



Study Guide #5

Is the Coronavirus a Sign of the End Times?

Welcome back Bible students! Thanks for studying with us through VISION 2020, where the goal is to get into God's Word, understand His plan and purpose for the days in which we live, and share the hope we have in Jesus Christ. God's Word is God's Story and it is up to us to spread His Story! With whom are you sharing?

New study guides are posted periodically, giving you plenty of time to dig in and study through God's Word. They are also purposely divided into parts, providing breaking points. Complete as much as you like, then come back another time to continue. Don't rush...you've got time!

In this study, we'll look specifically at the coronavirus and will tie it into Bible prophecy. At the time of this writing, we are entrenched in the effects of the COVID-19 crisis. So, we will look at the situation in light of Scripture, in hopes of sharing truth and encouragement during these difficult days.

Before we dig in, please remember the encouragement Jesus gave His disciples in [John 14:1-3](#). Right now He is preparing a special place for you, and one day soon our Father will give Him the command to come get us! What a day that will be! Read [John 14:1-3](#), then consider what that day will be like when He returns to take us home! Jot down your thoughts here:

Now, let's begin our study.

Part 1: Coronavirus Pandemic: Real Crisis or Over-blown?

First, what is coronavirus? According to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is not a new thing, but is a "family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV)." Thus, the current rendition is labeled COVID-19 (coronavirus disease first discovered in 2019).

Here is how the coronavirus (COVID-19) currently stacks up against other viruses:

2019 novel coronavirus compared to other major viruses

VIRUS	YEAR IDENTIFIED	CASES	DEATHS	FATALITY RATE	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES
Ebola**	1976	33,577	13,562	40.4%	9
Nipah	1998	513	398	77.6%	2
SARS	2002	8,096	774	9.6%	29
MERS*	2012	2,494	858	34.4%	28
COVID-19**	2020	137,445	5,088	3.7%	117

Sources: Johns Hopkins, CDC, World Health Organization, New England Journal of Medicine, Malaysian Journal of Pathology, CGTN

*As of November 2019 **As of March 12, 2020

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Furthermore, let's compare COVID-19 to other life-threatening conditions. In China, one of the deadliest days of the coronavirus pandemic was February 10, 2020, when 108 deaths were recorded and, on that day, China topped 1,000 deaths since the outbreak. ([Source](#)) There are currently about 150 countries reporting cases of COVID-19, but none with death tolls anywhere close to 108/day, and the vast majority with zero deaths. But, for the sake of comparison, let's assume each of those 150 countries had 20 deaths. (It's not even close to that, currently.) Including China, the death toll in a single day would be 3,108 (150*20+108).

It would be heartbreak for family and friends affected by those deaths, and I am in no way intending to downplay the dangers of COVID-19. However, compare that death toll (on one of China's worst days) to these deadly killers:

- 26,283 per day die of cancer
- 24,641 per day die of heart disease
- 4,300 per day die of diabetes

Furthermore, the CDC estimated 12,000 Americans died from influenza between October 1, 2019 and February 1, 2020, and deaths may reach 30,000 this flu season. That averages to 82 people per day in America. As it stands right now, the seasonal flu still far surpasses COVID-19 in terms of the threat of death. (Let's pray it remains that way.)

By and large none of those conditions receive even a small percentage of the attention given to COVID-19. That is not to say there should not be attention to the pandemic, or that nothing should be done to eradicate it. Informed decisions are being made and we should heed them. But no other condition elicits the attention given to the coronavirus, which begs the question as to what is most concerning: the virus itself or the panic and fear being created. Thus, I want to draw your attention to two things:

1. The perspective from a physician, and
2. Encouragement from God's Word

First, a very informative and level-headed 7-minute interview in which Dr Drew Pinsky emphasizes “Do not panic!” It is an exhortation to stay calm, while providing layman’s level information about the virus. ([Click here to find that video.](#)) Jot down your “take away” from this video:

Secondly, and most importantly, as believers, we do not need to live in fear! God’s Word is filled with encouragement, as we will see throughout this study guide. Recently, I posted [Coronavirus Pandemic: Real Threat or Over-reaction?](#) In it, I presented an entirely different view of the situation at hand. If you have not read it, please take a couple minutes to do so.

