

“Even if next year is just like this year, I won’t be. Even if 2021 doesn’t change, I will.”
– Jackie Hill Perry

This past year has certainly been one for the ages. It may even be the most memorable year for many people. Unfortunately, this year is so memorable for so many for all the wrong reasons. For many, it was a year of loss, suffering, and trial. People lost their loved ones, jobs, homes, health, and even lives. I find myself much more tender-hearted right now than I usually do, and that is probably because of the year we have just endured. My wife and I both lost our uncles. One unexpectedly, and another from suffering for months from cancer. We have lost some of our best friends in life. One from a battle with COVID-19 and other complications, and another from a sudden automobile accident. My wife also lost her grandmother, and one of my grandmothers currently is fighting off COVID-19. We understand though that we are not alone in our loss. We are just one couple out of thousands upon thousands that have experienced loss and grief at a greater level than we can imagine. Our hearts go out to so many people, and to so many families that are hurting.

Part of me wishes that I could change everything that has happened this past year. There were a lot of moments that sucked for a lot of people, and I wish that some of the suffering could have waited until a different time. Yet, when I think about a reality in which I shape and mold rather than a reality in which I allow God to shape and mold, I imagine a much more shallow, lifeless reality. It’s odd. The very things in which I wish to change in life are the very things that God presents with the greatest opportunity for change in self. I want to change my circumstances, and the circumstances of others, and yet it seems to be those very circumstances in which God uses to change us. Perhaps Jesus and Paul were wise when they embraced and stepped into the suffering and sorrow of others. Jesus wept with those who wept, and Paul tells us to do the same.

I don’t want to spend this new year wishing for things to be different. That won’t happen. I want to spend this new year working for change that I can control. I want to change the way I think. Instead of thinking that life has to be pretty or well put together I want to think of how I can be more put together on the inside. Instead of thinking about why things bad because of the hurt and pain, I want to think of how God wants to use that hurt and pain to grow me. I want to change the way I love myself and love my neighbor. Often times I find myself constantly trying to please others, and yet finding myself drained. I want to change that. I want what is best for me as well as for others, and I want that approach to help me more effectively help others. I want to change the way I talk to myself. Yes, I talk to myself, but most of the time I find myself talking negatively to myself. I want to change that. I want to speak to myself like I would want to be spoken to. I want my talk to myself to be Christ like. I want to change the way I eat. Instead of eating for pleasure, I want to eat for fuel. I want to see food as what it was intended for. I want to spend more time serving others. I want to be more patient. I want to be more content. I want to be more open-minded. I want to change a lot of things in my life that I know I have the control to change. The biggest question is – will I DO it?

I want to ask you to pray for me as I try to change the things I can control, and let go of the things that I cannot. I want to pray for you also. What do you want to change going into 2021? Are they things you can control? What do you need to let go of trying to control in 2021? What was the biggest lesson you learned in 2020? Let me know!

Speak Love Not Hate,
Bryce Woodason (Spoken Worth)