



Should the Coronavirus Change My Christianity?

Philippians 4:6: (NASB) *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*



The COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc. The virus itself is bad enough, but for most of us the havoc comes from what has been put in place to keep it from spreading. Jobs have been lost. Social, religious and family gatherings are all on hold, and we are supposed to just stay home. It feels like we have had enough. Boredom, restlessness, anxiety and depression are becoming our daily companions. Our personal desperation will likely continue to increase as there is no clear-cut pathway yet revealed to ending this chapter of life. What do we do? As Christians, how do we manage the rules that hinder our worship, the overabundance of

editorialized information, the isolation, the anxiety and the fear that drags on? Let's take a few steps back and put all these things in order so we can have a plan and work that plan.

For this first segment, we want to pull from the headlines and talk about how we should conduct ourselves.

Many churchgoers in the United States and around the world are up in arms because gun stores and liquor stores are deemed "essential businesses" during the lockdown, but churches are locked out from physically meeting because of the pandemic. Some clergy have disobeyed these orders, claiming the higher authority of God. For example, a Louisiana church pastor ignored orders to physically meet. While they have the ability to livestream, he says the word of God commands us to assemble together. Hebrews 10:25 and other Scriptures DO tell us this. Some are calling this a "persecution of the faith."

Could this complaining be because many churches are run like businesses? Are they afraid they will go under? The same Louisiana pastor sent out a message asking for people to send him their stimulus checks.

We ARE commanded to meet together, but we should not meet when we might endanger the lives of others. Christians who do not understand this are misrepresenting the mercy and love of God through Christ. As Christians, we should follow the rules of social distancing. We should be an example and let our lights shine.



Some claim religious freedom based, in part, on these Scriptures:

Acts 5:27-29: (NASB) ²⁷When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, ²⁸saying, We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. ²⁹But Peter and the apostles answered, We must obey God rather than men.



(Jesus' blood WAS upon them. They had yelled with the mob, *crucify him; his blood be upon us and our children.* Matthew 27:22,25)

But does Peter contradict himself when he instructs us to do this:

1 Peter 2:13-14: (NASB) ¹³Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

The Apostle Paul weighs in:

Romans 13:1-7: (NASB) ¹Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ²Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. ³For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; ⁴for it is a minister of God to you for good...

Daniel was a great example of following this admonition. He was subject to kings and faithfully served God without compromise.

But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. ⁵Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. ⁷Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

The rulers are in place by God's design so we can function and grow.

Before we try to harmonize these, we want to learn more about the Roman government at the time of the apostles.

CQ has a friend, Ann, who is an expert on early church history, specifically the first through third centuries. We asked her about the environment of the early church under Roman rule. The early church was often persecuted. And for roughly three centuries, being a Christian could equate to execution. But why? After all, the early church was a law-abiding church. There is little, if anything, that could be interpreted to promote civil unrest in the New Testament. Why (at least in the first two centuries) was this small and budding religion called Christianity so rife with martyrdom? We narrated Ann's words in the next audio clips.



Satan wanted to extinguish Christians who are considered "spiritual Israel," just like he has been trying to destroy natural Israel, who are still God's chosen people.



The early church was radical, *History of the Christian Church*

- *The early church was radical. Radical culturally, and radical in its mission. In fact, if it hadn't been so radical and zealous, its small numbers wouldn't have survived unto 313 AD when the Edict of Milan was passed, ending lawful persecution of the church. Now, Christianity does sort of start off as a clustered and primarily Jewish apocalyptic group that offended the Jewish community for its espousal of Christ, but also the Romans for its refusal to participate in common civic ceremonies that involved pagan*



worship. And because the pagan gods were a huge part of everyday Roman life, this was offensive enough to warrant persecution from the government. Moreover, the mission of the early church was kingdom-oriented, and as mentioned previously, the early church was radical. Their persistence in a message of morality in preparation for the new order was noted by the Roman authorities who, for the most part, regarded Christians as a general nuisance. But this continued preaching of subordination to a spiritual order, rather than to an earthly one, aggravated the state and made the church easy scapegoats. It should also be said that the early church welcomed this persecution as it meant they were not living like the pagans.



They were not living like the pagans around them. Their lives were about the gospel, the kingdom and preaching, not about themselves. They were not about collecting wealth, power and big buildings. That would change in the fourth century.



Fourth century changes, History of the Christian Church

- A quick glimpse into the lifestyle of first-through-third century Christians is that they were pacifists, separatists, feared prosperity, valued modesty, reviled almost every form of Roman entertainment from feasting to theatre - they met in homes and did not own church property, nor pay the clergy. In fact, much of what the early church considered foundational to the faith is absent in practice from the modern Christian church, and this will all begin under Constantine, when Christianity becomes the religion of the emperor, and the official faith of the Roman Empire. And pagan temples are converted into church property. And the formerly heretical concept of paying clergy leads to state sponsored salaries. As if paganism hadn't slowly been creeping into the church doctrines as more and more Gentiles entered the faith, it will now completely envelop the church during the fourth century, and all that will be left of the early Christian practices is held by small fringe groups who fight to survive against the Orthodoxy throughout the remainder of Christian history.

