

## Evidence of God at Work

### *God Accomplishing His Purposes*

COVID-19 has caused the world to make major changes to daily routines. There are many things we cannot do at this time. Instead of lamenting about the restrictions let us focus on important lessons learned. Make no mistake about it: God is at work during this time, accomplishing His purposes. In this devotion I want to focus on some of the positive God-inspired lifestyle changes I have observed. Perhaps you are experiencing them, too.

First let me set the scene for my personal observations. Later in this devotion I am going to ask you to evaluate what is happening in your life. Being in a higher risk age category with the coronavirus, Kathy and I have played it safe. For more than two months we stayed close to home, visiting only our daughter's family, who are also self-isolated. We kept our distance from others. I realize that not everyone can make the decision to stay close to home, but all of us have made adjustments to our way of living. Below are my observations from what I have experienced in my life.

***Family is a priority.*** When many of our activities are stripped away what do we have left? Family. Thanks to technology we are able to keep in touch with family through Zoom and other communication apps. It is heartwarming to hear our grandchildren tell each other that they love them on zoom calls. Family is a God-given gift that we have come to appreciate even more at a time like this. God has placed a high priority on family during crisis situations. *How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! (Psalm 133:1)*

***Appreciate Those Closest to You.*** God gave me the blessing of a wonderful wife. Kathy has done a marvelous job planning and providing a variety of meals even though we had limited options for grocery shopping. Looking ahead she has also planted a garden for healthy eating during the summer. I have come to appreciate meals and family time at the dinner table even more because I'm not running off to meetings. Because of the absence of distractions families are spending much more time together. It is important to not take for granted what I have. *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25).* What virtues do you see in your spouse that make life better? Read Proverbs 31:10-31 for a great example. I could write that about Kathy.

***All people are important.*** Even though we try to be self-sufficient we have come to appreciate the services others provide. Kernersville has done a great job of picking up trash, recycling and yard waste on schedule. As a result, we don't have full, smelly trash cans piled up behind our house. The grocery and drug stores, our church and our town government continued to function. Health care providers made great sacrifices to treat the sick. Parents have become more appreciative of the role and challenges of teachers when they have to homeschool their own children. While I am sitting at home there are people who carry out essential functions to make life possible. *Rich and poor have this in common: The LORD is the Maker of them all (Proverbs 22:2). For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).*

***People are willing to step up and help us during our time of need.*** As a family we are in need this year. During the past several months there have been times when we needed something that would have required interaction at retail stores. And we are self-isolating. We have friends who were willing to do the specialty shopping for us. It is a way they have chosen to serve others. *What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you*

says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead (James 2:14-17).

***This is a great time to do the tasks I have put off.*** There are no excuses for not having the time to do something around home that needs to be done. Postponed yard projects are getting done this year. We are not the only ones, as yard waste collections this spring in our community are 50% greater than during the previous year. Chances are, if you are not doing something now, it is because you don’t want to do the task, not because you don’t have the time. *But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way (1 Corinthians 14:40).*

***There are some benefits to slowing down.*** I can remember when I was working, how I would squeeze in appointments on my calendar, even though doing so sacrificed family time or added to personal stress. *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”(Matthew 11:28-30).*

***Separating Wants and Needs.*** We live in an affluent culture but during this time of restricted activity we have managed just fine. We have come to realize that we don’t need everything and are still doing OK. Some of the things we obsessed for, such as watching every big televised sporting event, aren’t missed as much as we thought. *And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).* We should be content with what we have because we know that God is meeting our needs.

***God is present in our home life, too.*** We are loyal in our church attendance but during this stay-at-home time we have worshiped and attended bible classes remotely. Participating on-line didn’t deter us from seeking God’s Word and direction for our lives. In effect, we have invited the Holy Spirit into our homes. And secondly, people aren’t staying silent about their faith. I was amazed at Easter in how many people professed their faith on social media. ... *But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15).*

### **Making changes permanent**

Think back to New Year’s... You may have had a week off for Christmas. As that vacation was winding down, on January 1 our minds often focused on desired lifestyle changes – resolutions. The secret to success was to maintain them for 6-8 weeks. Only those resolutions still in effect by the end of February had become lifestyle changes. In our current situation we have passed that 6-8 week threshold for the new behavior to be incorporated into our way of life. Let us continue with the positive changes. Each is evidence that God is working through the coronavirus time. God finds a way to make good things happen during this bad situation. *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).*

When conditions improve, allowing us to physically be out in the community, I am hopeful that we won’t revert to the harried pace of life. We are now in the “Safer-at-home” stage of re-opening our community. Activity will increase but perhaps we will have learned some lessons and made some positive priority changes to our lives. I also hope we will appreciate the people who indirectly and directly served us during our time of need.

**Question:** Your turn. What have you learned during this time? List and reflect on how you seen God at work in your life.

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father. This has been a difficult time for all of us. We know you are at work showing us positive changes we can make in our lives. We have come to realize what is truly important in our lives. We have also come to appreciate people who have served us during this pandemic. Let us come out of this pandemic stronger in our faith and understanding of your direction for our lives. Amen.