

MONAY MANNA

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PANIC OR PEACE – THE CHOICE IS UP TO US

By Ken Korkow

What we see determines what we do. What we see also tends to dictate how we feel.

Since the start of the year, we have lived through unprecedented, extremely turbulent circumstances. If you have seen times of great physical, economic and political problems, you likely have become anxious, withdrawn, controlling, and perhaps looking for ways to medicate your pain.

After relentless news reports that essentially insist, “The sky is falling! The sky is falling!” we start to think maybe they are right. Bombarded with messages of gloom and doom, we start to see a world of complex, unsolvable problems – and begin to see our own lives in much the same way.

That, however, is not our only option. There is also the option of seeing the world – and our lives in general – through the eyes of trusting, unwavering faith. As 2 Corinthians 5:7 admonishes, *“for we walk by faith, not by sight.”*

As a result, if we believe and trust that God, our heavenly Father is sovereign, completely in control with a perfect plan – even when everything around us seems to be in absolute chaos – we will then see these present challenges very differently. We can see them as opportunities, camouflaged opportunities to grow in faith and to share His love, hope, joy, peace and resources with others.

But these times have been painful, filled with stress, anxiety, and for some of us, genuine loss. How can we help but see the darkness and despair that seems pressed all around us? Because, as I and many people I know have discovered, pain is a great teacher – possibly the greatest teacher we can have in life.

The reality is, people tend not to change unless there is significant pain. They have to be forced, often after much resistance, out of their comfort with the known and familiar. When that happens, they can come to a revelation that they have been betting on the wrong horse, so to speak. Once they understand that, they become willing to consider change.

Who do you know that is stressing out over current events, who has become ensnared by the pervasive panic and hysteria? Perhaps this describes you, if all you can see are the perplexing problems that seem beyond solving. If that is the case, you need to shift where you are looking. *“While we look not at things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal”* (2 Corinthians 4:18).

And if you have succeeded in looking past the problems and focusing instead on God’s promises, this is the perfect time to share them with others. Look for opportunities to ask questions and go deeper in relationships with people – friends, co-workers, even your boss – because so many people are fearful. Without faith, they cannot begin to see how good can possibly arise out of hard times.

Remember this: God does not waste pain. And given the circumstances we have all been in, we have unique opportunities to tell others about His truth that changes our lives. There is God’s part, to bring light into the darkness. And we have our part, to be His representatives, His ambassadors for communicating His eternal message. We cannot do God’s part. And the Lord will not do ours.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

How have you handled the circumstances surrounding COVID-19, the coronavirus? Have you found yourself overcome by fear or anxiety? Has your job or business suffered as the many restrictions were put in place? Have you wondered how you could possibly survive?

What does it mean to see the world, your life, the circumstances around you, through the eyes of faith rather than perceiving them in light of the pervasive bad news we see and hear almost every day?

One of the Bible verses cited above says we are to look not at things that are seen, but things that are not seen. What do you think that means? How do you react to such an admonition?

Have you had any opportunities to talk with anyone who does not share the same faith you have? If so, what has been their response? Have you found people more responsive to considering spiritual truth, given the uncertainties and grim realities of our times?

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

Psalm 23:1-6, 27:1-5, 46:1-3, 118:13-14

Isaiah 41:10

Matthew 6:13-16

2 Corinthians 5:16-6:2