Christianity was not meant to be mainstream; it was never meant to govern nations or inspire revolutions. Christianity is radical because of an actual passion for God and the pursuit of holiness kept the church alive through the onslaught of civil and opposing religious regimes.

In the fourth century, it was easy for organized Christians to use mind control because people did not have Bibles and most could not read. At that point in time, "the church" shifted to buildings and not the people. How sad! Much of the doctrine became fear-oriented instead of gospel-oriented.



Please search our archives on the false doctrine of hell: [Is the Hell of Christian Tradition Taught in the Bible? \(Parts I, II and III\).](#)

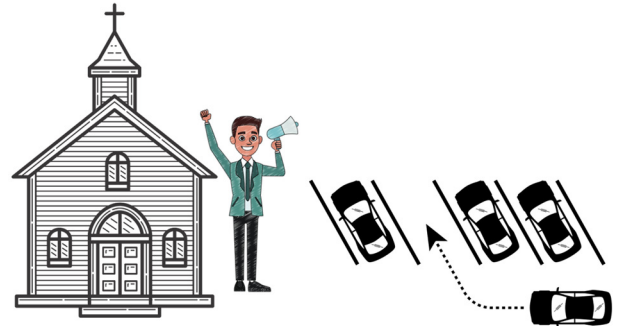
We are told to pray for those in authority:

1 Timothy 2:1-2: (NASB) ¹First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.



This freedom from governmental tyranny is not for the sake of our own prosperity, but rather so that we are free to teach and hear the gospel message.

We need to obey God but also obey the laws of the land. To get around this, some pastors have spoken with a bullhorn to people who drive up in cars. No one was in danger, but they were still given a fine. They were trying to obey the law with great creativity to get together to worship.



Jonathan and Rick are both pastors and currently conduct their services Bible online using Zoom. The congregations are meeting online.

We now know what the early church did and did NOT do. How do we fit into that mold?

What early Christian examples do we have to help our faith have a solid foundation in hard times?

There is one dramatic New Testament example of handling hardship that stands out. The Apostle Paul was a bundle of endless energy and spent decades going from place to place to preach and set up churches to follow Christ. Some of his most notable work came from his times of imprisonment.

(Source: <https://www.christianinconnect.com/background-to-pauls-prison-letters.html>)
Paul's Roman Imprisonment: Paul wrote the Books of Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians during his first imprisonment in Rome. The Lord Jesus brought Paul to Rome to complete the mission strategy that Jesus gave to his disciples just before his ascension into heaven. In Acts 1:8, Jesus told his disciples they were to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. With the coming of Paul to Rome, the gospel was brought from the Jewish capital of Jerusalem in the east to the Gentile capital of the world in Rome in the west. The Lord himself had told Paul, "Continue to be courageous! For as you testified these things about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome" (Acts 23:11).

Let's drop in on a story from Jonathan's cousin, Lisa, who is a community nurse in New England. Lisa is one of our CQ volunteers.



In all my years of nursing, I never thought I would be calling people to tell them they have tested positive for one of the worst viruses since the Spanish flu. My first weeks were so tough because I just didn't know how to provide the support and answers they needed - there just wasn't enough definitive knowledge on this pandemic. I came home and cried every night.

We will develop Lisa's story as we go through seven foundation principles taken from Apostle Paul's writings in prison.



FIRST FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE:

Frame your context as from God through Christ.



Was Paul a prisoner of Rome? Not by his own account! Paul used the following phrase many times in his prison letters:

Philemon 1:1: (NASB) *Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker.*

Paul saw himself as *a prisoner of Christ Jesus*, not a prisoner of Rome. He was imprisoned for the sake of Christ. This is a powerful way to look at being isolated.

Let's go back to Lisa's story.



I heard a comment in Bible study that had an enormously positive impact on me: "THIS IS A TIME TO LET OUR LIGHT SHINE." I went back into work that Monday, said a prayer and began a whole different approach. I provided the plan of action to keep them safe and let people know I'm there for them, and they can call me any time. Just providing that important link, just as Christ does for us, had more of an impact than I imagined. Many people recovered completely, and on my last call to release them from isolation, they expressed how much appreciation they had for the support from my team. We all need that link to know we are not alone in a difficult situation. It was about reaching out to say, "We've got you," and "You're not alone."

Lisa had a paradigm shift. She decided she could use this as an opportunity.



SECOND FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE:

Use your circumstances to be a beacon of the light of Christ.

Philippians 1:13-14: (NASB) ¹³so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, ¹⁴and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Paul was imprisoned, but even under normal circumstances we all are one way or another. How often can we do what we really want to do? We all have economic, physical, social or family restraints. Paul's incredible effectiveness and spirituality while he was in prison should be a lesson. We cannot use the excuse that we cannot do what we want to. Paul did great things while in chains, and so can we.



THIRD FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE:

Be profoundly prayerful one for another.

Colossians 1:9-10: (NASB) ⁹For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.



Colossians 4:2: (NASB) *Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.*

Paul lived a life of prayer every day while probably chained to a Roman guard.

