



Facing Unpredictability – Can Change Be Good?

My husband and I have very different attitudes towards unpredictability – it's led to a lot of interpersonal "negotiations." Our varied interpretations occur pretty much across the board. He likes to try different vacation spots; I like to go back to the same place. He goes for variety; I like familiarity. If we went skiing (which we don't) I can easily imagine him barreling down a black diamond run towards a cliff. (He assumes the guy who laid out the route knew what he was doing.) I wouldn't chance that run in 1000 lifetimes.

This man I married does plan wisely, and he's neither reckless nor erratic, but he finds unpredictability exciting. I don't like it. For much of my life, I've been alarmed by change.

A New Perspective

God, as He often does, challenged my thinking. As I read and reread Genesis 1, He showed me a detail of creation that I'd totally missed: God describes change as good. Repeatedly. That's not *my* response. I'm uncomfortable even putting change and good in the same sentence. And when it comes to the wild movement and unpredictable changes that happen during creation? I don't even like to think about it.

Yet right from the beginning of the bible God introduces wild movement and unpredictable change. Land emerges from the waters; the shoreline keeps altering its shape; plants break through the surface of the earth; sky, water, and land teem with creatures never before present. Even the sky keeps altering its contents. But in the midst of all this change, God keeps repeating *it is good...it is good...it is good*. Unpredictable, yes, but good as well. Take a look:

Genesis 1:4 And God saw that the light was good ...1:10 and God saw that it [the dry land and the gathering of the waters] was good ...1:12 and God saw that it [the earth's vegetation bearing seed after its kind] was good ...1:18 and God saw that it [the two great lights governing the day and night] was good... 1:21 ...and God saw that it [the water creatures and the birds] was good... 1:25 ...and God saw that it [the wild beasts and cattle] was good...1:31 And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.

*God asks us to trust His character even though we can't predict His actions.
Why? Because God Himself is predictably and reliably good.*

Unpredictability and Gift

I've long equated change, particularly sudden change, with danger; God equates His changes with good. While everything moves and multiplies and changes, God sees not danger, but gift.

What makes God's changes a gift? The fact that God – from creation through present times to forever – remains committed to gifting us. Though He initiates profound change, He Himself never changes. God is consistently good, and everything God produces is consistently good. While His actions are unpredictable, His goodness is absolutely predictable. We can relax. When our lives are hidden with Christ in God (see Colossians 3:1-4) change and good reliably coexist.

Under God's care, change and good fit together perfectly. This is important. You need to know this. I need to know this. Change does not automatically imply threat. That's a new thought for me. I'm getting used to it.

Explore Your Own Beliefs and Behaviors

- Do you think that God's unpredictability means that He is also unreliable?
- How much does your experience with people shape your expectations from God? For example, do you assume that God is as dangerous (or indifferent, or distant) as were other people in your life?
- Do you anticipate good from God, even when you have no idea what He's doing?
- Do you tend to equate change with danger or with thrill?

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