What one or two verses presented there did you find most encouraging, and why?

Be of good cheer, fellow Bible students! Our Headmaster will teach us great and mighty things if only we tune our ears to Him! ([Jeremiah 33:3](#)) Be encouraged today!

Part 2: Could the Coronavirus be Part of a Bigger Satanic Plot?

In Part 1, we examined some facts and statistics about COVID-19, as it stands today. We do not know what the days ahead bring, so the point is not to form an opinion as to whether the coronavirus is as big a threat as portrayed or whether it is being blown out of proportion. The point is this: whether the threat is large or small, we serve a sovereign God in whom we can trust!

Please look up [Isaiah 46:8-10](#). According to verse 8, what three things are we to do?

What does verse 9 tell us about God?

Now, focus on verse 10. God seems to reiterate His uniqueness and sovereignty. Write out exactly what He says in verse 10:

In the end, He will accomplish all His good pleasure! As a child of God, that excites me...how about you! Taking a cue from my pastor, try reading this phrase 7 times, with the emphasis on a different word each time:

HE will accomplish all His good pleasure!
He WILL accomplish all His good pleasure!
He will ACCOMPLISH all His good pleasure!
He will accomplish ALL His good pleasure!
He will accomplish all HIS good pleasure!
He will accomplish all His GOOD pleasure!
He will accomplish all His good PLEASURE!

Pretty much drills it home, doesn't it!

That same God we trust in times of chaos and peril also warns us of what is to come. Before we go any further, let me remind you of a key truth we focus on through VISION 2020:

Prophecy is meant to PREPARE, not to SCARE!

In today's world, we see lots of evidence of things Jesus Himself told us would characterize the last days. [Matthew 24:1-8](#) and [Luke 21:7-13](#) both reference things we will see in those days, among them pestilences much greater than the coronavirus. In fact, prophetic passages throughout the Bible warn of tribulational times that will be far beyond what we can even imagine in the relatively worry-free world we are used to! In fact, [Revelation 9:18](#) warns of a time when 1/3 of mankind will be wiped out by plagues!

According to [Worldometer](#) (on March 18, 2020), the world population is almost 7.8 billion. Suppose ½ of those people are Christians and are taken away in the rapture. (That's a very generous number!) That leaves 3.9 billion people on planet earth. The plagues of Revelation 19 occur during the Tribulation, and 1/3 of 3.9 billion is 1.3 BILLION who will die!

As deadly as the coronavirus might become, it is a head cold compared to that!

But, friends, the point is that we are seeing only a glimpse of what is to come, and sadly, there are those who have a stated agenda to reduce the earth's population! Wow...if that doesn't fall into the category of evil demonic schemes, I don't know what does.

But don't take my word for it. The quotes, the evidence and the signs are all there. We'll conclude Part 2 of this study guide with this:

[The Satanic Plot to Reduce Earth's Population.](#)

Please carve out about an hour to view Amir Tsarfati's teaching. It will awaken you to the hidden agenda and will help tie in what we know about the COVID-19 crisis with that hidden agenda. You will not hear this on the news!

Were there points Amir made in that teaching that were new to you? If so, take a moment to jot them down, then do your own research to see what the Bible has to say about those things.

Way to hang in there, study friends! Stick with us as we continue to apply Scripture to what we see and hear in our world today.

Part 3: Are We Overlooking a Deadlier Virus?

In closing Part 2, we followed Amir Tsarfati's teaching on the Satanic plot to reduce earth's population. In it, he described how COVID-19 plays into that evil scheme. Indeed, the coronavirus is pandemic and a worldwide concern.

