

TRANSITIONS, TRANSITIONS.....



dh 3.30.10

Transitions, transitions.... life is full of them, in fact each day begins and ends with one. Transitions can come in many different shapes and sizes, levels, intensity, quantity, from first breath to death, transitions all have this one thing in common: change.

TRANSITIONS: THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY

The Good: A job promotion, graduation, a new baby or a new puppy;), Springtime, turning 16....Transition/change can be as simple as moving your furniture around for a fresh look. I mean, when I change my living room around, it's a lot of work, but I like the result; a big transition is someone getting out of prison, they will need to 'transition' into freedom; if your business grows, you will have to 'change' the way you do things, more employees, bigger facilities, etc. The thing these 'good' transitions have in common is hard work.

The Bad: death, loss, separation, sickness, all seem like bad changes. Death seems like a bad transition from this life to the next, but depending on where you spend your eternity (heaven or hell) will determine the good or bad of it; Losing your job would seem like a bad transition, but again, depending on what God has planned for you, it could be just what you need; Separation from loved ones due to changing location, or war or some other circumstance beyond our control can be extremely difficult, yet manageable with

the Lord's help. And I could go on, but won't, I think you get the picture:)

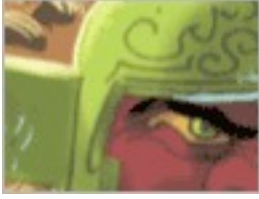
The Ugly: The transition from person to person, the transfer of power. This happens in our Country when a new President takes office, or when a new CEO takes over a company, or even when a leader of any kind passes the baton to the next person who will take their job. I guarantee the only way to make it a smooth transition is to plan for it and respect the process and the people involved. You see, these kinds of transitions can get ugly if they are not handled with great care. Personally, I'm going through a real whopper right now and I'm smart enough to know that I NEED HELP! Help from my Wonderful Counselor, the Holy Spirit. He leads me to His Word where I find this 'people transition thing' has happened more than once over thousands of years. Just let me say from the out set that this will not be an exhaustive study on the subject, but we'll touch on a few 'Biblical' transitions as are recorded for our example and instruction.

My journey into this study started with God transitioning Eli's authority as the Prophet of Israel to Samuel. This transition story is found in 1 Sam. 3. We find Samuel as a boy hearing the 'word of the Lord' for the first time. Each time he heard his name he would run to Eli and ask him what he wanted. On the third time of Samuel coming, Eli realized it was the LORD speaking to Samuel. He told

Samuel to say, 'speak Lord, for Your servant is listening.' What God told Samuel in that first encounter was regarding judgment against Eli's house. God chose Eli's 'replacement' when he chose Samuel.

The next situation we're going to look at is a BIG one! It's Israel's desire to transition from God as their King to a MAN being their King. In those days Israel did not have a human king, essentially, God was their King as HE spoke through and directed the Prophet. But one day, Israel, the whole nation of them, decided they wanted to be like the other nations and they wanted a (human) King to lead them. (1 Sam. 8:5) Needless to say, God is not happy with Israel's request for a human king to take HIS place. (1 Sam. 8:7) Nevertheless, God starts the process of giving them what they want, and it will cost them dearly. (Please read 1 Sam. 8:11-21) In verse 22, God tells Samuel to 'give the people what they want.' Even God is not happy with this transition, so all transitions are not BEST, but God WILL have HIS way in all of it because HE is the SOVEREIGN RULER over the realm of mankind! So, Samuel starts the grueling process of managing (at God's direction) transition from God as Israel's only King to Saul. The Lord God directed Samuel in every step from choosing Saul, to anointing Saul, to appointing Saul as King over Israel. (1 Sam. 10) And once God made this decision, there was no turning back.

ENTER JEALOUSY



The next transition we'll look at is from King Saul to David. This was a hard o n e

because jealousy comes into play. As the very first ever King of Israel, King Saul had his way of doing things, and had no experience with transition or desire for anyone else to have his job! Maybe he thought he would be the King forever, I don't know, but Saul was not happy at all about young David taking his place. King Saul's end of story starts at 1 Sam. 13:14 after he disobeyed the commandment of the Lord, Samuel prophesies that Saul's kingdom will be taken away and given to a 'man after God's own heart.' As soon as David is identified by the Lord as the future King of Israel, Saul can do nothing but become obsessed with trying to snuff out the competition. (1 Sam. 18:7-9) King Saul ended up chasing David to try to kill him if perhaps somehow he could stop the PLAN of GOD. Not a smooth transition at all, but one filled with jealousy, contempt, regret, and (attempted) murder.

