

2020

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a guide to *processing 2020*

Unexpected. Unpredictable. Uncertain and downright unbelievable. These are a few words to attempt to capture what 2020 has been so far.

For most of us, we started this year with a renewed list of goals and dreams and that expectant feeling that comes from hitting the “reset” button. Instead, this year has left many of us scrambling to understand, figuring out a new normal, and grieving a lot of change and “what should have been.” Through a global pandemic that has affected nearly every part of our lives, racial injustice and unrest, various natural disasters, and the chaos of an election year, it’s easy to feel lost, to doubt, and to embody what James said when he spoke of “waves of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.”

Pine Cove isn’t the source to inform you, but as an organization you trust, we want to provide an outline of how to process all that’s happening in the world by offering reflective questions and journaling prompts, pointing you to what Scripture says, and featuring other trusted resources. We hope this guide serves as a steady navigation tool in processing some really hard and confusing things.



As with any journey, we must first begin by searching our own hearts. Set aside some dedicated time to think and pray on your own or to process with a trusted friend or family member.

“SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART; TEST ME AND KNOW MY CONCERNS. SEE IF THERE IS ANY OFFENSIVE WAY IN ME; LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING.”

– PSALM 139:23-24

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SEARCH YOUR HEART: QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

+ Over the course of 2020, what have I changed my mind about?

+ Though it was challenging, what am I celebrating having walked through?

+ What's a habit from this quarantine season that I want to keep?

+ What's a habit I need to drop?

+ Are there any biases or prejudices in my heart that I need to ask forgiveness for?

+ If so, what is one way I am seeking to unlearn and retrain this bias?

+ Who am I thankful for in my community and why?

+ Is there anyone in my life I need to seek peace or forgiveness with?

+ What is an active step I can take to become more informed about and aware of things going on in the world?

While opinions can differ greatly on the biggest headlines, here are some questions to ask others to get a conversation started in ways that build relationships.

“LET NO CORRUPTING TALK COME OUT OF YOUR MOUTHS, BUT ONLY SUCH AS IS GOOD FOR BUILDING UP, AS FITS THE OCCASION, THAT IT MAY GIVE GRACE TO THOSE WHO HEAR.” – EPHESIANS 4:29

FOR CASUAL CONVERSATION:

- + *Are you a reader? What have you been reading lately?*
- + *What's your favorite social media account to follow?*
- + *What has been the highlight of your week?*
- + *How are you holding up?*
- + *What is one way that you have made the most of this season?*

FOR DEEP CONVERSATION:

- + *What has God been teaching you lately?*
- + *What has been a healthy habit of yours throughout quarantine that might be helpful for me too?*
- + *How do you perceive God's involvement in the events happening throughout society?*
- + *What is a way I can serve you in this season?*
- + *What has been challenging for you in the past month? How can I help carry the load?*
- + *Is there anything you are doing or thinking about differently in light of this past year?*
- + *What is a character quality of God that you've seen the most throughout this season?*
- + *Is there anything you need to process with a close friend?*

With times ever-changing and our minds struggling to keep up, it can be hard to be still.
Take some time to reflect on this unique period and how you've seen God throughout.

"FOR GOD ALONE, O MY SOUL, WAIT IN SILENCE, FOR MY HOPE IS FROM HIM." - PSALM 62:5

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REFLECT AND REMEMBER: JOURNALING PROMPTS

+ *Something that changed me for good during this past year that I want to carry into next year is...* _____

+ *The following passage of Scripture has encouraged me this year. These are some ways I want it to inform my future self and future actions...* _____

+ *List out some of the things that have caused you worry and anxiety this year. Ask God who He is in relation to each one. These are the truths God is bringing forth through His word and His Spirit...* _____

+ *Someone I need to reconnect with or ask forgiveness from is.... (Consider reaching out to them by writing a letter and mailing it to them.)* _____

+ *The abrupt endings or changes I am grieving are...* _____

+ *The happy moments I want to remember from this year are...* _____

+ *Lord, what I need to confess is...* _____

+ *Lord, what I need to face with courage is...* _____

+ *Lord, where I need healing is...* _____

+ *Lord, what I don't understand is...* _____

+ *Lord, what I am afraid of is...* _____

Spending time in God's Word will always be an invaluable use of time. With so much uncertainty and so many opinions swirling around, it's essential that we know how God thinks and what His Word says about all that's going on around us and inside of us.

