

THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

From a 'Senior Citizen' Perspective

2020

With all the information out there on the coronavirus pandemic, I try to keep my reading to the preventative measures so I won't catch it. I pass on the opinions, commentaries of everybody that try to explain how and why it happened or make predictions on the outcome and consequences of it all since no one really knows yet what they will be. As for what could be of the utmost importance, my husband keeps me updated since he's the one that reads the news on a daily basis. I'm not trying to hide my head in the sand here, but there's so much I can take before fear and worry start invading my mind. And I don't want that... However, when I recently retrieved my emails, I found one from my daughter-in-law. Attached to it was her comments on how she and her family are handling this situation. I was mostly interested in reading it since it touches me personally; it touches my family which is of the utmost importance to me... after God, that is.

She and her husband are parents to three school-aged children (7, 11, 13 y.o), and in her exposé she's sharing her personal feelings and how their family lifestyle is being impacted by it. In a nutshell, she explains how their routine got totally out of whack, and that they now have no other choice but to somehow adjust and make the best of the situation. Being pretty much cooped up inside their home (their huge screen porch must be a great escape route though!), and having to live together 24/7, the normal course of things changes drastically at different levels. She expresses with humor her own feelings of frustration for being subjected to this change at this time in her life, but she also turns her focus on the positive results she notices in her kids.

She sees God at work in their lives. They support, help, play, entertain each other and are kind to each other...until they get at each other throat again! (Kids will always be kids!) They help around the house. She witnesses them reaching out to other people. Instead of being bored, they find things to do, ways to keep busy. She sees parts of each of their hearts that she had not fully appreciated until now. Her comments besides being insightful and humoristic express pretty well, I'm sure, the sentiments of many moms and dads out there. That's life, a new way of living as we've all never known it before...

Unbeknownst to her, she gave me the fuel to write my own thoughts on the subject at hand. Oh, I know you may not be interested in reading what I have to say, but since my husband and I are part of that group called 'senior citizens', I'd like to give my two-cents worth on how we're coping with this pandemic. I hope you'll bear with me.

Both being in our mid-seventies we're definitely abiding by the rules of social distancing. We have each other to keep company and that suits us fine for the moment. We'll probably have a big celebration with family and friends after we're out of the woods though! In the meantime, with the technology nowadays, we can always stay in contact with our family members and friends by phone and video calls.

We stay home except for short trips to the grocery store when needed. My husband, (faithfully wearing his protective mask) takes this responsibility at heart. He knows how picky I am when it comes to choosing fruits and vegetables and I must say that he's doing a fantastic job! We sanitize every item when he comes back home from the store. It seems we're now in a sanitize-frenzy mode.

Kitchen countertops and cupboards' handles, doorknobs, garage door opener, cell phone and what have you... I've never used that many sanitizing wipes in my entire life! The companies selling them must make a fortune these days! Oh, and let's not forget the bathroom tissue companies...They all make a bundle out of this pandemic.

I have to say that we remain active despite our quarantine. There's always something to do around the house to keep us busy. We're taking walks and when we occasionally meet our neighbors, we take time to socialize with them making sure we keep the recommended distance of six feet between us. We're adjusting slowly to this new pattern in our lives. But that doesn't mean we enjoy it...

As seniors we realize that we can't escape the aging process. We may already show some signs of it but we thank God that we're in good health and still have the vitality to accomplish quite a bit physically and intellectually. Obviously we're slowing down. We're no 'Speedy Gonzales' (the fastest mouse in all Mexico!), but as I always say... "*We may be slow but we're steady and we get the job done!*" And I may add... "*As long as we don't bite off more than we can chew...*" I think the hardest thing for us, seniors, is to accept our limitations. We feel young at heart and would be ready to climb Mount Everest (well, maybe not!) but we realize pretty quickly that our body is not as young, and we oftentimes live to regret it. We'd like to help those around us in their moment of need especially at this critical time, but we're in the age group that is the most vulnerable to catch that virus and are asked to stay at home. So, want it or not, we obey...

