



Can You Ever Get Too Comfortable?



Ephesians 4:24: (NASB) And put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.



As another year rolls around many of us feel like it is time to shake off the lethargy of our most recent habits and experiences and dive headlong into the "new me." THIS time I am going to make those changes! This time I am going to see it through! This time I am not going to let circumstances, feelings, habits or others distract or discourage me! Lots of determined thinking and talk, but unfortunately it turns out it may well end up as lots of hot air. According to several sources (business magazines and periodicals) no matter what we say or resolve, about 80% of us stop trying to keep our New Year's resolutions by mid-February. Now, there are lots of reasons this might happen - from setting the bar too high to a basic lack of commitment. But what if the issue is that we are simply too comfortable? What do we do then?

 I want to quit, *Life Begins at the Edge of Your Comfort Zone*, Yubing Zhang, TEDx

It's a cold and foggy winter morning, and I'm standing on the world's tallest bungee platform. The platform I'm standing on is so tiny that I have to stand on my toes and balance myself against the wind. The operator ties one end of the bungee cord to my ankle and throws the slack in the air. I can feel the weight of the rope on my ankles slowly dragging me down. I look down, all the buildings and roads are buried in heavy fog; there is only one voice in my head: I can't do this! So, I turn around and tell them that I want to quit, and then I see a huge quote printed on the glass window right next to me: "Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone." I don't know why, but this short yet powerful sentence gives me the final push, and before I realize it, I walk straight back to the platform and jump off the world's highest bungee platform.



We will drop in on several examples of "comfort" and follow the pattern of Ephesians 4 as we observe them. First, there is the Apostle Peter.



Social Issue:

Galatians 2:11-13: (NASB) ¹¹But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹²For prior to the coming of certain men from James, (meaning Christians of Jewish descent) he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. ¹³The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

This was insidious peer pressure from the Jewish Christians.

Example: Peter is seeking a level of comfort that does not get certain people mad but makes others feel less important.

He fired me, *Why Comfort Will Ruin Your Life*, Bill Eckstrom, TEDx

- So, I was on a roll. I was an executive with a nice salary, annual bonuses and stock options - all the perks. Everything was on track. And on Monday, January 7th, 2008, at three o'clock in the afternoon, in a small conference room on the top floor of our building, the president of the company wanted to have a quick meeting with me, which wasn't unusual since he was my boss. But the meeting turned out to be even more brief than expected. He fired me. And I'll never forget how his words just sucked the breath right out of me. And I left the conference room in a dazed state and I went home and curled up in my bed in the fetal position for three hours. What I now realize is while that event created the greatest amount of discomfort I had ever felt, it was that discomfort, the departure from my ordered life that forever changed it for the better.

Bill's discomfort changed his life for the better.

Peter withdrew from the Gentile Christians - *fearing the party of the circumcision*. He joined with the Jewish Christians. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

The correction for the conundrum is to find the truth of the matter:

Galatians 2:14: (NASB) But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?



The Comfort Correction:



Being reminded of
what the truth
of the matter is.

The Apostle Paul stands before everyone and says *they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel*. He corrects Peter in public because the bad judgment was made in public. As Christians we are not to compartmentalize individuals.

Peer pressure is comfortable because standing up against it is uncomfortable. How do we deal with those comforts in life of falling in line with peer pressure?

The Comfort Conclusion:



Learn the higher
comfort of
walking the way
a Christian ought
to walk.

Ephesians 4:1-6: (NASB) ¹Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,

Be focused on humility which opens the door to tolerance and love:

²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,

With humility and gentleness in place, go to work preserving the unity of the Spirit:

³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.



Our Personal Comfort Question: Am I socially sound in my Christian comfort?
How well do I regularly recognize all of the brotherhood as equals?

The Pharisees thought higher of themselves than others, which is a perfect example of what we should not do. We need to be socially sound in our Christian comfort. It should be comfort which is Christian based, not how we feel. How well do we continually recognize all of the brotherhood?



Dealing with others socially is hard enough. How do we go about dealing with others doctrinally?