In response, as I view the issue from a Christian perspective, two looming questions linger in my mind:

- Is COVID-19 a sign of the end? (We've touched on this already, but there's more.)
- Are we overlooking a deadlier virus?

Let's focus on those two things today.

I often reference Matthew 24 as Jesus' treatise on end times. However, Luke records the same accounts from a slightly different perspective. (Think of it as two people seeing an event from two different positions. They see the exact same thing, but different vantage points yield different perspectives, though both are accurate in their description.) Scan through [Luke chapter 21](#) to gain context.

Now, zoom into verses 11 and 28, while soaking in Anne Graham Lotz's devotional, [*Is the Coronavirus a Sign of the End?*](#)

She answers the question, "Is fear the appropriate response?" Do you agree with her answer? If so, what spiritual truths do you take from this devotional that you might share with someone else?

Are there people in your life who need to hear those truths? If so, do you plan to share them? How and when? (Make a plan! You're much more apt to follow through!)

While we can in no way downplay the reality of the virus that, for now, seems to rule our lives, I cannot escape the yoke He has invited me to share with Him. Take a look at [Matthew 11:28-30](#).

The most popular application of that passage is that we often try to carry a heavy load not really suited to us, and that we need to offload that burden to the Lord. That is a legitimate application, and one most of us can probably relate to at times in our lives when we attempt to take on things God never intended.

However, I see a second application. What does Jesus tell us to do in verse 29?

We are to take His yoke upon us! Yes, He will bear the weight, but we join Him in the work! I picture a yoke built for two oxen. If two oxen are going to move in the same direction, a yoke is a great tool to accomplish the task while keeping them pointed toward a common goal. If one ox is younger, weaker or just doesn't know how to bear a load, an older, wiser ox could be paired with that ox to "mentor" the younger, weaker one. Jesus is my older, stronger brother (in this case, I call Him the "big ox!"), and He knows how to carry a load! It is He who invites me to join Him in the yoke!

So, you see, the burden He has given me will be made light if I "yoke with Him," yet the burden doesn't disappear!

The burden He has given me is that our world is full of evidence that Jesus could return for us at any moment, yet there are many who are not ready! I wonder, are we overlooking a much deadlier virus than COVID-19? I think so.

To that matter, I recently posted [Have We Overlooked the Deadliest Virus?](#) It is a short read...go ahead and read it. I'll wait here!

What is the virus?

Is there a cure? If so, what is it?

Imagine for a moment.... If you were a biochemist and came up with the cure for COVID-19, what would you do with it? I doubt you would keep it secret. If you had a friend or family member who was infected, I bet you would rush to their side to provide them the cure. In a humanitarian effort to better the world, you would find a way to mass produce and distribute it! (You would also make a ton of money, though that is irrelevant to this discussion!)

The reality is that every believer carries around a pocketful of pills that will cure the most deadly disease in the history of the world...sin! You carry around "God's pill"....the Gospel! So, I will ask again: Do you know someone with "the disease" who desperately needs the "God's pill?" Will you give it to them? When?

Dear believer, Jesus commands us to:

¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. ([Matthew 28:19-20](#))

You don't have to beat a person over the head with your Bible. Simply pray and ask the Lord to open a door with that person(s), then be willing to engage in a non-threatening way. We live in chaotic and uncertain days and we've all seen the panic in the toilet paper aisle! I believe God is preparing the soil and is looking for people who will plant, water and harvest a crop!

Time is short, my friends, and all of us have friends and family on the verge of eternity in hell! Let's give out the "God's pill!"

(Hint: if you don't know what Bible verses to use, write down the references used in the blog post you just read. That's what they are there for!)

