Springtime in northeast Ohio is very unpredictable. Although the earth begins to awake, and flowers start to blossom, there always looms the possibility of a spring snowstorm which will take us back to a momentary season of winter. Change is never easy, and it is rarely firm and absolute on the first attempt. In life, as in nature, there is a season of transition.

A baby does not get up one day and just start walking. No! He takes a step and falls, takes a few more steps and falls. Deciding it is easier to crawl than walk, the child will give up and revert to crawling. He wants to move, and walking is too hard. The process is too slow and discouraging. But then, a loving parent will stand the child up and encourage him to try again. Isn’t that just what our Heavenly Father does for us? God does not give up on you because you fall back a step into a past season of your life. Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. He stands you back up on your feet and encourages you to try once again. He is a God of second chances. Somehow, we have gotten the idea that we are supposed to get it right the first time, and we are tempted to feel, Things will never change. If we fall for that lie, we are missing something extremely significant . . . growth.

I have heard a teacher translate, “the old is going, and the new is becoming” which removes all the pressure for immediate perfection, allowing room to grow and time to change. Let’s get real. God knows that we are probably not going to get it right and run with it the first time around. Jesus himself said, “The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matthew 26:41. The truth is, for most of us anyway, transformation is a process and not a moment of instantaneous change. You need time to grow up, time to progress from milk to solid food. This process is called sanctification. Within the process, there is a time you will most likely fall back a step or two; like snow on the blossoms of spring, you’ll encounter a season of transition.

Paul wrote, “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.” Romans 7:15. Can you relate? Be encouraged! The very fact that you are aware that you are doing the things that you do not want to do is, in of itself, a sign of growth. That awareness, or sorrow, is called conviction, and that conviction leads to repentance. “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret . . .” 2 Corinthians 7:10. God is love, and love keeps no record of wrong. The Lord is on your side. He is faithful to lead you through every season. Conviction comes from God through the Holy Spirit to encourage you to repent, get up and try again. “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at your heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7. God sees your heart and your desire to change. God also sees your growth.
Are you denying your growth? Look again at the photograph above. There is snow on the flower, but look at the tremendous growth in this season. It cannot be denied. The flower is growing despite the conditions of adversity in the transition. YOU are growing too! People tend to point out and focus on our failure and our past, like the snow. Praise God, He does not keep score of our past sins and failures. The Lord forgives the repentant heart and remembers the sin no more. Are you that gracious to others? Are you that gracious to yourself? Is there someone in your life, a spouse, a child, or a friend, who is endeavoring to change but has fallen back a step? Have you fallen yourself? Are you focusing on the growth or the past? If you decide, “They (or I) will NEVER change, you will stunt the growth in progress.

The fall does not cancel out the growth, quitting does! Does the parent give up on the baby who falls? Does God give up on you? No, He gives you many chances and encourages each and every step of your forward momentum. True lasting change takes time and patience. It takes love and grace for others and for yourself. It requires focus not on the failure, but on the GOOD REPORT.

“... whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.” Philippians 4:8

Do you want to accelerate change in yourself and those around you? Focus on the good report. Encourage growth. Do not fall for the lie of the enemy that things will never change. Listen to the convictions of the Holy Spirit. Repent, get up and try again. Be gracious toward others and yourself. Forgive freely. Learn from the past and let go of it. Today is a new day . . . another chance! In time, you will see that this temptation, sin, habit, or trial has left you and given way to something new and beautiful. You will blossom into all that God has purposed for you to be. Victory over past sin will be yours.

You will look back at this time and see that remarkable healing and growth occur in the season of transition.

“Behold, I am making all things new!”
Revelations 21:5