Returning to Lisa's story:

Having to trace and connect with the people who have been in contact with the positive cases is difficult. They would need to quarantine for 14 days to see if they contracted this horrific virus. They feel vulnerable, like a "sitting duck." They are concerned they have exposed their entire family. People get frustrated with the person who contracted the virus, others are angry with themselves and most are just angry about the entire situation and its financial implications.

She was able to be a light in a very difficult situation.



FOURTH FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE:
Focus on others. Deeply encourage their preparations to be strong in Christ.

That is what Lisa did. She focused on how she could help and encourage others.

Ephesians 6:10-11: (NASB) ¹⁰*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.*

We need to help others be armed to fight a difficult circumstance.



FIFTH FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE:
Live your circumstances with freedom in Christ, even if you are in chains.

Colossians 1:11-14: (NASB) ¹¹*strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. ¹³For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Apostle Paul was transformed even though he was sitting in chains. We should look at our own isolation in this way.



Trish: One of the terms I would use is "uprooting." I found some of my notes on Episode 1094: How Do You Handle Being Uprooted in Life? This has been helpful for me because I'll admit, I have not handled this pandemic as well as I could have. It throws me off balance in work, in life. I feel like my work experience is upside down and backwards most of the time.



I want to share a few thoughts from Episode 1094. 1. *It is not fun to be uprooted, especially when you have no say in it. When uprooted, we normally ask, “What does God want from me?” Instead we should ask, “What does God want FOR me?”* 2. *Even dire circumstances can bring unexpected opportunity while bringing out the best in us as long as we maintain our highest focus.* 3. *With focus, long and lonely conditions bring profound and godly results. This has been very helpful for me. I think that podcast and this one will help me get my balance and be a big help.*



SIXTH FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE:
Be self-sacrificing on behalf of others to accomplish the highest right thing.

Philemon 1:9-13: (NASB) ⁹yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you—since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus. ¹⁰I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, ¹¹who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me. ¹²I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart, ¹³whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel.

We should do as Paul did and sacrifice for others.

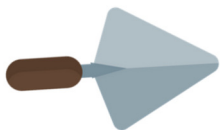


SEVENTH FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE:
Be willing to pass on the mantle of responsibility to those who are able.

Paul in prison before his death:

2 Timothy 4:1-2: (NASB) ¹I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

Paul never lost his confidence in God or Jesus, which is very inspirational to us during this time of the Coronavirus. In 2 Timothy 4:18,22, Paul's closing words show this even though he was in a Roman dungeon. Let these be our watch words: *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen. The Lord be with your spirit, grace be with you.* Confidence is very important for us, as well.



Summation of our Foundation Principles: We have the examples before us to teach us how to be beacons of Christian light in times like these. How seriously are we taking these principles? Ask yourself how you are doing.

There is a saying that says, “Tough times do not last, tough people do.” How tough of a Christian am I willing to be?



Let's get practical! The early church and the Apostle Paul are great, but how do we handle isolation?

The practical, hands-on, everyday event of social distancing and fear for our economic future IS a big deal. We have never experienced anything like this before, so we need to understand how to put things in order with all of our 21st century challenges being considered.

As Christians what SHOULD our lives look like?

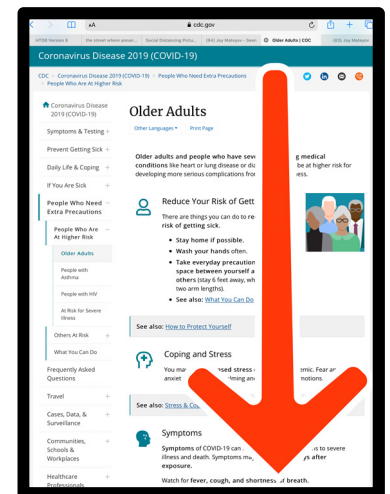


For more on understanding how to get through the information, please see Episode 1119: How Does the Coronavirus Fit Into God's plan?

We should be vetting the onslaught of editorialized information we have before us 24/7 on social media and the news. There is too much overload of information and not enough understanding of how to hear it.

 **Vertical reading, Sort Fact from Fiction Online with Lateral Reading, Stanford History Education Group**

- *We live in an era of information of overabundance. This demands that we be more discerning. Instead of accepting information at face value, we should always ask this one important question: "Who's behind the information?" The Stanford History Education Group conducted a study with Stanford undergraduates, professors from four different universities and professional fact-checkers to determine the most effective methods for evaluating digital information. There were dramatic differences in how intelligent people looked at the web. Many smart undergrads and esteemed professors evaluated the site by reading vertically; staying on the site and reading it as if it were a printed document.*



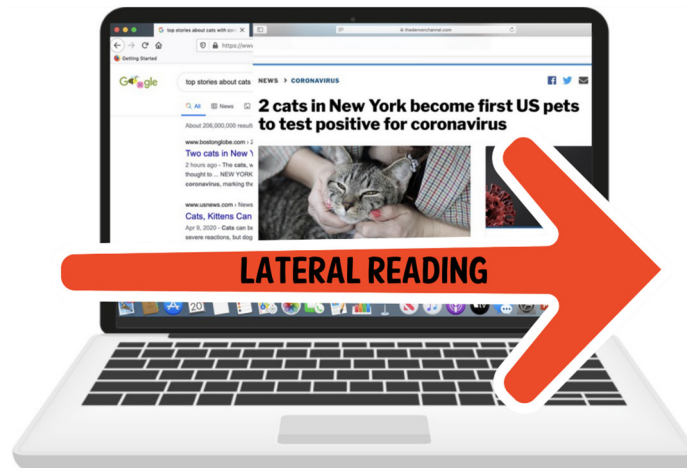
Many people read documents from top to bottom.



