

## CHAPTER 26

# GOD

# NEVER

# CHANGES

About 4,500 years ago, Pharaoh Khafre carved the Sphinx from limestone bedrock. Since then, this 66-foot statue of a man's head with a lion's body has stood in the Egyptian desert. For thousands of years, it has remained unchanged.

Or has it? Actually, this monument has undergone many changes. Khafre never finished the statue in his lifetime. For about a thousand years, it was abandoned to the Egyptian sands. In 1400 B.C., Thutmose IV uncovered the statue and painted it blue, yellow, and red and erected a statue of his father in front of the Sphinx's chest. Then another great pharaoh, Ramses II, extensively reworked the Sphinx in 1279 B.C. After that, the Egyptian sands once again began filling up around the gigantic face and body. Wind began to erode what the Pharaohs had done.

As early as the 15th century A.D., an Arab historian wrote that the Sphinx's face was disfigured. In 1818, a Genoese sea captain cleared away the debris from the statue's chest and uncovered an ancient chapel in front of it. He also discovered fragments of the Sphinx's stone beard, which are now in the British Museum. In the early 1900s, a French engineer cleared the Sphinx down to its base and shored up the weathered headdress with stone. During the 1980s, large slabs were added to try to

stop the erosion. Still, in 1988, part of the right shoulder fell off.

The Sphinx is eroding even faster today. During the last decade, repairs are once again being made to the ancient statue. The large slabs added in the 1980s are being replaced by more natural-looking stone. Many plans for helping save the Sphinx from

1

greater deterioration are being suggested.

The real fact of life on earth is change. Since the fall of Adam when sin was introduced, change has been a part of human life. The moment we are born, we begin to age. We grow, develop, and deteriorate. No matter what modern science does to slow down this process, it continues on without stopping. Our great monuments like the Sphinx are not really a testimony to our power to create something unchanging, but merely to our best efforts to delay the deterioration and ravages of time.

Our only hope in this life lies in one fact: God never changes. He is the constant that we can count on while everything else around us deteriorates.

### THE UNCHANGING NATURE OF GOD

One fascinating fact about many of the religions of the world is the unpredictable character of their gods. New Agers believe that everything is god and god is everything. The source of authority or “truth,” they say, is what you experience. Shirley MacLaine, proponent of New Age religion, says, “My own out-of-body experience...served to validate the answers to many questions—the surest knowledge

2

being derived from experience.” In other words, you may believe one thing to be true today, but then an experience tomorrow will change that truth. And what you believe to be true will not be true for me. For New Agers, truth changes.

But we learned that God’s truth never changes. It is the same today as it has always been.

Buddhists believe that salvation is in karma. Kenneth Latourette, a leading church historian, explains this Buddhist belief: “Karma may be described as the sum of an individual’s thoughts and actions in all his previous incarnations. In each incarnation, he modifies his karma for either good or bad...The ultimate aim is not only to improve one’s karma, but to do more, namely, to escape from the endless series of changes, the appalling eternal succession of births and rebirths. This would be

3

salvation.”

How different this is from God’s simple, unchanging plan of salvation! With

God's plan, we know where we stand, what we must do, and the result—an eternal, unalterable place in the family of God.

Animists and idol worshippers have developed their understanding of how their gods work from accumulated folklore. Their gods are so capricious that they must constantly be appeased with sacrifices and a variety of rituals so they will not change the rules of the game. But we can read God's rules in His never-changing Word.

The God of the Bible is the only unchanging Supreme Being. He has never altered one bit of His character or His purpose. That is what I love about our wonderful and marvelous God. I have known Him personally since 1944, and today He is just the same in His holiness and love, His grace and mercy as He was when I first turned my life over to Him. Theologians call this consistency and dependability God's *immutability*.

When I get up in the morning to pray, His response will not be different from when I pray to Him at bedtime. When I confront a difficult situation, I have calmness of heart because I know His unchanging Holy Spirit is present to guide me.