⁶So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; ⁸but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." ([Acts 1:6-8](#))

"Heavenly Father, send the Holy Spirit to fall upon every person reading these words right now! I pray You will pour out your Spirit upon us and upon a world lost in sin. We go out in the Name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit to take up the yoke you invite us to share. Send people our way and open our mouths with the "God's pill" that is intended to cure the disease of sin in every person's life. You are the Way, the Truth and the Life and no one comes to the Father but by You! May we be vessels of Your use. Send us out in power, I pray in the mighty name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Savior and King. Amen"

Part 4: Turning to God's Word

Indeed, Jesus is the cure to our sin problem! He is also the cure for all that concerns us, including the coronavirus!

After reading [1 Peter 5:6-7](#), what we can we expect from God after we humble ourselves under His mighty hand?

What do you believe it means to "cast all your anxieties (cares) on Him?" What cares do you have right now that you would like to cast upon Him? Write them below, then read verse 7 aloud for each item you list.

Here is a fun exercise. Logon to [Biblegateway.com](#) and enter "do not fear" in the search field. How many verses contain that phrase?

Now, change your search to "do not be afraid." How many times does that phrase appear?

Depending upon the translation you searched, the Bible exhorts us about 150 times not to be afraid. There must have been lots of fear back in the day! While coronavirus was likely not one of them, there

were surely many things which caused God's people to be fearful. Dealing with a scare such as COVID-19 is nothing new to God! That is why we can cast all our cares upon Him!

One of my favorite "do not fear" verses is [Isaiah 41:10](#). Write it here:

As you think about the coronavirus, how does this verse encourage you? With whom will you share this encouragement?

Here are some additional words of encouragement. For each, write out the key phrase:

- [Psalm 50:15](#)
- [Isaiah 26:3-4](#)
- [Isaiah 40:31](#)

Have you ever searched God's Word for specific words, phrases or ideas when longing to hear very specifically from the Lord? Once isolation and "social distancing" were imposed, I began looking for passages related to being shut in and isolated. I came across [Isaiah 26:20](#). Again, put into context of what we're dealing with in COVID-19.

It seems as though we have "entered our rooms" (homes) and closed our doors. We are hidden away, waiting for the big, bad virus (indignation) to run its course! How are you spending time in your room behind closed doors?

Many are wondering how long the virus will linger. Meanwhile, as we remain tucked away in our homes, it will undoubtedly get easier and easier to lose hope and interest in life. [2 Corinthians 4:13-18](#) will help us through those times. Read that passage.

What is God's promise to us in verse 14?

As we deal with the spread of the coronavirus, verse 15 tells us of the spread of something far more important. What is it?

Verse 16 encourages us not to lose heart. The coronavirus may cause "decay" of our outer body, but what is happening to our inner man day-by-day?

Now, the crown jewel! Re-read [verses 17-18](#). Do you believe the coronavirus will last forever? How does verse 17 describe what we're going through, and what is its effect?

For a moment, let's go back to that day when Jesus' disciples sat down with Him on the Mount of Olives to ask Him about signs of the times. [Matthew 24](#) is one account of that conversation, but we're going to examine Luke's account in [Luke 21](#). We read it previously, so zoom into verses 10-11. What sorts of things will characterize the last days?

The NASB translates verse 11 to refer to "plagues and famines," while the NKJV translates the same phrase "famines and pestilences." Whether you see it as a plague or a pestilence, the coronavirus is real. We are seeing clear evidence of characteristics Jesus Himself prophesied. Beyond that, verse 26 references "fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world."

As emphasized earlier, we need not fear. Nor should expectation of things to come scare us! In fact, Jesus and the New Testament writers encouraged us with the following passages. Read them slowly and deliberately, then pick one each day to memorize!

- [John 16:33](#) – In Him, we have peace!
- [Philippians 4:4-7](#) – His peace guards us as we put our trust in Him!
- [Romans 8:28](#) – For those of us who love Him God causes all things (including the coronavirus) to work together for good!

As I write, a very apropos graphic is circulating on social media. I think we all need to see it and be reminded of this truth:



Amen!

Part 5: How Should the Church Respond to the Coronavirus?

As we studied in Part 4, the key for us individually is to stay calm and put our trust in the Lord. He is able and will faithfully guide us through!

