

## How to Respond in Times of Change

### I. We battle fear in times of change as we trust in the Lord's protection and help.

Ps 46:1-3 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride.

### II. The winds of change at CUTR:

A. Andrew and Katie are resigning: this will take place on February 15.

Please pray for them as they look for new jobs and a new church home.

B. I am scheduled for back surgery on February 25th.

Please pray for our leadership team, as we strategize and plan to meet the pastoral needs of CUTR, during my time of recovery after surgery.

### III. Does the Bible teach us to live in "fear of deception?"

A. Throughout Christian history, there has always been false ministries and ministers, who promote and embrace deception and controversy.

1. False Christian workers draw people to themselves.

Acts 20:29-30 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

2. False workers cause dissensions by their smooth and flattering speech.

Rom 16:17-18 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

3. True and sincere ministry help people to embrace Christ, they are not in ministry for self-centered purposes (2 Cor 11:1-15).

Pure gospel presentations cause people to embrace Christ.

2 Cor 11:1-4 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.

4. False Christian workers exploit the church with false words.

2 Peter 2:1-3 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words;

5. The Holy Spirit will always lead us to abide in Christ and not follow those who deceive.

1 John 2:26-27 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

6. Deceitful workers, disguise themselves as followers of Christ.

2 Cor 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness,

B. The issue of deception at the end of the age: What does the Scripture teach?

1. Some will fall away in the last days.

Dan 11:35 God allows this for the purpose of purifying His people.

Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time.

1 Tim 4:1-3 in later times some will fall away from the faith

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.

2. Two things must happen before the Lord returns;

1) the apostasy, 2) the reign of the Antichrist.

How can we guard ourselves against the possibility of deception?

1) Guard our hearts against fear.

2) Receive love for the truth that leads to resisting sin and lawlessness.

2 Thes 2:1-12 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

3. The teaching of Jesus on the last days.

Matt 24 Jesus is speaking about two things simultaneously (the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the age).

24:5-14 At the end of the age many will fall away because of persecution and embracing lawlessness (sin), consequently most people's love will grow cold.

"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. 1At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

4. Difficult days will take place in the last days because of a lack of pursuing Christian character.

2 Tim 3:1-9 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding to a form of godliness, although they

have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

And some will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

2 Tim 4:1-4 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

5. The fruit of deception (or being deceived) always leads to living in sin.

Eph 5:5-7 For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them;

1 John 3:6-8 No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

#### **IV. Conclusion: from "Changes That Heal"**

There are four developmental stages of growth

##### **1. Attachment or Bonding to others**

Bonding is the ability to establish an emotional attachment to another person. It's the ability to relate to another on the deepest level. When two people have a bond with each other, they share their deepest thoughts, dreams, and feelings with each other with no fear that they will be rejected by the other person.

Symptoms of failure to bond:

Depression	Fear of Intimacy
Feelings of meaninglessness	Feelings of Unreality
Feelings of badness and guilt	Panic
Addictions	Rage
Distorted Thinking	Excessive Caretaking
Emptiness	Fantasy
Sadness	

##### **2. Boundaries or separation from others**

Boundaries are the realization of our own person apart from others. This sense of separateness forms the basis for personal identity. It says what we are and what we are not, what we will choose and what we will not choose, what we will endure and what we will not, what we will feel and what we will not feel, what we like and what we do not like, and what we want and what we do not want.

Symptoms of failure to set boundaries:

Depression	Under Responsibility
Panic	Feelings of Obligation
Resentment	Feelings of Being Let down
Passive-Aggressive Behavior	Isolation
Codependency	Extreme Dependency
Identity Confusion	Disorganization and Lack of Direction
Difficulties with Being Alone	Substance Abuse and Eating Disorders
Masochism	Procrastination
Victim Mentality	Impulsivity
Blaming	Generalized Anxiety
Over Responsibility and Guilt	Obsessive-Compulsive Behavior

### 3. Sorting out good and bad

The world around us is good and bad. The people around us are good and bad. We are good and bad.

Our natural tendency is to try and resolve the problem of good and evil by keeping the good and the bad separated. We want, by nature, to experience the good me, the good other, and the good world as "all good." To do this, we see the bad me, the bad other, and the bad world as "all bad." This creates a split in our experience of ourselves, others, and the world around us - a split that is not based on reality and cannot stand the test of time in real life.

The splitting results in an inability to tolerate badness, weakness, and failure in ourselves and others. It leads to two basic problems: sometimes we deny the existence of bad; at other times, we deny the existence of good. We feel like we are all bad when we fail, or we think we are all good while we are doing well.

In addition, we blame and punish others for failing to be the all-good person we want them to be. At other times, we deny the real badness they exhibit and end up with an unreal relationship with them that ultimately fails.

In the world around us, we require perfection, and we devalue any church, group, or job that fails our expectations. Either we withdraw from the church, group, or job, only to move to another imperfect and disappointing situation, or we idealize situations in a way that blinds us to their bad points. In short, if we do not have the ability to tolerate and deal with the simultaneous existence of good and bad, we cannot successfully deal with and live in this world, for the world and we are precisely that: good and bad.

Symptoms of Failure to Accept the Good and Bad:

Perfectionism	Eating and Substance Problems
Idealism	Narcissism
Inability to Tolerate Badness	Guilt
Inability to Tolerate Weakness	Sexual Addictions
Inability to Tolerate Negative Feelings	Broken Relationships
Affective Problems	Excessive Rage
Self-Image Problems	All-Bad Me
Anxiety and Panic	All-Good Me

### 4. Becoming an adult

Becoming an adult is the process of moving out of a "one-up/one-down" relationship and into a peer relationship to other adults. Adults have the freedom to make their own decisions without permission from others, to evaluate and judge their own performance, to choose their own values and opinions, to disagree with others freely, and to enjoy sexual relations with an equal spouse.

Symptoms of an Inability to Become an Adult:

Inordinate Need for Approval	Black-and-White Thinking
Fear of Disapproval	Judgmentalism
Guilt	Anxiety Attacks
Sexual Struggles	Impulsiveness and Inhibition
Fear of Failure	Superiority
Need for Permission	Parenting Others
"You Can't Do That" Syndrome	Hate for Authority Figures
Feelings of Inferiority	Depression
Competitiveness	Dependency
Loss of Power	Idealization of Authority
No Equal Differences	Idealization of Childhood