



How to Deal with Fear and Uncertainty?

Today, a friend shared their fears, and anxiety over the coronavirus. I share some of their concerns. Some are calling it a 100-year pandemic, and it seems that the biggest concern is the potential to overwhelm our hospital system if we cannot halt the exponential contracting of this virus with some aggressive containment measures.

- ❑ People are afraid for the health of their loved ones, particularly older family members and those with underlying health conditions.
- ❑ People are afraid for their jobs, their businesses, their incomes and the general economy.
- ❑ People are afraid of potential supply shortages of food, medicine and other items.

It has been said that the markets hate uncertainty. And it seems that uncertainty surrounds us right now, and we have witnessed a significant market decline.

So, how do we deal with fear and uncertainty? As I was thinking about this question, an old song came to mind, written by Dottie Rambo many years ago, ***“I Go to the Rock”***

*“Where do I go when there is nobody else to turn to
Whom I gonna talk to when nobody wants to listen
Who do I lean on when there is no foundation stable
I go to the Rock, I know He’s able
I go to the Rock”*

*“Oh, I’m going to the Rock of my salvation
Going to the Stone that the builders rejected
Run to the mountain and the mountain stands by me
When the earth all around me is sinking sand
On Christ the solid Rock I stand
When I need a shelter, when I need a friend
I go to the Rock”*

*“Where can I hide till the storms have all passed over
Where can I run to when those winds of sorrow threaten
And is there a refuge in the time of tribulation
When my soul needs consolation
I go to the Rock”*

*“When the earth all around me is sinking sand
On Christ the solid Rock I stand
When I need a shelter, when I need a friend
I go to the Rock”*

Here is the Whitney Houston rendition

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fWZsT6H0dkY&list=RDfWZsT6H0dkY&start_radio=1&t=87

And yes, Dottie got it right! The appropriate response is to go to the Rock! I go to the Rock, and the One who is “the same, yesterday, today and forever,” when I need perspective.

I go to the “unchanging One” when all around me seems to be changing.

I go to the “anchor of my soul,” when the sky is dark and the wind and waves seem to be battering my soul.

And when I hold on to my “firm foundation,” “the chief cornerstone,” I can stand immovable no matter what trouble comes my way.

The Rock, Jesus, said to us “in this world, you will suffer tribulation, but to be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world,” and He reminded us that he would be with us “always, even to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20). Jesus also told us not to be “anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matt 6:34).

Paul reminds us “not to be anxious about anything” (Phil 4:6-7), and in his second letter to Timothy, he said, “God will never give you the spirit of fear, but the Holy Spirit who gives you mighty power, love and self control”(2 Tim 1:7).

So, what is our response to fear and uncertainty? It is not surprising that the phrase “fear not” is used over 80 times in the Bible. God clearly wants us to resist fear. It is not from Him. However, resisting fear is only part of the solution. We need to replace it with something else. I believe the words of John give us some direction. He says, “Perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). Combining these thoughts, “**we should resist the fear, and pursue love.**”

During this unsettling time in the world, we can make a real difference. We each need to determine to resist fear, and ask, “how can I love others during this time of uncertainty?” And ask, “how can I make a difference?”

As we know, the coronavirus crisis first began in China. As I was reflecting on this, I remembered reading about the Chinese word for Crisis several years ago.

危機 The word "crisis" when written in Chinese, is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity. Thus, the hidden meaning of "crisis" is that in the midst of danger, there is also opportunity.

Crisis is written as:

危機
Crisis

The second is a pair of symbols that represent opportunity. Opportunity is written as:

機會
Opportunity

Notice that the symbol that makes up the last half of crisis is identical to the symbol that makes up the first half of opportunity. Here is what the ancient Chinese people were conveying:

機

*In every crisis
lies the seed
of opportunity*

In the midst of a crisis we often remain focused on the problem. However, there is always opportunity in every crisis.

What opportunities do you and I have to make a difference and love others during this crisis? There are certainly many things that we all can do. Washing hands often, wearing masks when out, social distancing, self quarantine if sick, etc. And there may be other things that we can do as well. Is there an older couple that should not be leaving their home that we can take food and medicine, or that we can shop for? What about our homeless populations, and those already on the economic margins? How can we come alongside our local shelters and food banks to assist them?

As Dr. Henry Blackaby said, "God is at work around us all the time. Find out where He is at work and join Him." As we all determine to join God in loving others during this challenging time, we will find wonderful opportunities to make a difference in the midst of this crisis.

Let me finish this encouragement with a reminder from Paul that "In everything, Give Him thanks and praise." Yes, even in the midst of this challenging time, give God thanks and praise, for the opportunity to trust Him, and for the opportunity to love others. Remember, God has not given you a spirit of fear, and you can make a difference. Love is the key.

By Jim Subers
President
Strengthening Hands International
March 12, 2020