

MONDAY MANNA

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WHY ARE SO MANY OF US SO FEARFUL?

By Ken Korkow

For the majority of us, over the past 18 months or so – or perhaps even longer – fear has been a daily companion. Part of it has been the pandemic itself, unprecedented in our lifetimes, which has cast a deep shadow of pain and death across our society and the world. The ramifications of COVID-19 and the restrictions imposed have affected our daily lives, as well as our businesses, often in very unsettling, even fear-inducing ways. People have been out of work. Business owners have either had to close their doors or cut back on their services dramatically. What the future holds has been shrouded in uncertainty.

On top of this has been the relentless barrage of bad news from the media. It has served us a steady diet of fear for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Not including “snacks” in between. No wonder many of us have felt ill, even if we did not contract the virus. It has not been a healthy way to live.

What is the cure? Or at least a remedy for this pervasive pandemic of fear – in many respects, greater than the virus itself? I have found the importance of choosing to start each day by focusing on the good, the certain, the unshakable promises from God – the One who is always the same, never changing, that we find in the Bible. Here is a sampling of many such assurances:

Through any crisis, God is always with us. When we feel alone, even abandoned, we have His promise that He is at our side at all times, guiding and sometimes carrying us through our circumstances, no matter how dire or desperate. *“Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you”* (Deuteronomy 31:6).

Faith in an unchanging God holds us firm. At times everything seems to be in chaos, in total disarray. But Hebrews 12:28 declares that those who follow the Lord Jesus Christ *“are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.”* And our response should be, as Psalm 46:2 states, *“Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea.”*

When challenges facing us seem so strong, we are too weak to stand, God sustains us. When we were children learning to walk, when we seemed about to fall a parent was there to catch us, even hold our hand. God is a loving Father who does that even when we are not aware of it. *“Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold My right hand. You guide me with Your counsel, and afterward You will receive me to glory”* (Psalm 73:23-24).

I have a suggestion. Every day I have a choice – to wallow in the drama of this world – or to marinate in God’s revealed Truth. Rather than beginning the day by drowning in negative news and fearful commentary, I start by focusing on God. Each morning I begin by reading an encouraging devotional, *Jesus Calling*, by Sarah Young. Then I read other daily devotionals that I have found helpful, and then read several chapters from the Bible I use which takes me through it, cover to cover in a year.

Time and experience have taught me I must soak – marinate – in the immutable Truth of God. If not, this world, my admittedly weak and sinful nature (what the Bible calls my “flesh”), and everything that is unholy around me quickly put me in the ditch.

How are your own daily spiritual disciplines? Are they helping you to be filled – to overflowing – with His Holy Spirit to give you strength, hope, wisdom and peace?

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

How would you describe your emotions and overall attitude since the beginning of 2020? What caused your greatest fears or anxieties – and how did you handle them?

What impact does reading and watching the daily news have upon your thoughts and attitudes? What methods, if any, do you use to minimise the effects of the negative information that seems to surround us?

Does spirituality – your faith – make any difference in how you respond to life's challenges, whether it's a global pandemic or just everyday problems that arise? Explain your answer.

What is your reaction to the suggestion for starting each day by focusing not on the events of the day, or the previous day, but taking time at first to focus on God, His character and His promises? If you have a time for personal meditation or a "quiet time," what is that like for you?

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

Isaiah 40:27-31, 41:10-14

Philippians 4:6-7

1 Peter 5:7

Matthew 7:24-27