

Transitions

Everyone goes through transitions. There are basically three kinds.

1. Crisis Transitions – These represent sudden trouble
2. Joyful Transitions – A time of blessing
3. Normal Transitions – The normal course of life, seasonal changes

Our task is to navigate them to the glory of God. All of them occur on a regular basis. In fact, all three can occur at once. Jesus gives us an example of this.

John 16:21 – A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being is born into the world.

All of them can make us better, but it doesn't happen automatically. With the wrong response the transition can set us back naturally and spiritually. It doesn't have to. They can all work together for good, and bring us to a level of growth.

Examples of Crisis Transitions – Death of a friend or family member, divorce, injury, illness, addictions, loss of a job, failure of a business, bankruptcy foreclosure. There are also crises that can occur in our community or nation that can result in a transition for us.

Examples of Joyful Transitions – A marriage, a new child, new career or job, new business, new house, a healing or a good medical report, the return of a wayward child, a major financial increase, overcoming an addiction.

Examples of Normal Transitions – Getting older, retirement, downsizing, moving (including to a new city), childhood to adolescence to adulthood.

There are also spiritual transitions, such as coming to Christ for salvation, moving from being a babe in Christ to maturity, growing from faith to faith.

How should we handle transitions? What is the best way to respond to any of these changes, and to get to a better place in our lives through all of them?

1. Avoid Isolation

Phil. 2:4 – Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

What makes us better is connection and community. Help someone else in their transition and you'll find you're helping yourself as well.

Rom. 5:1-3 - We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples [infirmities] of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself...

Notice that in each of these passages, serving others is directly related to what Christ has done for us. Therefore, when we avoid isolation and help others in their transitions, we are really being Christ-like. And that's what we should want through our own transitions. We want God be glorified, and to become like Christ.

2. Stay Focused

No transition has to stop you from your purpose. As long as your purpose is clear. It may take a longer time, as it did with people like Abraham, Joseph, and David.

We have to be confident that God will finish what He started.

Phil. 1:6 – Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote this to the Phillipians from prison. This was a transition for him, a crisis transition, but he understood that God would be faithful to complete His purpose for him, and use this transition for His glory and Paul's good.

As long as we keep our focus on the Lord and on His will for us, any transition can be a successful one. This is important because there are some people that have had joyful transitions divert them from God. The new thing became their focus. Be careful not to let your blessings become a curse.

3. Keep Moving Forward

No transition is intended to be permanent. They come for a reason and a season, and we have to be able to adapt and keep moving forward.

Heb.12:12-13 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet...

This passage describes a crisis transition and the right response. He says that it may be painful for the present, but there is an afterwards, and the afterwards will result in the peaceable fruit of righteousness if you are trained by it. This means we allow God to use it to train us.

When we allow this to train us at becoming better, we are to then become stronger. Verse 13 tells us to strengthen our hands and knees, and make straight paths for your feet. This means we keep moving forward. We don't stop. We don't let what is lame become disabled. We move on to healing.

This shows us we have a choice. We can let a crisis transition disable us, or we can be healed and keep moving forward. It may take time, but we must remember that God is with us through every transition of life, and

we're going somewhere. Life is not static. We are all moving towards that day of days when we will see His face and forever be with the Lord. This is our hope, and the greatest transition of all.