

Fanning it into Flame
Sunday, November 20, 2011
Comfort Zones

We all want to be comfortable. When you're in the market for a new mattress, you go to the showroom and test them out. While we certainly want to get the best deal for our money, the most important factor is how it feels when you lay down on it. We want a good night's rest. Getting living room furniture is very similar, but we probably add wanting it to look nice as well. We wouldn't buy it if it looked nice but didn't feel right. We want comfort. We're like that emotionally as well. We don't generally dive into situations that guarantee our discomfort unless something very important is at stake. The cliché "no pain no gain" can be very true.

When we use the term comfort zone we are referring to that place where we feel most secure; where we are sure of ourselves. It is a place that has been tested and found to be free of uncertainty. Comfort zones are good when they represent areas of expertise or proficiency. It is wise to do what you have been trained to do and to continue developing in that discipline. However, they are bad when they keep us from moving to a new and needful level, area of personal growth, or destiny that God wants to bring us into.

The Israelites were in bondage for 400 years when Moses led them out. As the journey through the wilderness got difficult they complained and remembered Egypt as the place where they ate well and were at home. Somehow they forgot that it was bondage. They were captives. God was giving them the promise of a new life, but they didn't want to pay the price for the change. When we sinned against God and sealed our fate of being eternally lost, he took the initiative to redeem us. He paid the total price for our freedom through the death, burial, and resurrection of his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, but it would cost us our life as well. That is, we would have to leave the bondage of self to have it replaced by the new life of being in union with Christ. In our own former miserable state of being, we could find comfort in feeling like we were in control, even when everything was pointing to the contrary. Eternal life is being offered, yet so many are reluctant to let go of their delusion of freedom for the real thing. The Apostle Paul touches on the fact that there is some suffering, but then puts it in perspective. **Romans 8:17-18 (NIV)** ¹⁷ *Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.* ¹⁸ *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.* The plans God has for us far outweighs any discomfort we may experience and there is some. We may experience some ridicule, but it is nothing compared to the glory God gives us.

Breaking out of our comfort zones is essential for spiritual growth. If we are not continuing to grow in God we are falling behind. We don't arrive at a spiritual place, set up camp, and wait for Jesus to come. We must continue to grow in grace and knowledge of him. God's goal in creating us in his image was to have us share in his life and be part of his family. He wants an intimate relationship with each one of us individually. He wants a personal, unique relationship with **YOU!** There is no one like you on earth. You are a unique creation with a deposit of the Spirit of God that God has destined to reflect his glory. No one else can represent that deposit of his presence in you, but you. We are each saved by God individually, not corporately. He knows you by name. Nothing less than intimacy with him will do. This level of relationship he is looking to have with you requires a continual letting go of past levels to arrive at new levels. **2 Peter 1:3-11 (NIV)** *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.* ⁴ *Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.* ⁵ *For this very reason, **make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;*** ⁶ *and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;* ⁷ *and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.* ⁸ ***For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*** ⁹ ***But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.*** ¹⁰ *Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.* ***For if you do these things, you will never fall,*** ¹¹ *and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (emphasis mine)* Notice that there is personal effort for continual growth. God wants us to experience living life like Jesus. That requires breaking out of comfort zones that our insecurities have manufactured. Let's allow the destiny God planned for us to be ours by saying "Yes" to his will. Talk to him about it Today!