

Life Review Questions

"I suspect that there are different questions for every age in life, perhaps every decade. Knowing them helps us to deal with people sensitively, and it gives us a better understanding of how to build a larger view of our own lives. . .

And here's the kicker. *As the questions change, so does the content (and perhaps the form) of our spiritual interests.* The 'questions' often become our way of approach when we go to the Scriptures looking for spiritual sustenance. They become a guide when we buy books. The questions form our approach to spiritual life. So if the way one does spiritual life was formed around twenty-something questions and one is now fifty, spiritual life will likely be obsolete and ineffective.

In each decade of life as the questions change, the Bible reader discerns new insights from the familiar Bible stories or teachings. The themes of prayer also change. The dangers and temptations inherent in the spiritual journey are modified. And in each decade of life, new decisions leading to deepening commitment present themselves. So, knowing the appropriate questions that we are likely to face at the end of the track in each decade of life just might help us become big-picture thinkers."

A RESILIENT LIFE, Gordon MacDonald, pp. 50,51.

As Gordon MacDonald notes, changes in us often affect how we think about God and how we relate to him. Spiritual disciplines or practices of earlier years may need to undergo revision, as our view of God and ourselves change, and as we face different stages on the journey that confront us in new ways. Simply put, we may be very different people in our 40's than in our 20's, and how we view and meet God may be very different. Often such differences confuse or threaten us, and we do not know what to make of them. But these differences also are opportunities to grow in our knowledge of God and ourselves, leading to a richer relationship with him and ourselves and others.

How **old** am I? How do I see myself on my "time line?" What underlying questions, concerns or projects seem to occupy me now?

What significant **changes** have occurred in my life in the last year----5 years----10 years? (Or think of major transition points in your life—education course, job changes, civil status, parental roles)

Outer world and circumstances:

Inner world and perspective:

Relationships:

How have these changes affected me, and my relationship with God, others, my work and myself? Try to give a couple of examples.

What significant **experiences** have affected me in the last year----5 years----10 years?

Encounters with God:

Successes in life or work:

Failures/lack of success in life or work:

Emotional wounds or injuries:

Health concerns:

In my family—parents, spouse, children:

In my friends or those close to me”

How have these experiences affected me? Look at a couple of examples.

As I am aware of myself today, what seems to be **different** from 5 or 10 years ago? How do I feel about these differences?

What dreams shaped me at the beginning of ministry? What are my dreams in ministry today?

How did I understand God’s call to me at the beginning of my ministry? How would I understand it today?

How does your perception and understanding of the Gospel compare with 5 or 10 years ago, or with an earlier period of your life?

How does your understanding of God’s mission compare with 5 or 10 years ago, or with an earlier period of your life?

How does your understanding of following Christ compare with 5 or 10 years ago, or with an earlier period of your life?

What insights and knowledge about myself have come to me in these last years? What changes in my view of myself have taken place?

How did I meet God, relate to God, in the early years of my walk with him? (Recall several key spiritual disciplines) What Scriptures spoke to me?

Additional Resources for Spiritual Formation and Prayer can be found at:

How am I meeting Him today? What Scriptures is He using? What has changed? Why? How do I feel about the changes?

As I look back over my life and my journey with God, what themes—truths, lessons, issues---seem consistently to occupy me, to which God brings me back to again and again. In other words, **what does not change** in terms of what God wants me to learn and grow in?

Many things do change for us as our journey unfolds, but the path of spiritual formation is always leading us towards certain fruits that God seeks to grow in us: *"We remember before our God and Father your **work produced by faith**, your **labor prompted by love**, and your **endurance inspired by hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Thes 1:3) *" . . . being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ."* (Phil 1:6) *"And now these three remain: **faith, hope and love**. But the greatest of these is love."* (1 Cor 13:13)

How do you see God working to grow you in faith and trust in Him, always and in all things?

How do you see God working to grow you in love to him and others?

How do you see God working to grow you in hope and its shaping of your life?

What questions or concerns come to me as I think about **the next five years**? What would I see as "priorities" for the next five years?

What desires or longings do I find for how I want to live the next years of my life? How will I offer these to God? How will I pray about them?