

**Managing Life's Transitions**  
**MANAGING LIFE'S CIRCUMSTANCES**  
**By Steve Chupp**  
**June 6, 2010**

**The Big Idea**

Circumstances are life changing. All of life's transitions involve changing circumstances which are typically beyond our control. Changing circumstances are unfamiliar and confusing. We will get better at managing life's circumstances if we learn what God wants to show us in them. Then we can make the right adjustments rather than just react to them. We will end up being ruled by God, not life's circumstances.

**Life is full of transitions.**

- "The only person who likes change is a wet baby." (Mark Twain)
- We often can't control life's circumstances.
- In that sense, we can't really manage life's circumstances.
- But we can manage our lives in the midst of them.

**We want to ask God, "Why did you allow this circumstance?"**

- This is a natural response, but not the best question.
- Better questions get better answers.
- What are the better questions?
- Today we look at three questions that will get you better answers about your circumstances.

**Resource: *Experiencing God*, by Henry Blackaby**

**The Widow from Nain – Luke 7:11-17**

*Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."*

*Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.*

*They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country. NIV*

**1. Get to know **God** in life's circumstances.**

- This poor widow may have been struggling with who God is.
  - Very likely the Enemy was taunting her.
  - **Psalms 42:3** *Day and night, I have only tears for food, while my enemies continually taunt me, saying, "Where is this God of yours?"* NLT
- She may have felt like giving up on following God.

- She may have felt like giving up on following God.
  - “What’s the use? Look where it’s gotten me.”
- Then Jesus showed up.
  - **Luke 7:13** *When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her [his heart overflowed with compassion] and he said, "Don't cry." NIV [NLT]*
- **Never judge God by your circumstances.**
  - **Let God be the judge of your circumstances.**
- We sometimes judge God by our circumstances. (Blackaby, p 96, 99)
  - “God is not fair. God doesn’t love me.”
  - Don’t judge God by your circumstances.
- What have you concluded about God from your (present or past) circumstances?
  - Is it true?
  - Does it line up with the Bible?
- Never allow circumstances to dictate what you believe about God.
  - You will react to circumstances according to what you believe about God.
  - Your reactions reveal what you believe about God.
- Two people may go through similar circumstances and come away with opposite conclusions about God.
  - E.g., death, abandonment, illness, loss of job...
- **Ask, “God, what do you want to reveal to me about yourself in these circumstances?”**
  - “God, what do you want to show me about your nature?”
  - Every circumstance is an opportunity for you to know God better.
  - The next two questions are based on this most important one.

## 2. Get God’s perspective on life’s circumstances.

- We must allow God to interpret our circumstances.
  - Let God be the judge of your circumstances.
- **Luke 7:14-15** *Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. NIV*
- **“Never, ever determine the truth of a situation by looking at the circumstances.”**
  - **“You cannot know the truth of your circumstances until you have heard from God.”** (Blackaby, p 100, 98)
  - **John 11:4** *But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it is for the glory of God. I, the Son of God, will receive glory from this." NLT*
- Let God judge your circumstances.
- **Ask, “God, what is the truth about my circumstances?”**
  - Then read the Bible, watch for God to reveal his wisdom, and wait for him.
- **Joseph – Genesis 50:20**
  - *You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. NIV*
  - *As far as I am concerned, God turned into good what you meant for evil. He brought me to the high position I have today so I could save the lives of many people. NLT*

### 3. Discover God's **plan** in life's circumstances.

- **Luke 7:15** *The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. NIV*
- Don't **adjust** your life to your circumstances.
  - Adjust your life to **God**.
- Ask: "God, what **adjustments** do you want me make in light of these circumstances?"
  - "God, what are you asking of me in this transition?"
- God uses our circumstances to make us more like Christ and to move us through transitions.
- Don't react to circumstances.
  - Respond to God in the midst of them.
- Don't yield to circumstances.
  - Yield to God in the midst of them.
- Don't allow circumstances to rule your life.
  - Let God rule your life in spite of your circumstances.
- Joseph adjusted to God in his circumstances.
  - He didn't plot revenge on his brothers, Potiphar's wife, or the butler who forgot him.
  - He let God rule in his life.
  - And God fulfilled his plan for Joseph – and a nation.
  - **Genesis 39:2** *The LORD was with Joseph and blessed him greatly as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. NLT*

### **The Bible is essential in gaining God's perspective on our circumstances.**

- It reveals God; his nature, character, power, purposes, ways...
- It causes us to become God-centered rather than circumstance-centered.
- It gives us faith to see beyond our circumstances.
- It offers us God's perspective on circumstances.

### **How are you managing life's circumstances?**

- My life's circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_
- God's nature, God's perspective, God's plan: \_\_\_\_\_
- How I can adjust my life to God: \_\_\_\_\_

Job – his wife, his friends, his God