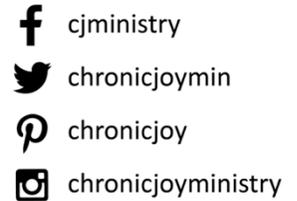


**CHRONIC JOY**  
chronic illness ministry



# Building Your Bucket List

## A Marriage Resource for Couples



Have you and your spouse ever built a bucket list?

Bucket lists are ways of charting our hopes and dreams, and the things we 'd love to see and experience before we die.

You can write a bucket list for each season of the year, or for specific seasons of life.

Bucket list items don't have to be extreme or expensive. They can include things like going to a new restaurant or a concert in the park, learning to play chess or learning to write a memoir, watching the sunrise or lining the driveway with luminarias on Christmas or New Year's Eve.

Bucket lists are a wonderful opportunity for you and your spouse to begin to dream together again.

### A BUCKET LIST IN FIVE STEPS

1. What matters most to you? What are your core values? What do you hold most dear?



2. What would you like to experience in this season of your life? In the next ten years?

3. Brainstorm ideas for your bucket list. Consider:

- ④ Places to see
- ④ Things to do
- ④ Skills to learn
- ④ Family and friends to visit
- ④ Projects to start (or finish)
- ④ Causes to support
- ④ Regrets to resolve
- ④ People to forgive
- ④ Sports, hobbies or activities to try
- ④ Books to read
- ④ Topics to learn about
- ④ Healthy new goals or habits
- ④ Random acts of kindness you can participate in together

4. Now create a timeline. What would you like to experience first, in the next year, in the next five years?

5. Prioritize your list based on your time and energy, and on the things you and your spouse hold most valuable.



## QUESTIONS, IDEAS AND CONVERSATION STARTERS

To get you started, we've developed a list of 101 questions and conversations starters. Choose one or two over the next several weeks as you rekindle your dreams *together*.

1. When was the last time you tried something new? What did you do?
2. What's the best advice you've ever been given?
3. What lesson did you learn the hard way?
4. What would you do today if you knew you wouldn't be judged?
5. If you could wake up tomorrow with a new skill, what would it be?
6. Where would you most like to go?
7. Who would you most like to visit?
8. What was your favorite childhood book or movie?
9. What kind of food would you like to try?
10. What show or performance would you like to see?
11. What hobby would you love to learn?
12. What random act of kindness would it be fun to do together?
13. Is there someone you need to forgive?
14. What is your dream vacation?
15. Who has had a powerful impact on your life? Have you ever told them?
16. What three things make your life easier?
17. What makes you laugh?
18. What would give you the greatest confidence boost?
19. If you could start a business with no strings attached, what would it be?
20. What were you passionate about as a child that you'd love to try again?
21. What would you like more of in your life?
22. What are the five things you're most thankful for?
23. What is the most adventurous thing you've ever done?
24. What do you like most about your appearance?
25. Over the last five years, how have you've changed?
26. If you could take a year-long sabbatical what would you do? Where would you go?
27. What movie scene would you like to experience in real life?
28. What are you holding onto that you need to let go?
29. What makes you smile?
30. If you had the opportunity to address to an audience, what would you say?
31. What is important enough to go to war over?
32. What is something you do differently than most people?
33. What are you most grateful for?
34. What is the one thing you'd most like to change in the world?
35. What inspires you?
36. Describe your life in six words.
37. What is the most defining moment of your life?
38. What is your most beloved childhood memory?
39. What gives your life meaning?
40. What is your life's purpose?
41. What is the most memorable gift you have received?
42. Describe the last three months of your life in three words.
43. Describe what freedom means to you.
44. What is your greatest challenge?



