

HAS SOMEONE OR SOMETHING MOVED YOUR 'CHEESE'?**By Robert J. Tamasy**

Recently I re-read the classic book, *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson, M.D. First published in 1998, this allegory still resonates for many of us today. With the pace of change in our world seeming to escalate daily – perhaps more in the marketplace than anywhere else – this little book continues to live up to its subtitle, “An A-Mazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life.”

If you are not familiar with the story, it is about two mice (Sniff and Scurry) and little people (Hem and Haw) who travel through a maze in search of cheese. When they discover an abundant supply, they return to the spot day after day, enjoying their cheese. Then one day the cheese has disappeared.

After a bit of confusion, puzzled about what happened to the cheese that had always been there, the mice begin searching for cheese elsewhere in the maze. In time, their efforts are rewarded as they locate more and better cheese than before. The little people, however, initially refuse to accept that their accustomed cheese is gone forever. They return to the spot day after day, only to find – no cheese.

Ultimately Hem, driven by hunger, decides to search elsewhere in the maze for cheese. However, his counterpart, Haw, is stubborn. He refuses to acknowledge the cheese will no longer be found in its accustomed place. “Who moved my Cheese?!” he repeatedly asks.

Many thousands of business and professional people can relate to the “cheese” story. Their quest might not be for actual cheese – their “cheese” might be more customers, a more satisfying career, more money, a happier life, or something else. Returning to the same place in search of this “cheese” when the supply has been exhausted is futile. The quest of “cheese” must follow a different path.

In my own career, the “cheese” has moved numerous times. Often the change has been disconcerting. I was comfortable doing the work I had been doing. It was familiar, I felt in control, and the prospect of making a major change was unsettling to say the least.

The Scriptures do not speak about cheese specifically, but they do address the challenges when someone or something seems to have moved our “cheese.” Here are just a few examples of how faith can help when our “cheese” has moved:

There is a time for everything. Few things remain the same in life. Change, whether we like it or not, is unavoidable, “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under

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heaven...a time to plant and a time to uproot...a time to tear down and a time to build..." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

God determines when the 'cheese' should move. When change becomes necessary, we can trust God already knows what is best for us. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, please to give you hope and a future'" (Jeremiah 29:11).

When our 'cheese' moves, it is usually for a good reason. God has an overarching purpose, and He will fit the changes we face in life into His overall plan. "Commit to the Lord whatever you do and your plans will succeed. The Lord works out everything for His own ends..." (Proverbs 16:3-4). "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps" (Proverbs 16:9)..

© 2023. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Had you heard of the book, *Who Moved the Cheese?* before reading this Monday Manna? What do you think about this allegory – moralistic story – as briefly described?
2. Can you relate to the mice and "little people" in their surprise to discover the cheese has moved? Think of a time when your own 'cheese' has moved. How did you respond to the situation? Were you most like the mice, quickly deciding to search for it elsewhere, or were you more like Hem and Haw, stubbornly or reluctantly waiting for the cheese to be returned to its accustomed location? Explain your answer.
3. What are some of the factors in the 21st century marketplace that are causing our 'cheese' to move frequently, often when it seems most inconvenient or unexpected?
4. How can our faith in the Lord give us strength and confidence as we seek to deal with the effects of unexpected or undesired changes in our lives or careers? How can it help us in how we respond, seeking to find where our 'cheese' might have moved?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 3:5-6, 16:25, 21:2; Isaiah 26:3, 41:10; Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:6-7

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