I know that some of my senior counterparts, the ones who especially fit in the eighty and ninety age group, deal with major health issues in their lives. In our neighborhood we have an assisted living facility, and I can only imagine how they're coping with this whole pandemic situation and with their life in general. If I could sit down with them and ask them about it, I believe the following comments would pretty much be their answer.

"We cope with this situation as best as we can... Social distancing is the hardest thing for most of us. Besides having to deal with some health issues, we can easily fly under the radar. People may easily forget about us... It's true that we don't make much noise. We're done making waves around us so to speak and people may find us a bit boring. But some of us are not and it would be worth investing your time with us to find that out...when the pandemic is over, obviously. Most of us are very compliant and complacent in our own ways. But we can show we still have some guts when it's called for, as well as enthusiasm especially when we're on a winning streak playing cards or dominoes!

"It's sad to realize that our group is the most at risk of catching this virus. We're certainly getting the short end of the stick... Some of us live in an assisted living facility which means we have to follow their rules too. They say we're on 'lock down'. What it means is that we have to stay in our apartment; no more trips to our community dining room, church, woodshop, hairdresser, library and fitness center since they're all closed; no more social gatherings at the community center and no more visitors, which are pretty much what we mostly thrive on... Loneliness and depression can creep in fast when our need for human contact is severed... But most of us are a resilient bunch. Some of us have survived much more than that in our lives. We'll get over this one too... And if God has the bright idea of taking some of us home because of this virus, well, we won't complain about that!"

This little scenario is a reality for many of our seniors. In as much as we can't avoid the aging process, no matter what age group we're in, how bad we may feel in our body, at the end of the day we all

have to make the best of what's being given to us in life. We can either choose to go through it with a heavy heart or with one that raises above our circumstances. The Word of God says that his children are under his personal care and that even in old age they will still produce fruit and be vital and green. To believe that we won't have any health issues in our latter years may be something we all wish for but may not be a reality. But for those of us who believe in a loving God, who trust in Him and yield to his leading, we will still bear fruit. And the fruit God is talking about here is made up of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Worry and fear are not part of it. Pandemic or not, if we truly believe that God is our primary caregiver, there shouldn't be any doubt in our mind that he will give us the unfailing strength and peace to bear whatever comes our way. That's his promise! And the end result, I would hope, is that we'll all give Him the glory for it.

It's true that this worldwide pandemic changes our lives like we've never known it before, and we're all anxious to get back to our 'normal'. But what if our 'normal' never comes back? How would we feel about it? Would it be a good or a bad thing?..

I would hope that through this forced quarantine, we're learning that we can change our ways for the better. I would hope that we're taking a serious inventory of what need to change in our lives. To redefine, if need be, our priorities, goals and objectives, our relationships between husbands and wives, children, family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc. But mostly, I would hope that we're putting God in the equation. YES, GOD, our Creator and the Creator of heaven and earth, our heavenly Father. Are we forgetting about Him? Are we so indifferent that we totally ignore Him? Are we putting all the blame on Him for what's happening? For those who won't give Him the time of day, why should it matter to them anyway what God does or doesn't do? But, since he's such a merciful and compassionate God, I would hope for their own good that they would start giving Him the time of day, because through all this mess, I believe God is trying to tell everybody something if we're only willing to open our ears and our hearts. He's waiting for us to humble ourselves and to turn our hearts to Him in complete trust.

For those believing in the saving grace of God, I would hope that their faith will grow and be strengthened. For those who believe in God but have not yet decided to commit their lives to Him, I would hope they will choose to do it now. For those who are losing loved ones to the pandemic, and for the ones who are losing their jobs and are in financial troubles, I would hope they would find comfort, peace, courage and strength in the only One who can truly give them these precious gifts. He may be using someone around them to do it, but he'll reach them somehow, for God is the giver of good gifts. I truly believe that every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father who never changes. Would you agree?

Stay healthy everyone! My thoughts and prayers are with you all.

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