

# A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

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JANUARY 2009

## “The Most Important Changes”

By His grace, love, and power we are now in the beginning of a new year. We are thankful He has brought us this far – thankful for His keeping us, His leading, His care, His provision, His protection, and His unfolding plan for every one of our lives. What a great God we serve!

Change is and will yet come – whether we are ready or not. No matter where we look or what we hear – everything is changing. Since change occurs on many levels – we are looking at the most important changes – dear women of God – those that happen within us. In our hearts we want to change and know we need to change – to be conformed to the image and likeness of Jesus (Romans 8:29). Martin Luther said “A Christian is never in a state of completion, but always in the process of becoming.

The word of the Lord commands us to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). He expects us to grow and mature and has many ways to bring that about. Most, if not all of these, will involve change. Know that every change God asks for is for our good, and our God who is Love knows best. Leighton Ford said “God loves us the way we are, but He loves us too much to leave us that way.” Just as we teach and train our children because we love them – so it is with the Lord.

There are changes God will make in us all by Himself as we love Him and walk with Him. Such good news! There are good changes that will come as we cooperate with Him, yield to Him, surrendering our lives – what we are and what we are not and desire His will above our own. We are not our own, we have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20). God gave His very best to purchase us to Himself.

We are to grow in our personal relationship with the Lord. Daily private time with the Lord is a necessity as well as a privilege. No relationship can grow without communication. It is good to sit in His Presence and listen – He wants to talk to us and we need to talk to Him about everything. Prayer is amazing – and the fruit of this time together is precious, powerful and sweet. We need to worship Him, and thank Him with grateful hearts for WHO HE IS and not just what He can do. Since His Word is life to us there must be time in the Word – reading, studying, meditating and doing what is revealed to us. The Word has the power to change us – Glory to God! As we take this time we will become more and more aware of the changes He wants. In Church you will hear Him in the preaching, teaching, and ministry. You will hear Him in communication with others. You will hear Him in the longings of your own heart. You will hear Him in your circumstances. We must be expectant – and in trust open our hearts to Him. Let Him speak the changes He wants, and not just what we think needs to change in us. What He asks – He is able to do in us as we give ourselves to Him.

His voice brings no condemnation, guilt or shame but instead a firm conviction, and an invitation to come up higher. He only wants what is good and best for us – and waits for us to agree with what He is asking, humble ourselves, and cooperate with His work within us. We cannot do it ourselves. Resolutions don’t work for very long, determination (me trying in my own strength) brings little success. Change – even transformation – comes only from Him – who loved us and gave Himself for us.

We are to grow in our relationships – those nearest and dearest to us, our Brothers and Sisters in Christ and those who don’t know him yet. Charity (love) begins at home but doesn’t end there. We are to love and treat others as Christ does to us. A part of loving God is loving others. We as women of God have tremendous opportunity and skills to love. We are to grow in obedience to what He has called us to be and do,

grow win our gifts, talents and abilities, grow in all the ways He has freely given us to know Him better. We are to grow in our character – that all those who know us, and those we come in contact with may see and experience the real Jesus. We are to grow in our commitment to Christ – His Church, His Work, and His people. We are to grow in purity. We are to grow in forgiveness and refusing offense. All these will change the way we think, the way we act, and the way we speak.

So how does change begin? As we have said, by God speaking to us, and us responding to Him. We start with determination defined as (1) absolute direction to a certain end (2) to fix on, to settle or establish and (3) the act of deciding or to come to a decision. In the natural these are all good, but for us more is needed. Having our lives centered in Him, doing all the afore mentioned in our quest to know Him, and wanting His will (and His only!) in our lives we will be determined in a godly sense. Out of it will come decisions. We have all made decisions based on feelings or emotions and later been disappointed. The decisions you make in the Lord are not (or should not be) made by feelings or emotions but out of your will which is yielded and surrendered to God “I will” are powerful words when spoken before the Lord. The God who is ever-working in you (Philippians 1:6 and 2:13) will enable you to do what you can’t do, strengthen you, encourage you, guide you, and let you know He is with you. Every step you take forward (in little and big changes) will cause growth, increase, and the joy of knowing Him in new ways.

To determination and decision add diligence. Diligence is defined as (1) steady application (2) constant effort to accomplish what is undertaken (3) perseverance and (4) persistence (continuing to do something in spite of difficulties and obstacles. We must keep at it, and not give up! Not quit! Your flesh (natural man) doesn’t want to change. The enemy doesn’t want you to change. But the God who never changes (Hebrews 1:10-12 and Hebrews 13:8) is with you and I in the changes. All the help we need comes from Him. R is a life-long process, and that every change will bring growth in you and Glory to His Name. May you experience Him in ever-increasing measure and the righteousness, peace, and joy that is yours in Christ Jesus.

Yours in Christ,

Toni Quinn  
For His Glory Women’s Ministry

“...for I can do everything God asks me to with the help of Christ who gives me strength and power.” Philippians 4:13 LB