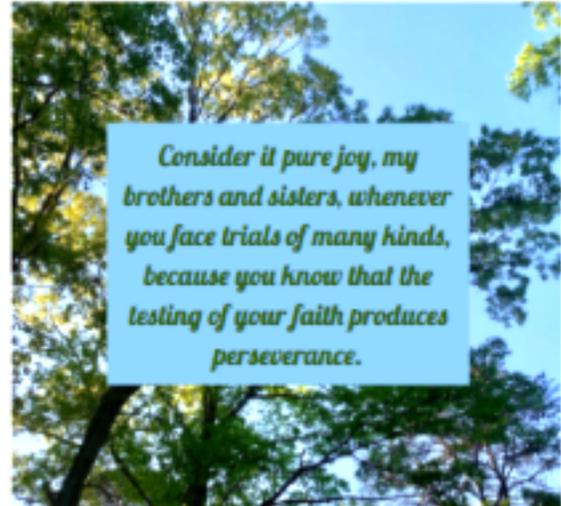


CONSIDER IT PURE JOY

APRIL 19, 2020

Another week of Covid-19 or Coronavirus, or “the Rona,” as it has become affectionately become known. If you are reading this, then you are a survivor. Each day I look at CNN and the numbers have increased, it’s truly stressful to wonder who will be next, and if it will be you because you went to the grocery store. In Bible study we are about to read the book of James. James 1:2-3 reads, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.” I wanted to use these verses for the basis for this week’s post, but I wanted to use an example besides our current situation.



I participate in a women’s health study that involves quarterly surveys, and usually a financial thank you gift. :-) I was a bit convicted, this week, as I completed my survey. As I mentioned, the survey is about women’s health, each survey is about a different aspect of such. This quarter’s 100-question survey was about reproductive health, but much of it centered around “if you found out you were pregnant in the next twelve months...” Well, my doctor and I discussed it, and I had him put a stop to that in 2007 about 5 minutes after my second child was born, so basically this survey did not apply to me - and that was the attitude I took as I completed the survey. Question after question, however, delved into how I would feel about a pregnancy - would there be financial strain, how my partner would react, would I keep the baby or consider alternatives? That last part, I believe, is where I was convicted. I would not want to become pregnant in the next twelve months, or even the next twelve years, but...if the Lord said it was to be, then I would remain prayerful and be the parent He would have me to be. I would consider it pure joy.

(Dear Lord, please understand, I am not making a request, just making a point. Amen.)

As humans, we put great effort into planning our course. Many of us have charted our pathway, and when something unexpected happens, we fall apart, fall into depression, feel cheated by life, or feel like God let us down. I have seen multiple stories of couples who were planning their wedding for April 2020, now they have had to change their plans. I’ve had some friends reach

milestone birthdays, and to celebrate, they had a Zoom party - they didn't get to Hawaii, as planned. There were thousands, millions, of young people planning to receive their diploma, and step into the next stage of life in May and June. Some graduation ceremonies have been cancelled, others have been postponed, indefinitely. What should we do?

James advises that we "consider it pure joy..." How, you ask, how can this virus, all of these people being out of work, businesses closing permanently, kids at home rather than school, graduations cancelled, medical personnel overwhelmed - how can we find any joy in this situation?

First, we must be rational, and look at the situation for what it is. There is a deadly virus that no one's immune system has seen before, and to protect us, our government has advised that everyone stay at home. Yes, there are consequences to this, but there will be consequences if we don't stay at home, too. If we stay at home, we have a much greater chance of living through this situation. Once it passes, we can resume our plans, or maybe we will be humbled and will have learned to listen for God's gentle whisper rather than the frenzy in our own mind.

Second, we must learn to enjoy the present. Personally, I have had many more conversations with my children in the past few weeks than we normally have. We ordered the game of Monopoly - I feel like we should have already had it, but we didn't. I am enjoying the retention pond behind our house. We've lived here 14 years and I'm just now noticing all of the turtles in the water. I recorded a video of a Louisiana Blue Heron at the water! When I walk the neighborhood, I generally wave at neighbors, but now, I stop and speak, from a distance of 6-8 feet, but it's more than a wave!

Third, we must give God praise. We must thank God daily for all that He is doing for mankind - we are His Creation and for us there is no greater love! When we look at the news we see the number of people who have died, but we can also see the number of positive tests. The number of people who have recovered from the virus far exceeds the number who have succumbed. For this, we must give God the praise! We must thank Him for the people who are working to keep us safe - those who advise our governing agents, those who are working to develop a vaccine, those who work daily to help patients recover. We must praise God for our life, health, and strength - something we may have once taken for granted.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." I saw a new story this week about a 106 year-old woman who has [recovered](#) from the Coronavirus. This is amazing, but she has survived trials in the past, too! She survived the last pandemic, Spanish flu in 1918, WWI, WWII, the Great Depression, not to mention personal problems in all of those years. She has faced trials of many kinds and each one has produced in her perseverance. Our faith is being tested, and we must persevere to pass the test. We will get through this, and better we shall be!