

3 'Ws' For Spiritual Hygiene During This Menacing Pandemic and Beyond

Experts tell us that older people, African-Americans and males, are more vulnerable to COVID-19, the coronavirus respiratory disease, discovered in Wuhan, China at the end of last year. Also, the virus may more severely impact people with pre-existing physical conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams has offered a simple three-step protocol aimed at stopping the spread of this deadly virus in the United States. He calls them 'The 3 Ws' for COVID-19 hygiene:

–Wash your hands often and thoroughly, with soap and hot water.

–Watch your distancing from others.

–Wear a mask to help curb the spread.

Who Do Masks Protect?

The messages about facial masks to curb the spread of COVID-19 have been inconsistent and confusing from the beginning of this epidemic. Exactly who is being protected from whom? How effective are these efforts? What scientific evidence do we have?

The coronavirus is a respiratory infection, spread person-to-person through close contact. Wearing a mask diminishes spreading “respiratory droplets” that you may release in a cough or sneeze. Some “experts” even suggest singing, shouting, speaking or even breathing without wearing a mask, may spread these contaminated droplets.

So, in wearing a mask in public, you are presumably protecting others. And others, wearing a facial covering or another mask, are being their “brother’s keeper” and presumably protecting you.

Still Confused?

Scientific evidence for wearing masks is limited and confusing to many. But, based on past evidence and recent observations, the filtered airflow through facial masks seems to reduce the larger aerosols being sent in both directions.

Masks should not be seen as just an unnecessary inconvenience but an altruistic tool to free us to move about in public and get to where we may need to be.

Lessons to Learn

I would like to spiritually adapt the three steps for COVID-19 hygiene, offered by Dr. Jerome Adams. Please consider with me The “3 Ws” for Spiritual Hygiene.

- 1. Wash your hands often and thoroughly.** James 4:8 (MEV) says, “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”

This season of social isolation and physical testing gives us added time to reflect, repent and repeat—to “purify our hearts” and focus on God. If He seems far away during this time, remember that He is actually closer than we may think. The closer we draw to God, He will likewise draw near to us. Therefore, let us cleanse our spiritual hands often and thoroughly purify our hearts!

- 2. Watch your distance from who or what may be carriers of the disease of sin and the lies of Satan.** Romans 12:2 says, “Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may

prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

Did you catch the two commands there? “Do not be conformed” but “be transformed.” Scripture said we would be challenged by the “world, the flesh and the devil.” During these months of excess time, we may have been tested by each of those “carriers of the disease of sin.” God wants us to submit to Him and then “resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Use this season for spiritual growth and “be transformed by the renewing of your mind!”

Another area where Satan may work against us in this time of crisis is in regards to fear and the uncertainty of death itself. Hebrews 2:14-15 says: “So then, as the children share in flesh and blood, He likewise took part in these, so that through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver those who through fear of death were throughout their lives subject to bondage.”

Some have lived “throughout their lifetime subject to bondage” over “the fear of death.” Jesus has come to bring deliverance from the false power of death (1 Cor. 15:54-57). The devil’s powers are curbed in the lives of committed believers.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:1-2, NIV).

3. Wear a mask. Our church has given out some custom-made masks with the church logo and this joyful saying: “This mask is hiding my smile.”

Wearing a mask during this COVID-19 crisis covers our nose and mouth and is meant to keep us from breathing in microscopic particles of the virus and its consequential effects.

Jesus’ blood provides a covering (“propitiation”) for our sins (1 John 2:1-2 and 4:9-11, MEV). God no longer sees us as sinners, but as His sons and daughters who have been freed

from the *guilt* of our past, the *effects* of sin in our present experiences and able to “eagerly await” our heavenly *rewards* in the future, where we will enjoy our “vaccine” over sin and Satan forever!

As we progressively walk in holiness, the fruit of the Holy Spirit immunizes us more and more from the evil one, who comes—as Pastor Jack Hayford used to say—to “trick, trap and trample” us.

Let us learn to proudly wear the covering of God’s love and Jesus’ blood to “mask” over the stain of a life of sin and forever to “smile”—as overcomers—at the eternal defeat of the Devil (Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10). {eoa}

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