

#13 Northside Natter

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Today I'm looking at **CHANGE**

There's no doubt about it, we've had a lot of change in the last three months or so and there is more to come. How we manage change, of any kind, is up to several factors:

- Our personality
- Our resilience
- Our attitude
- Our relationship with God

Our personality is what makes us who we are, however, we can reshape our reactions to things even if they do go against our inherent urges. For instance, if we distrust strangers, we don't have to treat them with distrust. We can consciously decide to treat them like a friend until they prove otherwise. Jesus knew that Judas Iscariot would betray him, yet he ignored what he knew and treated him as a close friend until Judas proved otherwise. Why did Jesus do that? Perhaps it was the thought that his friendship and favour towards Judas might win over a brother. Yet, Judas chose otherwise and Jesus cannot be held responsible for Judas's choice.

Our resilience is our ability to bounce back after something difficult, or bad, has happened to us. Many of us have a high degree of resilience while others take longer to bounce back. Resilience comes from experiences that teach us how to get back up and get on with life. Resilience is affected by our inner thoughts. For example, imagine our house catches fire and we lose everything we have. Do we see it as something that just happens in life, like a bingle in the car, and call the insurance company? Or do we blame God for allowing our home and belongings to be destroyed? Do we let this fester in us through anger, hurt, and disbelief in God's protecting hand? Remember, it rains on the just and the unjust alike, says the Lord.

Our attitude is something that we can control. The Lord and his Word shape and mould our attitude to what it should be, if we let them. If we remain wilful, our attitude won't be very good and our testimony will reflect that. We must humble ourselves before the Lord, daily, and be teachable in his presence. To remain wilful will only bring about our downfall. We must exercise our freedom of choice and choose to control and change our attitude.

Our relationship with God depends on both our actions and our attitude. It's easy to see how important a proper attitude towards salvation affects this relationship. If our relationship with God is not good at the moment, we need to fix it now. We need to read our bible every day to discover what his will is for us and learn from the examples given. We need to hear the word faithfully preached to be instructed in his ways. We must pray every single day for his guidance, wisdom, and knowledge. Once we have a habit of doing these things, we will see a change in our relationship with God. We will be open to having our thoughts directed by the Lord. This can happen in the form of a scripture, or the words of a chorus, popping into our heads unbidden, just when we need it. Or perhaps we will relate something in our current activity to a parable, or ask, 'what would Jesus do in this situation?' Knowing what the bible has to offer provides us with the knowledge to make better life choices. We should make sure our relationship with God is a strong one.

So how does all this help us with change? If we temper our personality, we strengthen our resilience to outside influences and foster a more appropriate attitude to the things around us. When we find change to be too challenging, we can go before the Lord and ask him to help us to cope with it. A good relationship with him allows us to rest in the knowledge that he has it all in hand.

There are people who hate change and refuse to go along with it. They dig their heels in and cry, 'not me, I'm not doing that! I don't like it!'

I remember when John Howard ordered everyone to put their money in the banks so every transaction could be accounted for (and taxed). Money launderers were forced to find other means of disposing of their ill-gotten gains. Many elderly people found this ministerial order very difficult to comply with. Few of them trusted banks. Eventually though, banks were getting old biscuit tins of cash smelling like earth, or crumpled notes from under (or in) mattresses. Or wads of rolled cash kept in freezers – perhaps that's where 'cold hard cash' came from!

Wages were paid into bank accounts instead of handed to employees in little yellow-brown envelopes, and getting used to a cashless wallet was a scary prospect for many. In time, those who refused to go along with the change found they were on the wrong side of the law.

"And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." — Anais Nin

Change in our world is inevitable and will happen with or without us. If we faced a raging river, we wouldn't try to swim upstream against the strong current to get to the other side. That's because we would tire very quickly and probably drown before making any headway at all. Our best bet is to go with the flow and let the river take us effortlessly to the other side. Facing change is the same.

Where our walk in the Lord is concerned, change is also inevitable. We can refuse to change our unhelpful personality traits, level of resilience, bad attitude, and relationship with God, or we can give over to the Lord and do what's required. I've heard people in the world say that they don't want to change who they are for anyone. My question to them (*in my best Yiddish accent*) is: 'You think you're so great the way you are?' God can mould us into someone we can be proud of. A gentler creature, full of love instead of anger or hate, a caring person who only wants what's best for those we meet, a helper of those in need, a planter, or waterer, of seeds of salvation. In short, more like Christ.

Change, even though it is inevitable, in the Lord it is essential, and in the world, unavoidable. Go with the flow brothers and sisters and effortlessly get to where you need to go in order to maintain your salvation.