The Bible presents the God we worship as One who is the same from eternity to eternity. The writer of the Book of Hebrews compares the immutability of God to His changing creation: "They will perish, but You remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But

You remain the same, and Your years will never end."<sup>4</sup> He never changes in His essential being, never varies how He reacts to sinful man, to man's repentance, or to man's worship. Sin and unbelief always displease Him; obedience and faith always warm His heart.

### **GOD'S NAME INDICATES HIS UNCHANGEABLE NATURE**

In the beginning of this book, we discovered God's most holy name, I AM. Through this name, God introduced the concept that He is unchangeable. He identifies Himself with that incredible statement: "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the

Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"<sup>5</sup> The use of the present tense in I AM means that the God who met Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden was the same God who met Abraham and Sarah and gave them a son—and He is the same God who acts on our behalf today.

God's unchanging nature applies to all of His attributes as well. We are

exceedingly glad that His love, grace, and mercy are unchanging. We appreciate the fact that His holiness cannot change. Emotions or circumstances do not affect God. He “does not change like shifting shadows.”<sup>6</sup>

The fact that we can depend on God’s immutability is tremendously reassuring for us today. We must admit that at times we violate one of God’s unchanging attributes, such as His holiness. But we know that when we repent, His unchanging grace brings

us forgiveness and favor.<sup>7</sup> We can proclaim God’s message of love and forgiveness without fear that God will change the rules the next day.

### **GOD DOES NOT GROW OR DEVELOP**

When you look at a newborn baby, you realize the tremendous amount of growing and learning that little person has to do. He cannot talk, walk, or reason. His body does not have the ability to sing, scratch his back, or throw a ball. His mind cannot tell you what he is feeling or remember what a tree feels like. He must go through all the stages of maturity—toddlerhood, childhood, puberty, adulthood, middle age, old age. In each stage, he will learn many new things.

God has never had to grow or change or develop. Although Jesus did grow in His physical body, He has always known everything and been able to do everything. He

laid aside His divine majesty and assumed human nature in the form of a servant.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, God has never had to learn anything—He has always been omniscient. God has never had to develop talents or skills —He has always been able to do everything. He has never needed to mature—He has always been perfect in all of His attributes.

God is also not moody, like we are. When I come before Him in prayer, I do not have to worry that He has just heard prayers of someone who really made Him angry and will take His anger out on me. He does not get tired, and He is not too busy to listen to my concerns. As the faithful Father, He is always there when we need Him. He is not more loving one day because He feels good and more judgmental the next because He wakes up on the wrong side of the bed. Because God’s attributes always exist in fullness and in cooperation with each other, God’s purposes, motives, thoughts, and actions are forever the same.

## **GOD’S WORD NEVER CHANGES**

If God’s character does not change, then it follows that His Word does not change either. If His purposes do not change, then the instructions He gives to us do not change.

Isaiah 40:6–8 records that “people are like the grass that dies away. Their beauty fades as quickly as the beauty of flowers in a field. The grass withers, and the flowers fade beneath the breath of the LORD. And so it is with people. The grass withers, and the flowers fade, but the word of our God stands forever.”

Let us take a look at how true that is. The first verse in the Bible, Genesis 1:1, reads: “In the beginning God...” In Revelation 22:13, the last book of the Bible, Jesus says, “I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”

Salvation has never changed in God’s Word. When God referred to Abraham, He said, “Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD declared him righteous because of his

9  
faith.” In the New Testament centuries later, Romans 3:27,28 says, “Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on our good deeds. It is based on our faith. So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.”

The principles throughout the Old and New Testaments are the same. God deals with each of us in the same way, with the same love and graciousness.

## **IMMUTABILITY INCLUDES VARIETY**

A common, misinformed picture of heaven today is of saints floating around on clouds playing harps—for eternity. Nothing disturbs their little bit of heaven, as they presumably stay right where they are—forever! Is that your picture of heaven? Does the fact that God never changes bore you?

