

Looking Back to Look Forward
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"It's OK to NOT be OK right now...and to just do your best to get through this truly unprecedented time." C. Vaile Wright, Director of Clinical Research and Quality at the American Psychological Association

From Washington DC to our devastated economy to the pandemic, 2020 was a year we will *never* forget. It may be the year that for the first time, many of us looked around and thought, "My God. What have we become?"

To pretend we haven't changed is to ignore the suffering. We can't go through a year like this and not be changed. But perhaps...that is a *good* thing.

Because dear reader, to break into the dawn, we must first experience the darkness.

And... it feels like a dawn is already peeking through. We have multiple vaccines rolling out. Life will get back on track, although maybe not back to "normal." It will take longer than we like, but the promise of brighter days ahead is undoubtedly strong.

It's interesting: when God wove our brains within us, He gave them two characteristics that enable us to not only get through times like these, but to thrive. The first is that our brains believe what we tell them, and the second is that our feelings primarily come from our beliefs.

Yes...this can result in the horrors of what happened in Washington DC.

But it can also result in the good.

So let's see how the "better angels of our nature" brought out the silver linings of 2020.

1. Thousands of volunteers put their own lives at risk by taking the experimental COVID-19 vaccines.
2. We saw the selfless dedication of millions of front-line workers out to help the world.
3. A record number of Americans voted in our national election.
4. Parents became heroes - working while helping their kids navigate virtual learning.
5. Americans cleaned out the animal shelters to adopt pets who needed us.
6. Distilleries produced hand sanitizers.
7. Companies made masks.
8. Auto manufacturers manufactured ventilators.
9. Board games were re-introduced to our living rooms.

10. The Internet enabled us to have virtual gatherings around the world.
11. Drive-in movie theatres came back.

And the list goes on.....

Statistically speaking...*one* of the years in our lives is going to be the worst. Perhaps it was 2020! So now that 2020 is over...it can only get better!

We cannot truly know happiness without knowing sadness? We cannot know a good year without experiencing a bad one!

And 2021 will still have its own ups and downs. However, most of us are still here, so we will make it through another year, hopefully with more grace, compassion, and empathy.

When the Lord wrote Ecclesiastes 3:1 - 8, I think He was thinking of 2020, and 2021.

There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under heaven:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

2020 may not have been what we planned, and it certainly wasn't what we wanted.

But perhaps...it is what we needed.

Maybe 2020 needed to happen to *all* of us —to humanity—to be on a better path ahead.

Perhaps...2020...in hindsight...really IS 20/20.

Wow!