

LESSONS LEARNED FROM COVID-19

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We have now lived through five months of intense focus on a virus that has destroyed lives and families, as well as businesses and family bank accounts. As we proceed through the next months, there is still a great deal of uncertainty in what we will face. It would be good for us to take a look at what we have or have not learned about ourselves during the pandemic so far. That way, we can avoid falling into any traps we found ourselves in during the first part of the year, and run the rest of our race to win!

Here are ten ways to assess what we have done so far and give a kick-start to what we might do in the coming months.

1. I may not be able to control my circumstances but I can control my responses to them. Isaiah 41:10, "So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."
2. Boredom and bad habits can tempt me to be "tired" of the situation, but pursuit of godliness can consume me. Isaiah 26: 3, "Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace—because they trust in you."
3. Lack of substantive resources can be real, but panic is a choice to not trust in God. 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."
4. Hoarding may be the way of the world but generosity is the way of the cross. Luke 12:25-26, "Which one of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"
5. Death is feared when faith is absent. Psalm 46:1-3, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging."
6. Complaining sets us up for unbelief. We should be demonstrating how we are not overwhelmed by what is happening. Nehemiah 8:10, "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."
7. Ministry to others is available if you look for opportunities around you. Create family memories; hold your own family church services or Sunday School. Children do not have to be scarred emotionally or psychologically but can gain

understanding and fruit of the Spirit through these times. Deuteronomy 33:27, "The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

8. A little love makes a BIG difference. Who is next door to you? Do they need help beyond the physical kind? Matthew 10:8, "... Freely you have received; freely give."

9. You may not be able to believe the press or the politicians, but you can believe God. Think of those who do not have Him! Proverbs 18:10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe."

10. Prayer can encompass every aspect of life listed above. Psalm 32:7-8, "You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance."

Send your any S.O.S. to the One who knew the pandemic was coming before the foundation of the world. He also knows if it will return in the fall, if there will be subsequent outbreaks, when a vaccine will be found, when life will be back to normal.

Do we really want life to go back to normal? Or do we want an American people who are not afraid to say, "God bless us." on the news without censure? Do we want to be contagious in our generosity, our love, our peace, and our joy? Do we want our prayers to continue as hard and numerous in the good times as when the world turns south around us? Do we want to be like the three Hebrew children who stood tall in the midst of the fiery furnace?

Philippians 4:6, "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."