When we speak of God’s immutability, we are not speaking of a lack of variety. They are two separate things. Look at God’s creation. An elephant and a mosquito both have four legs and an appendage on the front of their faces. But who would describe an elephant and a mosquito as alike? How about a mouse and a whale? They both have tails, pointed noses, and sleek bodies. But, oh, the differences!

Immutability and creativity are not the same either. Although God never changes, He is all-creative. Just think about how many different personalities He has created throughout the world. No person is just like another. How about the many different kinds of plants He has made—from a pear cactus flower to an orchid; from a giant

redwood to a delicate bluebell; from moss to seaweed. There is no end to God's creativity.

What does not change are the principles and the character that underlie the variety and creativity. God's plans for us are always to conform us to the image of His Son. He changes the way He works out His plan to fit our personalities, our circumstances, and our needs.

Sometimes, however, the unchanging nature of God's work is plain to see. Do you remember the story of Paul and Silas in prison for proclaiming God's message? Their preaching and that of other Christians produced phenomenal growth during the days of the early Church. It also produced persecution for the sake of Christ, which is why Paul and Silas were in prison. While they were praying and singing hymns at midnight, a great earthquake shook the prison's foundations. All the doors flew open and the chains fell off every prisoner.

In those days, if a Roman jailer lost his prisoners, the law required a sentence of death. The Roman jailer awoke, assumed all the prisoners had run away, and was going to commit suicide. Paul shouted, "Don't do it. We're all here!" The jailer, when he saw that the prisoners had not escaped, fell on his knees before Paul and Silas and asked how he could be saved.

Paul and Silas shared the Word of God with him, and he and his entire household believed in our Lord. The next day, the city officials released Paul and Silas.

Centuries later, the pattern repeated. In the 1930s, missionaries planted the Word of God in the southwestern mountains of Ethiopia. When World War II erupted and the missionaries were forced to leave, they left a church of only 48 believers. But in five years of foreign occupation in their land, the Ethiopian church grew to 10,000!

Raymond Davis, who worked in the interior of Ethiopia, tells of a miraculous story of God's work among the Wallamo people. The Christians had been horribly persecuted for proclaiming God's message, but their congregation had grown to more than a thousand. The government forced them to tear down their precious church building, which they had built with such sacrifice of labor and materials.

Later, they dared to rebuild their church building. Consequently, several of the church leaders, including a man named Toro, were taken to the marketplace, stripped, and beaten. Then they were thrown into jail where their jailers taunted them for believing in God. Davis writes:

Some time later, a group of the believers in prison were praying together when a terrible rain and thunderstorm came up. Toro says he doesn't remember the lightning ever being fiercer or the thunder claps louder. While they were praying and singing, the wind blew with such terrific force that the entire iron roof of the

prison was torn completely off. The torrents of rain pouring down onto the exposed mud walls made them crumble and melt. The prisoners were free!

Many of the non-Christian prisoners fled. The terrified jailers, convinced that the storm was the direct intervention of God on behalf of the Christian prisoners, came to Toro pleading that he pray to God to withhold His anger and fury—and

10

they would be released. The jailers kept their word.

Of course, not every person imprisoned for his faith is freed by an act of God, but these two incidents show that God is still at work as He was in the lives of the first-century believers. He never changes! You can count on Him!

### **PRAISING GOD FOR HIS UNCHANGING NATURE**

When you fly from Chicago to Los Angeles on some airlines you will fly over one section of the Grand Canyon. If you happen to fly over it during the late afternoon sun, the canyon's shadows help you see the incredible depth and breadth of it. But the fact remains—you are seeing only a small segment of it, for it runs well over a thousand miles. Now imagine yourself circling the Earth in the Mir space station and you come over the Grand Canyon. How much of it will you see now? All of it in one glance.

When we look at life on Earth, we see only a minute sliver of it, one minuscule slice of eternity. But God sees all of eternity at once, the end from the beginning. That is why we need God's perspective on the events of life—He sees it in ways we do not. As a result He can take corrective action to keep us from wandering off course or hurting ourselves as we march through life's parade of circumstances and events.

