

There Is No Vaccine for This

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“Eat your vegetables,” I said emphatically to Emma my daughter. “But I don’t like them,” she whined. I responded, “Don’t you know that there is some little girl just like you who wishes they could have those vegetables because they are so hungry.” Reluctantly, the guilt projection took over and she picked up her fork.

Today, we are hearing words and phrases that never before have been used, like COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing, and flatten the curve. We have learned the differences between medical terms like quarantine vs. isolation, respirator vs. ventilator, and epidemic vs. pandemic. Then there is the elusive term that is being used: the “New Normal.” When the professionals use these words on television, we seem to picture something different from the next person. This New Normal can bring fear into hearts who hate change and resist it at every turn. For others, the changes that we will have on a long-term basis will be insignificant compared to what we value the most.

What are we to expect in the future? Many small business owners will no longer have their dream of success. Large businesses are finding they don’t have to maintain expensive office buildings to house employees. What will characterize our daily existence? Will we look like the Asian countries who have continued to use masks since the SAARS virus hit them in 2003?

We have to admit that we have been spoiled in America. We experienced the horror of the 9/11 terrorists, but do not see the Middle East incidents that take away the simple act of going to a restaurant or store. We have had to face criminal activity and violence but at just a fraction of what many Eastern European countries have faced. We have hungry and homeless people in the U.S. but we have not been exposed to widespread starvation and relocation of people. Even the prejudice and discrimination that exists in our country cannot compare with the genocidal disposal of anybody who does not meet the current governmental guidelines.

I am not minimizing our problems; I’m just trying to give some perspective to what we have faced compared to the rest of the world. Yet, Emma still doesn’t like eating her green beans even when I told her that somewhere in the world a child would give anything to have them. That is because she is spoiled.

Hebrews 6:12 says, “So that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” What is the worst that the New Normal could be? I don’t think it includes any lifestyle changes that we have to fear.

When Jesus was ready to ascend to heaven following His resurrection, the disciples knew there would be great change for them. Their lifestyles would completely revert to

what they did before following Jesus all over the countryside. They would have to put up with those who didn't approve of their relationship with the "itinerant preacher." They were so undone by the change, they just stood there looking up at heaven after Jesus disappeared with their mouths open and question marks above their heads!

Jesus had already told them what they needed to do next. They were to stay in Jerusalem and wait. For those A-type personalities, waiting would be excruciatingly unproductive. For the others, the waiting may not be the problem, but being sure of what could happen next could stress them out.

The point is that the disciples didn't have a 5-year success strategy. They didn't even have a one-week plan. Yet, when the Holy Spirit did arrive, it changed them forever. They became driven because of the power that Jesus had promised them. They knew exactly what to do and most of them knew how to do it. Every personality represented by the disciples gave themselves to the task and became the spark that drove Christianity throughout the known world. That was their New Normal.

You may have to wear masks everywhere for the foreseeable future. Instead of grumbling, try remembering that the mask does not cover your ability to speak His words to those you meet. Instead of feeling deprived because of social distancing, remind yourself that Jesus has distanced you from sin and its consequences. And when you have to wash your hands yet one more time, remember that your true washing is in the Word of God daily. Your new perspective can make the New Normal well beyond merely survival...it can make the future something to look forward to – an opportunity for new greatness, just as the disciples had in the first century.

Be great, woman of God, be great!