In the age we are in with such a wide variety of information sources, we need to learn to read differently. The Stanford History Education Group suggests “lateral” reading.

Lateral reading, Sort Fact from Fiction Online with Lateral Reading, Stanford History Education Group

- *Professional fact-checkers approach the web differently. They understood that on the web, what you see is often not what you get. The web is treacherous territory, and you can't let your eyes deceive you. Landing on an unfamiliar site, they didn't waste precious time engaged in close reading. Instead, they said, they opened new tabs in their browser and read laterally.*



This suggests we spread out our sources to be sure what we are digesting is based on truth and not editorialized or ideas in the making.

In our first Coronavirus episode, **#1119: Does the Coronavirus Fit Into God's Plan**, we heard from Julie's lifelong Christian friend, Dr. Wendy Trzyna, Professor of Microbiology at Marshall University. We asked her how she as a scientist sorts through the mountains of information coming into us, piling on every day. In her audio clip she is referring to lateral reading.

Vetting information, Dr. Wendy Trzyna, Professor of Microbiology at Marshall University

- *The internet provides us a continuous stream of information on just about any topic. How, though, do you choose who to listen to, what to read and what to believe? There are several criteria to consider, and everyone can easily apply these to what they are reading or hearing on social media and be confident in knowing what information to trust.*
- *First, who is the speaker, writer or author of the article and are they credible? Find out if this*





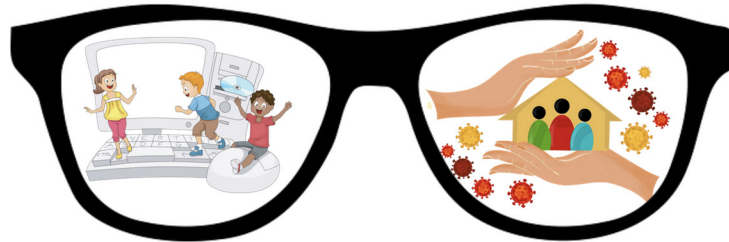
person has some credentials. Are they an expert in their field with the appropriate educational background, knowledge or experience? That you can check.

- *Secondly, determine whether the information being presented is backed up by reputable sources. Often an “opinion piece” is just that, whereas a real bonafide reporting, or discussion of factual statements, will be supported by real data that has been acquired through well-controlled scientific experiments. Determine whether the author is talking about actual research studies that have been published in scientific journals. Scientific journals comprise the primary literature where scientists and researchers publish the findings of their studies. Articles found in “peer-reviewed” publications are most reliable because this means that other scientists have vetted the study and the data contained therein.*

Please see the Bonus Material for more information from Dr. Wendy.

As Christians what SHOULD our lives look like?

LEARN TO LOOK AT YOUR “NEW NORMAL”
THROUGH THE EYES OF CHALLENGE AND GROWTH,
RATHER THAN THE EYES OF DEPRESSION AND LOSS.



Rick: Joining us is a fellow Christian who is in her eighties; she lives alone since her husband died five years ago. She still runs a bookkeeping business, attends church every week and has all of her local family (18 people) over for Sunday dinner nearly every week. THIS IS MY MOM!

You are in a category of high risk. How did you originally handle the social distancing?

My first thought when I heard about social distancing was, “That might be interesting and maybe a little exciting!” I cancelled my usual routine. I stopped working Mondays in New Haven and Tuesdays in Shelton. (Connecticut) I stopped shopping Fridays, I stopped making sauce and meatballs and cookies for Sunday family lunch, and I could no longer attend church services in-person and had to attend on computer with the video. It is very different.



You dove in and made the adjustment. What happened as several weeks went by?



It was okay for the first week or two. It became more difficult. I had no clue what impact this would have on me. My energy was low, my attitude was poor, I was super-sensitive to any mistakes, I needed to push hard to get anything done, I missed working on location, and of course, I missed family lunch on Sundays. I was feeling depressed and stressed, and I didn't know what day it was. I had to check my cell phone for the day and date. I had situations where I couldn't find my glasses; they were in my pocket. I wasted a lot of time, and it became very difficult.

Anna May's story is similar to that of many. She is feeling the pressure of needing to be careful and take care of herself. She is not the type of person to get depressed.

The turning point for me was when I received an email from one of my daughters. She mentioned that the Apostle Paul, while he was under house arrest, had written many encouraging Scriptures that showed an encouraging attitude.

