



CHURCH OF GOD INTERNATIONAL, MEDINA

HEALING FROM TRAUMA

It has been approximately five years since the Covid-19 Pandemic (a.k.a. CCP virus) first affected the world with wonder, suspicion, and fear, traumatizing the globe with paranoia, causing a lot of stress, worry, and anxiety. The effects of this worldwide event has become more devastating as additional information comes to light. So, how does one cope and recover from this kind of worrisome trauma; or any kind of trauma?

Bill Watson

Early on in 2020, the world was introduced to a new strain allegedly of the Sars virus, called “Sars-Cov-2.” It goes without saying, since discovering this virus there has been an enormous amount of suspicion, questions, and debate as to just what it actually is, how much of a threat it really presents, and what kind of healthcare is appropriate—and most importantly, to what extent of “lifestyle change” is actually necessary for minimizing or eliminating its negative effect upon the population of the world.

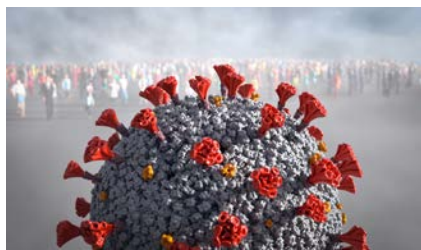
Clearly, we don’t need to discuss a lot of details about what mankind has contended with throughout the nations of the world over the last five years, but the conditions are admittedly, common to the population of the world. Most of us had to wear masks, social distance, obey curfews, and get our temperatures taken on a regular basis. Many have had to be tested multiple times—especially those who are in college or professional sports. During the course of this “pandemic” (as per the WHO and CDC), limitations, stipulations, and restrictions to control crowds were also implemented. Sports events and entertainment engagements were limited and



restructured at best, or canceled altogether, while nations globally locked down, reducing domestic and international travel to virtually a “crawl,” if at all!

Businesses, and even churches, were limited to ten or fewer people, or perhaps closed altogether, while others were told to work out of their homes or laid off, or maybe lost their jobs completely. The stresses caused from working at home added to the trauma due to the logistics and privacy challenges they presented. The conflation of one’s profession conducted from home and the distractions they posed from mates and children domestically sadly, increased the divorce rate. According to the New York Post, due to a combination of stress, financial strain, working from home, illness, death of a loved one, home schooling, etc., all contributed to a 34 percent increase in divorce from March through June of 2020, compared to 2019. These are real people—dads, moms, and children—that are now injured by divorce! This is a sobering statistic!

There is no doubt, the world has been traumatized over the last five years in such a way that it could take years to repair and recover from the damage caused economically, in education, and socially through the separation, division, and failure in families and personal relationships.



This so-called pandemic has redefined for many of us what family is, what entertainment, or a vacation actually means; how, or where we will shop—online, or at a local store. Many are rethinking how to conduct business going forward. Who will we work for, and how will we socially interact within our network of acquaintances at church, among business associates, and with classmates, friends, and family members? And, of course, the added anxiety and stress of considering a very traumatizing decision about whether or not one should wear a mask, or get this non-FDA approved emergency use inoculation. This can be a very traumatizing experience that weighs heavily on all of us and our families, especially now that certain additional dangers and risks from this “shot” have been identified and confirmed by specific side effects from this mRNA vaccine!!

Considering The Path Going Forward

However, with the advent of the present circumstances, now five years later, getting through this traumatic experience is still requiring particular adjustments for some. You have probably noticed there are still some people wearing masks outside, or in their cars when alone. On occasion you will see people distancing themselves from each other in public. And others remain “edgy” with tension toward friends and /or family members that refused to be vaccinated. And unfortunately, some are dealing with health issues from the side effects! Getting over the trauma we’ve experienced the last five years will take some effort on our part—and for some, it may take the rest of their lives!