What a great God we have! We can trust Him not to turn against us, for His love is unchanging. We can trust Him for life after death, for He is eternal. That is why the writer of Hebrews could say: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and

11

forever."

That is the God we worship and adore—and serve unconditionally. It is the God we proclaim to the entire world without ceasing, for He is worthy not only of our worship but also our obedience to His Great Commission to go and to love.

St. John Chrysostom, a third-century church leader, wrote of His Lord and Savior:

It is fitting and right to sing of you, to praise you, to thank you, to adore you in all places of your dominion. For you are the ineffable God, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, existing forever and yet ever the same, you and your only-begotten Son and your Holy Spirit. You brought us into being out of nothingness,

and when we had fallen, you raised us up again. You have not ceased doing everything to lead us to heaven and to bestow upon us your future and your only-begotten Son and your Holy Spirit. You do this for all the benefits of which we know, for those of which we are ignorant, and for those that are manifest to us and

12

those that lie concealed.

I urge you to take time to enjoy the wonder of God's attributes. As you learn more facts about His greatness, thank Him, glorify Him, and praise Him for all He means to you. Let the Holy Spirit fill your mind with His love and grace, and touch your deepest feelings with His comfort and gentleness. The more you worship and meditate on His attributes, the more you will become like Him. Worship Him through giving, serving, praising, singing, and giving thanks. That is the sure road to developing an intimate relationship with God!



# LIFE APPLICATION

**EXALT YOUR GOD**—Worship God with the powerful words of the hymn *Immortal, Invisible*.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,  
In light inaccessible, hid from our eyes.  
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,  
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.  
To all, life Thou givest—to both great and small;  
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;  
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,  
And wither and perish—but naught changeth Thee.

**REFLECT HIS IMAGE**—By nature, we, as humans, change. We grow older, taller, thinner, or fatter, and our emotions fluctuate. But we can reflect God’s unchanging nature by being people who are consistent—in our relationships and in our love for God. Examine your heart and ask God to make you a person who perseveres no matter what, a person who, as Jesus said, “stands firm to the end” (Matthew 10:22, NIV).

**SHARE HIS MAJESTY**—Jesus stated in Matthew 24:35, “Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will remain forever.” The Bible has encouraged and challenged individuals for thousands of years, and still speaks to us today. With whom can you share God’s unchanging word? Choose a verse that has spoken to you and use it to encourage someone today.

## CHAPTER 27

# GOD GIVES

# US REST

# IN HIM

Do you ever wish time would stand still? Has your neighborhood changed, or a loved one grown distant or passed away? Have dear friends moved away?

One of the hardest changes for a parent is when children grow up, move away, and become independent. I remember the day that Vonette and I helped our older son, Zac, settle into his dorm room at Life Bible College in Los Angeles. Later we helped our younger son, Brad, pack his car to leave home and drive across the country to Washington, D.C. to work for Senator William Armstrong from Colorado.

Before each of our sons left home, we got down on our knees together to thank God for him and pray for his safety. When we rose, we embraced and expressed our love. Of course, as parents, we always had a few last-minute instructions. My eyes misted as I silently thanked God for each of my boys.

As Brad drove away toward Washington, D.C., Vonette and I waved valiantly. I forced a smile and stemmed my tears. *My little boy isn't little anymore*, I thought as his car disappeared around a bend. *He's on his own now.*

I treasure the heartwarming memories of Zac and Brad when they were young and in our home. Vonette and I will always love our sons, and look forward to spending

time with them whenever possible. Today we still miss them as much as when they left home. As many of you know, the “empty nest” syndrome that comes when your last child leaves home is very real.

But our boys are independent adults now. They do not need us like they did when they were young. Of course, I would not wish for them to come back because they have lives, families, and ministries of their own. Some of the memories of separations are erased with our delight in visiting with our grandchildren. Yet we will never forget the emotionally difficult change we experienced when each of our sons left home.