Sometimes we get so occupied with trying to navigate the social issues that can arise as we practice our Christianity, we minimize its doctrinal aspects. This is dangerous as BOTH need clear and careful attention. A great challenge for all of us is managing and mastering both sides of this Christian coin. Social issues are powerful in our minds. Doctrinal issues are sometimes not as big and powerful.



Not as scary as it looks, *Life Begins at the Edge of Your Comfort Zone*, Yubing Zhang, TEDx

- During the five seconds of free fall, I remember thinking to myself it's not as scary as it looks, and that thought led to a whole new world. Every time I hear the voice of fear in my head: "I can't leave this job because I'm not going to find anything better." "I'm scared of entering a new relationship because I don't want to be hurt again." And even a minute ago before I walked onto the stage the voice was repeating in my head. Every time I hear that voice, I take a deep breath and tell myself, "It's never as scary as it looks."

Doctrinal Issue:

Galatians 3:1-5: (NASB) ¹You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? ²This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Example: Apostle Paul was saying to the Galatians, "Who has bewitched you to become comfortable with distorted truth?" The Galatians were tricked into believing they had to be circumcised as Christians. In Jewish history, circumcision preceded the Law. This was a VERY difficult area of comfort management.

The Comfort Conundrum:



In the days of the apostles it was easier as they clearly led the way, having received the word directly from Jesus. We now live in a time when the gospel is often presented in a fashion that does not even resemble the original. We can be comfortable in a circumstance that is not comfortable because we are not willing to investigate. We need to go back to the original twelve apostles, learn from their words and be sure they line up with the doctrine we are learning and believing.





Another example of "off-center" Christianity and the influence of Jewish Christians and the Law:

³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ⁴Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵So then, does he who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?

Paul was telling them they seemed to be abandoning the things they suffered for. They withdrew from the opportunity to grow.

For us looking back on the issues with the Law, this may seem like a foolish dilemma because Jesus nailed the Law to the cross, and Peter had the vision of unclean animals. Remember, for thousands of years up until the time of Jesus, the Law was the ONLY path to find God.

Your fish bowl, *Why Comfort Will Ruin Your Life*, Bill Eckstrom, TEDx

- The Growth Rings represent living environments that promote or hinder growth, and that includes everything from your place of work, to even a fish bowl. You see, what dictates the size of a gold fish is its environment, and while this goldfish lives in a very safe environment, it's also very limiting in most every way. And when placed in a more robust environment, like say a small pond, this can be the result - now it also means he could be eaten. But friends, this is you, the environments in which you work, live and play - they're all a proverbial fish bowl that dictates your growth.*



The bigger environment gave the fish the opportunity to grow.



Our experience with Christian Questions was like being thrown out of a goldfish bowl. Over 20 years ago, an opportunity came up that was foreign to both of us but by God's grace we were able to jump right in. We jumped into a pond that was much bigger than anything we ever experienced. Over the last 20 years, the growth, stretching and development was unlike anything we ever expected. Whenever we would start to get comfortable, the Lord would change it up again to an uncomfortable level to help us stretch and grow.





Ephesians 4:11-16: (NASB) ¹¹And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Jesus intentionally handed the gospel over to the twelve first, through which the Holy Spirit came to the rest of the body. This allowed for individual strengths and gifts to contribute to that body:

¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Previously, Ephesians spoke of unity of the Spirit in regards to dealing with each other, and now it is unity of faith in and knowledge of Jesus:

¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

Apostle Paul has warned us several times that ravenous wolves would come in and try to change the simplicity of doctrines taught to the apostles. Stand firm in the truth.

We MUST stay close to what was originally given and accept only teaching that is in line with the original gospel:

¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.



Our Personal Comfort Question: Am I doctrinally sound in my Christian comfort? Do I draw my teaching from only those sources that are directly in line with Scripture?

Many Christians go to church and follow along to get along. Many do not do the work to find out if what is being taught is in harmony with the Scriptures. It is more comfortable to go along. There are thousands of Christian denominations. They cannot all be right.



Social and doctrinal comfort seem to be the two big things. What about comfort with smaller things?

We really do need to watch the smaller things just as much as the bigger ones. The Bible even tells us that the little foxes are the ones that spoil the vine. Sometimes our personal interactions with others on a one-on-one basis are a foundation for many of the larger things we must cope with.

