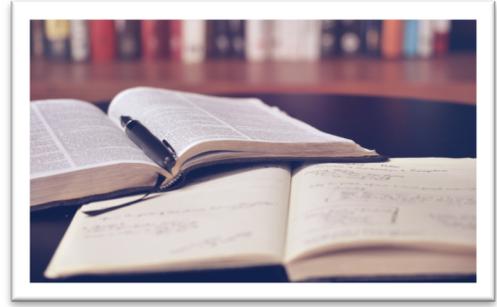


DON'T WASTE THE PANDEMIC

2 CORINTHIANS 12:10 // PASTOR TODD DUGARD
MAY 2, 2021



“For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Cor 12:10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you have any books or set of questions that help you take stock of your life? Why is it important to periodically check on the condition of our spiritual life?
2. Could you say that you are content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities? What are some signs that you are no longer enduring hardships for the sake of Christ?
3. Why do you think that acknowledging weakness in yourself helps you to understand how God’s strength works in you? (What happens if Christians won’t admit their weaknesses?)

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Take the personal survey that follows and write short answers to help you focus. If there is a question where you are under conviction, underline that part of the question and use the blank space after the question to make note of how God is leading you to grow in that area. This will be hard! But “when I am weak, then I am strong.” Make that question a subject of your prayer life by asking God for direction in this matter so that you can learn to show his strength.

In order to show the strength of Christ, and not my own, in the midst of this trial, I need to ask some critical questions of myself lest I “waste the pandemic.”

The questions begin on the next page....

Worship Christ. To worship Christ is to, first, have come to the cross of Christ and surrendered my life to the Saviour. It is to have confessed my sin, received his grace and forgiveness through the power of the resurrection, and then to devote my life to the 24/7 declaration of the worthiness of Christ. He is of greatest value. That's worship.

1. Do I truly know Christ as my Saviour? Have I been baptized as a public testimony to my faith in him and his grace toward me?
2. Have I been so focused on various aspects of the pandemic that I have taken my focus off of God? Has COVID crowded out Christ?
3. What habits, addictions, or vices have I substituted for God? Where do I run for comfort?
4. Have I been lax in my participation in livestream worship by either not attending or, when attending, not being fully engaged?
5. Have I continued to worship the Lord with my giving or did I shrink back in fear by pushing generosity to the side?
6. Am I prepared to break through my fear of returning to in-person worship when the time comes, or have I become comfortable in my isolation? Do I envision the joy that it will be when we're together in the room again?

Walk with Christ. To walk with Christ is to know that he is with me every step I take every day. It is to have personal disciplines in prayer and the Word. It is to share life with others who love Jesus. It is to engage in small groups, in the life of the church. It is to ensure that I, and my family if applicable, are all walking with Christ.

1. Have I spent more time reading about the pandemic than I have spent in God's Word seeking his will?
2. Have I spent more time complaining and lamenting to others than in prayer to God?
3. Have I modelled my faith to my spouse, my children? Would they say that I am closer to God now than I was a year ago?
4. Have I continued to engage in community with my small group and cherished my relationships with others despite the challenges of doing so online?
5. Have I become so consumed with my own brand of suffering that I have become desensitized to the very real suffering of others?
6. Am I able to point to at least one person with whom my relationship has deepened?
7. Have I been respectful to others even when their opinions and attitudes may be quite opposed to mine?

Work for Christ. To work for Christ is to know my passion for others, discover my spiritual gift(s), and find a place of service. It is the practical expression of **Love God and Love People** knowing that when I serve others, I'm serving Jesus.

1. Have I allowed the pandemic and the inability to meet together to cool my passion for serving others?
2. Have I discovered new ways of ministering to others or have I simply stopped using my spiritual gifts?
3. Do I have an eagerness to return to my place of service and do I have a greater sense of the urgency of the gospel?
4. Has my heart grown in compassion for those on the margins or did I hunker down into my own protective bubble?
5. Have I taken note of the injustices that are all around us or is my heart cold and my attention on myself?

Witness for Christ. To witness for Christ is to be on mission to make disciples of all nations. It is to share the gospel with those who do not yet have Christ. It is to invite people to **come and see** and it is also to **go and tell** those who may not come.

1. Has my social media activity represented Christ and his gospel or shamed him?
2. Do unbelievers who know me see fear, anxiety, anger, complaining, or paranoia in me or the hope of the gospel?
3. Have I witnessed to anyone in the past year? Invited anyone to watch the livestream or attend a service?
4. Have I prayed for anyone who is lost and without Christ?

A Final Note

If the course correction needed is significant and overwhelming, don't take it all on at once. Instead, (1) Start with worship; get vertical first; own what you need to own in your relationship with God; repent before the Lord and get your worship back on track; (2) Create a plan with a timeline and goals; (3) Bring someone into the process with you who will be able to pray with you and perhaps join you on the journey; (4) Don't let failure or small stumbles along the way discourage you from continuing on; God's grace is sufficient for that.