

1. When we find apparent contradictions in Scripture, how should we resolve the conflict?
2. Why is understanding the overall message of Scripture important?
3. Why is context important?
4. Why is humility important?
5. Why is trusting God important?
6. How should we respond when we cannot resolve the issue to our satisfaction?

BECAUSE GOD DOES NOT CHANGE...

- **We Can Trust God to Be True to His Character**

DEUTERONOMY 32:4 (NIV): He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

- **We Can Trust God to Be Faithful to Promises**

ISAIAH 54:10: Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has compassion on you.

- **We Can Lean into God for Comfort and Security**

*PSALM 62:1–2: Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him.
² Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*

1. What does it mean to lean into God for comfort and security?
2. What are some meaningful ways we can lean into him in the days and weeks to come?



If there is a constant in our world, it's change.

The skyline of Austin is dramatically different than it was a few years ago. The political climate is growing increasingly toxic. If you live in a newer neighborhood people are moving in. If you live in an older neighborhood, people are moving out. If you live in the city, things are changing really fast. New high rises. Specialty boutiques. Coffee roasters. Brewpubs. There are a lot of cool places to hang out, but everywhere you turn people's faces are buried in their laptops. It has the look and feel of community, but no one is making a connection—unless it is on TikTok, Instagram or Twitter.

You're changing. Every time you look in the mirror there are a few more gray hairs. Perhaps less hair. Laugh lines are deeper. Your brow more furrowed. Maybe your face is a bit fuller. You probably look a lot more like your mom or your dad than you ever thought you would. When you look at your high school yearbook, you quietly wonder, "What happened to me?"

The Apostle Paul, writing in his mid to late fifties, admits the rigors of life have taken their toll. But he is not discouraged. The temporary is giving way to the eternal. Nothing could be more desirable. He writes to encourage us all:

We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (1 Corinthians 4:16-18).

While everything around us is changing, our hope is deeply anchored in the one who does not change.

THE GOD WHO DOES NOT CHANGE

PSALM 102:25–27: In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ²⁶ They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. ²⁷ But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

JAMES 1:17: Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

1. Why is it a comforting to know that God does not change?
2. What images do the Biblical writers use to convey God's unchanging nature?
3. Why are these images deeply meaningful?
4. What if God's character were subject to change?
5. What if God's promises were subject to change?
6. What if God's gracious acceptance of wayward sons and daughters who turned to him in repentance and faith were subject to change?

THE PSALMS HAVE A WORD FOR THAT

PSALM 18:2, 30–31: The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield ^r and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold... ³⁰ As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord's word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him. ³¹ For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God?

PSALM 62:5-8: Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from him. ⁶ Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. ⁷ My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. ⁸ Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.

PSALM 95:1-7 Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. ² Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. ³ For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. ⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. ⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. ⁶ Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; ⁷ for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

1. When we describe someone as a rock, what do we usually have in mind?
2. What are some of the attributes of God that lead the Psalmists to describe God as their Rock?
3. Why is the thought of “God as Our Rock” particularly appropriate for this cultural moment?
4. How do the Psalmists invite us to respond to God as our rock?

PASSAGES THAT SEEM TO IMPLY CHANGE

GENESIS 6:5-6: The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled.

EXODUS 32:9-14: “I have seen these people,” the Lord said to Moses, “and they are a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰ Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.”

¹¹ But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. “Lord,” he said, “why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand... ¹³ Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: ‘I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky..

¹⁴ Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

1 SAMUEL 15:10-11: Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: “I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.”

JONAH 3:10: When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING THESE PASSAGES

1. One of the keys to understanding these passages is to distinguish between God's eternal purposes and his momentary response to sin.
 - a. God purposed to make the world exactly the way it is for his greater glory.
 - b. When God purposed to make the world the way it is, he also purposed that everything that has (and will) come to pass would indeed come to pass.
 - c. God purposed that he would form a people for himself through Abraham's descendants.
 - d. He also purposed that his people would test him to the point of their own destruction.
 - e. When Israel turned away from God and worshipped the golden calf, they indeed tested God to the point of their own destruction, and God was ready to destroy them in the moment.
 - f. God also purposed that the threat of destruction would be the means of grace by which Moses would intervene on their behalf and he would relent from destroying them.
2. Another key to understanding these passages is to remember that the Bible uses anthropomorphisms language to help us understand the heart and character of God, but God does not experience these emotions in exactly the way you and I do. “Regret” and “Relent” for us imply that we have made a mistake that needs to be corrected. For God they imply deep sorrow and are intended to show his intense hatred for sin.
3. A final key to understanding these passages is to look at the broader context. In each of these passages, God acts in time and history to bring about change in others, without being changed himself.