

Evangelist: 5 Areas You Can Control in This Out-of-Control Season

So, I admit it. Just like so many others, I am a bit of a control freak. I like to be in control of my circumstances, events and surroundings. I strive to have answers and a plan for everything. I thrive in structure. Can anyone relate?

During this time of uncertainty, it is increasingly more difficult to feel in control with daily changes in our world. Because of those constant changes and the onslaught of negativity in the media, there have been times where I have felt out of control and anxious. I struggle when there appears to be no clear answers for the health and stability of our world. It can be frustrating and overwhelming at times.

Often, our natural, human response is to react and allow our emotions to drive our actions and affect our clarity of mind. It is imperative that we take a moment to take a deep breath and bring ourselves back to a place of peace. Peace is not an emotion, but rather, a place where we choose to reside in Christ. We *can* choose peace over fear, even when things seem out of our control. I'm not saying to live in denial, but rather, understand that we can choose hope, joy and peace in the face of uncertainty and ask God to allow us to walk in wisdom and clarity.

One thing I know is that we may not be able to control what's going on around us or what's happening around the world, but there are a few things we *can* control. Those are the areas I would like to focus on. Here are a few areas we have control over.

1. We can control where we place our trust. Yes, we must have faith. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the

evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). It is seeing those things that are not as though they were. But we must take our faith to the next level. We must step into a place of trust. "You will keep in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isa. 26:3). Faith is a result of my encounter with God, but trust goes a bit deeper. Trust is a result of God's reputation and my relationship with Him. Dig into God's Word and spend time in His presence so that you may know Him, trust Him and hear His voice to bring peace during this time. Now is the time to model what true trust in God looks like. People are looking for answers, so be the one who directs them to God, the one they can fully trust.

2. We can control how we react to fear. I love what Winston Churchill said: "Fear is a reaction; courage is a decision." "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). We must not panic, but rather, use wisdom in our actions. When we lean into God and listen to His voice, we will have peace in the face of fear. Fear is not the absence of courage; it is the embryo of courage. It is courage waiting to be awakened. Now is the time to model courage, strength and calm to our families, friends and neighbors. Everyone is looking for hope. Be the calm in the storm that directs people back to God, the one who can calm them.

3. We can choose to defeat and disarm the enemy called *fear* through God's Word. Second Timothy 1:7 (NKJV) tells us that "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." We need to understand that God did not leave us defenseless. He gave us three distinctive weapons to defeat fear when it attacks our hearts and minds.

—"Power": This word means to change the atmosphere and the course of events and to see and walk in supernatural signs and wonders. We can do this through prayer and intercession.

–"Love": 1 John 4:18b says "perfect love casts out all fear" and 1 Corinthians 13:7 tells us love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things."

–"Sound mind": If you study this word, it literally means that we can have a sound mind that is protected and brought into a place of safety and security and is no longer affected by unfounded, illogical and absurd thoughts. This is why we can operate in 2 Corinthians 10:5 (KJV), "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

We cannot abandon our trust, hope and peace, and trade it in for fear. We must quit divorcing God for a mistress called fear. Now is the time to model true courage in the form of utilizing the weapons that have been given to us to defeat fear.

4. We can control how we take care of our health. We can take care of our health so that we have the best chance of fighting off sickness. While so many schools and places of business and large gatherings are closing or canceling, it would be easy to just sit and worry and think of all the negative thoughts. When we do this, it causes us to become negative and irrational and begins to affect our mental and physical health. Instead, use this time wisely. Use this time to connect with your family while everyone is confined at home. Spend time with your spouse and your kids. Have virtual gatherings online. Play games and catch up on your reading and things you have complained you didn't have time to do before, like cleaning out the closet or the garage.

This is a great time to make good on those new year's resolutions and work on your physical and mental health. There are so many online workout programs that are available to us. Sign up for a virtual workout class. For example, my husband

and I bought each other Peloton bikes for our anniversary, and we love the workouts. I was determined to break my record on the Peloton bike and finally crushed 11-plus miles during this week! Solitude forced me to focus on health. Now is the time for us to model that we take care of every aspect of our lives: mind, body and spirit. Third John 2 (MEV) says, "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, even as your soul is well."

5. We can control how we treat others. Sometimes, when we are feeling out of control and frustrated, and we have no answers, it would be easy to think we are the only ones going through difficult times. We must remember: Everyone around the world is facing the same thing we are. This is a great time to model and practice patience, self-control and compassion. It's a great opportunity to love our tribe well and show kindness and generosity to those around us. 1 Peter 5:8-9 (MSG) says: "Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce, and would like nothing better than to catch you napping. Keep your guard up. You're not the only ones plunged into these hard times. It's the same with Christians all over the world. So keep a firm grip on the faith. The suffering won't last forever. It won't be long before this generous God who has great plans for us in Christ—eternal and glorious plans they are! — will have you put together and on your feet for good. He gets the last word; yes, he does."

Let's remember that we are all in this together. Take this opportunity to check in on those you love. Check on the elderly and less fortunate and if you are able and it is safe, offer to help deliver some needed items to those who are not able to do it for themselves. So many live from week to week, and they may need some temporary assistance or someone to drop some items off at their front door. Now is the time for us to model compassion, patience and generosity to those around us. We can be those who offer hope in the most difficult of times.

For all my friends out there who struggle, as I do, with

control issues: Now is your time to shine. Stop focusing on what you cannot control and start focusing on what you can choose to do. Choose to rise up and be the voice of calm, the voice of clarity and the voice of hope—and watch and see if it doesn't become contagious. We may not be able to control everything, but I'm sure we will continue to try. But those things I cannot control, I will choose to fully trust God about. I will use wisdom, and I will purpose to keep my mind, my heart, my spirit and my body healthy instead of allowing my emotions to drive my actions. I will listen for God's direction, and I will offer hope instead of panic and fear.

Let's purpose to model what we hope to see in others during these trying times. Let's continue to pray as one body and one voice for our world to have peace, clarity and relief in the form of a supernatural-intervention miracle for this virus to be eradicated. Let's stand united and all work together to be part of the solution instead of the hindrance to our breakthrough. {eoa}

*Read more about breaking fear and the three weapons to defeat fear in Pat and **Karen Schatzline**'s book, Restore the Roar, available at .*

Watch and listen to powerful messages by evangelist Karen Schatzline by going to the Schatzlines' YouTube channel, "Pat and Karen Schatzline," or click: