

March 29, 2020

Lessons to Be Learned from COVID-19

COVID-19, or the Coronavirus disease has been declared a “**Pandemic**.” An “**epidemic**” is an outbreak of disease which affects many people at the same time, whereas a “**pandemic**” is a global outbreak of a disease. As of March 27, 2020, this disease has been found in 199 countries and territories. It seems to be growing exponentially, and it is adversely affecting the lives (in one way or another) of people throughout the world!

While we all can bear witness to the dreadful effects of this disease, and hope and pray that it will soon go away, there are some positive lessons to be learned from this pandemic. A few such lessons are as follows:

1. Seemingly “little” things can have major consequences. Reportedly, the Coronavirus originated in a meat market in Wuhan, China, and the pathogens which spread from animals to humans, and from the humans initially exposed to millions of others around the world. But that is small compared to the “little” sin Adam and Eve committed in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-6), and the deadly universal consequences of what happened when one couple chose to disobey God!

2. There are times when “distancing” can be advantageous. Both civil authorities and medical experts recommend that people keep a six foot distance between themselves and others. It is not wise to get “too close” to one who is contaminated with this virus. “Distancing” is even more important in the moral and spiritual realms. “*Bad company corrupts good morals*,” I Cor. 15:33, E.S.V.). While sin is **committed** (I John 3:4), and not inherited (Ezek. 18:20), it can be very contagious. That is why we must “*abstain from every form of evil*” (I Thess. 5:22), and why we must “*abhor what is evil*,” and “*cling to what is good*” (Rom. 12:9). One can not long frequent those places where profanity is continually mouthed, where the drinks are flowing, and the flesh is showing, without being adversely affected. However, a person can die from COVID-19 and still go to heaven, but all who die **in sin** will go to hell! But isn’t it amazing how multitudes will “self-quarantine” and avoid contact with victims of COVID-19, but who continually (and knowingly) expose themselves to the worst sins imaginable. Where is their sense of values?

3. Adverse circumstances frequently bring out the best in people. Just this a.m. a neighbor (knowing my wife has been ill), phoned and wanted to know if there is anything they can do to be of assistance, and a grandson phoned and said our evening meal will be delivered to our door today at 6:00 p.m. Family members and members of this congregation have repeatedly reached out to us, inquiring if there is anything they can do to be of help. Yes, this is a time when many are showing their love for their neighbor (Matt. 22:39), and seeking to “*bear...one another’s burdens*,” Gal. 6:2.

4. Many are leaning to respect the consciences of others. When, on the one hand, we have a command from God to assemble to worship (Heb. 10:25), and “*come together*” to partake of the Lord’s Supper (I Cor. 11:20; Acts 20:7), and on the other hand the command to obey the law of the land, Rom. 13:1 (unless it involves breaking the word of God, Acts 5:29), some tough decisions have to be made. Some, mindful of their own compromised health condition, and always apprehensive lest they contact a potentially deadly virus which they inadvertently could pass on to others, are choosing to stay at home, worship at home, or to log on to worship services from elsewhere being livestreamed to their own house. Others, for conscience sake, are determined to meet with whomever is willing to worship God in a regular worship assembly. It is wrong to willfully forsake “*the assembling of ourselves together*” (Heb. 10:25), but not all missing is **forsaking**!

5. Times like this help enable us to count our blessings, and to better learn the meaning of contentment, (Phil. 4:11; I Tim. 6:6-8). When all things are going as normal, it is so easy to get caught up in the “daily grind,” but then when the daily routine is suddenly interrupted, we tend to become reflective and focus our minds upon the more important things of life. I well remember driving from Louisville, Ky to Memphis, TN to visit a friend who was hospitalized with lung cancer. Just before entering his room we met his wife who said “I have learned that many things I use to think were important are not as important as I thought.” *“The governing authorities”* (Rom. 13:1) tell us to “stay home,” but multitudes have no place which they can rightly call “home.” Do you have a place you can call “home,” do you have “family” or loved ones with you? Then “count your many blessings, name them one by one.” Most of us are blessed beyond measure.

6. *“It is appointed unto men to die once, but after this the judgment”* (Heb. 9:27). Yes, deep within our beings, we are aware that, unless the Lord comes first, we will die. But (especially) if we are young and healthy, it is so easy to convince ourselves that we are indestructible and momentarily ignore the fact that we will all die and meet the Lord in the judgment to come. But when faced with a potentially deadly virus which is growing exponentially, and taking the lives of so many, we tend to face up to our own vulnerabilities, and to recognize our need for God. It is not easy to accept, but there are times when we must be jolted to an awareness of reality!

7. The best time to prevent contacting a disease is **before** you get it! While no one can be 100 percent certain that he can avoid this virus, it is possible to greatly lessen being personally affected. This is why airline flights to certain places are being canceled; this is why “stay home” orders are being given, and this is why so many are taking unusual precautions to avoid being victims thereof. And the best way to avoid sin in your life is **before** venturing into places of ill repute, thinking upon, and focusing our eyes upon that which is sordid and corrupt. David sinned grievously when he committed adultery with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11), but it could have been avoided if he had not focused his eyes (and thoughts) upon a beautiful, naked woman bathing herself (2 Sam. 11:2)! No one ever became an alcoholic by obeying Prov. 23:29-35, but multitudes (almost from the first drink) have become alcoholics!

Conclusion: No doubt there are many other lessons we can learn (and benefit from) as we reflect upon the effects of the Coronavirus. Meanwhile, let us learn the valuable lessons it potentially teaches, and let us pray that this virus (like so many which appeared in the past) will soon be wiped off from the face of the earth.

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