

How to Face the New Year With Hope, Not Despair

2019 has begun, and the year is off like a rocket ship toward new targets. But issues in our past and ones we often try to ignore unfortunately still keep rearing their evil heads.

World hunger, sexual injustice, cancer, global warming, political turmoil and terrorism are world dilemmas that bite at our heels, but it's our own personal dilemmas that generally keep us grounded and unable to soar. These life disruptions never seem to heal or go away, nor can we escape them. We must deal with them. We must keep trying because somehow we know that if we can fix dilemmas then we can change the world.

Is there a way to approach our dilemmas differently in this new year?

Maybe. But first, let's step back and determine what is solvable and what isn't. Knowing if the issue is a problem or a dilemma is the first step. In fact, futurists are predicting that knowing the difference between a problem and a dilemma—and leading within them will be an essential key for success in years to come.

Simply put, problems are solvable and dilemmas are not. As technology allows us to solve more problems, dilemmas will become bigger and will impact our lives more severely.

For example, the #MeToo movement is a recent example of a dilemma that exploded in 2018 leading to the #ChurchToo movement. This is a huge challenge because sexual injustice has been around for thousands of years, but the internet delivered the ugliness of this issue via our digital devices in a 24/7 online stream. Modern technology made the world take notice of the dilemma, and it certainly needs to be

confronted, but the truth is, it will not be easy.

So how can we bring God's light as dilemma leaders?

First of all, we must understand that technology can help solve problems but it cannot solve dilemmas. Whereas technology made the world take notice of the #MeToo movement, it didn't solve it. Computers may help us figure out how to distribute food for a nonprofit organization in new ways, but computers won't solve world hunger.

God-given wisdom and courage to act on His direction are the elements required to work towards the solutions that will ultimately solve a dilemma. It means becoming a leader who is bold and unafraid of revolutionary thinking—one who observes a hopeless situation and brings a new perspective, an uncanny approach or possibly a flip of the situation into an opportunity allowing others to see God's alive and active resolution.

A supernatural intervention is needed to solve a dilemma. As believers of Jesus, we call these unnatural occurrences miracles. They are something that a computer program or new technology will never be able to accomplish. When Jesus took a few fishes and loaves of bread and fed thousands He showed us how to solve a dilemma. When He told Peter to throw his net to the other side of the boat, Jesus taught Peter how to solve his dilemma by looking in a new direction—His.

Can we really experience miracles of God to solve dilemmas today?

Jesus said we could! (See John 14:12.) He gifted us through the Holy Spirit, which was evidenced as His disciples performed many miracles after His death and resurrection (see Acts 5:12). Today we hear stories, often turned into movies and TV shows, about people who have survived miraculously from deadly diseases or injuries and even been brought back from the dead by the power of God. It is to that end that we, as

believers in God and leaders of ministries and Christian nonprofits, bring hope to the people we serve.

So, how do we lead in 2019 while we wait for a miracle?

We stay engaged with God and become purveyors of hope. We become proclaimers of God's promises found in His Word, bringing the aroma and knowledge of Jesus to the world (2 Cor. 2:14). We then use our integrity and influence shaped by the infusion of His wisdom to bring positive life-changing resolutions to otherwise hopeless situations—the seemingly unsolvable dilemmas of our age. And what's most important, we become conduits of God's power to be displayed.

We saw this power displayed in the lives of William Wilberforce, Florence Nightingale and Abraham Lincoln, and in our modern era in the lives of people like Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela. These heroic leaders pursued unsolvable dilemmas, knowing that without supernatural intervention, there would be no positive answer. But with it, the world might see a new light and go a better way. Today their legacy continues to affect lives as others take up their tireless passion to continue to find resolutions to dilemmas of our generation.

Will dilemmas ever be solved?

Yes. They will be solved fully when Jesus returns to eradicate sin forever and bring God's justice to the earth. Only then will pain and suffering completely end and peace come. Until then, God calls us to endure and aid those who suffer; to stand in the gap and be peacemakers with the hope of miracles foremost in our minds, even while living in a world characterized by opposing viewpoints and choices often leading to more suffering and pain.

But we're called to be here. We're called to be Jesus' representatives, bringing peace and sharing the message of Jesus, the hope of all, to the world.

F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "The test of a first-rate intelligence (a wise person) is to hold two opposing ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function. One should ... be able to see that things are hopeless, yet be determined to make them otherwise."

Are you willing to stand in the gap of opposing ideas and be a dilemma leader in 2019?

Don't give up, because with God, we can be dilemma navigators—and even dilemma-busters. With God's wisdom and our courageous trust in Him, nothing is impossible, no dilemma is unsolvable, and we can bring peace rather than violence, love rather than hate and hope rather than hopelessness.

"The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever" (Isa. 32:17).
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