

Cobweb !

As I opened my blinds the other morning, the light from the ceiling and it reminded me of Miss Havesham in 'Great Expectations'. In the film, rooms were covered in masses of cobwebs everywhere when she was jilted on her wedding day. (I do that I do not have cobwebs hanging down all over the house!) Miss Havesham stopped change.

light shone onto a long, flimsy cobweb hanging down Haversham in 'Great Expectations'. In the film, rooms because Miss Havesham left everything as it was hope will believe me though when I say over the house!) Miss Havesham stopped change.



We do not go to the extent of stopping clocks, but, most of us do not take kindly to changes.

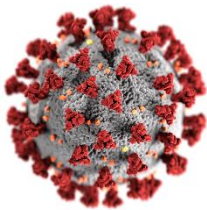
We get into a routine that suits us and try to stick firmly to it because it is a routine with which we are



comfortable. My Mam was brilliant at looking after us, yet always stuck to the same routine. It could be pouring with rain on Monday with a lovely sunny day forecast for Tuesday, but, Monday was washday and that was that. She cooked a different meal for dinner each



day of the week - but - every week was always the same. You knew exactly what you were going to be given each day several years in advance!

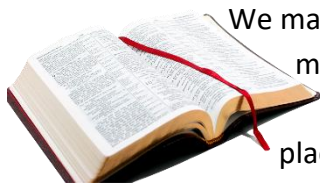


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I suppose that all of us have had changes in our routines over this past year. We hear talk of a 'New normal', because things have altered so much, but, we have to accept the fact that some things will never be the same again. In our natural lives we can have set patterns that remain unchanged for long periods of time; for our spiritual lives this does not happen in the same way and this is because our spiritual lives are about a relationship and not about a style of living.

Relationships are never static and are constantly changing. We can be on good terms with a person one week, then there is a bit of a disagreement and for a while the relationship is altered. If we have a good relationship with someone, then that relationship is constantly deepening as we share our lives and thoughts.



We may have a set routine as to when we spend time reading our Bibles or praying, which may have to be varied according to other events that are taking place in our lives; however, regardless of this, our spiritual lives are never in exactly the same place from one day to the next. Our relationship with God varies and is influenced by

a number of factors. Here are some of the things that may alter the level of our relationship with God. Some of these may draw us into a deeper relationship, others may increase the distance from Him.

- ** Time spent/not spent reading our Bibles and praying
- ** Busy lives/Family commitments
- ** Relationships with other people
- ** Our desire/or lack of it, for a deeper relationship
- ** Illness/Bereavement can make us less responsive or can draw us closer
- ** Unforgiveness on our part
- ** Our reliability on God

The one thing of which we can be absolutely certain, whatever our ideas and thoughts about God, He is unchanging. He always was, always is and always will be the same. Our circumstances in life may change but God remains firm and unshakeable. Whatever we do or say never alters His nature; He is always there, always listening to us and always loving us. We are unable to change God, but God is able to help us to change.



How does God change us?

When we give our lives to Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes into our lives and changes us.

Sometimes we are aware of this change happening instantly, at other times we become aware of it over a period of time. How does this happen? I don't know, I only know that it does. We can read our Bibles and know all about Jesus, but it is only when we accept Him into our lives that we begin to have a personal relationship with Him. This process is not an easy one for us to comprehend but is acknowledged by millions of Christians all over the world whose lives have been changed by the presence of Jesus.

What changes are brought about by the presence of Jesus in our lives?

We have more of a desire to please God and live the sort of lives that God wants us to live. This, of course, is an ongoing process. There are occasions when a bad habit in our lives is stopped immediately, whereas on other occasions it may very much be a start/stop/start/stop process. Even Paul, who wrote a large part of the New Testament in our Bibles, said, "I do not understand my own actions. I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." None of us are instantly made perfect by becoming a Christian because it is a continuous and ongoing process as the relationship deepens, with the help of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

What changes should we expect to see in the life of someone who has become a Christian?

We are not able to see Jesus or the Holy Spirit in the lives of people. What should be visible to us are the changes in their lives because of what has happened to them. Here are some suggestions of the changes that we are likely to see:-

- ** A joy and happiness that was not previously apparent
- ** More tolerance
- ** Attempts to put right unforgiveness
- ** A strong desire to please God
- ** An effort to overcome undesirable habits
- ** An increasing love for others
- ** Time spent reading the Bible and praying
- ** A stronger reliability on God's help
- ** A desire to tell others about Jesus and what He has done for us



Individuals are all at different stages in their spiritual lives so in some we may see most of the above changes, but others may find things do not alter so quickly. The important thing is not exactly which stage an individual has reached, but their continuing aim to reach those goals – and of course, we all adapt and change at different rates. It is important that those who have been Christians for a while encourage those who have not long been on the journey.

Something for you to do: If you are a Christian, are there some of those suggestions that you need to specifically pray about and rely on God's help to achieve?

Related Bible Readings: Romans 7: 15; John 3: 16; 2 Corinthians 5: 17