Today, we live in a time of hyper-change. Fashions and trends change weekly; people relocate frequently; technological advances quickly make the past obsolete. A way of life that was once familiar and comfortable to us rapidly fades away. This change produces a great deal of stress. As we search for stability, we wonder if there is any permanence anymore. Is there some anchor that will hold us so we will not be swept away by the waves of change washing over society?

There are several reasons we are drawn into the undercurrents of change. For one, sin and our fallen nature promote a process of decay and deterioration. Things get progressively worse when left to themselves. You can understand that if you have ever had to maintain an old house. The water heater needs replacing; the screen door comes off its hinges; the roof leaks.

Another reason we change is because we experience pressure from others or from our circumstances. We change well-laid plans because of illness or because a family member is in crisis and needs help. An airline goes on strike so our flight is canceled. All kinds of events make us modify what we want to do.

A third reason is because of boredom. We do not want every day to be exactly the same as the last. A little spice and variety make life more enjoyable.

Also, technological achievements and other kinds of improvements stimulate change. Computers have dramatically altered the way we do things. Seldom do we mail a package of important papers. Now we can e-mail a file or fax the pages immediately. Everyone expects instant turnaround time.

But the influences that cause change in our lives have no effect on God. Let us look at several benefits we enjoy because God never changes.

### **GOD’S UNCHANGING NATURE PROVIDES STABILITY**

A story is told of a shipwrecked sailor who clung to a rock in great danger until the tide went down. Later a friend asked him, “Didn’t you shake with fear when you were hanging on the rock?”

He simply replied, “Yes, but the rock didn’t.”

Life and its uncertainties may shake us, but God—who is the Rock of Ages—does not move. If we cling to Him, His strength sustains us.

Since God never changes,<sup>1</sup> God’s character is constant. Unlike us, He does not compromise or change His values. He cannot be manipulated or persuaded to go against His word. He does not have a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personality where He will comfort us one moment and snap at us the next.

### **GOD’S UNCHANGING PURPOSE GIVES US ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Psalm 33 states, “The LORD’S plans stand firm forever; His intentions can never be shaken.”<sup>2</sup> God’s plan existed at the beginning of creation and remains the same today. It unfolds in phases and stages, which may give us the impression of change, but His original design has always been consistent. God’s purposes for us are fulfilled within the framework of time and history.

The nation of Israel is the clearest example of this truth. The Lord declared to the people of Israel, “Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish...I

have said I would do it, and I will.”<sup>3</sup> From the day God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, God’s hand has been leading and guiding His people.

And we are part of His plan! We share His purpose. Paul wrote to the believers in Ephesus, “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so

that we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.”<sup>4</sup> We no longer need to feel as if we are unimportant in the cosmos. As God’s people, we are His loved ones whom He has planned from the beginning to bless and to live with forever!

### **GOD’S UNCHANGEABLE WAYS ASSURE US OF UNWAVERING GUIDANCE**

In the early 1960s, President Kennedy challenged NASA to send a man to the moon. The man in charge of that seemingly impossible assignment was a marvelous Christian and a dear friend. He told me that they had nothing to build on except the unchanging laws of God’s creation. Imagine the frustration had God’s laws of science, physics, and creation not been dependable. That is where the scientists started, and sure enough—the impossible mission happened on schedule!

Just as the natural laws of the universe never change, God's principles for life never change. David writes, "As for God, His way is perfect. All the LORD's promises prove

5 true." Following His guidelines, given in Scripture, will produce fruitful lives. Not only that, He assures us that His Holy Spirit living inside us will complete what God has begun in our lives. As I look back over the events of my life, I can clearly see how God has guided me in ways that produced what He intended even when it was impossible for me to accomplish. All He required was my availability and willingness to do what He asked of me.

For example, in 1945, as a new Christian I had a dream to produce a film about the life of our Lord. I was hoping to finance the film with the profits from my business. I was long on zeal, but short on practical knowledge.

