



Today marks the 19th anniversary of the attack on one of America's cities that changed America and many parts of the world, forever. Many of you reading this remember exactly what you were doing that September morning. Me personally, I was in shock for close to two weeks and couldn't take my eyes off the TV. As Dr. Jeffrey L. Reynolds President and CEO of AmericanFlags.com stated: *"In the days, weeks and months following 9/11, our nation was bathed in American flags and American pride. We came together as a one nation and people who had never flown the flag before did so as a bold statement of unity..."* He continued: *"Today, 19 years later, lots of those flags have disappeared and some of that national pride has faded..."*

We all know of the 3,000 people that died that day and I have read that tens of thousands more, including our police, fire fighters, emergency personal and private citizens have died suffering with illness due to the 9/11 attack. Without a doubt the largest loss of life from an attack on American soil. That was then.

Today, I watch the TV with such sadness and a heavy heart as I see the police, firefighters, and emergency personal in the *same city* under attack daily. I believe some of those attacking them may be the children of the people these men and women gave their lives to save! Many if not most of these young people have no idea what this day means in the lives of the people that lived through it and the lives and families forever changed.

You know in the Bible, it teaches in the days of Jesus and the early church, demonic activity was quite common. Jesus himself tells us that in the last days before He returns, Satan's activity will increase steadily. I am not being political here; I am being biblical. Jesus said the demonic activity would increase until He comes and ends it once and for all. What else could you call what we are seeing in our country now. Satan's momentum is building to steal people away from "the gift of life eternal" with Jesus. He knows his time is short. He has come to "steal, kill and destroy" just as Jesus said he would.

When the World Stopped – Patti McDonald

History will record a time when time stood still. When countries shut down for a pandemic. The year is 2020. The variables that changed our lives, some for good, some for bad, will be shared here for all to see. Everyone has a perspective, this is mine.

2020 started for me in Hawaii. Recently retired, I decided to visit a friend over New Years. My husband and I had visited her in 2000 and now, her husband had passed away, and I wanted to see her. I flew there without incident and, although sick with a cold coming back, returned to my home in Alabama.

Our home is on a few acres in the middle of the city. My daughter built a house on an acre at the end of our long driveway and our son, recently retired from the Navy, bought a family home through a path in the woods that faces a different street. Our four other children live in Mobile and other cities in Alabama. That background is important to show that, for the most part, we were not entirely isolated what the country shut down. I also visited my elderly mom and made many visits to our local grocery store during this time.

My husband is a full-time missionary and he had a trip to Guatemala in March and enjoyed a wonderful and blessed visit where he did an evangelistic "show" for over 400 school children. He was able to get on the plane to return home just as the country (Guatemala) shut down and their schools closed. Our president had stopped travel from China in January, however, just as Joe returned home, our schools closed, and most businesses shut down. I can't thank God enough for returning him to the US as Guatemala is still on lock down, now 6 months later.

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So, we are 6 months into this pandemic. It is September. I would have never guessed this would still be as much of a disruption for this long, but here we are. I won't get into the politics of it, but it looks like things are slowly progressing back to our "old normal." That said, some of the schools are still not opened or opened virtually and the ones that have opened have the dear children in masks for the entire school day. I am a keen proponent of the resilience of children though, and they are carrying on like champs. Here's to the day when we un-mask the masses! That seems to be the largest change that has developed during this time.

Another personal change, other than required masks in stores, etc., is that I now carry hand sanitizer and cheap plastic gloves around in my car, for personal hygiene and to use while pumping gas. I think the sanitizer habit has helped a lot of us not only avoid Covid-19 but also the flu.

I mentioned "some for good, some for bad" as it related to changes in our lifestyles. I really think the bad has to do with people's attitudes. Especially toward the "anti-mask" crowd. I have seen people get incredibly angry on both sides of this fence. You can really tell when someone is taking this to the extreme when they drive around in their car, alone, with a mask on, or walk at the park or go to the beach. That said, we do have the right, as Americans, to wear a mask if we want, all day if we want. It's so great to be an American!

I couldn't leave out, although, thank God, it hasn't touched us personally, the rioting and domestic terrorism going on in many cities. God knows, Satan can't let a "good crisis" go to waste. My prayers are for this chaos to end soon and for order to be restored to our cities.

As for us, we have slowly gotten back to family gatherings, additional shopping as stores have opened, and out to eats at restaurants, plus, we've even taken some out-of-town trips recently. It is fair to say that our lifestyles have only been as interrupted as parties and reunions being postponed or cancelled, ministry events mostly on hold, church gatherings outside of services pretty much not happening for a while. My 401k savings has gone down and up, depending on the day and doctor visits for my mom are totally masked.

I asked my daughter-in-law what part of this change was positive or negative, and she said she had enjoyed her little ones being home from school for a bit. It allowed her to enjoy them and they visited and played with the baby. Although I'm sure she's happy with the return to routine now, it was a cherished time that was not expected.

Everyone has their good and bad from this pandemic, the worst being people that did have the sickness and then, of course, those that died. My dear granddaughter didn't have a break as she is a "front-liner" as a RAD Tech at a local hospital. I appreciate her so much.

As an aside, just for the record, this isn't the first time that my world has stopped, 19 years ago, Terrorists took down the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the world stood still then. 10 years ago, a huge oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico threatened to take away our wonderful beaches. Other historic tragedies and disasters, hurricanes, fires, storms have threatened and rocked our world. Although at the time we thought things would never go back; perhaps our world been altered in some way, but we resume our lives as though nothing has happened. This too, will pass.

Still, the things we've learned and experienced are highly significant. First, never never never take anything for granted and have a thankful heart. Second, be ready in season and out to help a family member or a neighbor and third and most important trust God for and with everything.

If we get this right, we can pull through anything! Even when the World stops!

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6

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