

GO AHEAD AND PRAISE HIM

“My God is so great, so strong and so mighty, there’s nothing my God cannot do.” So goes the song. So let’s take a look back over the past seventeen or eighteen months, a difficult time that we have lived through, to see how our God has been working; bringing good things out of COVID-19 that we can thank and praise Him for. We’ll be like the one leper who turned back to thank Jesus after his healing. Several have submitted their thoughts and these have been loosely categorized below. Perhaps you will be able to identify with some of these and respond with thanksgiving and praise.

Financial Benefits:

- Some doctors are giving \$100 to those who will take the vaccine.
- Many have realized they can live with less and are buying fewer ‘things’, and are donating things they don’t need to others.

Practical:

- Some people actually got around to clearing out their closets, drawers, and garages.
- Members of various organizations served others’ needs, bringing meals, water, food, and household items to the homes of the housebound.
- Some countries have offered other countries help with vaccines.

Insights:

- Some became aware of how much God loves and cares for them.
- Due to the quarantine, some can now empathize with those who were housebound even before the pandemic.
- Some have spent time reflecting on God’s will for their lives.
- Some people are now more spiritually sensitive; and desire to go to church.

Relationships:

- Many have a new appreciation for family and friends in their lives.
- “I now realize how important it is not only to pray for others, but also to let them know I’m praying for them.”
- “I was made aware of the importance of reaching out to

those in need – with my time, finances, etc.”

- Having more time to spend with the Lord, some have grown closer to Him.
- One lady says she’s thankful for how deep the bond in her family has become due to the pandemic. She “was forced to see a more holistic version of each family member and we all have gotten a lot closer because we weren’t so busy living ‘every-day’ lives.”
- This time has been an opportunity to renew old friendships by phone, Skype, etc.

Life Styles:

- One lady said she’s an introvert so she loved how the pandemic catered to her style of living, filtering out a lot of ‘fluff’ relationships/interactions and forcing people to work toward true connections. “An introvert’s dream come true!”
- Another lady said she has taken a look at her behavioral patterns and realizes that much of what she does must be reorganized.
- For one person, the onset of the pandemic followed the completion of a resignation process and prevented the continuation of additional emotional pressure. She says, “The Lord had plans for my life I had not anticipated. He helped me make critical decisions and transitions I needed to make.”
- Many who once followed God and slacked off have turned back to

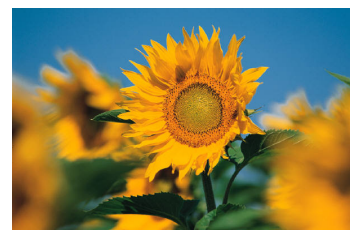
the One Who loves us enough to turn us back to Him through difficulties we face.

Health/Medical:

- One lady’s son was very ill (non-COVID related) and hospitalized during the pandemic. She thanks God for the pastors, brothers, and sisters of her church who prayed with her for her son’s healing. God answered and he is well now. Praise God!
- Many can thank God for His mercy and protection all through the pandemic.
- Medical researchers have been put in a position of trying to find a vaccine to help with the COVID threat to the whole world.
- Doctors and patients now have access to house visits via telehealth services.

Mental Health:

- Many thank God for His amazing grace that has kept them both sane and physically healthy.
- Many who attended church functions via various forms of technology were greatly encouraged by the Lord and the fellowship they experienced with other believers.



Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and establish thou the work of our hands. Psalm 90:17



Technology:

- Despite restrictions on physically attending church, the Worship Services, Sunday School classes, Prayer Meetings, Life Groups, Bible Studies, Youth Meetings, and even Business Meetings continued for many churches via various technology platforms, so that all who wanted to attend could do so. This was especially meaningful for shut-ins. We were even able to give our offerings via technology. Praise God!!!
- Many have grown in their understanding of technology and can now communicate with others in person or online.
- Teachers learned how to teach using technology and there are now many classes that people of all ages can take online.
- The spread of technology to many might be an avenue for everyone to see Christ when He returns.

Spreading the Word:

- Although many para-church and missionary organizations were already using technology before the pandemic, many creatively added to their ministries through which God's wonderful plan of salvation could go out.
- In 2020 the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association began broadcasting Gospel TV spots with the Good News of Jesus Christ that can be seen across the U.S. Over 375,000 calls have been received in response to the Gospel TV Spots and thousands have made decisions for Christ!

- “An amazing **16,416,717 children** got to hear about Jesus in nearly every country of the world through CEF! (These are the ones that could be counted – not the ones who might have seen the TV broadcasts or heard it on the radio or received a booklet!) Of that number, over **5.6 MILLION children** said they put their trust in Jesus as Savior. That's 5,616,810 children who are now in God's family and will have an impact on millions of other people for the rest of their lives!” (Excerpt from Child Evangelism Fellowship Newsletter)
- One lady, a senior citizen who has been learning more and more about technology, decided to start her own Sunday School class on Zoom. She now has thirty-two students (with more wanting to join) from around the world attending on Thursdays, from N.Y. and N.J. in the U.S., the U.K. and Spain in Europe, Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore in Pakistan, and Dubai. She's teaching about Jesus through Bible stories. Not only are the children hearing the wonderful news of Jesus, but some adults who have never heard about Jesus are listening in and being impacted through her ministry.