45. If you could live one day over again, which day would you choose?
46. If you could invite anyone to dinner, living or dead, who would you choose?
47. Why do you matter?
48. What makes you think of *home*?
49. What is your most prized possession?
50. What is your greatest accomplishment?
51. What makes a person beautiful?
52. Where do you find peace?
53. When have you worked hard and loved every minute of it?
54. Who do you trust and why?
55. If you had to give up every physical possession except what could fit in a single backpack, what would you keep?
56. When does silence speak louder than words?
57. What is your greatest skill?
58. What do you have trouble seeing clearly in your mind?
59. What are you looking forward to?
60. Who is the strongest person you know?
61. What makes today worth living?
62. What is your favorite song and why?
63. What makes you angry?
64. What is the most valuable lesson you learned from your parents?
65. What does love feel like?
66. What is the best part of growing older?
67. What is worth waiting for?
68. Where would you most like to live? Why?
69. What is your greatest strength?
70. What is your greatest weakness?
71. What made you smile this week?
72. What motivates you to do your best?
73. What is the most spontaneous thing you've ever done?
74. What life lessons did you have to experience before you understood them?
75. What is your saddest memory?
76. What is the best decision you've ever made?
77. What makes love last?
78. What is your greatest distraction?
79. What do you think about when you like awake in bed?
80. What responsibility would delegate if you could?
81. Who do you secretly envy and why?
82. What is your favorite sound?
83. What makes you cry?
84. Describe your childhood in one word.
85. What is your spouse's most attractive quality?
86. What is the last thing that surprised you?
87. What is your biggest pet peeve?
88. What is the best compliment you have received?
89. When was your first impression of someone completely wrong?
90. What is the number one quality of a good leader?
91. Where is your favorite place on earth?
92. In what ways are you your own worst enemy?
93. What is your favorite quote?
94. What do you know well enough to teach others?
95. What stresses you out?
96. What do you want more of in life?
97. What do you want less of in life?
98. What is your favorite smell?
99. What is your favorite holiday?
100. What simple fact do you wish more people understood?
101. Describe your future in three words.



## BUCKET LIST IDEAS

Still stuck? Start small by choosing from the list below. Sometimes all it takes is the first step to spark a new dream.

1. Go for a walk.
2. Look up at the night sky.
3. Hold hands in the car.
4. Curl up on the couch and talk.
5. Have a picnic in the backyard or at a local park.
6. Volunteer together for a worthwhile cause.
7. Cook dinner together.
8. Mail each other a handwritten letter.
9. Watch the sunrise or sunset together.
10. Read a book out loud to each other.
11. Kiss in the rain.
12. Memorize a favorite passage of the Bible.
13. Look for funny moments. Laugh more. Let your joy become contagious.
14. Build a Reverse Bucket List – an exercise in gratefulness. Make a list of the things you've done, places you've gone, adventures you've experienced, people you've visited, etc.
15. Attend a book reading in support of a local author.
16. Visit a local museum. Plant a flower or a tree.
17. Dye Easter eggs.
18. Splash in a puddle.
19. Make homemade hot cocoa.
20. Decorate sugar cookies.
21. Complete a "Random Act of Kindness" together.
22. Carve a pumpkin.
23. Share a milkshake.
24. Have a bubblegum blowing contest.
25. Fly a kite.
26. Visit a hometown attraction.
27. Play a board game.
28. Solve a jigsaw puzzle.
29. Renew your wedding vows.
30. Recreate your first date.
31. Slow dance at home.
32. Start a journal of love letters to each other.
33. Attend a couple's retreat.
34. Begin a couple's devotional.
35. Enjoy a concert in the park.
36. Build a house of cards.
37. Volunteer at a soup kitchen, homeless shelter, humane society, or wildlife refuge.
38. Build a birdhouse.
39. Take a class together.
40. Go to a farmers market.
41. Kiss under the mistletoe.
42. Do a Word Find.
43. Make a gingerbread house.
44. Go on a dessert date.

## AN ETERNAL BUCKET LIST

Now that you're on your way, consider another kind of bucket list — one with eternity in mind.

Read **Matthew 25:35-36** and fill in the blanks.



For I was \_\_\_\_\_ and you gave me something to \_\_\_\_\_, I was \_\_\_\_\_ and you gave me something to \_\_\_\_\_, I was a \_\_\_\_\_ and you \_\_\_\_\_, I needed \_\_\_\_\_ and you \_\_\_\_\_ me, I was \_\_\_\_\_ and you \_\_\_\_\_, I was in \_\_\_\_\_ and you came to \_\_\_\_\_ me.

