



WIRED FOR CHANGE

Theme: "Out with the old, in with the new".

Bible Reading: Romans 12:2

Starting Question: Are you ready for change?

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Reflection Reading

I'm sitting in the food court this morning waiting for the oil change guy to call. The mall is still closed, technically, but the doors have been open for a couple of hours to host a particular sort of customer. My café chair faces a great bay window, maybe 30 feet across, which means I can see everyone who enters the building or exits into the parking lot. Not a single guest in sight is younger than 60, possibly even 70. They are walkers. They exercise here, away from the humidity of this July morning, away from the icy chill when winter comes. And it's free.

Some pace alone, some walk hand in hand. Some mosey in contemplation or zoom along in obedience to doctor's orders. Others cool down in packs at nearby tables, laughing like long-time friends. The muzak playing overhead keeps it all going, like a fitness party for retirees.

I'm struck by how much vitality I see.

A man wearing compression socks ambles past and I think about my 11-year-old car getting a colonoscopy at the Sears down the hall. Changing out the old for the new somehow lets it age appropriately. If it were any more human, my car might be embarrassed by the procedure—so intimate, so invasive. But it handles it fine, like our 78-year-old neighbor whose lengthening hospital stay has him peeing in a bottle while I'm still in the room. No problem, he says, though I step out for his wife's sake, her hair and jewelry done up tastefully.

And so we go, adjusting to life as it comes. The tenderness in my right calf muscle reminds me of this. If I'm going to keep playing soccer, I'll have to swap speed with smarts. These are the bones and tendons I must carry to the mall myself someday.

Back at home, we have a kid heading to middle school and another to high, the one getting help to calm her fears of leaving childhood. This resonates with me, having recently endured a mid-life transition. I was also the last one on the block who still played with Matchbox cars, so there's that. But I gave them up, just as I've

given up the fantasy of holding on to so many things past. The present is good and it is now, and our daughter will figure that out, too.

We're wired for change, aren't we? A cleaning-out there, a purging here. Physical therapy, new jobs, scheduling times to walk. We press on.

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

I'm pondering these things in the food court when I remember a recent Tavis Smiley interview. He was asking actress Laura Linney about her role in Mr. Holmes, and she said, "You know, you never know where you're going to be, the things that you'll encounter along the way. It's amazing. It's a great thing about getting older." Tavis interrupted, "You said a great thing about getting older?" I asked the same question from the couch. They continued:

Linney: Oh, there's a lot I like about getting older.

Tavis: I want to hear this, seriously.

Linney: ... I am completely empathetic to how difficult and frightening and uncomfortable it is to age. ... However, you know, not everyone gets to grow old. You know, when you have friends and family who have lost their lives early, I hear them scream beyond the grave when someone complains of getting old. ... It really is a privilege to age and I find that I like myself a little bit more [laugh]. I'm a little gentler with myself, a little gentler with the people around me, I hope.

Some things are more difficult and other things, you know, ease up a little bit. So I enjoy stuff a little bit more, so I'm pretty grateful to have the experience of being able to age, you know.

The funny thing is that aging isn't what's on my mind this morning, even as I people-watch and recall this conversation. I'm thinking instead about how adept we are at replacing old with new. Jesus says it best:

No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved. Matthew 9:16-17

And so we go. I wouldn't have guessed that these would be my final words as an editor at The High Calling. But after seven years milling about the place, it somehow feels right. It's time to replace the old with the new; the former with the things to come.

THANK YOU

I am deeply grateful for all of my current and past teammates (Ann K, Ann V, Bob, Charity, Cheryl, Chris, Christine, Claire, Dan, David, Deidra, Dena, Glynn, Gordon, J. B. (Camel), Jennifer, Katie, Kelly, Kris, Laura, L. L., Marcus, Sandra, Tim, Tina).

I'll walk the mall with any of you! And what should I say to the many, many readers who followed, commented, shared, and encouraged along the way? How rich I am because of you.

Oh ... that's my phone. Pardon me.

"Hello?" (It's the oil change guy.) "Yes, I'm here."

"Mr. Van Eman, your car is ready."

It's time to go.

Dynamic Reflection

1. How could you explain Romans 12: 2 after reading the reflection reading?
2. What do you usually do in the changes of your life?

Application

1. How your mindset and actions changed after reflecting on this.
2. What can you do to practice this teaching in your work.