Smooth Transitions

Going from King David to his son Solomon was a pretty smooth transition. (1 Kings 2:1-10) My personal favorite is the transition from EliJAH to EliSHA. Elijah makes me laugh at how real he is. After one of the most victorious times in his ministry (1 Kings 18:19-46), then probably the most defeated time in his ministry where he feels like dying (1 Kings 19:1-13) God tells him to anoint a couple of Kings and his 'prophet' replacement (vs 15-16). The way I read this, Elijah isn't really into picking his replacement, We see this in 1 Kings 19:19-20, Elijah sees Elisha plowing, and as he (Elijah) walks by him, he throws his mantle (robe) on him. The scripture doesn't say he went up and spoke kindly to him, explained himself, then took off his own robe and gently laid it on him, NO, he THREW his robe on him. Now, I don't really know if that was standard procedure for transition from one prophet to another, but the next verse makes me think Elijah is just not into this: vs 20 (Elisha is speaking) "please let me kiss my father and mother, then I will follow you." And he (Elijah) said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to

you?" In today's vernacular it might be like, "whatever dude, it is what it is, do whatever you want, uuugh!" After Elisha does the goodbye ceremony with his family, he begins to follow Elijah. For the next 3 years Elisha serves and learns the ways of Elijah. In 2 Kings chapter two, we see the last days of the Elijah-Elisha ministry. It's so funny, but it's almost like Elijah is trying to 'lose' Elisha....Elijah tells him he's going to a place and tells Elisha he can't come with him. He does this three times, and each time Elisha tells him, no way, I'm going with you! Finally, Elijah asks Elisha what he can do for him because the Lord is about to take Elijah away from the earth. Elisha asks for a 'double portion' of the spirit that Elijah has. (2 Kings 2:9-12) The rest is history, Elisha sees Elijah get taken up in a whirlwind and receives the double portion that he asked for. Another smooth transition for the books:)

Now, let's look at the smooth transition from John the Baptist to Jesus. Read what John says to **his** disciples in John 3:30 "I must decrease, but HE must increase." John realized who he was and who he was not. (Jn. 3:28-31) John 1:15: John bore witness of Him, and cried out saying, "this is He of Whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" I think a major element of a successful, smooth transition is humility. We see that King Saul did not have humility, but David did in his transition to Solomon. John had to be further humbled as he watched his disciples begin to follow Jesus: vs 35, Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked upon Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 37 and the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

Now, I know there was no doubt in John's mind about who Jesus was, and he knew at least logically that his disciples **must** begin to follow Jesus since HE was the Messiah, but I wonder if John didn't have some kind of sadness about this transition as he watched those whom he had trained, lived with, and with whom he had served together, begin to leave him to follow Jesus. Sometimes I think we can forget that these great icons of the faith were human too, they had feelings and stuff bothered them just like stuff can bother us.

Now it becomes personal. I've worked at many Churches over the years as a Worship Leader and this is the first time I have ever

experienced a true, peaceful transfer of this position to another person....while I'm still there! Most of the time, the leadership opts to NOT tell the congregation I'm leaving until my final day there arrives. It's a shock to the congregation and not ideal, but that seems to be the M.O. of most Churches making this transition. This time though, it's different. We have told the congregation a couple months ago that I would be moving away, and we are now in the process of transitioning to another Worship Leader. I had a mission, sort of like John the Baptist, and having completed, or at least mostly completing my mission of training a worship team/leader, I must go on my way to the next mission or good work God has prepared for me to walk in. I'll tell you though, it's a real battle for me to keep my flesh in check and to walk in love and humility during this time. It's all new, not only to me, but to everyone involved and I respect the process that could turn ugly if any of us let our guard (of humility) down.

DYING DAILY

It all comes down to love. Jesus died on the cross because of His love for mankind, and we, as His followers, must follow Him to the cross for love sake. We must die daily in order to be pleasing and obedient to Him. (Luke 9:23) Everyday the cross awaits me, every second I make a choice to live for myself and die to the things of God, or to die to myself, and live for my LORD....and it's really hard, but it's really necessary for the sake of God's Kingdom, for the sake of love.

Transitions, transitions, this life is full of them. As long as we live on this earth we will have to deal with them. I only want to encourage my brothers and sisters in Christ who are reading this to make them as smooth as possible, inasmuch as it depends on us. It's not about us... none of it is since we have been crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20).

If we want to be a part of any peaceful transition from one to another in the Body of Christ, we must do it for the sake of the Kingdom, and say with all sincerity and humility, "I must decrease, but HE (Jesus) must increase."

Peace IN, Denise aka Big D