Here, we read about six specific things we are called to do:

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit those in prison

But there's more. Read **1 Peter 4:10** and fill in the blanks:

Each of you should \_\_\_\_\_ whatever \_\_\_\_\_ he has received to \_\_\_\_\_ others, \_\_\_\_\_ God's grace in its \_\_\_\_\_ forms.

Begin thinking about your gifts, your skill sets, and what you love to do? Think big and small. Spend some time brainstorming. For example:

- yard work
- accounting
- house cleaning
- financial planning/debt management
- laundry
- plumbing
- painting
- electrical work
- cooking/baking
- auto repair
- errands
- carpentry
- volunteering
- correspondence/writing
- computer programming
- sewing, knitting, crocheting
- gardening
- crafts
- decorating
- photography
- salon services (haircuts, beard trims, perms, etc.)
- music lessons



🕒 home organization

🕒 listening

Look back at **Matthew 25:35-36** and **1 Peter 4:10**.

Use these seven tenets to build your Eternal Bucket List. Have fun with this. Dream together. Pray together. Ask God to guide and inspire you. Here's a short list to help you begin.

## ETERNAL BUCKET LIST IDEAS

### 1. **Feed the Hungry**

- 🕒 Make sandwiches for the homeless
- 🕒 Purchase groceries for someone who is struggling financially
- 🕒 Volunteer at a rescue mission or soup kitchen
- 🕒 Donate to a food pantry
- 🕒 Make a meal for someone who is ill, recovering from surgery, unable to drive, or homebound

### 2. **Give "A Cup of Cold Water" to the Thirsty**

- 🕒 Donate water bottles for the homeless
- 🕒 Donate baby formula to a pregnancy help center
- 🕒 Volunteer at a drink station during a charity race
- 🕒 Pay for the person in line behind you at a coffee shop

### 3. **Clothe the Naked**

- 🕒 Clean out your closet, attic, garage or basement and donate what you no longer need
- 🕒 Knit, crochet or sew baby blankets for a pregnancy help center
- 🕒 Donate scarves, hats, socks, jackets, mittens or boots to a homeless shelter

### 4. **Shelter the Homeless**

- 🕒 Volunteer on a local Habitat for Humanity worksite
- 🕒 Mentor a child through Big Brothers/Big Sisters or a similar organization
- 🕒 Sponsor a child through Compassion International, World Relief or a similar organization
- 🕒 Volunteer at or donate to a local rescue mission or homeless shelter

### 5. **Visit the Sick**

- 🕒 Volunteer at a hospital
- 🕒 Volunteer at a nursing home



- ④ Send a card to someone in the hospital, someone recovering from surgery, someone going through cancer treatment or someone who is homebound.

## 6. Visit Those in Prison

- ④ Lead a Bible study at a jail or prison
- ④ Donate Bibles or spiritual resources to a jail, prison or correction center
- ④ Mentor a troubled teen
- ④ Become a pen pal through Prison Fellowship, Evangel Prison Ministries, Christian PenPal Ministry, or a similar organization

## 7. Use Your Gifts

- ④ Make a meal
- ④ Alter a dress
- ④ Teach a skill you have
- ④ Be a mentor
- ④ Use the gifts God has given you to enrich the lives of others

Bucket lists can help us remember who we are and why we're here. They can draw us closer as a couple and deeper into God as we pour the love, compassion, mercy and grace He so freely lavishes on us into the hearts and lives of those around us.

In short, a bucket list can help us:

- ④ dream together as a couple
- ④ love God, our spouses and others well
- ④ prioritize where and how we invest our time, energy, skills, and resources
- ④ bring glory to God as we learn to live out his Word

And now, Friends ...  
Love wholeheartedly.  
Live as you were created.  
Be God's people  
In our fragmented world.  
Amen.

Tim Grave, *Liturgy Bits*

