

## **FIRST-PERSON: Responding to the COVID-19 crisis with grace**

by Lynn Pryor, posted Wednesday, March 25, 2020 (one month ago)



NASHVILLE (BP) -- We're tired of the non-stop news and reports related to the COVID-19 virus. Yet here we are. And here we sit in front of our TVs because the news seems to change every 15 minutes. We're tired of the news, yet we can't walk away.

Life has changed -- and life will continue to change. It's in these moments when our lifestyles are threatened that our true character comes out. And it's not always pretty.

-- In an Australian supermarket, a confrontation over toilet paper ended when a knife was pulled -- even though there was no shortage of toilet paper.

-- Protestors hurled insults and threw rocks at passengers coming off a cruise ship -- a ship that had no reports of COVID-19.

Of course, there's the good side too. NBA players are stepping in to financially help people whose jobs are adversely affected by the cancellation of games. Neighbors are helping neighbors. Individuals are helping total strangers.

Even as Christ-followers, we can get frustrated. Impatient. We roll our eyes at the behavior of others. But it's in moments like this that we can most brightly shine the light of Christ.

-- If you feel people are unnecessarily fearful and giving in to fear-mongering, don't judge. Love them and respond with grace.

-- If you feel people are making light of a terrible, fearful situation, don't condemn them as callous. Forgive them and respond with grace.

-- If hoarders emptied the store shelves before you could, forgive them. Respond with grace and trust God to provide what you need.

-- If you do not feel the government is doing enough, respond with grace and trust the Lord who is sovereign over governments.

-- If you think people are acting like Chicken Little -- "The sky is falling!" -- don't make light of them. You don't know what they are dealing with. Instead, show love and respond with grace.

-- If you fall into the camp that thinks the media is blowing the COVID-19 crisis out of proportion, don't shout "I told you so" if the crisis dissipates as quickly as it came. Remember, thousands of believers have been praying for that very thing. A greater crisis may well have been averted because God acted. I pray God works in a mighty way to remove this virus, but God may just as well work through the wisdom He gives doctors and scientists. No matter how God chooses to work, respond with grace.

We can shine the light of Christ when we walk alongside the fearful. Let your trust in God be a comfort to them.

We can shine the light of Christ when we patiently wait our turn or face the many inconveniences with grace and self-control.

We can shine the light of Christ when we keep on our knees in prayer. We need wisdom in how to help others. Our pastors need wisdom in how to help us be the body of Christ to a scared and hurting world.

We can shine the light of Christ when we pattern our lives after Christ and live out Colossians 3:12:

"Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."

All that is wrapped up in grace. So as Christ showed us immeasurable grace, let us show grace to others. When we display grace, we are shining the light of Christ.

Respond with grace. Jesus does -- and so should we.

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