
Turning Points

Adapted from LifePlan, a resource of the Paterson Center

We each have a story. This Turning Points worksheet will help capture insights that will be invaluable to unearthing who God designed you to be.

What Is a Turning Point?

A turning point answers the question, “*How did I get to where I am now?*”

A turning point is a decision, event, person, episode, or experience that turned the direction of your life from where you were going to a different direction entirely. Turning points can be positive or negative.

Don't confuse turning points with milestones. The birth of a child may be a turn or it may not. It is a life event and milestone regardless. Your wedding day is more likely a milestone; the turning point was asking your future spouse out on a date or saying yes to going out for coffee. It's only a turning point if your life truly turns.

Another way to identify turning points is to ask, “*How did this turn change how I work, live, engage, think, relate to God and others, and lead me to this point in my life?*”

TURNING POINTS INCLUDE:

Relationships

A person is brought into your life or removed from your life at a critical juncture. A guide, coach, sage, mentor, parent, friend, or counselor leaves an impression on your life. They are a pivotal person in making you who you are and what you are doing today. These people come into our lives for a reason. It may be a person who challenged you for better or worse, encouraged you, shared a conversation, an example, a belief. Whose influence or absence has made you who you are today?

Season of Life Events

A degree earned or not. Marriage or the ending of a marriage. The birth or loss of a child. The death of a loved one. Gaining a job, losing a job. A trust earned. A hurtful betrayal. Such events are not impersonal forces. They profoundly impact the course of a life. What events changed you and where you are in life?

Spiritual Turns

Coming to faith in Jesus Christ. A renewal or epiphany in your walk with Him. Being transformed by hearing a passage of Scripture. A desert season. A rebuke. A word of insight. Freedom from a besetting sin. Anointing. Laying on of hands in prayer. We respond to life with new decision making, priorities for God, and action to be obedient to His call. What spiritual turns have guided you to where you are today?

Every human adventure has peaks and valleys, turning points that give perspective for your past and pathways for your future.

Life-Changing Experiences

Life-giving and life-draining experiences can alter the course of a life. Examples may include pushing yourself harder than ever toward an athletic goal or other achievement, or toward gaining acceptance in an organization, club, or institution. It could be helping another person succeed, a problem solved, summer camp experience, or a trip that helped shape who you are today. There are also personal illnesses, bankruptcies, divorces, adultery, addiction, or participating in illegal activities. A mix of many of these types of experiences may be included in your life. Which experiences left their mark on you and have shaped how you think, live, and relate to others?

Turning Points Tool

Take time to list all of the turning points that have changed the direction of your life. You will later explore and discover connections, patterns, and themes as you see your life story charted on the map.

Not all important memories are turning points. Focus on instances that turned the direction of your life.

For each turning point, identify your age at the time, what specifically happened, whether it was a high point (10), a low point (1), or something in between those points on the scale, and record the impact on you.

A close friend or spouse can be helpful in identifying your turning points.

Map Your Story

Now that you have identified your turning points, it's time to plot them on the story map below. Plot each turning point in the high points or low points box. Organize your turning points by age, using the age timeline as you guide. Mark your age in decades along the timeline.

Once you have plotted your turning points, identify the themes in your life. What themes appear in your storyline? Label them in the themes row and give each one a name.

Once you have plotted all of your turns, identify the themes in your life. What themes appear in your storyline? Label them in the themes row and give each one a name.

Know your story. Live your purpose.

Take a day to reflect and share with a trusted person about your turning points. Give thanks to God for His providential care for you and consider how your story unearths His good design for your life.

STORY MAP

THEMES	
HIGH POINTS	
AGE	
LOW POINTS	

*If this has provoked a desire to dig deeper into discovering who God made you to be and what He is calling you to do, consider joining a LifePlan Launch cohort or attending a LifePlan Retreat. More information is available at **patersoncenter.com/tvc**.*

