


THREE TRUTHS

by Carol Johnson

*The Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations. —Psalm 100:5*

God's chosen people, the Israelites, had lives that were constantly changing—in some major ways. They left Egypt where they had been slaves and wandered in the desert for 40 years before they reached the Promised Land. They followed a cloud and pillar of fire from one place to the next, never knowing when they would stop.



In Egypt they had eaten fish, melons, cucumbers, leeks, onions, and garlic (see Numbers 11:5). In the desert they ate manna every day and quail once a week.

As they traveled around, their lives and families changed, too. Babies were born. Children grew up. Young men and women got married. Older men and women died.

Maybe the details of the situations are different, but you can probably think of changes in your life, too. Maybe your family is growing bigger or smaller. Maybe you've moved to a new home or school. Maybe you're not as close to some friends as you used to be. Maybe you've noticed yourself growing and learning new things.

Change can be hard, and it's normal to feel sad about some changes. When things are

different, we miss the good parts of our lives from before the change. But sometimes we can spend so much time thinking about the way things used to be that we miss the good things about our new way of life. The Israelites did this, too.

They spent a lot of time thinking about the things they missed about their life in Egypt, and they complained a lot about their new life.

Here are three truths we can learn from their experiences. These truths can help us face our own changes.

1 GOD GIVES US GOOD GIFTS TO ENJOY. Although they had been slaves in Egypt, the Israelites focused on the things they missed about their old life. God gave them food every day and kept their clothes and shoes from falling apart. God led them to their own land where they lived in houses and cities. But instead of enjoying all the ways God was good to them, they complained about the things they missed.

What about you? Have you taken time to think about what is good about the changes in your life? Think of five good gifts from God that have come from changes in

your life. If you want to, write them down. Then take time to enjoy these good gifts.

2 GOD IS FAITHFUL.

God took care of the Israelites in amazing ways. God used the 10 plagues to get them out of Egypt. God opened up the Red Sea and kept them safe from Pharaoh's army. God dried up the Jordan River so they could walk across it on dry ground.

Instead of recalling the ways God had been faithful to them, when something difficult happened, the Israelites thought about the problem they were facing. They forgot what God had already done for them.

After the people had crossed the Jordan River, God told them to build an altar out of 12 large rocks. This altar was to remind the people of how God had taken care of them in the past and to help them know that God would continue to care for them.

What about you? When you face a tough change, do you remember how God has cared for you in the past? You may want to make your own "altar" to remind you of God's faithfulness. This might be a journal where you record all the ways God has cared for you. It might be a place where you keep a small cross or another symbol or

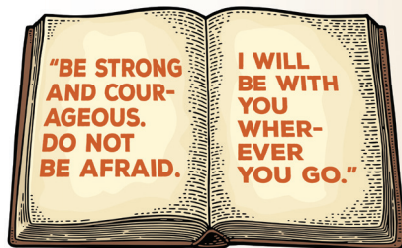
picture that reminds you of God's faithfulness. Whenever you look at your "altar," remember that God will help you through any difficulty.

3 WE DON'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID.

Just before the Israelites were going into the Promised Land, God said something important to their leader, Joshua. God told Joshua to be strong and courageous because God would be with him. (See Joshua 1:9)

Joshua didn't know everything that was going to happen in the next few years as the Israelites moved into their new land. But he could know that he had no reason to be afraid. God was on his side.

We can know this, too. We might not know what's going to happen in the next few weeks or months. We might feel scared or worried in new situations. But God is on our side. Imagine God saying to you right now,



Psalms 100:5 reminds us that God will give us good gifts to enjoy and will continue to love us. God will be faithful in the present and the future, just as God has been in the past. ■

=GOD=
is

MY ROCK

~ AND MY ~
salvation—

my stronghold!—

I won't be

SHAKEN...

PSALM 62:2