

CREW Bible Study

Youth XP3 Message Series – FAMILY MATTERS – Week 3

- **BOTTOM LINE:** When family changes, your mindset matters.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand that change is inevitable, but God is constant and His presence can comfort us in uncertain times.
- **SCRIPTURE:**
 - *There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace. – Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*
 - *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. – Isaiah 43:2*

MESSAGE

Let's start today with some truth in two short words. Are you ready for it?

Things change.

Think about it....the music you listen to, the clothes you wear, the way you style your hair, how you decorate your room. In the past, let's say, five years, has any of that changed? A little or a lot?

What I just named are changes that are, for the most part, *expected*. No one expects to look exactly the same way they did in elementary school five years later.

But there are also changes that are *unexpected*. Changes that feel like they show up out of nowhere. And unlike changes in fashion or music, these types of changes can be a little more difficult to deal with. For example.....

- Maybe you've had a **friendship** that changed. There was a person who was close to you that you trusted, but something happened to take you and that person in different directions. You went through a friendship breakup, and now you don't think things with that person will ever be the same.
- Maybe it was a **group of friends** that changed. You had a group that you felt a part of and you felt like you were *in*. And now you feel like you're *out*.

You're trying to make new friends while at the same time figuring out how to deal with the hurt and confusion of losing the old ones.

- Maybe you got **cut from the team** and don't know where, when or how you will get to play again.
- Or maybe you literally changed **location**. You moved to a different neighborhood, town, or state, and you're trying to navigate finding a new life in a new place.
- Maybe it's something else, like an **injury or illness**.
- Or a big **financial change** for your family if someone lost their job.

Whatever they are, unexpected changes have a way of disrupting our lives. And that's hard to deal with. It's human nature for us to want things to stay the same. Stability and predictability help us feel safe and secure.

Many of us consider – or want to consider - family to be that source of stability. So, when change happens in our families, it can be much more difficult to deal with. Maybe you've experienced this.....

- Maybe your parents got **divorced**. You thought that they'd be together forever, but suddenly, they split up.
- Or one of your parents got **remarried**. And now you have a step-parent and step-siblings to deal with.
- Maybe one of your parents got a **new job** and had to move away for a while. Or you're a military family and one of your parents got **deployed**.
- Maybe a sibling went off to **college**. It definitely changed the dynamic in your house. It's not the same without them.

No matter what our experience is with change, something about it happening in our *families* makes it more difficult. So, the question is, if avoiding change isn't possible, how do we get better at handling it? Is there a way to navigate change in our family so that it doesn't cause us to become bitter and angry?

Lucky for us, there are lots of stories in the Bible about change. In fact, the writer of the Old Testament book Ecclesiastes had a lot to say about change. Many people believe this book was written by King Solomon, one of the kings of Israel who was known for being incredibly wise. Listen to what he says in chapter 3, verses 1-8.....

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

King Solomon found a very poetic way of saying, "You better get ready because change *is* going to happen. Nothing stays constant forever. This is the world we live in, so get used to it."

In some ways, this sounds pretty depressing. But that's not what Solomon means by this. He's saying that when we know things will change, we can be prepared to deal with it. Instead of fighting change and pretending like things will always stay exactly the same, we can give up trying to control everything to avoid it.

God is fully aware of everything that changes in our lives. He knows the good and the bad, and neither will last forever. And God makes a promise to us. Listen to these words he shared with the prophet Isaiah.....

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

God spoke this to the prophet Isaiah to tell God's people. God wanted to reassure them that when everything around them was changing, He wasn't. In every single moment and every season of change – including family change – God would be with them. And just like He said He would be with them then, He will be with you and me now too.

When your family changes, your mindset matters. Here's three things to help you work on it.....

1. **Understand that change will happen.** This is why that passage in Ecclesiastes we talked about earlier is so powerful. Change is bound to happen. Time moves on. "There's a time for everything." It doesn't make change easy to handle, but at least we know that everyone deals with.
2. **Know that God is with you.** Like it says in Isaiah, whether you "pass through the waters" or "walk through the fire," God will not leave you alone. Whatever change you face in your family, He will be right there with you to help you, guide you and comfort you. Talk to Him.
3. **Trust that God can use the change to change you.** God can use the transition and adjustment we go through to grow us in ways we may have never expected. God can do something in and through our time of change, but we have to think long term. However bad it feels right now, it won't feel this way forever. When we have a long-term view, we know there's something after this. We just might not see it yet. But God does. He isn't done.

If we can begin to see change this way, we can embrace it as something that can take us somewhere good. Change has the potential to make you better, make you stronger, and become more of who God designed you to be.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Compare the "you" of 5 years ago to the "you" of you now. What has changed?
2. What is one of the best changes that has ever happened to you?
3. What was a change in your life that was unexpected?
4. How do you typically respond to change? How does your family as a whole typically respond to change?
5. What is one big change that you or your family has experienced in the past year? Is it COVID related? How did you handle it?
6. Why do you think changes in our family feel extra difficult?
7. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. Does this shift your view on what change looks like in your life? Does one phrase from this passage jump out at you?
8. Read Isaiah 43:2. What does this verse mean to you?