At that time, our ministry did not have the funds to produce such an ambitious project. Yet for more than 33 years, our board of directors, the staff, and I discussed the need for a film on the life of Christ which could be used as an evangelistic tool. We reviewed more than thirty films, but most of them were not scripturally accurate. We even seriously considered buying the rights to one of these films and reworking it to make it biblically accurate. But we were never able to raise the huge amount of money for the production costs. Yet I still believed that God wanted me to complete this project.

Then in 1976, I met John Heyman, a movie producer who had produced more than thirty feature-length films. I introduced John to Paul Eshelman, our U.S. Field Ministry director who later headed the *JESUS* film project. A few months later, Bunker and Carolyn Hunt, long-time friends and generous supporters of the ministry, agreed to provide financing for the film. God began to fulfill the dream that He had placed in my heart over three prior decades.

Accuracy and authenticity were crucial as a team of researchers painstakingly produced a 318-page document giving the biblical, theological, historical, and archeological background of every scene as presented by the Gospel of Luke. During the filming in Israel, John Heyman demanded excellence. For example, he once stopped the cameras when he noticed a ripple-soled tennis shoe print in the dust. But excellence was what we needed to produce a film that could touch the world.

We prayed that the *JESUS* film would become a mighty evangelistic instrument to introduce millions to God. When the filming and production were completed, *JESUS* opened in America in the fall of 1979 in Warner Brothers theaters. By the end of the commercial run a year later, more than four million people had seen the film. From the beginning, however, we planned that *JESUS* would go beyond American shores.

We developed a strategy to bring the film to urban centers, rural areas, islands, mountaintop villages, and countries where electricity is a rarity.

To date, more than two thousand *JESUS* film teams have been sent to remote villages and great metropolitan areas. You can imagine the excitement when a team begins to set up its equipment in places where people have never had the opportunity to view a movie, particularly in their own language.

As of April 1, 1999, *more than 2 billion people in almost 500 languages in 225 countries have viewed JESUS*. Hundreds of millions have responded with salvation decisions. God has used our thousands of staff and volunteers, almost 1,000 mission organizations, and tens of thousands of local churches of many denominations to introduce people to Jesus through this film.

God demonstrated His unchanging faithfulness when He began to work in me through a vision to fulfill His purposes.<sup>6</sup> Then 33 years later He brought together the resources and personnel to make the dream come true. I am sure you can point to many instances in your life where God's guidance, true to the unchanging principles of His Word, made a huge difference in your life and ministry and the lives of others. We can depend on His guidance every day of our lives if we continue to trust and obey Him.

### **GOD'S UNCHANGING WORD EQUIPS US WITH TIMELESS TRUTH**

God does not change what He says based on opinion polls or focus groups. His words and commands are timeless. They are valid throughout all eternity. They apply to every culture, race, and nationality.

That is why the Bible has remained relevant throughout the ages and to all civilizations. What God says is always pertinent. It never becomes obsolete. His timeless truth is the surest foundation for anything we attempt.

Almost to a man, the founding fathers of our nation sought to serve and glorify Jesus Christ with their lives. One study found that of 15,000 writings by the founding fathers included in newspaper articles, pamphlets, books, monographs, and other

<sup>7</sup> documents, 94 percent of all quotes either directly or indirectly cited the Bible. Fifty-two of the 55 framers of the Constitution were avowed biblical Christians. They were inspired by God to dedicate this new republic for His honor and glory. Even the curriculum of the institutions of higher learning used the Bible as a textbook. The

efforts of our founding fathers produced miraculous results. The United States Constitution is currently the oldest operating document of any government in the world. Every other nation on earth has instituted a new form of government since our founding documents were written. The U.S. Constitution is unlike any other political instrument because the liberties it guarantees are greater than the liberties granted to the citizens of any other nation. And all this resulted in God's unchanging principles, which provided the timeless truths for our governing documents.

