

In Times Like These

How do we view our present situation? Is there meaning in this seeming uncertainty? Where do we find value in a quarantine? The Apostle Paul said, "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

How do these words apply to a pandemic? This is our task-at-hand to find meaning in chaos, to find the good that God brings, to find Jesus in the storm. But where do we start and how do we approach the process?

We (Stefa and Harv) compared notes and suggest an approach to these disorienting times. We propose a way forward over the next 60 days for you to give focus to your spiritual growth, your team leadership, and guidance to your students. Our proposal comes to you in the form of Convictions and Actions.

A Framework of CONVICTIONS (things I believe)

CONVICTIONS For Personal and Spiritual Development

- I believe God is speaking to me in the midst of this crisis.
- I believe I need to pause long enough to hear His Word to Chi Alpha and the world.
- I believe despite being forced to curtail regular ministry activities that I must not miss this moment to hear His voice.
- I believe this crisis will usher in a great harvest of souls. Therefore, I believe I must go deep before we can go wide.
- I believe Isaiah 50:4 – "The Sovereign Lord has given me his words of wisdom, so that I know how to comfort the weary. Morning by morning he awakens me and opens my understanding to his will."
- I believe I must treat myself with grace, for I will not be as productive in the ways I am normally accustomed.
- I believe I must move my body, exercise and be outside in government-sanctioned ways.
- I believe I must step away from digital technology for regular, predetermined intervals.
- I believe I must re-discover Sabbath rest in a time of turmoil.

CONVICTIONS For Professional and Team Development

- I believe I best grow as I interact within my community of fellow believers.
- I believe I will find connection with God and others even during a period of self-quarantine.
- I believe in teams, and if I am not on a team, I can work to form a team, or join a team.

CONVICTIONS For Missional Development

- I believe, if Paul could advance the gospel from a Philippian jail (Phil. 1:12-14), I can pastor students and make disciples from my confinement.

A Framework of ACTIONS (things we can do)

- We recommend for you to focus on your personal spiritual deepening, your leadership and team development, and your student connections during the duration of the quarantine.
- We recommend you consider the resources listed below to bring clarity to your heart and congruity to your Christian service.
- We recommend you connect deeply with your ministry team.
- We recommend, should you not have a staff team, that you reach out and form a small team of fellow Chi Alpha missionaries within your district, area or previous relationships.
- We recommend as your form a team you also add one missionary that you do not know well.
- We recommend you interact with your students with both pastoral ministry and intentionally prescribed ways.

- We recommend you select one or more of the suggested actions listed below in each of the three categories.

Personal, Spiritual Development	Professional and Team Development	Missional Development
ACTION: to be practiced privately	ACTION: to be processed with the team you are on or the team you form	ACTION: to be provided and monitored to your students
The Motive: Why So Many Leaders Abdicate Their Most Important Responsibilities	The Ideal Team Player: How to Recognize and Cultivate the Three Essential Virtues: A Leadership Fable	Chialpha.com/LTCGO
The Common Rule: Habits of Purpose for an Age of Distraction	Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice	The Whole Bible Story: Everything That Happens in the Bible in Plain English
How to Take a Personal Retreat with God	Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21 st -Century Model For Church and Ministry Leaders	The 300

- 1) The Motive: Why So Many Leaders Abdicate Their Most Important Responsibilities, Patrick Lencioni, (Jossey-Bass, 2020), 192 pages.

Patrick Lencioni says this may be his most important book. The Motive addresses the heart of the leader and challenges leaders to examine why they lead. Lencioni identifies two motives for leadership. Reward-centered leadership believes that “being a leader is the reward for hard work; therefore, the experience of being a leader should be pleasant and enjoyable.” By contrast, responsibility-centered leadership believes that “being a leader is a responsibility; therefore, the experience of leading should be difficult and challenging.” An excellent book to cause self-reflection to help you properly understand why you lead.
ACTION: Read for personal reflection and application.

- 2) The Ideal Team Player: How to Recognize and Cultivate the Three Essential Virtues: A Leadership Fable, Patrick Lencioni, (Jossey-Bass, 2016), 240 pages.

The Ideal Team Player by Patrick Lencioni recently became part of the core curricula of RUI. It is essential reading to anyone who wants to build a good team. What are the “Three Essential Virtues” of an “Ideal Team Player.” Someone who is: 1. Humble, 2. Hungry, and 3. Relationally Smart. While this sounds simple, it is rare to find these 3 traits in a well-balanced team member. When you do find someone with these 3 traits, put them on your team as fast as you can. **ACTION: Assign chapters to different staff members and have them make presentations to the team. Discuss, self-score, and determine how to infuse the virtues into your student leaders.**

- Brief Summary of The Ideal Team Player: How to recognize and cultivate the three essential virtues

- 3) The Common Rule: Habits of Purpose for an Age of Distraction, Justin Whitmel Earley, (IVP Books, 2019), 199 pages.