Our next example for being uncomfortable: Paul, Barnabas and John Mark and the issue of not being ready for specific discomfort.

Relationships Issue:

Acts 15:36-40: (NASB) ³⁶After some days Paul said to Barnabas, Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are. ³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. ³⁸But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

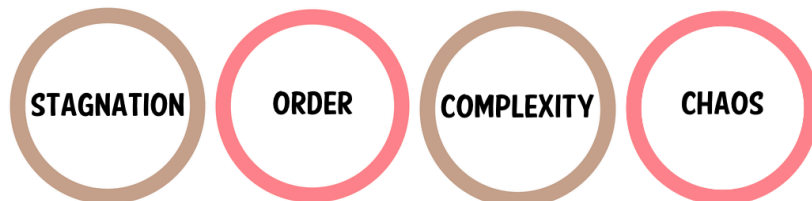
Who was right? Paul was focusing on the rigors that the work would require while Barnabas was focusing on the growth of one individual who had previously failed. This was also a personal issue for Barnabas because John Mark was his nephew.

The Comfort Conundrum:



Stagnation and chaos, *Why Comfort Will Ruin Your Life*, Bill Eckstrom, TEDx

- So, the first growth ring represents a low performing, low growth environment called stagnation. Stagnation is understood by having to follow too many steps, and permissions and minutia that stifles creativity, independent thought, and action. To imagine an environment such as this, think no further than our state and federal governments. Now the antithesis of stagnation is chaos, also low growth and low performing. Chaos can be caused by internal or external events or conditions. We see chaos occur at times in business mergers, natural disasters and horrific events like 9/11. Chaos is having zero predictability or control over inputs and outcomes.



Stagnation can happen when there are too many details and chaos happens when there is no order or control. Neither one of those situations promote growth.

The Comfort Correction

Being reminded that all things and people don't fit in all circumstances.



What happened with Paul and Barnabas in relation to John Mark?

³⁹And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. ⁴⁰But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas parted ways but had mutual respect. It is interesting to remember that Barnabas was the one who took Paul under *his* wing when he was a new Christian.

This does not seem like the happily ever after moment we would want from such a challenge. However, because the discomfort was extraordinary, the lesson is as well. The Lord's work continued, and they were all blessed. Sometimes the gospel can be served even though our feathers get ruffled and we see things differently. We should stay in harmony with each other even when there is disagreement.

Here is the end of Paul's story regarding his "harsh" treatment of Mark:

2 Timothy 4:9-11: (NASB) ⁹Make every effort to come to me soon; ¹⁰for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.

Paul saw the growth, strength and development of Mark and requested he join him in service. Paul needed a strong replacement. We can have discomfort with relationship issues and disagreements, but it does not mean it is the end.





Ephesians 4:17-24: (NASB) ¹⁷*So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; ¹⁹and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.*

Sometimes we are too comfortable in our relationships and those relationships can cause us to make compromises that we should not make. Paul and Barnabas both believed they should not compromise - and they were both correct.

Discomfort is good if it helps us grow. We must ask ourselves, "Have I become callous in any part of my less-than-Christian comfort?"

²⁰*But you did not learn Christ in this way, ²¹if indeed you have heard him and have been taught in him, just as truth is in Jesus, ²²that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.*

Beware of overextending your ability due to immaturity - it is great to seek life out of your comfort zone, but it can be deadly if we go there under false pretenses. Everyone cannot do what everybody else does. Work with what God has given you.



Our Personal Comfort Question: Am I relationally sound in my Christian comfort? Do I respect and acknowledge others' limitations and growth, and do I know myself well enough to respect myself?

Do we know ourselves well enough to respect what we are capable of and honor the things others may be capable of? Thank God we can each do our part.

What about our emotions? Should we ever be uncomfortable with how we feel about things?

We need appropriate comfort when it comes to social, doctrinal and relational issues. It is only reasonable to expect that we have appropriately based comfort when it comes to our emotions. This may be one of the hardest areas of all because we are so easily driven by how we feel.