Abraham Lincoln, our 16th President and the man who guided our country through a civil war, stated, "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Savior gave to the world was communicated through this Book."<sup>8</sup>

Former President Ronald Reagan, a devout believer from his youth, declared on numerous occasions that if only the American people would "live closer to the Commandments and the Golden Rule,"<sup>9</sup> the problems we face would be solved. As you know, the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule are basic principles from God's Word. Tragically, we are now reaping the consequences of a society that has abandoned biblical truths. Yet as we each base our lives on His Word, we will see the joy and blessing that come from living according to God's unchanging truths.

### **GOD'S UNCHANGING COMMITMENT GUARANTEES US EVERLASTING SECURITY**

Recently, I stood at the grave sites of two dear friends, and as I reflected on their lives, I realized that the most important moment we can experience is our death. When we breathe our last earthly air and take our first breath of the celestial, we transition into the presence of God! This life on earth is but a prelude to eternity. My friends had no fear of crossing over, for they knew the reality of God's unwavering faithfulness to them.

Hebrews states, "God also bound Himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that He would never change His mind."<sup>10</sup> We who have given ourselves to God through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ have received eternal life. God is committed to our redemption, our Christian walk, and our eternal destiny. God's unchanging nature assures us that we will indeed live with Him forever as He promised. God's commitment is as strong as He is constant. No one and nothing can violate His promise: "[The Holy Spirit's] presence within us is God's

guarantee that He really will give us all that He promised.”<sup>11</sup> We can bank our entire future on His unchanging character. What a sure anchor for our faith!

Perhaps you are thinking: *If God never changes, what is the purpose of prayer and other communication with God?* I want to caution you about using God’s immutability as an excuse not to pray or to ask Him to intervene in your daily life. Although He will never change His plans, Scriptures abound that show how God alters His temporary purposes in response to our faith and actions. For example, He

reverses His judgment because of sincere repentance of sinners.<sup>12</sup> At other times, He

responds to the needs of human beings or the fervent prayer of the righteous.<sup>13</sup> This is one of the mysteries of God’s nature. We know that God never changes, and yet He relates to us and gives us our free will. When we pray and ask Him to intervene in our lives, He does so—when it is in line with His will. He works through us as we walk and talk with Him. So I encourage you to take comfort in the fact that God never changes; but realize that when we seek His face in repentance, we can expect Him to respond to our prayers and deal with our sin.

Now that we have discovered many facets of God’s character, how will our knowledge affect our lives? Intimacy with God requires changes on our part. It also means that we will give God the praise and adoration He deserves. This is where our study of God’s attributes will really bring blessings to our lives, including lasting joy, peace, fruitfulness, and confidence. In the conclusion to this book, you will find helpful suggestions on how you can cultivate a healthy fear of God and become transformed by His majesty.



# LIFE APPLICATION

**WRITE IT ON YOUR HEART**—Commit the following statement and verses to memory. Then as you encounter situations during this week where you need to remember that God never changes, claim these promises by faith.

- Because God never changes, my future is secure and eternal.
- James 1:17—“Whatever is good and perfect comes to us from God above, who created all heaven’s lights. Unlike them, He never changes or casts shifting shadows.”
- Hebrews 13:8—“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

**COUNT ON GOD**—Paul writes in Philippians 1:6, “I am sure that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on that day when Christ Jesus comes back again.” Because God never changes, He will never change His mind, go back on His word, or leave unfinished what He has started. Every day He is molding you, maturing you, and preparing you to spend eternity with Him—and He will complete what he has begun. What promise can you claim for an area of your life where you know God is helping you change? Use your Bible concordance to find a promise and claim it for your situation.

**OBEY GOD**—God’s standards do not vacillate based on the latest fads or opinion poll. Society’s perception of right and wrong may be different from what it was just a generation ago, but this does not alter the truth. Take God’s commands seriously in an area where His Word contradicts society’s beliefs. Ask God to help you confirm your stance in this issue.