“As the name suggests, the Common Rule is meant to establish communal – not individual – rhythms, so ideally it’s practiced with other people. Change – even personal change – almost always happens within a community where people support each other, process what they’re learning, and keep each other accountable to goals.” Earley suggests 8 habits, 4 daily habits and 4 weekly habits that help you to better love God and your neighbor, and help you embrace the right things and resist the wrong. Each habit is well within your ability to grasp. **ACTION: Read and apply the habits for personal growth.**

- 4) [How to Take a Personal Retreat with God](#), Sally Herman, (Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, 2016), 31 Pages + appendices.

Maybe you said, “I really need to take some time, get away, and experience a personal retreat.” Well maybe a COVID-19 quarantine provides you with the perfect time to do it. “A personal retreat is not a vacation or an extended day-off, though refreshment is often a beneficial by-product. It is an extended time alone with God where we open up our hearts, ask questions we need answers to, and discover ways to solve some sticky problems. In a word, what we seek most from our time alone with God is Clarity.”

ACTION: Use questions to improve your self-awareness and to hear from God. Use the clarity He provides for your personal and ministries’ benefit.

- 5) Chialpha.com/LTCGO.

The National Training Team led by Alex Rodriguez, in just 10 days, pulled together a student leadership training curriculum. It is comprised of audio and video files to pass on the convictions of Christian discipleship and the essential skills for leading a discipleship small group to your potential student leaders. A short manual describing how to use this material in a virtual environment is provided with discussion questions accompanying each lesson. **ACTION: Review the manual on how to utilize the online resources.**

- 6) [The Whole Bible Story: Everything That Happens in the Bible in Plain English](#), William H. Marty, (Bethany House Publishers, 2011), 300 pages.

Do you want a summer assignment for your students to help them with their Biblical illiteracy? “The Bible tells a story. It’s a beautiful account of God’s love for people throughout history. The events told in the Bible are exciting, tender, and at times awe inspiring, but often they story can get lost among the laws, genealogies, prophecies, poetry, and instructions. Sometimes we need to get back to what happens in the Bible, focusing on the plot and the characters.” A great tool for cohort or personal study. **ACTION: Organize students into 3-person cohorts for them to form a discussion book club.**

- 7) [The 300](#).

Here’s another way to address Biblical illiteracy in students. There are about 1,200 chapters in the Bible. But if you select 300 of them, you may get in effect the entire story of the Bible – The Bible Storyboard. Here they are. Read these 300 chapters in this order to get the story of the Bible in chronological order: Genesis; Exodus 1-19; Numbers 11-14, 16-17, 20-25; Joshua 1-11, 24; Judges 1-21; Ruth 1-4; 1&2 Samuel; 1&2 Kings; Jonah; Daniel 1-6; Ezra 1; Haggai; Esther; Nehemiah 1-2, 4-6; Luke; Acts; Revelation 21-22. **“EXCELLENT! I believe the healthiest practice is reading the Bible during this season.” Scott Martin. ACTION: Create a reading calendar and encourage one another to read these chapters concurrently.**

- 8) [Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice: Experiments in Spiritual Transformation](#), Jan Johnson & Dallas Willard (NavPress, 2006), 192 pages.

Jan Johnson guides you through 61 carefully chosen selections from renowned author Dallas Willard’s best-selling book *Renovation of the Heart*. With each selection, you’ll progress through Dr. Willard’s plan for renovating the complete person. Each provocative reflection includes a thoughtful, meaty selection by Dallas Willard along with Jan’s illuminating personal stories, plus suggestions for

making the concepts come alive in your own experience. **ACTION: Organize staff into 3-person cohorts for them to form a discussion book club.**

9) Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model For Church and Ministry Leaders, Aubrey Malphurs (BakerBooks 2013), 375 pages.

Just as 9/11 forever changed the world, so too will the COVID-19 crisis. How may you best prepare yourself and your ministry team for a new world on the other-side of this pandemic? Simply put by Prayer and Planning. Need help with the planning part? Then Malphurs' book is the go-to text for Christian leaders to work through with your leadership team to give focus to your Chi Alpha group coming out of a crisis. **ACTION: Assign chapters to different staff members and have them make presentations to the team. Take each chapter and apply the principles to your ministry context. If this book seems too daunting note the three short articles attached to this email as a substitute.**

- Church Strategic Planning In 4 Easy Steps!
- Simplify Strategic Planning
- Planning Successful Staff Retreats