Order, Why Comfort Will Ruin Your Life, Bill Eckstrom, TEDx

- *Coming back down to growth rings, next to stagnation is the most desirable environment - order. Order is knowing that what you do or what is happening in your environment leads to a predictable outcome. And in predictability comfort is found. But comfort, is also what makes order so dangerous because science shows that any time you continually do something or even think about something the same way, you will eventually stop growing. And this applies to every living thing. So, before your order continues to limit the way you think and act, remember what I said earlier - Growth ONLY occurs in a state of discomfort. Now, think about the power of that phrase - "Growth only occurs in a state of discomfort."*



I love order! We love everything being in its proper place. Well, the Lord said, "No, bring your parents home to live with you." We have almost round-the-clock caregivers, and everything is not the way it ever was.

It is not predictable, not orderly and there is always new adventure that arises. It is still orderly but the way it is set up is different because the expectations now need to be different. Sometimes our perception of orderly may not be what God is perceiving we need. Jonathan, your life is in order, but from a godly perspective.

Example: Forgiving one another - it is not always as easy as it sounds or as we would like it to be.

The Comfort Conundrum:

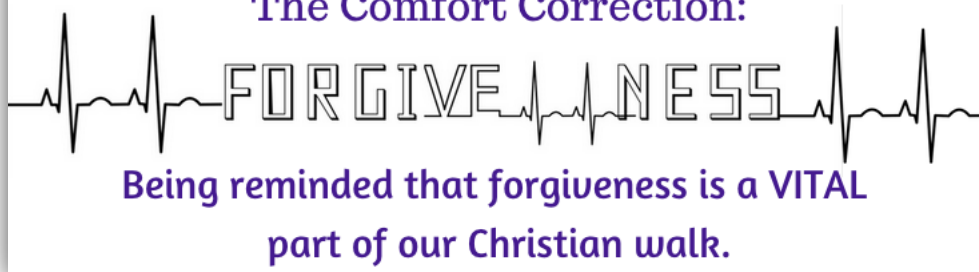


Emotional Issue:

Matthew 18:21-22: (NASB) ²¹Then Peter came and said to him, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?

We need the answer to this question to solidify our need to forgive as we are too easily convinced that there are tangible limitations to our requirement to forgive.

The Comfort Correction:



²²Jesus said to him, I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

When we forgive someone, we are *not* releasing them from godly consequences. We are releasing them from our heart. We are saying, "No longer will what you did live in my heart."

Jesus speaks often and plainly about our giving forgiveness. Never does he say, "See how you feel about it first," or "It is okay not to forgive if you are not up to it."

Luke 17:3-4: (NASB) ³Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, I repent, forgive him.



Right after the Lord's Prayer:

Matthew 6:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

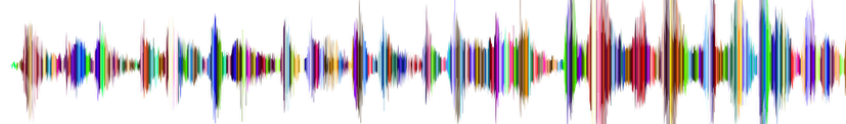
The lesson is to grow into the forgiveness and acknowledge it before God through Jesus.

 Chia was afraid, *Life Begins at the Edge of Your Comfort Zone*, Yubing Zhang, TEDx

- *Let me take you back to the summer of 2007 - a remote village in Cambodia in a small room in a domestic violence victim center. It's my first day of work. I walked into the room and was introduced to an 18-year-old girl; her name was Chia. Chia was so emotionally and physically abused that she was trembling all the time, and she couldn't even look at me in the eyes. And on her face, I saw fear, anxiety and shame. And that day Chia refused to take our help and went back to her husband. And in the course of the next few months she would do that again and again, only to come back with more bruises and cuts.*

The discomfort of changing that which was not comfortable was - in her mind - greater than the existing discomfort.

The Comfort Conclusion:



Learn that speaking truth and acting appropriately is always better than any feeling we might want to cling to or hide behind.

Ephesians 4:25-32: (NASB) ²⁵Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity. ²⁸He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.

We must rise above how we feel.

Emotions create a classic opportunity for the devil to take hold of our lives from the inside out:

²⁹Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. ³⁰Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Be willing to follow Jesus in going beyond what you are comfortable with and beyond even what you might think is reasonable.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice - those are all emotions.



