

Recognizing a Season Change in the Spirit

by Melanie Imel

When I lived up north in Indiana, it was always pretty easy to recognize the season changes. One day the trees are green then the next day, they begin to turn yellow, red and brown. Spiritually, it is not always so obvious what God is doing. Did you know that we do go through different spiritual seasons? I don't really feel to go into a complete teaching on the different seasons that we go through, but I want to focus on helping you recognize a season change in the Spirit.

Please read this with a mature heart. If your husband is causing you grief, do not think your season is done with him and you can trade him in for another! If that's your situation, please call your pastor; you need spiritual counsel. If you are a person who is constantly in conflict, do not blame this on a season change, but that YOU need to change and develop the fruit of the Spirit in your life! With that said, let's look at four keys to discern a season change in the spirit:

1. God will tell you. If you are a person of prayer, many times the Spirit of God will let you know ahead of time that a change is coming. I have heard that wonderful phrase before: "change is coming", and sure enough, it came. Jesus said, "He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness but he shall have the light of life." (John 8:12) If we are living for Him and He is truly our Lord, then He is in charge, not us. Notice the ministry of the Holy Spirit in John 16:13; "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth (reality): for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come." The Holy Spirit reveals the things of God to us.

In 1 Corinthians 2:14, we read that "...the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The things of God can only be spiritually understood. This is why you need the Holy Spirit in your life. He will teach you and unveil the mysteries of God to your spirit before you see it in the natural.

2. New Vision. God will begin to plant within your heart a new vision, a new assignment, for a new season. You will sense a restlessness, a release of the old vision in your spirit and an excitement for the new vision. I have experienced this 'restlessness' in my life. I felt like a race horse in a pasture! I felt like I had completed my assignment and I was ready to run with the new vision! That new vision comes with the new season. You can't step into the new vision without releasing the old. You will begin to look beyond what you are doing and where you are, to where you want to be. That is why it is good to ask yourself this question: "Do you feel God releasing you from this assignment, this job, this obligation, this course of action?". When we sense this release, this helps us discern what is going on,

especially when key #3 kicks in!

3. The Grace has Lifted. Most people don't like change and sometimes in order for God to bring us into a new season, He will lift from us His grace to stay where we are. We will begin to be dissatisfied, spiritually uneasy and wondering what is going on. God is showing you that a season has ended and you must release what you have been doing, or where you have been, in order to step into the new that He has for you. This can be SCARY on the flesh!

I remember the first time this happened to us in ministry. We were serving on staff at a church and began to feel that uneasy feeling of change. We so wanted to stay where we were because we loved everybody and we loved what we were doing for the Lord. But God had a different place for us and when we finally said okay, He gave us our first church to pastor. It is important to obey God when you sense this release because if you don't do it in God's timing, key #4 will begin to pop up!

4. Conflict. Why am I so miserable at this job? Why do I no longer enjoy spending time with this friend? Could it be that a new season has arrived and you are refusing to release the old season? When we remain in a situation, relationship, position, that God has released us from, we will NOT HAVE THE GRACE to stay! That is why we begin to experience conflict. We begin to feel out of place, because we are!

I like to compare this to the mother bird who knows it's time for her baby birds to leave the nest and fly. What does she do? She kicks them out! I'm sure it is not a pleasant experience for the little birds but necessary to their development. God does the same for us. We are in our nice comfortable nest and God, in His mercy, makes it unbearable for us to stay in a season that we have outgrown!

Season changes in the Spirit can be hard on the soul and the flesh because many times we don't clearly know where we are going or what our new assignment is. This is the UNKNOWN FACTOR found in Genesis 12:1... "Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country, And from your relatives and from your father's house, To the land which I will show you.' " Abraham, when called to go to a land he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though HE DID NOT KNOW where he was going. Why doesn't God show us the new thing before we release the old? I know He sometimes does reveal the new thing first, but most of the time, He does not. God want us to walk by faith and not by sight. He wants us to obey Him and when we do, THEN He unfolds the new wonderful plan He has for us.

2 Corinthians 3:18 says that we are changed from Glory to Glory. The Amplified says we are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another. Season changes bring us into new

degrees of Glory. This is necessary for you to finish your spiritual course. A season change might be as simple as saying goodbye to that excessive hobby or as complex as resigning that ministry position to go to the mission field.

Many times a season change is not a location change but something on the inside of us needing to change. God is always pruning so that we bear fruit for Him. John 15 gives us a glimpse into this pruning process. John 15: 1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. Notice that there can be a time of no fruit bearing and God's plan is to get you to the next level to bear fruit. As you read this chapter, you see the progression: no fruit, fruit, more fruit, much fruit, and the last one, verse 16 says to have fruit remaining.

If we want to stand before the Lord, having finished our course with joy, then be ready for a SEASON CHANGE. We need to be pliable in the hand of God and willing to move on to other areas as the Spirit calls us. Don't fight it, but embrace it, because God has so much more for you than you can think or imagine!
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