**Season of Change**

One of my favorite seasons of the year is Autumn. I love the change of weather, from the sweltering weather of summer to the cool weather of the Fall. I can change from my shorts and sleeveless shirts to sweaters and sweatshirts. But most of all, I love the change of the color of the leaves. Change never stops and it never takes a rest. I have never been more aware of change than I have this year. And this season of change has also become a journey of change.

As part of this journey, I have evaluated how I look at my world, at other people, at circumstances and myself. One of my favorite books is Ann Voskamp’s “A Thousand Gifts: *A dare to live daily right where you are.”* The author speaks of God’s grace and the joy that comes when we look around us and see the gifts that God has given us. She uses scripture and her own experiences to describe her own journey of change. As I have read scripture and this book, I have noticed several things that need to be changed in us in order to change from a life of criticisms, complaints and lack of joy to one of thankfulness and joy.

The first thing we need is a change of heart. God is all about change. Throughout the Bible we read of names being changed, locations being changed and changed hearts. The heart is mentioned over 700 times in the Bible, so the condition of our hearts is very important. The heart spoken of is not the vital organ beating within our bodies or the heart spoken of in romance novels but is where our emotions and desire lie. Because our emotions and desires are deeply affected by sin, sin affects our minds, our emotions and our desires. Thus, we need to have our hearts changed by the power of God in response to faith in him. As Roman’s 10: 9 & 10 says, and I paraphrase: We need to acknowledge with our lips that Jesus is Lord. With a changed heart we have as Psalm 51: 10 says, a new heart created in us; one that is “right and of a steadfast spirit”.

With a changed heart, comes joy. Joy is one of my favorite words. In my home I have this word displayed in some form or another, whether on a mug or picture, because I need a reminder to have a heart of thanksgiving and joy. Today, there is so much happening in our world that is not easy to look at this world with joy. But we need to have the same attitude of that of Christ Jesus through everything that is happening around us. We need to rejoice in the Lord always. We need to rejoice when our children just won’t sit down at the computer and do their schoolwork. We need to rejoice when our computer won’t work or even when we are struggling just to get through our day. How do we do this? Ask God to help us with our responses to these unplanned interruptions in our day. Philippians 4:6 says: ***“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your request to God.”*** Instead of despair, change will come, and we will have peace that transcends all understanding and guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (4:7). We will be able to be content (satisfied to the point where we are not disturbed or disquieted) in whatever state we are (4:11).

Lastly, with a change of heart comes a new perspective. We will look at the world differently. My husband is 6 foot 3 inches tall. I’m 5 foot almost 3 inches tall. He sees his surroundings from high. I see them closer to the floor. We have different perspectives.

As believers, we need to gain God’s perspective in our daily living. We need to see ourselves, the world and others through Christ’s mindset so that “Whatever we do, it is because Christ’s love controls us”(2 Corinthians 5:14). When we do, we will stop evaluating others (or circumstances) by what the world thinks about them.

At the beginning of my spiritual journey, I mistakenly thought of Christ as though he was merely a human being. How differently I think about him now! We believers have become new persons. We are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun. (2 Corinthians 5:17).

As you look at the changes in color this season, may you open your heart to change in a way that allows God to show you his heavenly perspective and embark yourself in your own journey of change.

Questions to help you explore this further individually or as a group:

1. As you think of your life, where do you need to change?
2. What actions can you take to change?
3. Read Philippians 4:6 and spend time in prayer bringing situations to him to change your anxious thoughts for His peace.
4. Reflect on this quote from Ann Voskamp’s book “A Thousand Gifts” and begin your own list of what you are thankful for. *“The world needs fewer complaints and more thanks -those engaged in highest thoughts. The world needs more men and women living thanks, living loftiest. And thanking is the highest form of thinking”.*

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