I'm not under house arrest; I'm only quarantined. I read the book of Ephesians and Colossians. I found some inspiring and helpful Scriptures I would like to share:

Colossians 1:9: (New Living Translation) *...ask God to give you complete knowledge of His will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding.*

This is different than the earthly way of looking at things.

Romans 12:2: (New Living Translation) *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

That rang a bell in my mind. All I could think of was: You cannot change the facts, but you can change the way you look at them.

Colossians 1:11: (New Living Translation) *We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy.*

Of course, under situations like this we need endurance and patience.

Ephesians 3:16: (New Living Translation) *I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.*

Colossians 3:2: (New Living Translation) *Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.*

The next Scripture is a theme text I use for work:

Colossians 3:23: (New Living Translation) *Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.*

When doing a difficult or boring job, if you work as if working for the Lord, you automatically improve the quality of your work. It is helpful in this situation, if we do it for the Lord rather than for self.



Colossians 3:15: (New Living Translation) *And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.*

2 Timothy 1:7: (New Living Translation) *For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*

I needed self-discipline in order to change my thought process.

John 14:27: (New Living Translation) *I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart...So don't be troubled or afraid.*

These Scriptures inspire me and help me to stop thinking about myself and to put things in the Lord's hands. We get strength, comfort and encouragement from him.

She had a challenge that was different than anything she had before, so she went to "The Book" that gives her the inspiration to be able to cope.

I put key points together from all of those Scriptures and made a few sentences:

- Ask for spiritual wisdom and understanding.
- Let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think so you will have all the endurance and patience you need.
- Be filled with joy, live in peace and always be thankful. This results in peace of mind and heart.
- You cannot change the facts, but you can change the way you look at them.

It is a decision to transform the difficulty into blessing. That is what the Apostle Paul did. Can we do what the Apostle Paul did in our difficulty and isolation?

We need to remember those who need extra encouragement. More focus on them means less focus on myself!

What other practical steps can we take to combat the loneliness, fear and aimlessness of isolation?

For a society that has always had places to go, people to see and things to do at any given moment, the trauma of sudden and overwhelming isolation is a real shock to our system. All of this, as with any other challenge that comes to us in daily life, comes down to what I WILL DECIDE to think and do. We are in a position that requires something different. Our response, therefore, has to be something different. We get our inspiration from the Bible.



Special Guest: Hannah Pop, DNP (Doctor of Nursing Practice), ACNP (Acute Care Nurse Practitioner)

Hannah was with us previously. Please search our archives for Episode 1116: How Do I Avoid Burnout? (Part I)



The global pandemic of Coronavirus or COVID-19 has changed the way we interact with each other, as family, as friends, as co-workers, and even with the person standing next to you in line. In the wake of the spread of coronavirus across the world, there is a second epidemic touching lives, the mental and spiritual impact of the new normal.

Some aspects of this impact include feelings of **loneliness, anxiety, stress and fear** affecting the Christian walk.

Loneliness: To contain the spread of the virus, there is a call for social distancing and isolation for those who may be or are infected. These measures can lead to feelings of individual loneliness, which is an emotional state in which one feels sadness due to a *perceived* disconnection from others. We can be in a room full of people yet still feel lonely. Or, we can be physically isolated but still feel connected to those in our lives, and to the Lord as well.



- Humans are created in God's image, and we naturally seek love, companionship and connection with those around us. Even in the darkest hours of this pandemic we see acts of kindness and love that surpass the despair of sickness and death facing mankind. Even though we are apart, there is a solidarity among all of us as human beings. We are going through this together and should draw strength from this. Reach out to others. The more we think about someone else, the more we are able to cope with our own personal issues.
- Jesus gave special comfort to his followers, knowing loneliness is a common human emotion. He said in Matthew 18:20: (KJV) *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*, and reinforced this again saying in Matthew 28:20: (KJV) *...I am with you always, even to the end of the age*. He is with those who call upon his name to bless, comfort, and strengthen them, especially in times of trouble. He promised he will never leave or forsake us, and He is faithful who has promised this. Even though we may be isolated at this time, this is a good time to develop our personal relationship with Christ. We are free to work on something that might have gotten

pushed aside because we have been too busy. What better way to develop a personal relationship with anyone than to spend time with them? A lot of us now have time. How are we investing that time?

- Finding ways to shine your Christian light safely in this time can help combat feelings of loneliness. Take advantage of the modern technology, a blessing the Apostle Paul did not have when he was in prison. Stay connected in online fellowship and study. Or, simply pick up your phone and check in on someone else. The more you connect, the more connected you will feel during this time. This is something that comes more easily to the younger generation. We challenge them to reach out to those who are not as technologically savvy and help them to connect as well.



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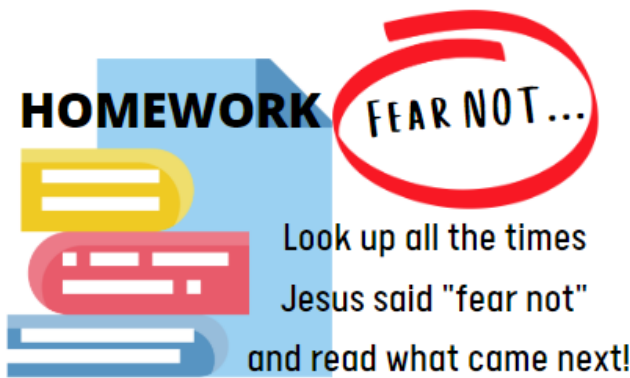
Hannah made a chart of everyone over a certain age and emailed it to all those younger and said, “Pick someone” and be responsible to call them and find out if they need groceries and make sure they are connected.

