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READ FOR YOURSELF

For the past few weeks it's been difficult to turn on the TV without hearing something about Coronavirus (COVID-19). Now, it's all over social media, too! About 3 weeks ago, I thought I should maybe purchase a box of face masks - not urgent, but just in case. You may know that I have a pretty good grasp of science, but you probably don't know that at one time I considered epidemiology as a major, and although I didn't, working at the CDC would still be my dream job!



I think the human immune system is one of God's best. It is alert, adaptable, and aggressive. In some people it's so alert and aggressive that it will attack harmless agents. This is what happens when we experience allergic reactions and suffer from autoimmune diseases. I read a theory several years ago indicating that autoimmune diseases have risen because we have become such a clean society. Our cleanliness takes work away from our immune cells, and since they cannot rest idle, they take on new tasks - they destroy parts of the body that we would rather keep. This theory was rather convincing, and made me much less of a germophobe - that is until Thursday when I caught myself wiping down my Walmart shopping cart. I had never given any attention to the wipes at the door until this week. I am certain it was due to the media's messages about Coronavirus.

In Walmart, I discreetly shopped for face masks. After searching in several places where they should have been, I went to the pharmacy to ask. I was almost whispering, so as not to cause any alarm. She told me in a regular volume that I was about the 30th person to ask her for them - on Thursday! She said they were out of them and had been for a couple of weeks and she didn't know when they would get more. Now nervous, I went online to do my shopping. I found boxes of 100 face masks for \$399 and delivery was mid-April to mid-May. Now in a mini-panic, I went to Dollar General, Ollies, and Walgreens - no face masks. I went home.

At home, more coverage of the virus on every station, the number of deaths, video of people wearing face masks, Facebook friends posting about the virus. I went online and searched "coronavirus survival rate." The media would have us believe that this disease is a death sentence, but what I found in my research is that it is not. According to an article on Health.com, dated February 27, 2020. "It can be scary to watch the death toll rise from the coronavirus overseas. But we now know that most cases of coronavirus in China have been mild and less than 3% of patients have died." In another article in the Harvard University Medical School Blog, it states, "As of February 25, 2020, the reported confirmed cases and deaths in China suggest the mortality rate is roughly 3%." How reassuring! I could breathe

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again - without a face mask!!! In fact, they recommend NOT wearing a facemask, "Currently, face masks are not recommended for the general public in the US."

Finally, I went to bed feeling relieved, glad I had read that for myself. Sometimes when we listen to others we don't get the full picture, instead we receive a slanted message, we hear what someone wants us to know. This realization made me think how awesome it was that God inspired 40 people to record His Holy Word. We don't have to trust what we hear, we can read it for ourselves - and we should. I have attended church all of my life, I have listened to sermons and have even taken notes, but there is something about reading it for myself that has been really powerful. I started attending Bible study Fellowship in 2013 and reading and studying for myself has changed my life.

I used to think the Bible was applicable in certain situations, but because it's old, it had limited application now. I thought this because I didn't know how to read it. We can't read the Bible as a set of scriptures, unrelated sentences - that's dangerous. Much of the Bible is written as narratives, with context and details, and we must read it in terms of its application to our lives. I've found that I can read a passage, a story, several times, and each time I find a new application that I had not previously noticed. When we read His Word, God speaks directly into our lives because He knows what we need at the present time.

If you are interested in reading the Bible to find out God's plan for your life, find a reading plan or just open to the start of a book. I have found starting in the Old Testament book of Exodus to be a good starting point. Others have started in the New Testament with Matthew or Luke. It doesn't matter where you start, it matters that you start and never stop.

If anyone would like information about [Bible Study Fellowship](#), please let me know. You can find the 2020 New Testament Reading Plan from First baptist Church of Rock Hill, [here](#).

~2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

As the coronavirus news continues to unfold, I don't have a facemask, but I do have salvation in Jesus Christ. While, I will eventually die a physical death, my soul will live on, in Heaven, with the Father. Do you know the fate of your soul? Are you sure? I would be glad to discuss salvation with anyone who wants to discuss it. You should be able to confidently make the same statement I just made. God loves you and He wants you to be sure.

John 3:16-18

~For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.