cavanaugh

This world is constantly changing and although change is often good, it can also be hard to adjust to. This is true in the world of work as well. With budget and staffing changes, not to mention goal and procedure changes, you and your staff must often adapt to new demands. In the midst of this change, even if it is for the best of your organization, morale may decrease. One source of hope that I've found as I've faced changes in my life over the years, and one which may be an encouragement to you and your staff, is that God never changes – He is immutable!

This attribute of the deity is a source of strength, a sure foundation upon which to stand when all around things are in flux. No matter where you go, no matter how your job description changes, no matter how your leadership structure metamorphoses, God is always the same. Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

This means that God's love for you never changes. It never fails (Psalm 136). This is such a wonderful truth because it frees us from the pressure of needing to perform perfectly especially during those periods of change when we are just figuring things out. Yes, God calls us to excellence, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" Colossians 3:23,

but it is a call cushioned on all sides by grace. We are to do our best work, but as we do so we know that He always has enough grace to cover over our shortcomings (Romans 5:20). Jesus is the one who did all the work required by God perfectly once and for all (Hebrews 10:10) and now we can go forward knowing that His perfect record is already credited to our name (Romans 4:24).

God has a way of de-throning our idols through change and taking us to a place of recognized vulnerability that leads us to greater faith in Him.

God's immutability also means that His promises always hold true. I won't catalogue all of God's promises here, but they include that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6), He works all things for the good of those whom He has called (Romans 8:28), and He has given us all that we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). What comfort this is to those in the midst of a challenging change, maybe even one that seems to be a negative change.

This also means that God's

character never alters. God is always sovereign over all things. God is always good. God is always wise. And God is always loving. So whatever happens has happened not only because He ordained it, but it is the best possible thing that could happen to further His kingdom work both in this world and in you. That doesn't mean that every change is good, but even the bad changes can be opportunities for you to live out your faith, to show patience, to extend grace, and perhaps to fight for justice.

We are told in James 1:17 that "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." This tells us that our God gives us good gifts and further since He does not change, we know that He always gives good gifts. Sometimes it's easy to see what is good about change, but other times it's hard to find the "silver lining". The truth is that God cares more about redeeming our souls than He does about our comfort. This is tough love and we should be grateful for it even though it is often painful at the time. Another verse that gives me great comfort is Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will He not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" I don't know about you, but I often find it hard to really believe that the difficult

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circumstances in my life, of which the discomfort and loss of change are often a part, are really part of God's love for me. But when I step back and see the big picture, that He gave the one thing He loved and prized more than anything – Jesus – for me, I have no room for doubt.

Change is a blessing because it is necessary that we be transformed to become what God originally created us to be. As uncomfortable as change is, we desperately need to be changed – to be sanctified. God has promised that He will complete the work of changing us so that we are sinless (Philippians 1:6). Often this internal change takes place in the context of changing circumstances around. God has a way of dethroning our idols through change and taking us to a place of recognized vulnerability that leads us to greater faith in Him.

Finally, we are told to “Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4) which includes times of transition. We can rejoice because we have a God who never changes. We can rejoice because His love never changes. We can rejoice because His promises never change. We can rejoice because His character never changes. We can rejoice even in the midst of the growing pains of change, even in the loss of change, and certainly in the hope of change.