Check out our CQ Kids video, [How Can We Be of Service to Others?](#)

- Acts of kindness also help fight loneliness by focusing on others. As a nurse practitioner, I see homemade signs posted in front of the hospital reminding healthcare workers how much they are appreciated. I can’t tell you how much these little things mean. I slow down in my car and read each one before pulling into the parking lot. It gives me the energy and a boost I need to get through the shift. It is small acts like this we can do for each that help us not to feel so alone.



Anxiety, fear and stress: There are many reasons to feel anxious and stressed during this pandemic. People are fearful of loss of jobs, loss of home, loss of health and loss of life. This is a universal feeling. As we are “imprisoned” in our homes, it is hard to fight off rising feelings of panic and despair. Jesus said many times to his followers, *fear not*. These two words were usually followed by a blessing and a promise.



Working full time at home while suddenly becoming schoolteachers for your children can push even the greatest reserves of patience and resilience. God knows what we need and what trials we can withstand. If He allows us to be tested, He will allow us the means to cope with those trials. 1 Corinthians 10:13.



- It is okay to feel feelings. If you can name the feeling, then you can address it. Are you feeling anxious? We are in an unprecedented time in world history, but we should be careful to guard our minds against these emotions that tend to creep in with unprofitable extremes. 1 Peter 5:7: (NASB) *Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.* Worries rob us from the peace of God. Philippians 4:7: (NASB) *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*



People told me I was acting anxious and worried. I did not realize I was going down that path. I prayed, "Lord, help me to overcome this." People showed me acts of kindness. I am the sole income earner of the family, and now there is no income. Now what? I put that burden on Him and the Lord has provided. Things are working out. I got caught up in what is happening.

- Limiting media exposure can help during this time. There is a fine line between staying informed and being sucked into media riddled with messages of fear that are not profitable or uplifting.
 - Social media has become more edgy and combustible during this crisis. Seemingly innocuous comments have turned into explosive tirades. Social media is full of trolling, conspiracies and scams. Everyone is mad and yelling at everyone else. To create order in life, people are leveling judgment upon each other, convinced they are right in their own eyes. The Christian would certainly never do this in person and should have no part in this behavior online.





Divisiveness only adds to collective suffering.

- Some may be tested more than others. Do not make a comparison with your friends and family on how they are coping. Some people will be tested more severely than others. For those who are taking extra precautions, do not judge them as having a lack of faith. For those who seem more nonchalant in their behaviors, do not judge them as having a lack of wisdom. We should each exercise a spirit of prudence and sound reasoning. 2 Timothy 1:7: (KJV) *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind.* Romans 14:12: (NASB) *So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.*

Christian maturity includes giving space for others to interpret the best way for themselves.



My daughter, also a nurse practitioner, contracted the virus. Just recently her husband got it, and they have a 15-month-old baby, so we know what it is like to have it in the household.

- All of us are experiencing grief and sorrow, either a direct loss of family and friends, or witnessing it as healthcare providers, or watching it on the news as daily reports of death tolls rise. It is said that the death of thousands is a statistic while the death of one is a tragedy. The human mind can comprehend a life lost, but thousands of deaths are beyond most peoples' comprehension of what that loss means. Remember that each and every life is precious to God, and not one life is forgotten by God who will raise everyone from the grave in His kingdom. Luke 12:6: (NASB) *Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God.* We are more precious than sparrows. Despite having all of this suffering and death toll around us, we need to know God remembers every human who has ever lived. He has given us His promise for the restoration of the whole human race.

In spite of the fear, anxiety, anger and unrest, God's plan has every single human being in the palm of His hand. We need to pause and consider that piece. We want to keep moving forward, through (not around) the difficulties.

There is one piece to the Christian coping puzzle that is not yet in place. What is God's plan in all this?

Coping skills are necessary. Scriptural examples are key. Being Christlike is a must. But without a strong conviction about the bigness of God's overall plan and providence through this unique and difficult time, we are more likely to fall prey to doubt and anxiety. God's plan has always existed.



How Have Christians Responded to Epidemics in the Past, *Eternal Perspective Ministries*



- *It was Martin Luther writing on the plague of 1527. Here's what he said about the plague of 1527: "You ought to think this way. Very well, by God's decree, the enemy (Satan) has sent a pestilence." So, you see, Satan can send a pestilence, but it's by God's decree. It is only by the permission of God. Satan can't do anything to you, as we see in the book of Job, except that*

which God permits. Then Luther says, "I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then, I shall administer medicine and take it. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order not to become contaminated, and thus, per chance, infect and pollute others. Where I am needed, there I'll go, but if people in a city were to show themselves bold in faith when a neighbor's needs so demands, and cautious when no emergency exists, and if everyone would help ward off contagion as best he can, then the death toll would indeed be moderate. But if some are too panicky and desert their neighbors in their plight; and on the other hand, if some are so foolish as to not take precautions but aggravate the contagion, then the devil has a heyday and many more will die."

