

3 Keys to Surviving the Onslaught of Horrible News

How do you survive in a world of constant bombardment?

- Britain leaves the EU, and the world markets freak out
- The never ending political chaos that is a U.S. election year, where every iteration seems to sink lower and lower into chaos
- America, apparently at war with itself, throwing rocks—or bullets—instead of finding understanding in racial tensions
- On a personal note, a virus hits me, and suddenly sleep and breathing are a luxury

It has been a rough couple of weeks. The problem is that when we are caught in these negative cycles—and they come along regularly—our natural tendency only makes it worse.

When we see the overwhelming negative, it activates our adrenal system, which pumps energy into our system, helping us feel more alive. This does not perpetuate life. It actually depletes us of joy, peace and, in the long run, energy—because even the biggest truck eventually runs out of fuel when you keep gunning it.

Or, we escape by drowning out the world, trying to make the panic go away—we each have our drug of choice. Anything that becomes your coping mechanism becomes your drug of choice.

In John 16, Jesus is about to face the mob that arrests him. Some of his last words to his disciples are to prepare them for the perpetual negative news cycle about to hit them:

Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? Listen, the hour is coming. Yes, it has now come that you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone,

for the Father is with Me. I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world" (31-33, MEV).

Things are not always as they seem, but even when they are at their darkest, we can choose not to try to cope with it on our own (which leads to more problems), but to seek Christ's peace. Here are some ways that you can find energy and peace through Christ:

1. **Find someone to bless.** This is a spiritual principle. Giving to others feeds us. I think it is because when we give to others—not in survival mode, to try to control or placate, but in genuine blessing—the Holy Spirit, who lives in you if you are a believer, provides the strength. We are not generating the strength; it is coming from a source outside ourselves, thus filling up that gas tank.
2. **Strengthen your soul.** I often use a fish analogy. There are fish that live so deep in the ocean, no human, even in a sub, can go there because the pressure is too great. Yet, the fish survive because the pressure on the inside of them is equal to the pressure on the outside. Strengthening your soul sometimes feels like working out—nothing you want to do, but once you get to it, it is joy. What strengthens your soul? This is highly individual, and it is connected to being the person God created you to be. See 1 Corinthians 12 for how this might look.
3. **Focus on truth.** You knew I would get to bible study, prayer and worship at some point. When the world is against you, you need God's perspective. In 2 Chronicles 20, Hezekiah and the whole nation of Israel were facing devastation. Instead of preparing for battle, they first spent time getting God's perspective (praying) and then they marched forth proclaiming God's perspective

(worship). When they got to the battle ground, the problem was already solved.

This sometimes feels like we are sticking our head in the sand. After all, the world is in chaos. To seek God's perspective feels a bit like denying your house is on fire while the flames lap at your nightclothes. Not smart. Or like we are playing mind games (don't look at the man behind the curtain). However, this is what Jesus was talking about: things really aren't as they seem. We only see part of the reality—entropy, the result of sin, creating chaos.

Jesus has an answer. We can be part of His solution when we bless others instead of responding in fear, strengthen our insides so that we show up 100 percent and be the person God created us to be in every situation. We can build up while the world around us is tearing down.

Jesus knew that his friends were about to desert Him, but he spent these last minutes spreading peace.

How are you dealing with the chaos and perpetual bad news cycles that are our reality this month? How do you wish others would?

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