

Finding Peace in an Out-of-Control World

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The normal human response is to feel anxious when life spirals out of control, and that's how many feel today. Dr. Daniel Amen writes, "While most people are focusing on ways to fight the coronavirus pandemic, few are prepared for the other pandemic that is already spreading more rapidly around the nation and across the globe—a mental health pandemic." Research from Kaiser Family Foundation indicates "45% of Americans say the coronavirus pandemic is impacting their mental health." Increasing rates of anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and domestic violence point to a mental health pandemic, but we can help limit its proliferation!

We recognize the need for physical protection (wearing masks and/or sheltering at home); for our overall health, it's vital to experience shelter from a mental health pandemic, too. God provides for our safety! 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV) explains: *For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.* This tells us that "a spirit of fear" is something we don't have to accept! Instead, we can live with "power...love and...a sound mind," choosing what we listen to and believe, living beyond anxiety, fear, and dread.

Psalm 19 offers practical guidelines for experiencing peace instead of fear and anxiety:

1. **Be alert** for God's Voice. *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows and proclaims His handiwork. Day after day pours forth speech, and night after night shows forth knowledge* (Psalm 19: 1-2, AMP). Carefully listen to His promises, such as Isaiah 26:3.
2. **Be intentional** about how you invest your time, creating a new routine, rediscovering an ordered existence (per 1 Corinthians 14:40), allowing God to provide your needs. *The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the [whole] person; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure and bright, enlightening the eyes* (Psalm 19: 7-8).
3. **Be grateful**, living fully present where you are [you can't be where you're not!]. Instead of allowing a virus to be your focus (and fear), focus on Truth. *The [reverent] fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether* (Ps. 19: 9).
4. **Be aware** of God's warnings so you won't be misled by the world's fears. Just as we avoid all forms of exposure to COVID-19, we need to avoid what seem like "small" doubts that silently erode mental and spiritual health. *Moreover, by them in Your servant warned (reminded, illuminated, and instructed); and in keeping them there is great reward...clear me from hidden [and unconscious] faults* (Psalm 19: 11-12b).
5. **Be kind** to the people in your life, pausing to wisely choose what you say and do. *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer* (Psalm 19:14).

Just as appropriate medical help is important for your physical health, so mental health care is important when needed. If your thoughts of anxiety and/or depression are spiraling out of control, if you have attitudes and/or behaviors that are harming yourself or others, please contact a mental health professional today. To find a counselor, you can contact your church for recommendations, or look online at a "find a counselor" section at any of these websites: sfacconline.org; aacc.net; ccef.org; focusonthefamily.com.

For additional help, you can work through *Core Healing from Trauma*, a biblical counseling workbook for individuals or groups, available on Amazon. To reduce the impact of trauma, you can also watch "Strengthening Your Core," a series of 12 videos on YouTube at <https://cutt.ly/Or6EiiW>. You can subscribe to my blog at <https://corehealingfromtrauma.com/>.