

BCA Market Perspective ©
Coronavirus Disease: What Should You Do Now?
April 2020

U.S. equity markets abruptly ended the 11-year bull market as investors braced for a global quarantine from the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). This pandemic brought the entire world to a screeching halt, dragging the U.S. Economy down into what most believe will be the first recession since the Great Financial Crisis. From the peak on February 19th, to March 23rd, the S&P 500 experienced the quickest drawdown in market history, retreating 33.9% from the all-time closing highs.

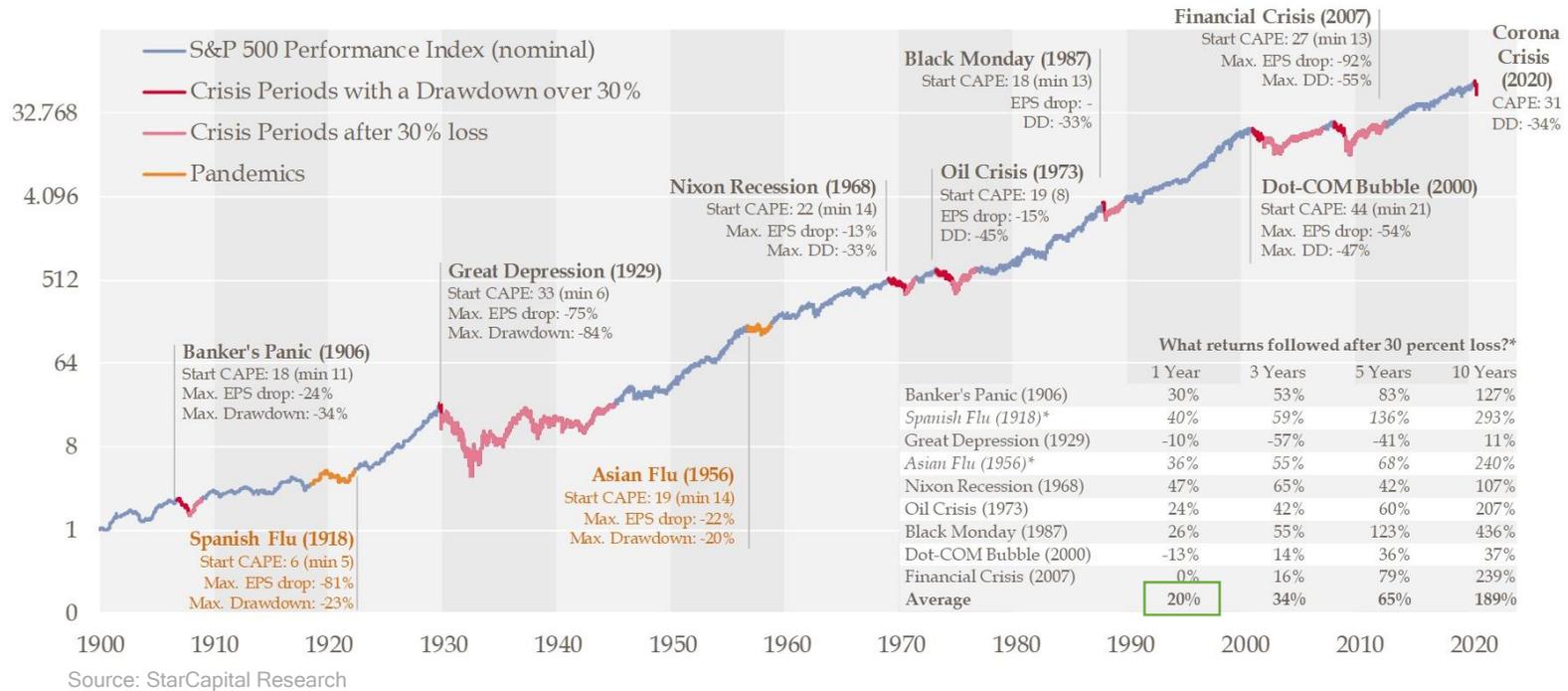
In response to the crisis, Congress, the Treasury Department, and the Federal Reserve all took war-like action to help combat economic slowdowns. Congress passed the CARES Act, the largest ever crisis relief bill to the tune of over \$2T. The Treasury Department is coordinating with the SBA to distribute the funds, and it is coordinating with the Federal Reserve to expand market liquidity. The Federal Reserve cut the Fed Funds Rate to 0%, set-up a \$10B commercial paper funding facility and initiated a \$700B Quantitative Easing program to purchase Treasuries, Mortgage Bonds, and Investment Grade Corporate Debt. While the end is not in sight, one thing is clear: everyone is expending all the resources they can to end it sooner than later.

What should you do now? The answer depends on whether you are a speculator or an investor. “A speculator is happy to buy more shares when prices rise, betting that Mr. Market will buy them back later at even crazier prices. When Mr. Market’s enthusiasm turns to fear and prices fall, the speculator sells into that panic.” An “investor scarcely ever is forced to sell his shares, and at all other times he is free to disregard the current price quotation”. – Benjamin Graham, author of *The Intelligent Investor* and mentor to Warren Buffett.

Long-term investors should always have a balance of stocks and bonds. During declines, investors should become more enthusiastic about buying stocks, bringing a portfolio closer aligned with their long-term objective. This process, also known as rebalancing, keeps investors disciplined and prevents them from “timing” the market.

The illustration on the following page also demonstrates that markets recover on average +20%, following crisis periods with drawdowns of more than 30%. And given the magnitude and speed of this decline, the recovery is expected to be much sooner. Note: it took just three trading days (March 24th, 25th, 26th) to rebound 17.5%, marking the largest three-day move for markets to the upside since the Great Depression.

These are certainly strange times, but the team at BCA remains vigilant and responsive. We take a long-term perspective and believe in the process of rebalancing and risk management. Most importantly, we are committed in guiding our clients through this period of uncertainty.



Disclosure: All expressions of opinion reflect the judgment of the author as of the date of publication and are subject to change. Content should not be regarded as a complete analysis of the subjects discussed or as personalized investment advice. All investment strategies have the potential for profit or loss. References to market performance in publications do not represent the returns achieved by Burgess Chambers & Associates or any of its advisory clients.