

Managing Life's Transitions
MANAGING MAJOR TRANSITIONS
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The Big Idea

Change is hard. And big change is very hard. History is replete with examples of people who failed when faced with major transition. We see it in business, culture, technology, family, and church. How do we avoid joining those who failed change? The Bible gives us ample insight into how to manage major transitions. If we prepare our hearts and heads now, we can change successfully.

Change is an essential aspect of God's Kingdom.

- **Matthew 18:3** [Jesus] said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." NIV
- To repent means to change your mind.

Major Transitions in God's Kingdom

The Charismatic Movement – "Look what they did to our church!"

- Profoundly changed the face of the church
 - Gifts of the Spirit, especially speaking in tongues
 - Music/worship
 - Ministry style
 - Ministry gifts – Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher
- Met with very strong early resistance, especially in certain denominations
 - Opponents were often angry
 - Pastors were fired, church members asked to leave
 - In our own area I knew five pastors who lost their jobs over it.
- Zion Chapel was an early pioneer that was criticized
- Now there is widespread acceptance.
 - Alpha is a good example of this.
- It is not emphasized as much now partly due to lack of controversy.
 - The changes God brings often come in an exaggerated form.
 - Then they find their appropriate level and place.

What if God did something like this again?

- How would we respond?
 - We who were pioneers find ourselves joined by others.
 - What we believe was once very controversial.
- What if God brings another major transition to the church?
 - In some ways, the evangelism and discipleship movement that is sweeping the church is bringing major change.
 - We don't need to give up the previous move to embrace the next.
- What if God brought a major transition to your life?
 - How do you know you will not resist it?
 - How can you be assured you will accept God's big, hard changes?
 - What can we learn from previous major transitions, especially mistakes?

Reasons people fail to manage God's major transitions:

- They refuse **biblical** reasoning and **God's** long-term goals.
 - **Matthew 22:29** *Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God." NIV*
- They are held back by **emotional** attachments and **short-term** loss.
 - **John 11:47-48** *"What are we going to do?" they asked each other. "This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. If we let him go on, pretty soon everyone will be believing in him and the Romans will come and remove what little power and privilege we still have." NLT & Msg*
- They identify with a **destination** rather than the **journey**.
 - They lose sight of the path.
 - We must see ourselves in flux rather than fixed in our situation.
 - Our identity needs to be tied to growth rather than arrival.
 - **Ephesians 4:11-13** *[Christ] is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ, until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ. NLT*

Jesus brought the biggest spiritual transition in history.

He came to Israel to bring the transition of Old Testament to New Testament.

This was a huge change in mindset.

- Law to Grace
 - **John 1:17** *For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. NIV*
- Moses to Jesus
 - **Mark 9:4-7** *And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus... Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" NIV*
- Sacrificial system to Jesus the final sacrifice
 - **Hebrews 10:12, 18** *But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God... And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin. NIV*
- Temple worship to living temples
 - **2 Corinthians 6:16** *For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." NIV*
- Prophets speaking to the Son speaking
 - **Hebrews 1:1-2** *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son. NIV*
- A separate nation to one people, both Jews and Gentiles
 - **Ephesians 2:14** *For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one [Jews and Gentiles] and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. NIV*
- Political nation to spiritual kingdom

- A separate priesthood to every believer a priest a priest
 - Revelation 1:5-6 *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-to him be glory and power for ever and ever! NIV*
- Salvation by works to salvation by grace through faith
 - Ephesians 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast. NIV*

When Jesus brought this major transition, most of the Jews rejected it.

- He had to start with a few common people – his chosen disciples – rather than the religious elite of his day.
- Most of Israel rejected him – and wanted him crucified – because of these three reasons.
- Yet he began a movement of God’s Kingdom that is still expanding today.

How can you successfully manage major transitions?

1. Keep God’s long-term, biblical purpose in view.

- David saw beyond the law to relationship by grace.
- Look at the original setting of God’s creation.
 - Relationship with one simple law
 - Rules multiplied because sin entered the picture.
- Read the Bible.
 - Mark the headlines.
- God’s big goals are:
 - To make you **like Christ**
 - **Romans 8:28-29** *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son. NLT*
 - To **win** others to Christ
 - **1 Timothy 2:4** *[God] wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. NLT*
 - If you don’t have these goals, God’s major transitions will frustrate you.

2. Guard against emotional, personal attachments.

- Pay the price of short-term loss for God’s long-term gain.
- This is a mark of maturity.
 - **Maturity** is the ability to delay gratification.
 - **Luke 9:23** *Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.” NIV*

3. Develop a journey mentality.

- Value transition as a means of **becoming**.
- Remember that God has great things in store for us.
- **1 Corinthians 2:9-10** *No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him – but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. NIV*