

Pk's Perspectives ... 91 Days

I'm looking at my calendar. March 15 was the last Sunday we shared a "normal" day of ministry; Wednesday night March 18 was our first FB Live service. 13 weeks have rolled on by since the specter of social isolation made its way into our lives and routines. 13 weeks. 91 days. How have you invested these 91 days? Have you established new rhythms in your Quiet Time routine? Have you initiated new habits related to personal exercise and/or healthy nutrition? Have you constructed new family traditions that are enriching the relationships between spouses, parents and children?

According to a 2009 study published in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, on average it takes 66 days for a new behavior to become automatic. Old habits are not easily broken; new habits - even good ones - are not easily formed. The reshaping of personal behavior requires self-discipline, accountability, and time. It might just be that the silver lining of this period of social isolation is the slowing of the proverbial "hamster wheel" on which many people were wasting their journey - exerting great effort but accomplishing nothing of great value. It takes, on average, 66 days to establish new habits; we've had 91 days foisted upon us wherein we were unable to chase after the usual time consuming activities of our personal hamster wheels. How have you responded? Are you able to see the gift we've been given; the gifts of a slower pace, fewer options, simpler decisions, and ample time for spiritual reflection and meditation?

Again - how have you invested your 91 days? Have you squandered this time searching for answers to "Why?" or "Who is to blame?", seeking to uncover conspiracies lying in the shadows, or immersed in anger or frustration at the sudden intrusion of social distancing? Our natural inclination is to focus on the negative aspects of a difficult situation; our calling as children of God is to look for the beauty of His presence in our difficult circumstances.

Dale Carnegie once wrote, "Two men looked out through prison bars; one saw mud, the other saw stars." Mr. Carnegie was attempting to illustrate the point of the importance of our "way of seeing" the challenging circumstances we encounter. Have you opened your heart and mind to the beauty of how God might use these days of social isolation to re-shape your life and priorities? Have you missed the light of God's presence in these days by virtue of focusing on the darkness of sinful humanity, the political landscape, or succumbing to the fear of not being able to know the future?

We are quick to quote Romans 8:28; yes, we know that all things work together for the good! But do we intentionally look for the good God is creating? Do we yearn for God to work His good work in our own hearts, or are we waiting for God to work His good work in everyone else? Are we willing to be brought to the place of faith where, like Joseph in the OT, we can shout in the face of adverse circumstances, "What you meant for evil, God intended for good?" (Genesis 50:20)

These have not been easy days. The barrage of conflicting headlines, the social unrest exploding in protests and riots, maddening celebrities (Hollywood and sports) offering their expert opinions, financial/economic fears, and forced homeschooling (yay for summer) have conspired to keep a steady supply of fuel flowing to the cultural fires dotting the landscape. But we know - don't miss this - we know that God is in control, He is still on the throne, He is sovereign over all. God is working in all of this! God has not been blindsided by the coronavirus. Seek first His kingdom. Cya Sunday, Pk.