A Challenge for now and the future:

- One brother challenged me to see this pandemic as a testing of our faith. In it, we are challenged to remain faithful to God and His truth. Regardless of what lies ahead, God is forever faithful. He

is preparing us for what lies ahead.

Timing:

- In November 2019, three months before the pandemic spread vigorously, The Holy Spirit urged me to rent out my first floor apartment that I had been using as an Air BNB. It was rented in three days. I didn't know the future, but God did. I thank God for looking out for me!
- During the pandemic, I worked at home and saved money by not commuting to and from work. With the money saved, I am now in my second year of taking voice lessons. I am thankful to God that I can use a much better voice to sing praise to Him. I've also learned more about humility and spiritual principles through the journey of taking voice lessons!

So, have you read anything you can thank God for or praise Him for? Perhaps you can add to this list. If so, go ahead and thank and praise Him!

Psalm 148:1, 11-14

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights!
11 Kings of the earth and all peoples;
Princes and all judges of the earth;
12 Both young men and maidens;
Old men and children.
13 Let them praise the name of the Lord,
For His name alone is exalted;
His glory is above the earth and heaven.
14 And He has exalted the horn of His people,
The praise of all His saints—
Of the children of Israel,
A people near to Him.
Praise the Lord!

COVID TESTIMONIES

Do I have eyes that do not see, or ears that do not hear and understand? Because of events such as 9/11 or the recent (and still current) Covid-19, I would have to admit...yes. Am I racist? I never considered myself to be such, but I recognized that I am when I "locked up" upon hearing a certain man's name a few years ago. Do I consider myself to be a Christian? Yes, while probably being a lot like Peter, and often reacting without taking the necessary time to think through the repercussions of my inappropriate thoughts.

After a day or so of very heightened sensitivity God helped me to recognize that, no, I should not "nuke" the Middle East and "turn all that sand into a sea of glass". No, it's not my place or "duty" to "take out" those who brought about the devastating consequences of Covid-19 into the world.

Am I the only one, or what is your natural reaction to the homeless guy that pushes an old lady into the path of an oncoming subway train? What would you do to the gang members who in their cross fire take out the life of a young child or a baby? Don't deny your first thoughts. I believe that many of us... yes YOU and ME... would want to repay evil with evil. This is exactly where Satan would have us to be. Keep in mind that the Lord doesn't allow us to be His vengeance takers. While still dealing with issues of forgiveness, a year of being homebound imposed by issues of Covid-19 has given me the opportunity to bring my vengeful, condemning heart to the Lord and grow, and to be just a bit more like Him. -Tom Van Etten

Growing up I was taught to appreciate God's creation. That appreciation was renewed during the pandemic when we were restricted as to where we could go and what we could do. Anxiety, fear, confusion and loneliness crept in. But, as I freely walked on the streets and through the parks, I noticed the grass was greener, and the trees were more colorful than previous years. Beautiful flowers were everywhere. Did you notice the abundance of bird choirs during the pandemic? Their sweet sounds brought peace to my heart and soul. Every morning now my new bird friends wait for me to open the window screen and then they gather on the driveway below, awaiting their birdseed treats. The song says, *"Why should I feel discouraged? Why should the shadows come? Why should my heart be lonely and long for heav'n and home, when Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is He. His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me."*

-Ellen Van Etten

The pandemic family's perspective. We way possible these past be. While the difficulties struggling business has family, our TRUST IN

Early on, God and one man in my life started by my cousin, to me. I was asked to join as prayed together even began. This prayer group even more not for myself, that I don't even know. I as it has deepened my through prayer.



has truly changed my have been tried in every two years and continue to we faced with my husband's weighed heavily on our GOD has greatly increased! allowed a group of women through a prayer chat be a positive influence on my cousin and I constantly before the pandemic has encouraged me to pray but for the needs of others am so grateful for this group relationship with God

Due to the fact that someone shares about individuals needing prayer on a daily basis, a shift has occurred in my life. I now can avoid the negativities of life issues brought about through my own difficulties and just focus on Him. I can see the effect that it has had, not only on my life, but on my family's life as a whole.

My family and I have always been one that relied on prayer to express adoration, thanksgiving and intercession where we draw near to God and learn more of His will for our lives. However, we noticed that COVID-19 and life's issues were taking away that focus. God began to fill me with strength through prayer and reminded me that He is with me. As he continued to direct me through prayer, my faith and trust in Him began to grow stronger.

Please forget about the cares of your life and draw near to God through prayer. God invites us into his purpose and power through the power and guidance of the precious Holy Spirit. Though my family still faces many challenges, we know that we will make it because God tells us in His word, *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* (Isaiah 41:10)

I would like to share a quote I heard in one of our group chats: "One day you will tell your story of how you overcame what you went through and it will be someone else's survival guide." by Brene Brown. So, lean on God through prayer for all of your needs and trust that He will meet them, just like He has done before. -Yvonne Jetter



This is a trustworthy saying:
If we die with him,
we will also live with him.
If we endure hardship,
we will reign with him.
If we deny him, he will deny us.
If we are unfaithful,
he remains faithful,
for he cannot deny who he is.
2 Timothy 2:11-13 NLT

MISSION

To provide counseling services by integrating psychotherapeutic techniques with biblical principles

*Generous contributions have blessed the ministry in various ways. PCC continues to depend upon your prayer and support. If you would like to sponsor a session, or a client,
Contact us at (718) 463-4613. Thank you.*

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