

MONDAY MANNA

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HOW TO ESCAPE THE DRAMA AND THE TENSION

By Ken Korkow

Everywhere we look, we see drama, tension, fear, and a new crisis seemingly every minute. Forced to live and work in this oppressive environment, we can either become overwhelmed with anxiety, or take proactive steps to minimise external influences on us. I have chosen the latter. Here is what I am doing:

First of all, I have determined not to waste energy on things I cannot influence. Feeling helpless can be a very debilitating emotion, so whenever I realise things are beyond my control, I choose not to spend time agonising over them.

My second step is actually the flip side of the first. I endeavour to exert influence in areas where I can make a difference, especially when I can see the possibility of an eternal impact.

Like you, I find myself inundated with information overload – from TV, radio, the Internet, emails, texts, billboards and other sources. It is impossible to process it all. At the same time, we all get many requests for help, many of them very worthwhile. There are lots of valid concerns, as well as countless good and noble causes. But like you, my resources are limited; I cannot do everything, even if I wanted to. So I have applied the two principles above as a way of determining my priorities – what is the best investment of my time, talent, and treasure. As a result, here are some of the decisions I have made:

For 40 years I have subscribed to the respected business periodical, the Wall Street Journal, but this year stopped. For 30 years we have received the Omaha World Herald every day, but this year we stopped. And a long time ago I stopped watching national television news.

Please do not get me wrong. I am not an isolationist or a head-in-the-sand person. I have simply come to realise that the “news” is slanted entertainment with a desire for higher viewer ratings so they can sell more advertising – and I no longer want to get sucked into the drama.

God wants us to be like the “men of Issachar” described in 1 Chronicles 12:32, because they “understood the times and knew what their nation needed to do.”

So how can I do that? First, I make the effort to spend time in the Bible (I also read several devotionals) each day because, as King Solomon wrote, “there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). In the process, God through His Spirit guides, protects, and provides for me.

Next, I check a few Internet news sources twice a day and read periodicals I have found useful for international, national and local news coverage. Very sporadically my wife and I will watch the first 10 minutes of the evening TV news, but again limit that because we do not wish to get caught up in the drama of managed news coverage.

Throughout each day I strive to remind myself that the Lord is completely in control of everything, so the issue is not “What is happening?” but rather, “How will I respond to what is happening?” I have found that only then, when I am being filled with God’s truth, His Spirit and His love, does the overflow of my life reflect His character.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. Do you share the view that the world around us seems filled with drama, tension and fear, often manipulated, even magnified, by the various sources of information available to us? If so, what has been the impact as you go about living your life and performing your work?
2. Do you sometimes find yourself caught up in agonising about things over which you have absolutely no influence or control? Why is that – and what do you think should, or can, be done about it?
3. How can a person shift the focus from things they cannot influence to those things over which they can exert positive change, even things of eternal significance?
4. What is your response to the idea of restricting or limiting exposure to information sources that always seem to have an unsettling effect on our lives? Do you think this is a wise choice, or do you think we need to collect as much information as possible to ensure we are fully aware of and current on local, national and world events?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

- Proverbs 4:26-27, 10:19, 14:8,30, 16:4,21, 17:24, 19:20, 26:24-26;
- Isaiah 41:10