But what about the church? I'm talking about the congregations of believers all over the US and around the world. Should churches function in fear? (No) Should they ignore government and CDC guidelines? (No) Should they stick their head in the sand? (No) Should they continue ministering to congregants? (Yes) Should they reach out to those in need? (Yes)

Hopefully common sense rules the day and the body of Christ (believers around the world) shine the Light of Christ in such a way that others see Jesus in us.

Take a moment to look at [*In the Midst of Crisis, Let Your Light Shine*](#). As you read the passages provided there, which one "strikes a chord" with you? How will your light shine to others? Write down a few ways you can cast your light in a dark world.

Additionally, Franklin Graham recently shared the following timely encouragement. Read it carefully and allow the truths to sink in:

Many years ago, the great writer and theologian A.W. Tozer made this profound statement, "A scared world needs a fearless church." That is so true. During this time with the coronavirus, fear is gripping the hearts of people around the world. There is a mountain of anxiety and alarm, and it is still building. It is as real as the virus itself—but it is treatable. There are people in need that we can reach out to help. Like a fireman runs to the fire, the church needs to respond to crises around us. We who are the church need to stand up and be the hands and feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. During these days of less group activity and gatherings, we could all take time to call and check on the elderly or others who are alone. Maybe you could offer to drop off some food or necessities they might need. Talking with someone on the phone, listening to what they are going through, and most importantly, praying with them, could change not only their day, but their entire outlook. We need to share the "reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). Jesus Christ is our hope, our anchor, our comfort, and our peace. Let's share His love with as many people as we can, making every day count. Christians, God can use you. The virus isn't the only thing that's contagious. What if we had an outbreak of people helping people and a sweeping eruption of prayer?

Are we a "fearless church?" If not, what must each of us in the body of Christ do in order to become fearless?

In 1948, the world was concerned about the threat of nuclear war. During that time, CS Lewis wrote a very thoughtful piece in which he shared a perspective I believe can be applied today. As you read it, replace the thought of atomic bombs with the coronavirus. His words will be encouraging:

In one way we think a great deal too much of the atomic bomb. "How are we to live in an atomic age?" I am tempted to reply: "Why, as you would have lived in the sixteenth century when the plague visited London almost every year, or as you would have lived in a Viking age when raiders from Scandinavia might land and cut your throat any night; or indeed, as you are already living in an age of cancer, an age of syphilis, an age of paralysis, an age of air raids, an age of railway accidents, an age of motor accidents."

*In other words, do not let us begin by exaggerating the novelty of our situation. Believe me, dear sir or madam, you and all whom you love were already sentenced to death before the atomic bomb was invented: and quite a high percentage of us were going to die in unpleasant ways. We had, indeed, one very great advantage over our ancestors—*anesthetics*; but we have that still. It is perfectly ridiculous to go about whimpering and drawing long faces because the scientists have added one more chance of painful and premature death to a world which already bristled with such chances and in which death itself was not a chance at all, but a certainty.*

This is the first point to be made: and the first action to be taken is to pull ourselves together. If we are all going to be destroyed by an atomic bomb, let that bomb when it comes find us doing sensible and human things—praying, working, teaching, reading, listening to music, bathing the children, playing tennis, chatting to our friends over a pint and a game of darts—not huddled together like frightened sheep and thinking about bombs. They may break our bodies (a microbe can do that) but they need not dominate our minds.

— "On Living in an Atomic Age" (1948) in [*Present Concerns: Journalistic Essays*](#)

I can't help but wonder if this catastrophe is the one that will draw us together and will cause believers to wake up and commit to the life of a born-again, spirit-filled productive part of the body of Christ. But what does it take? There are entire Bible studies out there that attempt to answer that question more comprehensively, so I want to focus only on what the Lord has impressed upon me.

Read [2 Chronicles 7:12-18](#). Undoubtedly, you recognize verse 14, but let's dig in a little bit to gain a deeper understanding. According to verse 12, who spoke to whom?

