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The Seasons of Life: Seeking God in Summer, Fall, Winter, and Spring

In Eastern Washington where I grew up, there are four very distinct seasons. Winters were bitter cold. Without the help of special heaters, many car engines would freeze solid at night. With the arrival of spring come singing birds and rains that melt the last of winter's snow away. Trees begin to leaf out, and tulips can be seen pushing their way up through the warming soil. Summers begin mildly enough but grow warmer and warmer until the 100-degree heat threatens to burn everything around. With fall comes cool breezes, fresh vegetables from the garden, and a beautiful explosion of color from the flowers. As the night air grows crisp trees drop their leaves in a brilliant display of crimson, yellow, orange, and brown.

On the farm where my grandfather lived his life, there were specific jobs that had to be done in each of the seasons.

During the fall of the year, the red winter wheat was planted. It was important to plant at the right time so that the young seedlings would be well established before winter rains and snows arrived.

Winter was when all the equipment got overhauled in preparation for the next year's work.

Spring was when the white spring wheat was planted; weeds were plowed under, the crops were fertilized, and Grandpa would work on painting and repairing farm buildings.

By early summer the harvester would emerge from the barn to be prepared for the work to come. It often took Grandpa a month to inspect every nut and bolt on that giant machine to make sure that nothing would break during the critical harvest period.

As the wheat would begin to turn golden brown, everyone knew that harvest was near. Every morning as the sun began to break over the horizon Grandpa would walk into the field, grab a head of wheat, rub it in his hands to remove the chaff, and then eat a kernel or two. "Not yet," he'd say, "maybe tomorrow." When the wheat was finally ripe enough harvest would begin in earnest. It



was always a race to get the crop in; too many hot days could shrivel the wheat, a rainstorm could knock it down to the ground and make it mold reducing a year's worth of work to ruin. It was a risky business, but Grandpa was one of the best farmers around because he understood the reason for the seasons and did what was needed in each.

God has seasons for our lives as well. So, as we close out one year and begin a new one afresh, it seems fitting to consider what God has in store for us in the seasons of our lives.

I used to think of life's seasons relating to age; youth, emerging adulthood, adult, and the retirement years. But I've changed my mind.

A Season for Every Activity

On the left side of your Bible just past Psalms and Proverbs lies a small, but powerful book called Ecclesiastes. The author describes life as utterly meaningless that all our striving for *things* is vanity apart from a relationship with God. It is here that God shows the importance of understanding the timing of the seasons of life. As you read the passage from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 you may recognize phrases from several songs made popular in the 70's and 80's:

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.”

The first verse tells us that God has a plan and a time for every activity in life. The list of examples that follows in the subsequent verses shows that there are times not only for physical activities like work, but that there are also seasons for emotions like weeping, mourning, laughing, and dancing.

Winter: The Season of Storms

In every winter season that I have lived through there have been storms. Sometimes the storms are small, coming and going in a day. Other times they stay for several days, and their effects linger on as people dig out of the snow, repair the damage from a windstorm, or wait for rivers to recede from a flood. Regardless of the size of the storm, you can be sure in every winter season there will be storms. Storms tend to come upon you quickly without warning, and then just as quickly they fade away.

In our lives, we will face many seasons of “storms.” God said to the nation Israel, “*call upon Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you, and you will honor me*” (Psalm 50:15). In those days,



people generally offered sacrifices to God for sin or to relieve their troubles, but here God tells them that he will deliver them if they will just call on Him and give Him the glory.

When you are faced with storms in your life, you need to seek the shelter of God's love. When you do, God promises to comfort you and to deliver you:

- *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”*
- *“The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles” (Ps 34:17).*

So, the next time you find yourself in the middle of a storm call out to God in prayer and know that He has promised not only to comfort you but to deliver you.

Spring: The Season of Growth

King David often faced enemy armies along with the difficulties of running a country. He often turned to God for help. On one such occasion, David wrote, *“He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God”* (Psalm 40:2-3). When David had turned to God, God delivered him, gave him new confidence, and lifted his spirits.

For the farmer, spring is the time for planting and nurturing young seedlings. When you are in a spring season, you need to plant seeds. It's a great time for making changes, building better relationships, focusing on new ministries, new businesses, or developing new habits.

Spring is a time of great energy. It is the best time to renew your perspective on life, review God's purpose for your life, and praise God for all He has done for you. Remember, *“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow”* (I Cor. 3:7).

Summer: The Season of Waiting

After the seeds are in the ground, there is little the farmer can do. He must wait for the crop to grow. Things like wind and rain are beyond the farmer's control; he must wait until the crop is ready for harvest.

We have similar times in our lives. We may have planted the seed of a new ministry or a new business, and now we must wait to see it grow. So many times, God tells us to wait for Him, but it is difficult because we are so impatient:

- *“Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him”* (Psalm 37:7).



- “Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest” ” (Mark 6:31).
- “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29).
- “For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest” (Exodus 31:15).
- “You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near” (James 5:8).

I believe that sometimes the greatest test of our faith is when God wants us to wait. Remember God answers all our prayers. Sometimes the answer is “yes,” sometimes it is “no,” and sometimes it is “not yet.” It’s those “not yet’s” that challenge my faith. When I am faced with a “not yet” I try to remember Grandpa checking the wheat and saying, “Not yet, maybe tomorrow.”

Fall: The Season of Success

The fall is the time for harvest; bringing in the crop that was so carefully planted and nurtured in the spring, and so fretfully worried over in the summer.

For us fall is the time when we see our hard labor begin to pay off; children become responsible adults, businesses prosper, and ministries flourish.

It is in our seasons of success that we must be careful to stay close to God. It is the time when we think we can do anything, a time when we think we are solely responsible for the harvest. It is the time we forget that we depend on God for every breath we take. Jesus said, “*Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me*” (John 15:4).

Paul wrote to Timothy, “*The hard-working farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops*” (II Timothy 2:6). When it is harvest time in your life you need to celebrate the success God has brought to you, share some with others, and save some for the future.

Grandpa used to slaughter a steer and divide it; a portion for him and Grandma, a portion he shared with his children’s families, and a portion he might sell to buy another cow. Grandma used to do the same thing with her chicken eggs. She’d keep some for her and Grandpa, give some to their children’s families and sell the rest to neighbors. Grandma’s “egg money” was saved for a rainy day or special treats.

Celebrate, share, and save. It’s a good formula for business; thank God for the success He has brought, share your success with others, and save for the future.



One Final Thought

God gives us seasons to build our trust in Him and to develop us into better people. During winter storms, we need to turn to Him for deliverance. In the spring, we need to be renewed in mind, body and spirit. In the summer, we need to trust in God, rest and wait upon Him. And in the fall, we need to celebrate our success, share our bountiful harvest, and save for the future.

No matter what season you may be in now, know that God stands beside you ready to comfort and deliver you if you will just trust in Him. Isaiah, referring to God, wrote, “*He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge*” (Isaiah 33:6).

God’s foundation is a Rock, who will never leave us or forsake us. Who better to turn to during the storms of our life? Who better to look to for comfort and deliverance? Who better to build a solid foundation for our lives? Who better to trust and provide rest? Who better to share our love? The answer is simple. There is no one better!