

## **Make This the Defining Moment of Your Life**

How can you make the most of this pandemic? What can you learn from this season or crisis that you could learn no other way? What does God have for you during and after this? Could this become the defining event of your life?

My calling as a writer is to help men stop, examine their lives, be reconciled with Christ, and make needed changes based upon a commitment to God's larger purpose.

To that end, I wanted to create a short, pandemic-related tool, or guide, that can help you process the bigger picture of your life through the lens of this time.

Francis Bacon said, "Writing maketh an exact man." To get the most out of this guide, I suggest you print this out and physically write your answers on the lines provided.

**THE BIG IDEA: Stop, examine your life, be reconciled with Christ, and make needed changes based upon a commitment to God's larger purpose.**

### **STEP 1: STOP**

Rod Cooper saw a sign at the start of a road leading to Alaska: "Choose your rut carefully. You're going to be in it for a long time."

Perhaps the hardest part to any change is the simple act of getting out of the rut or off the treadmill long enough to hear the whisper of the Holy Spirit.

If you want to think differently, break up your routine. For example, I started this blog at 5 a.m. in my driveway with a campfire (since campgrounds are closed), a cup of coffee, and a cigar. Crazy, right? But changing things up liberated my mind from thinking in the same old ways.

The following quote is often attributed to Italian painter and architect Leonardo da Vinci:

“Every now and then go away, have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgment will be surer, since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power of judgment. Go some distance away, because then the work appears smaller, and more of it can be taken in at a glance, and lack of harmony and proportion is more readily seen.”

This often happens for me when I’m on a hike or while I am doing my private meditations and devotions in the morning.

How do you “stop”? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## STEP 2: EXAMINE YOUR LIFE

Do you have some habits that you’ve wanted to break but couldn’t? It could be as simple as wanting to cut down from three cups of coffee a day to two, or it could be as serious as an addiction or an all-consuming idol that has become so important that you have lost your “first love,” Jesus.

Or maybe it’s to *start* some habits. You already know the ones that would be good for you.

We are often unsatisfied with the way things are but lack the motivation to change. A crisis is the ultimate motivator to re-examine what you believe and how you live.

Find a quiet time and place to stop, and then use these questions to examine your life. No doubt you will think of other relevant questions, so write them down as well.

- Have I been in a rut?

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- What might God be trying to say to me during this time?

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- Whom have I been taking for granted?

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- What have I been taking for granted?

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- Where have I been struggling to be humble?

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- Whom have I been trying to control?

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- Whom have I been bashing that I shouldn't have been bashing?

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- Whom have I hurt with careless and/or angry words?

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- What is the idol(s) to which I've become addicted?

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### STEP 3: BE RECONCILED WITH CHRIST

Nothing is more important than to be in right relationship with God. Jesus said "loving God" is the single most important thing a man can do in his relationship with God.

A good starting point is to humble ourselves before the mystery of His providence and the majesty of His holiness, where we repent of any self-sufficiency to tackle the problems before us apart from His power, presence, and purpose. 1 Peter 5:6-11 puts it this way:

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Take a moment in humility and ask Jesus to renew a right spirit in you.

## STEP 4: MAKE NEEDED CHANGES

Finally, ask God to use the pandemic—or whatever crisis you’re facing—to help you make changes that you’ve wanted to make but couldn’t make on your own.

For example, you may not have liked your job, but job security or fear of the unknown kept you from exploring a new career path. So if you’ve lost (or lose) your job, and once you’ve had time to absorb the blow, turn it into an opportunity for God to help you make a change.

Or if you have been caught up in a destructive behavior, like greed or a critical spirit, ask God to help you break the cycle.

Write down your answers to the following questions. As Professor Louis Agassiz said, “A pencil is one of the best eyes.”

- What is my best understanding of God’s purpose for my life—why I exist and what He wants me to do?

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- What kind of character does God want me to have?

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- What kind of people do I need to associate with to develop this character?

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- What kind of roles does God want me to have?

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- Where do I think God wants me to be in 10 years?

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- What destructive behaviors are holding me back?

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- What changes do I need to make now to get where He wants me to be in 10 years in my—

- Spiritual habits: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Marriage/Family: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Vocation: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Finances: \_\_\_\_\_

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- Education: \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Friendships: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Idols/Addictions: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Serving others: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It would be overwhelming to try to do everything at once, so pick one, two, or three initial steps. Psychologists call it *behavioral activation*: “Today I’ll walk to the end of the street.” Then tomorrow, having succeeded, you can walk to the end of the block.

- What is something I can start doing today that will get me to “the end of the street”?

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## CONCLUSION

We all ache for this pandemic to be over. But I can’t help but think most of us also want this to be a—if not *the*—defining moment in our lives and ministries. So, let’s, in humility, ask God to help us make the most of this crisis.

For the glory of Christ and no other reason,

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