

Coronavirus | CoVid 19 Update #2
Keep it Real and Pray for the Ideal
Tuesday March 17, 2020

Isaiah 41:10 says, *“Don’t panic. I’m with you. There’s no need to fear for I’m your God. I’ll give you strength. I’ll help you. I’ll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you.”* {TM}

Well, here’s another fine mess we find ourselves in.

Let’s look at the facts - the stock market has tanked, borders are closing, airports and cities are madhouses or ghost towns, businesses are struggling, people are struggling, freedom and mobility is dwindling to war-time levels, and worst of all, people are sick and dying.

How do we deal with it all?

First of all, understand that many of us are experiencing some measure of shock. That’s why, as you’re working from home, you feel so numb with very little motivation to get anything done.

With the recent forecasts predicting, not weeks but months of social distancing, we have to be very careful in how we mentally prepare ourselves.

Jim Stockdale was an American general captured and imprisoned during the Vietnam War. He was held and tortured for seven years.

Stockdale said the first people to die in captivity were the *optimists*, who kept thinking things would get better quickly and they’d be released. *“They died of a broken heart,”* Stockdale said.

Intead, Stockdale argued, the key to survival was to combine realism and hope. In Stockdale’s words:

“This is a very important lesson. You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end—which you can never afford to lose—with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”

Unprecedented times call for unprecedented measures. If you’re worried about overreaction, delayed reaction may be a bigger problem.

From Josh Barro, the [business columnist for New York Magazine](#):

*Justin Lessler, the Johns Hopkins University epidemiologist, noted a way in which this epidemic tricks people into panicking when it’s **too late**. “If people are only going to start taking the actions they should when they start to see a lot of people dying around them, it’s already too late,” he says.*

When you combine the substantial period from infection to death with exponential growth in infections, the number of deaths you see around you is likely far lower than the number of deaths you are about to see. The people who stand to die within the next 30 days may not even be very sick yet. And when they get very sick, the hospitals may be overwhelmed and ill-prepared to respond. This is the corner Italy backed itself into. We might be headed there, too.

Isaiah 41:10 from The Message says, *“Don’t panic. I’m with you. There’s no need to fear for I’m your God. I’ll give you strength. I’ll help you. I’ll hold you steady, keep a firm grip on you.”*

Practically speaking, the following suggestions are vital to your mental, emotional, physical and spiritual health in the early days of dealing with this pandemic.

- **Get some sleep.** A tired leader is an ineffective leader. Your body and brain need rest.
- **Pray and meditate.** Start every day with some time to reflect, pray and even meditate on scripture and surrender the problems you have to God. I like to start my day this way but if I miss it in the morning I have a rule that I can’t watch TV or check social in the evening till I’ve spent some time with God.
- **Get some exercise.** Even a 20 minute run or a brisk walk will help. If you can do it with someone else, all the better, especially if you’re an extrovert.
- **Eat better.** Yep, this is sounding a lot like what you already know. But just do it.
- **Call a friend you can talk to.** In a crisis, you need people who want something for you not anything from you. Phone a friend.
- **Spend at least some time with your family.** They need your leadership and friendship too, as much as your church or company does.

Thanks to Carey Nieuwhof for information included in this note