Clearly, we need to remember this pandemic has affected all of us differently. Some of us lost jobs, and opportunities, or had to reinvent ourselves and change careers. Others experienced separation, perhaps due to an elderly loved one in a nursing home where visiting wasn't allowed. Maybe we suffered with worry, anxiety, or even anger, about a loved one that was hospitalized and distressed by lingering health concerns from the effects of the virus, or vaccine. Others may have even lost a loved one or a close friend during this time due to complications arising from having the virus. Or how about our children and the negative impact it had on their learning and social skills. But suffice it to say, the variety of experiences that have negatively affected each of us has been different—we all have our own story! And “trauma” is often a “common denominator” among ALL of us concerning the world we currently live in.

We must realize, trauma can originate from many different sources besides this pandemic of a few years ago. Life is filled with traumatizing events and circumstances that can come upon us at anytime, from many directions. Sources that are sometimes beyond our control—such as a hurricane, tornado, forest fire, or being victimized by a crime, or an unexpected accident—many



things can cause loss in our lives, which often is the root cause for the trauma we experience. Yes, loss is usually the basis of trauma. And the degree, or intensity of the loss will often determine the extent and severity of the trauma.

This trauma can go painfully deep and last a long time in the mind and emotions of an individual. Violent crimes, accidents, betrayal, incidents of war, an unexpected illness, or death, all have their own degree of trauma associated with them; and how we cope with these traumatizing events is specific to the circumstances that caused it and our frame of mind—our mental and emotional ability to adjust to those circumstances. So, are there some keys we can use that will help us to at least minimize and improve our control of the trauma in our lives?

Things to Keep in Mind

As we consider what can be done, keep in mind Christ makes it clear to “come unto me, all you that labor [toil, wearied, fatigued, work hard] and are heavy laden [loaded up, overburdened], and I will give you rest [refreshment, ease]” (Matthew 11:28). Paul mentions; “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulations [trials, trauma], that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we our-selves are comforted by God” (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).

This is foundational to the Christian outlook when facing traumatic conditions. To recognize our Lord provides us with refreshment, comfort, and ease will indeed provide us the courage and resolve necessary to endure the trauma. Always keep in mind, “the LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all... The Lord redeems the soul [nephesh—the air-breathing, material creature] of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate (Psalm 34:18–19, 22). There is no fear in the love of the Lord because “God is love” and “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:8, 18).

With this as a foundation, we know grieving loss is natural and healthy. We should take time to grieve. Even David used thirty days to grieve the loss of his son. But he came to terms with the loss and resolved to move forward. Admittedly, this is not always easy to do. It can be arduous, grueling, and strenuous, taxing every mental and emotional fiber you have; and yes, it may take longer than thirty days to finally accept, or at least adjust to the loss. But the goal is to get ahead of the trauma at some point and put it behind you by recognizing whatever there is to learn if there is a lesson to be understood.

We need to keep in mind, God never leaves our side when we suffer—He is still right there standing by us, for our comfort, ease, and refreshment. It’s in this time of reflection we have opportunity to move from “why me” to “how can I grow from this experience?” It’s in these times of despair, when we’re broken-hearted that a contrite spirit is golden in “potential” for spiritual growth! Easier said than done? Perhaps! But Paul encourages us to remember: “I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me” (Philippians 4:12–13).

Notice what Solomon said: “It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow [vexation, anger, grief, provocation, indignation, soreness] is better than laughter [in merriment or defiance, to scorn, sport, mocked]: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better [well, right, favor, kind]. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth [feasting, pleasure, gladness]” (Ecclesiastes 7:2–4).

So, it becomes apparent, we are expected to work through the traumatic conditions we find ourselves faced with from time to time. We’re even expected to view these experiences as learning tools for improving our out-looks, faith, commitments, and dedication to the God we represent. And how we do this takes determination to remain calm while in the storm; because trauma has been described by many professionals as feeling alone, perhaps abandoned, betrayed, helpless, humiliated, and hopeless. This is what many of us are up against when deep in the throes of trauma. It can be paralyzing—and it’s not easy to see traumatic circumstances as learning tools when in the “thick of the torrents.” But, we are encouraged by the apostle Peter to

be determined, committed, to contend with our trial for the sake of our God's glory and the salvation He is offering (1 Peter 1:6-9) !

