

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding.”

Job 38:4



Adaptation over Immutability

Ordinarily, people favor consistency over change. In politics the incumbent typically wins; in institutions the inventive idea is often met with, "That's not how we do things around here." In churches we want to hold onto pastors who have been in residence a long time, preferring their known foibles over those of anyone unfamiliar. And in our own life most of us will prefer the old familiar routine over anything new and potentially inconvenient.

It seems to be a part of our culture, established even in the minds of the young. Paging through one of my old high school yearbooks, try as I might I cannot find any notations that say, "I look forward to seeing what you become," or, "I just bet you will have changed for the better in twenty years." Instead I find the saccharine litany, "Good luck to a great guy!" and, "Always stay as you are—never change," and, "You're a great kid, so stay that way!"

Well, I can say with some accuracy that after forty years, I have most definitely changed: in some respects for the worse, but mostly for the better. I may have substantially added to my girth, and deducted from my pate, but thank goodness I am no longer that pimply faced class clown, unremittingly unsteady around the fairer sex, and more interested in extra-curricular activities than actually studying.

Oddly, however, man seems to take a different tack when establishing a relationship with God. While in our more mundane living we favor consistency over change, in our dealings with God we favor adaptation over immutability. Uncomfortable with His eternally unchanging character, we set out to re-mold Him into our own image.



We live in a world that, if it thinks about God at all, cares only to redefine Him into a benevolent buddy who abides by *its* standards. Instead of seeking a God who exists on His own terms—a God who can offer a firm foundation against the quicksand of man's idiocy—this world seeks only to pursue a God of its own making.

Many people doggedly avoid any search for God for fear of what they'll find at the end of that search. The result of their search will surely be uncomfortable, they surmise, and certainly inconvenient. God the Father is too holy and detached, they assume, and Jesus the Son is too dated to be of any use to this present age.

Their ignorance aside, the believer cannot thrust a bony finger of condemnation at the world without first pointing it at himself. Sadly, this

reluctance to take God as He is has a comfortable dwelling place even within the body of Christ.

Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something on the wheel. But the vessel that he was making of clay was spoiled in the hand of the potter; so he remade it into another vessel, as it pleased the potter to make.

Jeremiah 18:3-4

The bright sweetness of God cannot be enjoyed after it has been rubbed dull by the earth's abrasive darkness. Indeed, by such treatment it is rendered unrecognizable. And it is the height of man's arrogance to presume to refashion an omnipotent, omniscient, eternal God. To remake God is to reduce Him (in the mind) to a small god—that is, no God at all, but a mere idol. Of what earthly good is a god fashioned from the soil? What profit is there in rising toward someone already lower than oneself? For, by its very nature, whatever is fashioned by man is something lower than he who made it; the creator is always superior to the thing created.

To change God from what He is, is to set man above Him. And any attempt to change Him is to say, "I will remain who I am, and bring God down to my level." To change God is to reverse the universal order of our being,

for, in His universe, *He* is the one who creates and refashions.

Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Can I not, O house of Israel, deal with you as this potter does?” declares the Lord. “Behold, like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel.”

Jeremiah 18:5-6



God *does* stoop to our level—as He did most dramatically at the cross—but it is only to reach down and lift us up to Him. He will not be soiled by earth and flesh—that was the *point* of the cross. His desire is to bring us into the paradise of His dwelling—to restore the bright sweetness He once enjoyed with His creation.

We may squander our precious opportunities for communion by vainly trying to modify God’s personality and character. We may remain stiff-necked and arrogant, demanding that He bow to our wishes. We may remain stubborn and resolute, waiting for Him to reconcile His precepts to our more manageable traditions. But in that we will ultimately lose, and God will remain what He always has been.

Unchanged.