



CORONAVIRUS AND ANXIETY: HYSTERIA OR PEACE?

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We are all concerned about the coronavirus. We have learned that it cannot be dismissed as “no big deal”. Rather, efforts to deal with this virus are consuming our country and the world, affecting nearly every aspect of our lives. What is an appropriate spiritual, mental and emotional response to this crisis?

Fear. A healthy response is fear of the power and consequences of illness resulting from the virus. But fear can result in emotional disaster or emotional strength. We have a choice as to how to deal with our emotions and thoughts regarding this unforeseen threat to our well being. Fear can devolve into an out of control hysteria that brings our thoughts, emotions, and bodies into a state of crisis and turmoil. While we sit in our living rooms or drive our cars our beings may be existing in a self-induced state of trauma determined by out of control thoughts and emotions.

The antidote to this hysteria is to take every thought captive and regulate our emotional responses. Stay in the moment as opposed to thinking about worst case scenarios. Limit conversation and media input regarding fears and disasters. Be aware of when your body is becoming tense and relax. Breathe. Pray. Enjoy your day. Hysteria leads to irrational thinking, impulsive behaviors, and destructive emotions.

Functioning from HYSTERIA fits into the Biblical category of foolishness. Functioning from PEACE is wisdom.

Scripture says that we are to be anxious for nothing but are to ask God to address our needs. The result is a “peace which passes all understanding”. Does this mean we will have no fear? No. But we will have a fear based in wisdom rather than foolishness, knowing that God works all things to the good for those who love him. Peace does not result in passivity. Rather it allows reasoned responses and constructive actions free from the debilitating energies of traumatic and hysterical functioning.

God has given us his Spirit who provides the strength and wisdom to face all he calls us to encounter. Perfect love casts out all fear. Embracing that love allows us to live in his glory.