

Finding Hope During Times of Uncertainty

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Brothers and sisters, all across the globe we have entered a very unique and stressful time- a season in our lives that may bring up our worry and feelings of uncertainty. Though we are able to wash our hands, practice social distancing, and take care of our neighbors as best we can, we have come to find that there is still a lot that is out of our control.

When we lose a sense of control over our lives, it is very normal to feel disoriented and to want to grasp at things that help us feel secure again, like hoard grocery supplies, watch the news incessantly to keep a tab on everything happening, or try to control everyone else around us. Our bodies may tense in anticipation of what waits for us around the corner. We may try to predict the future in order to guarantee that we'll get a certain outcome that we are ready for, though no one fully knows what is to come.

Even in the midst of all this uncertainty, there is *hope* (Hebrews 6:19). We do not have to feel paralyzed or helpless but can move forward with our lives and the world *just as it is*.

Here are a few tips to consider:

1.) Acknowledge what you are feeling.

Fear, sadness, or anger are perfectly normal, natural feelings that may be rising in you. There is insecurity, grief over your varying losses, and anxiety over what your future holds. Instead of avoiding these emotions, you can acknowledge this pain with compassion. You can ask the Lord to enter into the pain with you (Psalm 46:10).

2.) Affirm who *you* are and who *God* is.

Going through difficult times can make us believe we are powerless, insignificant, or out of control. It may even make us doubt God's goodness. Again, this is a normal way to feel, and yet we are not held captive to these initial reactions. Begin this step by affirming that you are a beloved child of God, a God who looks at you with infinite love, tenderness, and tremendous regard (Isaiah 43:4). You are not small or unimportant to the Lord who is always near. Remember that, though circumstances are hard and pain is present, God's plan for you is to prosper you and to give you a hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). You cannot see how it will come to pass, but you can trust the process. Often, God works through slow miracles (Philippians 1:6).

3.) Recognize that you have choice.

In the face of fear, may you never forget that you always have the power of choice. Ask yourself this: who do I want to be? What choices can I make today that will keep me aligned with the kind of person I want to be, despite my current circumstances? Moment by moment, you *get to choose* what to focus on, how you want to respond, and what you want to cultivate according to what you value most. Maybe this means you choose to practice gratitude in your mind space, or maybe it means that you spend time reaching out to others in order to serve those who may be feeling isolated.

God is using today and the days to come to make you more like the image of his son, Jesus Christ. Try opening up and asking God about what He wants to do in you today- then take some time to listen.

These times are difficult. Let them be difficult. Recognize that “this is bigger than me”, and allow this to lead you towards surrender to the One who is in control. Feel what you feel, be who you want to be, and let go of the results.