This was 500 years ago. It is good to hear the wisdom of not panicking, being of sound mind and not taking foolish chances. This shows the sacrificial Christian perspective of helping neighbors in need. Many Christians lost their lives during that plague by ministering to others. What a beautiful opportunity it can be for us to let the light of Christ shine through us.

"POWER POINTS" OF GOD'S PLAN:

All of God's intelligent creation, be they spirit or human, have been endowed with the extraordinary gift of free will, the ability to choose. He created us so we could be like Him in this way. He gives this gift so His creation will be able to ultimately experience, feel and live in eternal harmony. To teach His creation to have eternal appreciation for this harmony, His plan calls for a period of intense learning. Free choice brings about these learning experiences. This learning period is what we are going through in our world today, and its lessons will echo for countless ages to come.



1. God has foresight and had His plan in place LONG BEFORE SIN TOUCHED HUMANITY.

Revelation 13:8: (KJV) *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

The fact that this verse (and others) allude to a time in history before history was written, tells us God knew the pathway of not only His spirit creation, but all His earthly creation. This shows God has foresight and uses it for good. God is not *reactive* - God is *proactive*. This is the God of the universe!



2. God uses his foresight for ultimate good, AND IT IS ALWAYS BASED UPON A FOUNDATION OF JUSTICE.

Psalms 89:14: (NASB) *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; lovingkindness and truth go before You.*

We can always rely on the fact that God is righteous, and God is just. God always does the next right thing. What determines what is right? Justice!



**3. While God's Justice is exacting,
His mercy is also encompassing.
GOD'S PLAN IS BUILT ON APPLYING BOTH
JUSTICE AND MERCY IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

Romans 6:23: (NASB) *For the wages of sin is death...*

Justice always requires its price, but God provides help. He does not provide a way to avoid it; He provides a way through it.

Romans 6:23b: (NASB) *...but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

How does this work? How can we have justice AND mercy?

By arranging for justice to be fulfilled:

1 Timothy 2:5-6: (WEY) *⁵For there is but one God and but one mediator between God and men - Christ Jesus, himself man; ⁶who gave himself as the redemption price for all—a fact testified to at its own appointed time.*

The answer is Jesus. But it seems this plan is out of balance. How could one man be the redemption price for all? Because of how God's plan is structured.



**4. God's plan provided an efficient
and effective way
TO RESTORE HIS CREATION TO
RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

It is no surprise that God is efficient, nor that He is effective. God allowed the first man to sin and the rest to inherit sin. Therefore, only one man was required to ransom that one man who sinned.

The result was a changed inheritance for ALL others:

Romans 5:18-19: (NASB) *¹⁸So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. ¹⁹For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.*

One man's *disobedience* resulted in *death*. One man's *obedience* resulted in *life*. It is perfectly balanced. There is nothing left out. Look at the beauty and the efficiency of this. This is the BEST NEWS.



**5. Jesus was that one man needed in God's plan.
Through his Ransom would come the
restoration of all that had been lost.
THAT IS WHY HE TAUGHT US TO PRAY.**

Matthew 6:9-10: (NASB) *⁹Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*



Have we seen God's kingdom established here on earth? Why would Jesus tell us to pray for something that would not happen? After mankind has learned from 6,000 years of these experiences, we will see the beauty of God's kingdom here on earth.



**6. The results of this age
of sin and death will bring
WORLDWIDE PEACE, HARMONY
AND HEALTH UNDER GOD'S HAND.**

Daniel 2:44: (NASB) *In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.*

Revelation 21:4: (NASB) *and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.*

Do you believe it? It is written in the Book. Do not allow yourself to fall prey to panic, fear, and the anxiety of wondering what is going to happen. God has us all in His palm. Be kind, wonderful human beings and be shining lights of the news of God's plan of HOPE during this difficult time and always!

*So, should the Coronavirus change my Christianity?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



**Join us next week for our podcast on April 27, 2020
Ep. 1123: Can Our Sins Ever Produce Blessings?**

Bonus Material and Study Questions

When we are no longer able to change a situation - we are challenged to change ourselves.
— Viktor E. Frankl



Here is the rest of Dr. Wendy's advice for properly vetting scientific information:

Here are a few tips for determining what exactly is a real scientific study. You may recall learning about the "scientific method" back in science class. A legitimate scientific paper is a report of a study that was conducted using the scientific method. This method is essentially the testing of a hypothesis (question) through experimentation. Data is collected and analyzed, and conclusions are drawn. Proper experiments include both experimental and control groups. A control is the group to which no "treatments" were applied. Without a control group, it is impossible to determine if the treatments being tested actually had any real measurable effect on the experimental group. So, if you are reading about a new medication and you come across the term "controlled study," that tells you that it is a clinical trial in which the "test agent" (new medication) is being compared to a standard treatment with known effects. The control group may receive no treatment or placebo. And a randomized control trial is considered to be the most reliable. If we are talking about a new treatment or medicine, this kind of testing is the gold standard for determining the efficacy of a new drug or treatment. That is, does it really work?

