



The Flame

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from GCCN Prayer Ministries

Change is Coming: Part 1 – Nothing Stays the Same

My four-year-old grandson woke up one morning from a bad dream. We all had gone to House of Japan (or HOJ, “hodge”), he told his mom, but nobody was there.

Let me explain. Since he was born, we have gone to HOJ quite frequently. The staff, chefs, and management know him. He’s the only kid in the restaurant who eats salad. To be honest, since his nightmare, *I’m* having trouble sleeping! Over the last few months, we’ve shown up at three of our favorite restaurants only to discover they were closed. What if HOJ...!

The truth is that fear of the unexpected is natural. We can get pretty uncomfortable when the reliable patterns of our lives are interrupted. Even the idea itself can be unsettling.

So, what does any of this have to do with prayer?

We all have routines and patterns in our prayer lives. The time of day, the order we follow, a favorite devotional, even the language we use – all help us focus on the sense of God’s presence.

So be forewarned: Change is coming!

Schedules and familiar settings are not forever. We will – not could, but *will* – encounter the inevitable interruption to our routines, and that includes our prayer lives. I wrote some time ago that some of my best prayer times were at night, even the middle of the night. That was a couple years ago, and I now fall asleep too easily. My pray time at night is involuntarily shorter than it used to be, so I have had to set aside other parts of the day for my primary time for prayer.

Our emotional capacities are also subject to change. Any number of unavoidable twists and turns may take away the comfort and calm that is normal in our lives. Just as such changes affect the way we relate to others, they can affect our prayer lives as well. Several years ago, I went through a period of many months when I prayed and felt nothing. Trauma had removed me from familiar settings, altered my normal relationships, and left me socially disconnected and emotionally empty. The grip of grief brought me to the verge of depression.

But, I prayed anyway. It was an act of the will alone, a deliberate choice.

Worship is a choice. The only unchangeable element in our lives is the God who is worthy of our allegiance.

Awe is not a feeling, but the conscious embrace of who He is and who we are in His eyes.

Taking Your Next Step

Make worship a choice. You will not always feel like praying. You will have times of dryness when your emotional capacity will be diminished. But worship is deliberate.

Feeling His presence is wonderful, but when the feelings are absent, God is still present. He is still worthy of praise, deserving of our thankfulness. He still offers to fill our minds with His thoughts. His Spirit is still available to give wisdom.

Worship must always be an act of the spirit anchored in Truth.