

God is a Hope Dealer

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.—1 Peter 1:3 That's right. God is a hope dealer (thanks Craig Groeschel). Jesus is in the business of dealing hope and peace to any and all who trust Him. Yet, even with this promise, fear can still creep in and try to steal what hope we have.

As the world around us seems to be losing heart due to a lot of misinformation and hysteria in social media, TV and gossip lines, it has become increasingly difficult to know which voices we can trust to bring hope in the fray of the COVID-19 crisis.

J. I. Packer once said, “The peace of God is first and foremost peace *with* God.” When we really believe that God is worth trusting, His voice of grace through the resurrection of Jesus has its full, saving effect on our hearts and minds. That is to say, His life infects us with a living, thriving and active hope that is contagious, not unlike the coronavirus; with the exception that Christ’s hope inside us brings *life* to everyone with whom we come in contact.

So, how do we remain proactive in keeping our hope quotient high? Here are few reminders about how we might be effective hope dealers of Jesus in the midst of all the fear and anxiety around us.

Create some space for yourself. You can’t pour an ounce of hope from an empty cup. If you are tempted to lash out in anger or to criticize others who don’t share your perspective (even if it’s only in your head), you’re likely suffering from information overload or an inflated sense of self-importance. If you want to increase your hope quotient, structure some time during your day to get alone with God in a quiet place so He can fill your cup with hope, humility and grace (even if that means sitting in the car in your garage for a few minutes of alone time!).

Determine to be a hope dealer. Jesus was a hope dealer. He saw hope beyond the cross so we could live a new kind of life that sees beyond our circumstances. He knew Easter was coming. We do too. Being a hope dealer means being with others long enough and often enough to identify fear and anxiety in order to speak life and the living hope of Jesus into the situation.

Encourage at least one person a day. We can’t be hope dealers if we’re not dispensing it. This doesn’t mean that you have to call everyone one on your phone list today. But you can encourage at least just one person... today. As Mother Teresa wisely said: “*If you can’t feed 100 people, then just feed one.*”

Listen to reliable people. We all need wise and reliable people we can trust. While we all have our favorite places to go for perspective, I have provided a few “go to” resources in the box below that I find to be wise and non-anxious voices that provide hope in the midst of and *beyond* our current crisis.

Hungry for Life!
Pastor Doug

Here are a few of my “go to” resources that help me stay my hope on Jesus.

The Bible: I know this is a no brainer but this should be our #1 go to resource to boost our hope quotient. God has provided a rich resource in His living word. [Click here for a free online bible](#) that has several of your favorite translations and devotionals for your computer and/or phone.

Emotional and Spiritual Health: We all need some guidance and support if we are going to mature as Christians who are emotionally and spiritually fit in God’s kingdom. While there are many reputable leaders I could site, [Dr. Henry Cloud](#) and [Pastor Peter Scazzero](#) are well-balanced, down-to-earth and Christ-centered voices worth listening to. (Click on highlighted names to go to their website.)

Spiritual Formation: While I have had many mentors in my life, [Dallas Willard](#) and [C.S. Lewis](#) are perhaps two clarion voices that consistently point me directly to Jesus. Although both are home with Jesus as I write, like many wise and humble teachers of the past, their insight bears the quality of Jesus’ voice for the present. I also find pastor and author [John Ortberg](#) to be a clear and insightful teacher. (Click on highlighted names to go to their website.)

Leadership and Current Trends: Two names come to mind here. Both are Pastor/Authors and are reliable thought leaders who are current and clear about how to lead well as Christians in many different arenas: [Carey Nieuwhof](#) and [John Maxwell](#). (Click on highlighted names to go to their website.)

P.S. I would like to hear your thoughts!

How have you experienced hope in the past few weeks in spite of uncertainty in your own life?

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