(Source: <https://www.christianinconnect.com/background-to-pauls-prison-letters.html>)

The Books of Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians:

Paul's Roman Imprisonment: Paul wrote the Books of Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians during his first imprisonment in Rome. The Lord Jesus brought Paul to Rome to complete the mission strategy that Jesus gave to his disciples just before his ascension into heaven. In [Acts 1:8](#) Jesus told his disciples they were to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Paul was brought to Rome to complete the mission of bringing Jesus' gospel to the ends of the earth. With the coming of Paul to Rome the gospel was brought from the Jewish capital of Jerusalem in the east to the Gentile capital of the world in Rome in the west. The Lord himself had told Paul, "Continue to be courageous! For as you testified these things about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome," ([Acts 23:11](#)).

In compliance with the Lord Jesus' will to have his gospel brought to Rome, Paul came there, not as an apostle who was free to go about conducting his ministry, but as an apostle in chains whose activities were limited because he was held under house arrest and guard.

His imprisonment began in Caesarea years earlier. At the end of his third missionary journey, during which time he spent more than two years working in Ephesus, Paul revisited the churches he had established in Macedonia, the northern province of Greece, on his second missionary journey. From there he traveled to Jerusalem by way of Troas and Miletus. In Jerusalem the Jews mobbed Paul, because they thought he had desecrated the temple by bringing a Gentile into it. Roman soldiers came to Paul's rescue and took him into their custody. Paul then became entangled in the Roman judicial system. He was taken to the Roman governor Felix in the provincial capital of Caesarea. Felix kept Paul imprisoned there for two years, hoping that he might receive a bribe from Paul for his freedom. Festus then succeeded Felix as governor and intended to appease the Jews by having Paul transferred for trial to Jerusalem. Paul then resorted to his right as a Roman citizen and appealed his case to Caesar in Rome.

Paul was transferred by ship under guard to Rome. Enroute his ship was wrecked in a storm off the island of Malta. Paul finally arrived in Rome the beginning of April A.D. 60. There he was held under house arrest and guard for the next two years. His Roman imprisonment, or captivity, was from April A.D. 60 to April A.D. 62.

The Internal Evidence Within the Letters: The internal evidence within the letters clearly indicate Paul wrote them while a prisoner in Rome. The internal evidence is as follows:



In the letter to the Colossians he wrote:

Colossians 4:10: Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greeting...

Colossians 4:18: This greeting is by my hand, Paul's. Continue to remember my imprisonment.

In the letter to Philemon he wrote:

Philemon 1: Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, our brother; To Philemon our beloved and fellow worker...

Philemon 9: for the sake of love I rather appeal, being such as Paul an old man, but now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus

Philemon 23: Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you.

In the letter to the Ephesians he wrote:

Ephesians 3:1: For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles

Ephesians 4:1: Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the calling with which you were called.

Ephesians 6:20: I am an ambassador in chains.

In the letter to the Philippians he wrote:

Philippians 1:12-14: Now I want you to come to know, brothers, that the things concerning me here have worked for the greater advancement of the gospel, so that my imprisonment on account of Christ has become known in the whole palace guard and to all the rest of the people, and most of the brothers in the Lord have become confident because of my imprisonment to have much more courage to speak the word without fear.

Christian Questions Weekly Newsletter

CQ Rewind Show Notes and Study Questions

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to **22828** to get started.



Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1122: Should the Coronavirus Change My Christianity?

<https://christianquestions.com/program/1122-coronavirus-isolation/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. Should we meet together for Sunday gatherings despite the health risks of COVID-19? Why or why not? (See Acts 5:27-29, 1 Peter 2:13-14, Romans 1:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-2)
2. What troubles did the early church face? What can we learn from them regarding obedience to the laws of our governments?
3. How did Paul cope with his imprisonment? How can we be like him during our quarantine? (See Philemon 1:1, Philippians 1:9-14, Colossians 1:9-14, 4:2, Ephesians 6:10-11, 2 Timothy 4:1-2)
4. What can we do to find the truth in the vast sea of information found on the internet?
5. What can help us overcome stress and depression in our current situation? (See John 14:27, Romans 12:2, Colossians 1:9-11, 3:2, 15, 23, Ephesians 3:16, 2 Timothy 1:7)
6. What are some practical steps that we can take to handle the loneliness caused by social distancing? (See Matthew 18:20, 28:20)
7. What can we do to manage our anxiety, fear and stress during these difficult times? (See 1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:7, 2 Timothy 1:7, Luke 12:6)
8. What comfort can we receive from how God designed His plan? (See Revelation 13:8, Psalm 89:14, Romans 5:18-19, 6:3, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, Matthew 6:9-10)
9. What will come next because of this current time period we are in? (See Daniel 2:44, Revelation 21:4)
10. How has COVID-19 affected your daily life? Are you feeling any negative emotions because of self-isolation? What will you do to make the most out of this situation?