When the Lord spoke to Solomon, He was speaking to the Jewish king. As Christians, we tend to hijack this passage and make it our own well of blessing, when in reality, God's promises to hear from heaven, forgive their sin and heal their land was made to Israel, not to America! (News flash!) However, while the promises belong to Israel, I believe the principle applies to nations around the world. Humbling ourselves, praying and seeking His face and turning from wicked ways moves the heart of God, and as a good Father, He will respond.

So, let's put the principle to the test! Take a careful look at verse 13.

- Shut up the heavens so there is no rain. Do you know of places around the world where the heavens seem to be shut up and rain does not fall? While [drought in the US has subsided to a great degree](#) (partially due to flooding!), drought areas around the globe are becoming [more severe in general](#). This is happening!

- Locust devour the land. Hundred of BILLIONS of locusts invaded [East Africa](#), [India](#), and [Iran](#) since the beginning of 2020. This is happening!
- Pestilence among My people. Not only has the coronavirus (pestilence) overtaken Israel but is spread worldwide. This is happening!

That verse is followed immediately by the familiar verse 14. If the principle is to be applied to all, what three or four things should we do if we desire God to hear from heaven, forgive our sins and heal our land?

As God dealt with Solomon, His people had drifted into wickedness, yet He still promised to hear them, forgive them and heal their land if they humbled themselves, prayed, sought His face and turned from those ways. In essence, He asked them to rid themselves of arrogance and pride, and to humble themselves. What do you believe He is asking us to do in America?

Friends, we were meant to call upon the name of the Lord! The promises are not ours, but the principles remain, and God is gracious and merciful. I want to test the principle, how about you? Let's close out Part 5 by doing just that. Find a private place to plead God's grace, then:

- Humble yourself. Humility begins with confession of sin. Let's confess our own, then confess the sins of our nation. (Daniel did that in [Daniel 9](#). Check it out!)
- Pray. We can all do that! Pray for our nation. Pray for our leaders. Pray for God to pour out His mercy and healing.
- Seek His face. When is the last time we yearned for God Himself? Not for what He can do for us or give us, but simply to know Him. Paul said, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." ([1 Corinthians 2:2](#)) Are we as determined as Paul?
- Turn from wicked ways. This is a step beyond confession (agreeing with God about sin), to repentance (turning from sin). Let's forsake even the "little" sins that so easily entangle us. As we confess and commit ourselves to God, the Holy Spirit provides the power for us to forsake sin.

Who's in? Let's do this!

Part 6: Practical Suggestions to Remain Productive during Isolation or Quarantine

In Part 1 we examined the details of COVID-19 and in Part 2, we looked at the coronavirus in light of evil ambition. A deadlier virus was the focus of Part 3, while we turned to God's Word in Part 4 and discussed the church's role in the midst of crisis in Part 5. Now, we'll close it out by discussing practical suggestions for getting through the challenges of isolation and quarantine.

Read [Ephesians 5:15-16](#). In the context of our battle with the coronavirus, summarize those verses here:

Now, flip to [Ephesians 6:10-13](#). Who do we battle against and how do we win?

Spiritually speaking, we must remember the battle belongs to the Lord, but we must “suit up” for battle!

Practically, let’s redeem the time! Whether we’re isolated in our homes or foot loose and fancy free, time is a limited commodity. Every moment passes into eternity, never to be recovered, thus, time is gone forever once it passes. Here are some ideas:

