

# Living Faith @



*Dear Faith Shapers,*

*With the start of fall there are many new things happening. At school, work, and even at home new beginnings are occurring all around us every minute of the day. I see photos of new schools, new jobs, new relationships, new hair styles, and this is the month of new television shows.*

*September is the month of new beginnings in so many ways. People are affected in different ways when changes happen. Many times if there is a person available to listen, it can be a big help! If you find yourself in need of a listening ear, notify your pastor or a close friend - don't wait and don't think you can handle it on your own. Don't be afraid to try new things. You may fail but ... step out – be willing to change ... it might work but you won't know unless you try!!*



As we begin a new year of new beginnings, let us commit to hope in God's power to make all things new - as God restores and renews, creating new every day. God offers renewed mercy to us, God's children ... "For I know the plans I have for you to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future ." ~ Jeremiah 29: 11. Rather than see another year as a daunting task to be met or an unknown to be feared, let us trust in God's sovereignty over new. New blessings, new failures, and new victories with God's goodness guarding them all.



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**New beginnings** ... we all have them – sometimes more often than we want or need. Change can be stressful and cause people to be irritated and impatient but the reaction to change can depend on the type or reason for the change.

We all realize the Covid pandemic has caused many disruptions in families, schools, and work-places in the last couple years. The way we communicate, care for others, educate our children, and work. There has been a shift in behaviors, the economy, in medicine and so many others. Even though the variant viruses are present and continue to cause disruptions, there are many people trying to get back to a normalcy of life ... or create and initiate a new normal – some using guidelines and protective gear.

As children head back to school, many parents and teachers are encouraging students to “get back to basics” – especially those who spent time (or were supposed to be) with long distance learning. They need the reminder to look inside themselves for their own creativity, resilience, and strength to allow them to problem solve unexpected issues that they may encounter. Parents and teachers can empower kids to face situations and conceive solutions.

It seems some students have fallen behind in the learning curve for their grade level. Whether students are studying for tests or catching up on missed assignments, students need encouragement and motivation.

As summer comes to a close and children ready themselves for classes, parents are shopping for clothes and supplies to help motivate and initiate excitement for a new year. Some students are influenced by inspirational quotes or passages to help in the process of getting into the spirit.

Adjusting to new schedules including getting up earlier, being on a time schedule, meeting new friends and teachers, and the challenges of a new grade can be daunting and demanding.

Families can help each other by committing to prioritize everyone’s mental health. This can be done in a number of ways including encouraging a good night's sleep, staying active, and eating healthy meals. Small acts of family togetherness can be the anchor that helps kids deal with the uncertainties that they’re facing.

Adults have been experiencing changes as well. Many professions have been inundated with people deciding to change their vocation – either during the pandemic or more recently, during the emergence from the pandemic situation. A new job or profession can be quite daunting during “normal” times, but during a pandemic the stress can build exponentially and get out of hand quickly. Adults also need reassurance and empowerment to carry on, tap into their reserve of patience, and adjust to the changes happening in their life.

Reminding people that uncertainty and change are to be expected and that being flexible and adaptive in the face of change will help them feel more resilient, confident, and at ease. Assisting people with finding the help they need will ultimately be best for their welfare – no matter their age.