

# Conquering Coronavirus Chaos: 10 Tips for Turbulent Times

During difficult seasons, we often ask, “Where is God?” The irony is that it often takes stormy seasons to turn us back toward safety. The COVID-19 virus is serious; it’s affecting all of us in profound ways. I believe God wants us to take this seriously and be concerned about the health and safety of others. Fear can bring out the worst in us and harm our families, as this article reveals: [North Texas Hospital Reports Spike In Severe Child Abuse Cases](#).

It’s not that you or I will never fear; it’s what we do with the fear that matters. We have a refuge during the storm if we will simply run to Him. I don’t want to downplay what’s going on, but I also don’t want to amplify fear. The Bible tells us not to worry; instead, it provides hope. It’s honest about the consequences of sin and pending judgment, but it also offers a solution: Turn to God with all your heart is a consistent theme in Scripture. How people respond to a crisis clearly reveals who or what they trust in. If you’re fearful, angry, and anxious, take an inventory: Have you humbled yourself, repented of your sin and asked God to save you? Are you trusting in God or in religion? In Christ or in your good works? There is no peace until you are right with God, which leads me to the first and most important point:

## **1. Embrace God’s wake-up call.**

Psalm 119 reminds us of an essential truth: “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word.” Affliction via difficulties, challenges and obstacles can lead us back to God. In one fell swoop, COVID-19 has dethroned all our idols. We are finally realizing what is really important. Our affliction has brought many prodigal sons and daughters home. Medical staff are reportedly calling the situation in Italy

“the apocalypse” because of the biblical significance and devastation. Luke 21:11 reminds us that “Great earthquakes will occur in various places, and there will be famines and pestilence. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven” when God begins to judge the nations. One of the most quoted verses during this time is 2 Chronicles 7:14, but if you read it, you will see that verse 13 (NLT) is actually the beginning of the sentence: “When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people ...” The context is a pandemic. Sound familiar? This is how God would get the attention of His people. Embrace God’s wake-up call and return to Him with all your heart.

## **2. Difficulties can shape character or ruin it.**

When affliction came to the writer of Psalm 119, he responded: “Teach me good judgment and knowledge” (v. 66, NIV). He was open and teachable. He knew that “many are the afflictions of the righteous” but that God would deliver (Ps. 34:19, ESV).

## **3. Minimize media and maximize the moment.**

For me, key verses in Psalm 119 have always been, “Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things,” and “Direct my steps by Your Word” (vv. 37a, ESV; v. 133, NKJV). Time in God’s Word and in prayer changes your heart, realigning it with His. But spending countless hours watching negative and unproductive media will dampen spiritual health, and most of the media outlets are focused on fear rather than facts. Instead, maximize the moment and allow your relationship with God to grow and flourish. Even when the psalmist said that his “soul clings to the dust” he knew that God could “revive” him according to God’s Word (v. 25). When you meditate on God’s numerous promises, you are built up and encouraged rather than weakened and deflated. This leads me to point four.

## **4. Fuel hope, not fear.**

Psalm 119 says: “Remember the word to Your servant, upon which You have caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word revives me” (vv. 49-50, MEV). Fear and chaos need a host (you or me), and they need fuel. You choose what you’re feeding and fueling yourself with (see point 3). Take this point seriously—this is where either success or failure prevails.

#### **5. We must persevere in prayer.**

Psalm 119:147a (NKJV) says, “I rise before the dawning of the morning and cry for help.” Persevere means to persist despite contrary influences, opposition or discouragement. In other words, keep fighting even when the battle is getting discouraging. This is actually not the time to give in but to fight and to persevere. In return, you build faith, spiritual strength and trust.

#### **6. Shepherd your child’s heart.**

A quick word to parents during these turbulent times: Our kids need to see faith, not fear. Pray for and with them throughout the day. Show them how God can use all of this for good and why there is no need to fear when we trust in Him.

#### **7. Seek God before you seek the media.**

Matthew 6:33 (MEV) reminds us to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you.” But most of us do the reverse: We check Fox News, CNN and the Drudge Report before seeking God. As a result, we begin the day worrying instead of worshiping. Try putting a sticky note on your phone each night that says: “Leave off and seek God.” This works great for me. After I read, pray and worship, I’m equipped to confront the day.

#### **8. When God tears down your idols, don’t rebuild them.**

Use this time to rebuild your faith and strengthen your soul.

Once the COVID-19 hysteria fades, don't go back to old patterns and habits. Ironically, a new habit usually takes about 21 days to establish, and that's about how much time many of us will be isolated (guesstimating, of course, at this stage).

## **9. Keep building; keep trusting.**

The psalmist said, "My soul longs for your deliverance, but I hope in Your word" (Ps. 119:81). In other words, as it becomes more and more difficult, we must keep trusting and persevering. Your family, marriage and faith will be tested, but God is an ever-present help in times of trouble (Ps. 46:1).

## **10. Cry out to God.**

In the book of Joel, great swarms of locusts had devoured the land, and the people's provisions had dried up and withered away (1:4-12). They were desperate and despondent as their hope vanished. But God didn't give up on them. He told Joel to tell the people to consecrate a fast—this showed the magnitude of their sin and the need for desperation—and to come together to a sacred assembly, which represented the incredible power of unity. Then finally, they were to go into God's house and cry out to Him (1:13-14; 2:12-17). The crying out via repentance became their all-consuming priority, and it needs to be ours as well.

I am concerned that America is fearful but not repentant, anxious but not surrendered to God, worried but not worshipful, confused but not diligently seeking Him. What will it take to draw us back to God? Like the Israelites in Joel's time, we must change course and cry out to Him in repentance with prayer and fasting. God heard His people then, and He will hear us now—once again pouring out His Spirit on a dry and thirsty land, for whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:25-32).