Our Personal Comfort Question: Am I emotionally sound in my Christian comfort? Do I follow the principles and preferences of godliness over my own humanly comfortable ways?



Too often we may say, God knows I am an imperfect person, so we justify our behavior. We should not be comfortable rationalizing our life before God. It is important for us to understand the need to rise up and go before the throne of grace.

**Christian comfort is learned and not inherited.
What is the highest Christian comfort we can strive for?**

When we are willing to go forward into what we know will be serious human discomfort, that is where true Christian maturity is found. This is a place that is not for the faint of heart nor for the one who is just content with the way it is. Spiritual comfort lives in the denial of one's self.

Example: Paul leaving Ephesus - willing to face discomfort and to leave them uncomfortable.

Spiritual Issue:

After being there for three years, Paul is being called away by his mission and he gathers the elders:

Acts 20:22-25: (NASB) ²² And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. ²⁴But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. ²⁵And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face.

This is perhaps one of the hardest spiritual things to do - be separated from your co-laborers. This was serious discomfort for Apostle Paul.



The Comfort Correction:

Being reminded that our present comfort, though good, needs to grow in scope and maturity.





Acts 20:26-31: (NASB) ²⁶Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. ²⁸Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

Paul is saying to the leaders of Ephesus - I have shown you how to stand up and fight so that you are equipped. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. He was promoting accountability.

 Chia-new chapter, *Life Begins at the Edge of Your Comfort Zone*, Yubing Zhang, TEDx

- Chia knew that she should leave her husband, but she was scared to because she had been married to him since 14, dependent on him for survival, and did not know that she could live a life on her own. To help Chia and thousands of other girls like Chia I started a vocational skill training program. After three months of training, magic happened. Chia regained confidence and dignity, stepped out of the fear and failure, found a new job in a local hotel, and separated with her husband. She started a new chapter of life at the edge of her comfort zone.

The Comfort Conclusion

Learn to emulate all of the good you have been taught so that you might find a new comfort in taking up the responsibilities that arise from necessary change.

Acts 20:32-38: (NASB) ³²And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to

the men who were with me. ³⁵In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. ³⁶When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him, ³⁸grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship.



Our Personal Comfort Question: Am I spiritually sound in my Christian comfort? Am I willing to "step up and step out" when my mission for the gospel and the brotherhood calls me to do so?

If we are not uncomfortable, we are not growing. It is not just about social relationships, doctrine, our personal relationships or how we feel. Those things are important, but *it is about our spirituality*. Apostle Paul is showing us taking steps that are incredibly uncomfortable, even though what we are walking away from was comfortable, profitable and blessed, sometimes must happen. To be able to face those steps and say, I am going to move forward in the grace of God and those I leave behind I commend to the grace of God - that is the epitome of finding spiritual comfort in our physical discomfort.



May the Lord's will be done in every aspect of our lives. We *can* get too comfortable. If we can recognize that comfort and say, "I need to be uncomfortable so I can be more comfortable in serving God and walking in Jesus' footsteps," we cannot only tolerate but we can learn to embrace that new level of discomfort because it brings us closer to our heavenly Father, and therefore, closer to one another.

We wish you all a wonderful new year in the Lord. Be uncomfortable as you grow so you can be more blessed.

*So, can you ever get too comfortable?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on January 7, 2019:

Ep. #1055: "Are the Wicked Winning?"

Bonus Material!

No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it. — Albert Einstein

A few Scriptures to help prepare for the discomfort of Christian growth, which inevitably leads to greater spiritual comfort.

Discomfort happens:

1 Peter 4:12-19: (NASB) ¹²*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. ¹⁵Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; ¹⁶but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? ¹⁹Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*



Let us arm ourselves to be ready to fight through to the end:

Ephesians 6:10-17: (NASB) ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Practical ways to view the challenges of comfort and growth.

Be sacrificial:

Romans 12:1-21: (NASB) ¹Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Be humble:

³For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Be engaged:

⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. ⁶Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. ⁹Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; ¹¹not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹²rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

Be on the alert to always reach higher:

¹⁷Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. ²⁰But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.