Navigating the Torrents of Trauma

According to Mr. Ron Hawkins, Chairman of the Executive Board of the American Association of Christian Counselors, coming to terms with trauma occurs in three phases. These phases include, first, achieving a sense of safety and stability; second, processing the trauma; and third, consolidation and resolution. Working through the trauma means “moving on from it.” Now we may not like the “hand we’re dealt,” but it is critical we recognize a means by which we can “play that hand.” And fundamental to that is to “remain engaged” with your life and those loved ones around you—continuing to serve God, family, and those within your network.

Keep in mind, it's at this time family and friends can become beneficial, assuming they have your best interest at heart. Solomon saw this when he wrote that “Two are better than one... For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together they have heat... And if one prevails against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly [hastily, swiftly, easily] broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:9–12).

In so many words, it's a known fact, we are better off if we allow (trust) ourselves to be hardwired for relationships. And this is also at the basis for ministering to a traumatized individual—genuinely being there for them. Remember, it's not about you. Paul lays down a premise for all of us to keep in mind when asked occasionally to comfort another who is traumatized in their lives. He says, “let no corrupt [worthless] communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying [building, concretely, structure], that it may minister [bestow, show, connect] grace [divine influence, reflection, favor, benefit, gift] unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29). In other words, when we hurt, be there for each other. remember, “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Proverbs 17:17).

So, when communicating to the traumatized in today's world—and there are some who live with trauma due to scares caused from tragedies in the course of their lives over the years—it's important the message is clear that together we can face these conditions better than if we were alone; because without the sense of security, safety, comfort and encouragement others can provide, we will not be able to process the trauma.

Specifically, concerning this alleged pandemic, much of what we've gone through over the last few years may have been disruptive to our careers, lifestyles, or relationships, and perhaps, consequently our physical, mental, and emotional health. Compounded, by the revelation of new information surrounding the dangers and risks of the mRNA vaccine and now “proven” side effects connected to it—some may be anxious over the thought about their own health condition,

or a friend and/or a loved one, assuming of course, they took the shot and the associated boosters.

This could be troubling and traumatic to deal with. But, in the context of trauma, it is important to use this time to draw close to God. How you, in your relationship with God, determine to cope with what is required for your particular circumstances may indeed, vary from person to person. However, if we expect to resolve the worry, anxiety, stress, or physical symptoms of any side effects associated with the trauma we might be experiencing from the vaccine/virus, then it must come from God our Healer, according to our faith!

Paul told us to be living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. And be not conformed [fashion alike, to pattern alike] to this world: but be you transformed [metamorphose, changed, transfigured] by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect [completeness, full of age, mature] will of God” (Romans 12:1–2). Paul continues this same line of reasoning when he says, “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Ephesians 4:23). And he shares this same advice with the Christians at Colossae when he says, “But now you also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication [vile, vulgar] out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge [God’s Word] after the image of him that created him” Colossians 3:8-10.

This Christian transformation for the twenty-first century will demand from all of us who are following Christ, a resolve that is going to take bravery, boldness, courage, and of course faith to stand up to the forces that are in the “demonic shadows” stalking us for failure. We must learn to be free from the fears in our lives, which only feeds the torment of trauma. “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness [frankness, assurance, confidence, speak freely, or openly] in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love: but perfect [complete] love casts out fear: because fear has torment [penal infliction, punish, chastise, to curtail, trauma]. He that fears is not made perfect [complete, fulfill, accomplished] in love” (1 John 4:17–18).

So, brethren, draw close to our Lord Jesus Christ and be fearless in your faith because He can and will heal you of any trauma you may have; if only you would embrace the comfort in knowing there is nothing in this physical realm comparable to what He has reserved for us as our shared destiny in His Kingdom. Keep the words of the apostle Paul in mind whenever you begin to allow your fears or losses to overwhelm you. Notice what he says: “For I reckon that the sufferings [hardships, pain, emotions, affliction, trauma] of this present time [the twenty-first century—our life’s circumstances] are not worthy to be compared with the glory [our destiny as immortals] which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

Oh Lord, increase our faith that we might be able to endure to the end (Matt. 24:13)!