

# What I Have Learned in Turning Forty

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By Stephanie Reck



Forty is a big milestone, and I just crossed that milestone this week. I have had time to reflect over the years of my life, and this article will explore what I have learned in the last forty years. If I think back twenty or even just ten years ago, I can say my life has not turned out quite like I thought it would. My life has had many peaks and valleys, and many surprises, what a journey it has been. I could not have imaged my life as it is now. You see I had different expectations for my life, and different plans. I just assumed that I would have the things that I desired, and I thought that by forty I would have 2.5 children, a healthy, supportive family, I would be in a career and professionally oriented, making the big bucks, and I would have the most awesome marriage where my husband thought I was awesome. Well, let me burst my bubble for a minute, those things I wanted did not quite turn out that way. I could not see past what I wanted for years, and I entered into a time of bitterness, jealousy, and even anger in MY desires not coming to pass. I saw everyone getting what I wanted, and it caused me to become angry and bitter. I could not understand why God would want to withhold those good gifts from me. I even saw people who were not walking with God, receive these blessings I wanted. Now that is hard to swallow, when you see people who are opposed to God get the things you have prayed for, cried and begged God for.

I had been given things I did not want, nor did I think they were fair. I tried for many years to cover up my pain, to avoid my pain, to desire someone else's life, and even plotted ways I could escape my life because I was so displeased with my life. I had a lot of pain that I did not want nor ask for, and years of unrelenting pain caused me much grief. I had long seasons of

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grief. I could not possibly understand God and His ways. I tried to understand God, but I felt He was mad at me or punishing me, and that is why He was withholding these desires from me. I was tormented, and did not understand that just because I was suffering, God still loved me. I just did not understand why my life was so hard. I had trouble enjoying life, and had difficulty having grace for myself. I lived in a world of perfectionism and unrealistic expectations. I worried and became easily anxious over things. I lived in fear of the past and fear of the future. I cared about what others thought of me, and had a fear of man. I sought people's approval. I knew deep down inside God did not want me to live this way, but I was in so much pain that I thought it would never end. I wanted my life to be different, but I still was holding on to my wants and desires. I could not let go fully of what I thought my life would be like. It was not until I told God I want peace, joy, and contentment no matter what the cost. God said to me, "Surrender all to me, and trust me that my plans and timing for you are just right." When I started releasing MY plans, life eased up, joy and peace came back and I began to learn that I could have contentment even if I did not have this or that. I asked God to teach me to be content in any and every situation like the Apostle Paul. What I thought was important twenty years ago, like material things and a high-powered career, God has shown me that joy and contentment do not come from these things, but from Him alone.

When we say to God, "Have your way in my life," God can begin to take the front seat in our lives and we can get in the back seat. When we give up control because we live in fear, God can direct us instead. We usually want what we don't have, and when we get it, we soon realize we really don't want the thing we thought we wanted. I believe the enemy stirs up these desires to torment us, and to lie to us about God's goodness and love.

What I have learned from the forty years of my life:

1. MY plans are not necessarily God's plans.
2. There is a satisfaction when you begin to accept your life just as it is, contentment happens.
3. God's timing is not my timing.
4. God CAN be trusted. He knows best, I really don't. I am human, He is God.
5. God's plans are better than what I think I want, even though I don't always think so.
6. Make plans but hold on to them loosely, God may change them!
7. God will work ALL things out for good for those that love Him. [Romans 8:28](#)
8. It is better to surrender your will and desires, than taking matters into your own hands, you are not God, and you could end up with an Ishmael like Abraham and Sarah. It is better to wait on God.
9. You can have joy and contentment while you wait and despite your circumstances. Don't waste your life complaining and murmuring and stop your stinkin' thinkin', it does not help but actually harms you. (See book resource at the end for help with your thinking).
10. Don't become bitter, angry, or jealous. Don't desire what others have. You may not really want what they have. You never know what somebody goes through.
11. Enjoy your life, it goes by incredibly fast. Slow down and do take the time to smell the roses. Take it one day at a time, don't be in a rush. Enjoy the small things.
12. Never give up on your relationship with God. Trust Him even if you don't quite understand His ways and plans.

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13. You can settle down and stop worrying and being anxious, God will intervene, maybe not exactly when or how you want, but He will.

Book resource to help you with your thinking:

To order a copy of "Wilderness Mentality Stop Your Stinkin' Thinkin' "By Stephanie Reck go to [www.createpace.com/4036785](http://www.createpace.com/4036785)

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*Stephanie has a passion to bring hope and encouragement and to see people made whole.*

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