



COPING WITH ISOLATION

10 Tips To Stay Emotionally Healthy in a Crisis – *adapted from Pastor Rick Warren*

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF DURING COVID-19 – A COVENANT OF HEALTH

There's a verse in Song of Solomon that says, "I have been the keeper of other vineyards but my own vineyard I have neglected" (Song 1:6).. It is imperative that you "keep your vineyard" during this crisis.

1. I will be kind and gentle with myself.

The most important thing you can do right now to reduce your stress during quarantine is to be gentle to yourself and to others. You can't place the same expectations on yourself as you had before this crisis. There's no way you can accomplish the same things you did before. So be forgiving of yourself!

2. I will be kind and gentle with others.

While you are being kind and forgiving of yourself, be kind and forgiving of others too. Ease up on your expectations of those around you. Remember that this is affecting them, too.

3. I will begin and end each day reading God's word.

"His Word FIRST Word, His Word LAST Word." What this means is, when I wake up in the morning, the first person I want to hear from is God. And when I lay down at night, the last person I want to hear from is God. Starting and ending your day in God's Word is the best habit you can build in your life, especially during this crisis. It sets the tone for the rest of your day, it determines your focus daily, and it frames your everyday, ordinary life as worship to him. God wants first place in the little things of your life too. In fact, the Bible says he delights in them. If you want to see God at work in your life, then include him in the small things.

4. I will keep a predictable schedule and routine.

Creating a routine helps our bodies as they navigate the stress of this season. Our brains are dealing with vast amounts of new information and working overtime to cope – keeping a moderate, predictable routine helps with stress management.

5. I will limit the amount of negative news that I watch.

Corrie ten Boom, who suffered in a Nazi death camp, explained the power of focus: “If you look at the world, you’ll be distressed. If you look within you’ll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you’ll be at rest!” Your focus determines your feelings.

6. I will get out in the sun for at least 15 mins.

If possible, try to get outside for at least 15 minutes every day. Remind yourself of God’s goodness in nature. Studies show at least 15 minutes of sunlight a day is good for our health.

7. I will connect with the people I love every day.

We may be separated, but we don’t need to be isolated. Make a point to connect with people you love every single day. If you can, connect with them visually through an app like Facetime or Zoom. We were created for connection.

8. I will plan multiple refueling times throughout my day.

Consider practicing the idea of “dosing.” Instead of long stretches of inactivity followed by an intense burst of activity, break up your day with shorter 15-minute refueling breaks. This helps regulate the body and prevent fatigue.

9. I will serve others.

Sometimes when you’re feeling down the quickest way to improve your mood is to serve others. This season we don’t have to look far for a need to meet. Use this time to serve others. You’ll find your focus will shift and your outlook will too.

10. I will control the controllable, and trust God with the rest.

This crisis is revealing just how much in our lives is out of our control. But the good news is God is still in control, and he has promised to take care of you. The starting point to letting go of worry is to maintain this humble attitude: “God is God, and I’m not.”

REFLECT ON SCRIPTURE:

Romans 12:11-13:

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

From The Message, we can read this as: *“Don’t burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don’t quit in hard times, instead pray all the harder. Help needy Christians and be inventive in hospitality.”*

PRAYER:

Loving God, we come to you full of anxiety about what may happen in the coming days and weeks. Shower us with the peace Jesus promised to his disciples, and make us into steady pillars for those around us. In this time of uncertainty and epidemic, wake us up to the reminder that we are not alone.

We feel so alone in isolation. Even as we are asked to keep our distance from others, help us to find ways to reach out to those who need our support. Give us strength to care for ourselves and others.

Remind us, each time we wash our hands, that in our baptism you call us to let go of our fears and loneliness and live in joy, peace, and hope. Amen.