"[BLESSED IS THE ONE] WHOSE DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD, AND WHO MEDITATES ON HIS LAW DAY AND NIGHT. THAT PERSON IS LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY STREAMS OF WATER, WHICH YIELDS ITS FRUIT IN SEASON AND ITS LEAF DOES NOT WITHER. IN ALL THAT HE DOES, HE PROSPERS." – PSALM 1:1-3

ON RACIAL UNITY:

+ *Micah 6:8*
 + *Matthew 22:37-39*
 + *2 Corinthians 5:16-21*
 + *John 13:34-35*

"ALL THIS IS FROM GOD, WHO THROUGH CHRIST RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF AND GAVE US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION; THAT IS, IN CHRIST GOD WAS RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF, NOT COUNTING THEIR TRESPASSES AGAINST THEM, AND ENTRUSTING TO US THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION." – 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

ON UNCERTAINTY:

+ *Jeremiah 10:23*
 + *Psalms 94:19*
 + *Proverbs 3:5-6*
 + *Psalms 139:1-6*

"WHEN THE CARES OF MY HEART ARE MANY, YOUR CONSOLATIONS CHEER MY SOUL." – PSALM 94:19

ON POLITICS:

+ *Proverbs 21:1*
 + *1 Timothy 2:1-2*
 + *Philippians 3:20*
 + *Daniel 2:20-21*

"DANIEL ANSWERED AND SAID: 'BLESSED BE THE NAME OF GOD FOREVER AND EVER, TO WHOM BELONG WISDOM AND MIGHT. HE CHANGES TIMES AND SEASONS; HE REMOVES KINGS AND SETS UP KINGS; HE GIVES WISDOM TO THE WISE AND KNOWLEDGE TO THOSE WHO HAVE UNDERSTANDING.'" – DANIEL 2:20-21

There is a lot of information and sometimes the further we go, the more fearful we can become. It can also be difficult to know where to start or what to believe. Below are some trusted resources authored by brothers and sisters in the Faith. As with any resource, be sure to ask God to guide your thoughts to be like His.

“IF ANY OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, LET HIM ASK GOD, WHO GIVES GENEROUSLY TO ALL WITHOUT REPROACH, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN.” – JAMES 1:5

READ

- + *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson
- + *Be the Bridge* by Latasha Morrison
- + *Humble Roots* by Hannah Anderson
- + *Anxious For Nothing* by Max Lucado
- + *Every Moment Holy* by Douglas McKelvey
- + *Sacred Pace* by Terry Looper
- + *Oneness Embraced: Reconciliation, the Kingdom, and How We are Stronger Together* by Tony Evans
- + *Tony Evans Racial Unity Resources* (tonyevans.org/racial-unity-resources)

LISTEN/WATCH

- + Follow “Alethia Family Counseling Center” on Facebook for video resources on navigating common societal challenges
- + “Be the Bridge Podcast with Latasha Morrison”
- + “Made For This with Jennie Allen” Podcast
 - Episodes: “Where Do We Go From Here?” and “How to Stop Anxious Thoughts”
- + “Harris Creek Baptist Church” Podcast
 - Episode: “Questions to Ask When Making Decisions”
- + “Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man” YouTube Video Series
 - Episode: “White Parents, Raising Black Children” featuring Aaron and Jamie Ivey & family

It’s difficult to live during a time when it’s never been more clear that the only certain thing is that everything is uncertain. The truth that can be found in the midst of that, however, is the assurance we have in what is unseen and knowing that our hope is not found in any of this.

There is so much we cannot control, but what we can control is setting our hearts on the Lord, talking through our emotions with our communities, and aiming to grow and learn however we can.