- Rest. I am guilty of burning the candle at both ends. For those of us in that category, perhaps this is a time God is calling us aside to provide appropriate rest for our bodies. If you are on the opposite end of the spectrum, perhaps you must work diligently to get busy day-to-day and spend less time sleeping. There is a balance to be found. Let’s give our bodies what they need, whether it is rest or activity.
- Exercise. How often do we hear “I’m too busy to exercise!” This may be a great time to begin a new habit! You don’t need fancy equipment, just get outside and walk or run. Fresh air does us good, and we can still abide by “social distancing” mandates.
- Read God’s Word. If you don’t typically have a quiet time to get alone with God in His Word, this is a great time to do it! I’m spending the time I would normally be driving to work as extra time in His Word. So far, it has been wonderfully uplifting! Get a good devotional, use a Bible app (such as YouVersion), or do it the old-fashioned way: begin reading through a book of the Bible. Before you read, ask the Lord to provide a “nugget,” then read slowly, waiting for the Holy Spirit to quicken the spirit within you. God always speaks, we must listen!
- Pray. On a normal day at work, I take a short walk every couple hours and that turns into prayer time. Working from home, I tend to lose track of time, so I set an alarm to get out and walk 3-4 times per day. Turn a walk into a prayer walk. Also, try praying through a passage of Scripture. It must thrill the heart of God to hear His Word prayed back to Him!
- Conquer a project. Is there a closet you have neglected for months? How about the garage? Whatever you have put off, schedule a time and do it! Accomplishing a task gives a sense of accomplishment and provides a bit of joy in the midst of a challenging situation. Just do it!
- Read a book. In our fast-paced world, it is difficult to find time to curl up with a good book. Now may be that time! If you have a family, try reading together. When is the last time your kids read you a book (or vice versa)? Whether obtained electronically or at the local library, books are easy to access and can provide relaxing entertainment as we wait out this crisis!
- Connect with old friends. Who doesn’t have a friend with whom we have lost contact? Reconnect and initiate communication. Between email and social media, communication can happen within a matter of minutes. Reignite relationships.
- Reach out to those in need. Whether the need is practical (in need of a bag of groceries) or personal (in need of encouragement), there are very few people on earth who would not be appreciative of an expression of kindness! Call, email, PM or a text them to simply state you care about them and ask if they have needs. Provide for needs, pray for others, and offer them the encouragement we’ve discussed in the passages shared in this study guide. Remember: don’t withhold “God’s Pill” from others. Share, share, share!
- Write cards to the elderly living in care homes/facilities. Many get very few visits from family or friends to begin with, and now with everything shut down, there is no chance of visitors. Drop off cards, or mail several in a packet together to be distributed. Cards can also be written to

those who are incarcerated. Contact your church or a prison ministry to get plugged in. There is a fantastic Prison Ministry through CalvaryPHX in Phoenix. Their mission is huge, and they can always use more hands to write notes of encouragement to inmates. Contact Calvary's office (602-973-4768) to get involved.

- Stay connected to friends and family, and to your church. Use email, use social media, use snail mail, but stay engaged with those you know and love. If your church provides live streaming of services, then get up, get dressed and attend online! I know for some of you that may seem sacrilegious, but it beats not enjoying fellowship at all. The internet SHOULD NOT replace regular attendance at church, as the writer of Hebrews tells us not to forsake gathering together. There is definitely a dynamic that is lost when we can't be together to worship, hear God's Word and minister to one another. However, in times like this, I am so thankful for technology and our ability to attend virtually when live attendance is not possible.

Finally, friends of mine who attend a church in the Midwest shared a video via Facebook that I think provides good, calm perspective on how to navigate as believers through this time of isolation. I share it because it is not only informative, but also very encouraging. Here's the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/christchurchsterling/videos/259350981749905/>

Well done, my friends! You made it through our fifth study guide together. If you have not gone through the previous four study guides, I urge you to do so. The objective of VISION 2020 is to realize God has written a story and continues to write it on the pages of our lives. The only way we become aware of His Story is to get into His Word and allow Him to apply it to our lives. That is my hope and my prayer as I post study guides, then pray for His guidance and blessing upon your lives. Not a day goes by that I don't pray for all who might stumble upon this website and our study guides.

May you be richly blessed, may you remain healthy through this crisis, and may we all come out on the other side much deeper in relationship with our Creator, Savior and Sustainer. Trust Him! We're going to get through this!