

Compass Bearing #34

Devotions to Navigate the Coronavirus Pandemic

"Difference Makers"

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Global pandemic. Economic slowdown. Lost jobs. Canceled sports. Distance learning. Closed restaurants. Shuttered theaters. Online church. Racial brutality. Riotous demonstrations. Social unrest. Hurting neighbors.

The past three months have been some of the most unsettling times we have experienced. In some cases we long to return to normal. In others, we cry out to return to better. As followers of Jesus, what are we to do in such times? Let's explore God's Word.

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. ² Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. ³ For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." ⁴ For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. ⁵ May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God (Romans 15:1-7).

Scripture clearly teaches us that Christ followers are to be people who tear down walls and build bridges. Phrases like *bear with* and *build up* and *accept one another* remind us that we do not exist for ourselves. In fact, Jesus said that our two most important responsibilities are to love God and love people. We fail when we love ourselves more than we love God, or when we love people like ourselves more than we love all people.

Looking after the poor can be hard work. Addressing social justice can be precarious. Being a neighbor to someone on the other side of the tracks can be difficult. Helping someone who has lost a job can be challenging. But the God-life is never about convenience. It is always about calling.

Today, ask yourself, "How can I bear with, build up, or accept someone today?" Listen as the Holy Spirit reveals His answer to you. Then, take action. Help someone in need. Make a new friend. Build a bridge. Make a difference.

Be the body of Christ in the world... His hands, feet, eyes, ears, voice, mind... His spirit in the world today. Do not be afraid, but put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). Do not be ineffective, but display the full fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Do not be passive, but actively obey the Word of God (James 1:22).

Then we will live into Jesus' statement, "*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*" (John 13:35).