

1.) Accept Ambiguity

I am a planner. I like to know how long something will last.

I hear a lot of people saying, "It would be so much easier, if we just knew when this would end."

That would be nice.

But it is not possible to have a timeline right now.

A useful skill, discipleship practice, and an exercise in faith- is to grow our capacity to tolerate ambiguity.

Waiting in ambiguity is not easy.

In the book of Exodus, the Israelites lived in a wilderness time and struggled with "not-knowing."

When the people waited on Moses to return with the 10 commandments they struggled with ambiguity.

"When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

Exodus 32: 1

When we wait not knowing, we want answers, we want something tangible, clear, and easy.

But there are not easy answers. There are not clear timelines.

Rather than demand quick answers as the Israelites did, let's wait as the Psalmist calls us to wait in Psalm 130:

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
And in his word I hope;
My soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning."

Faith in our Lord doesn't give us all the answers, but it gives us the ability to be okay even in ambiguous times.

2) Practice being Present

You cannot plan.

You cannot know what is coming next.

Simply work on being in the present moment.

In the book of Exodus, the Israelites receive enough manna for what they need for each day and only enough for a day at a time. (Read Exodus 16)

When we pray the Lord's Prayer we pray for our "daily bread."

God provides for each day.

Focus on this and be present and grateful for each moment.

Jesus teaches us this when he says, "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today."

-Matthew 6: 34

In order to practice being present, I invite you to a daily practice of asking yourself and your family some daily quarantine questions. Perhaps you have also seen these questions on social media:

Daily Quarantine Questions

- 1) What am I grateful for today?
- 2) Who am I connecting with and checking on today?
- 3) What expectations of "normal" am I letting go of today?
- 4) How am I getting outside today?
- 5) How am I moving my body today?
- 6) What beauty am I either creating, cultivating, or inviting today?
- 7) How am I practicing my faith today (reading scripture, time in prayer, bible study, online worship)?

Notice- each of these questions end in the word "today"-- so that we can focus on each day as it comes.

3.) Consider what you can Control (*and what you cannot control*)

Most of us are familiar with the phrase, "Let go and let God!"

It is not easy. It is easy to worry and to let our fear and anxiety in this pandemic turn to panic.

In order to combat this- consider what is actually in your control and what is not.

You cannot control what others do and how they react, how others will feel, how businesses will respond, how the economy will recover, or what the government will do.

That doesn't mean you have no control

You can control what you do, what you say, what you read and watch and listen to.

You can control how you care for yourself and others and the mindset you choose to adapt during this time.

It may be a helpful exercise to think about this and post it in your house.

Here is a helpful resource of a blank image to consider what you can control and what you cannot control:



1 Peter 5:7 says, "Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you."

God cares about you so much, that he invites you to let go of things that weigh you down.

Jesus says, "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

4) Find Peace, not Perfection

Perhaps you have made a beautiful schedule to follow during these quarantine days.

Maybe you attempted a schedule and its not going the way you hoped.

Or maybe you've got dishes piled in the sink and you're not sure the last time you changed your pajamas.

It is okay.

You are okay.

There is no "right way" to do COVID-19 Quarantine.

We are all in this together.

And we are learning.

And I see sharing occurring at a level that brings me more hope that I've felt in a long time.

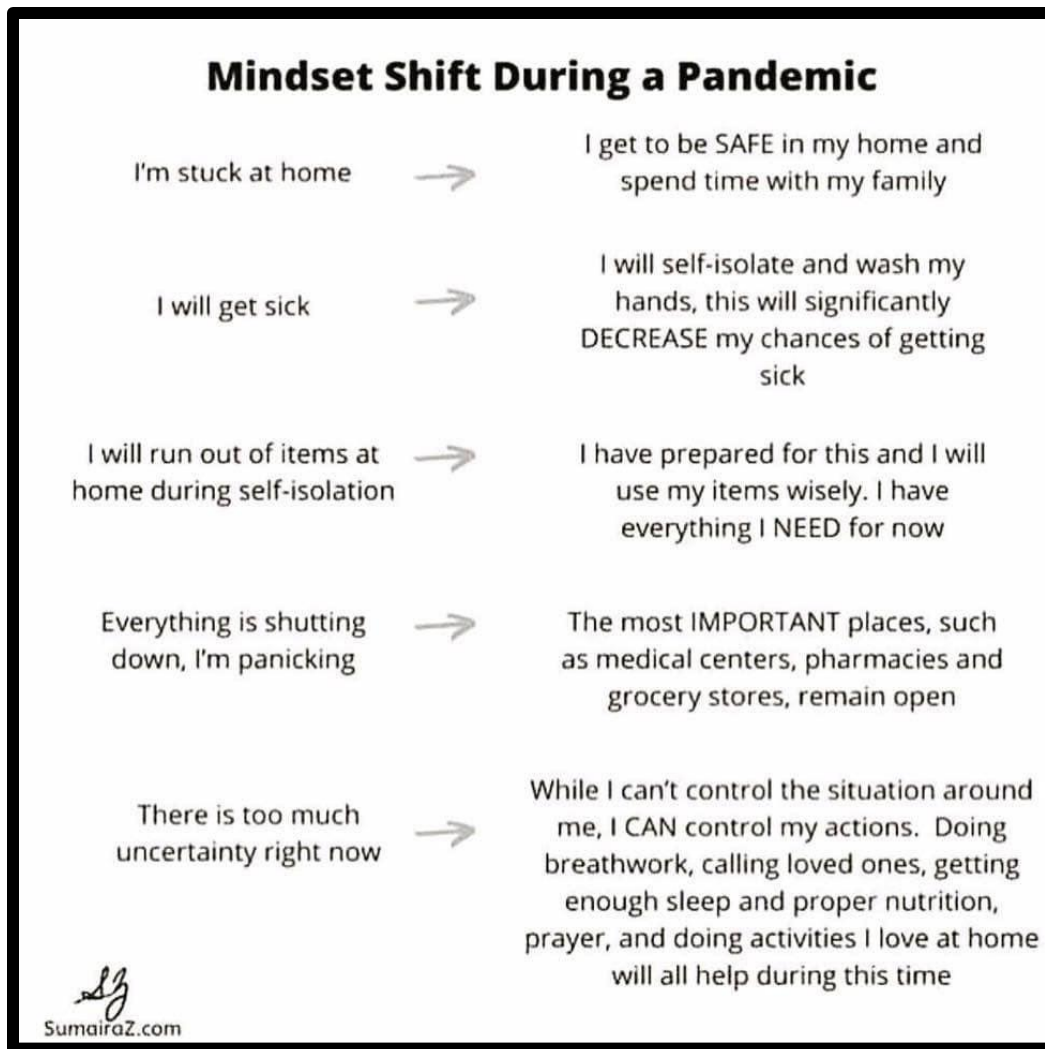
During this time we can grow as disciple by learning to be content no matter our circumstances.

Paul wrote, "I have learned to content with whatever I have."

Perhaps through this time we can learn to be content and we can learn to shift our mindset.

We can move from seeking perfect to content with "good enough" and find peace.

And maybe in doing so-- we'll find perfection is overrated.



5) We are the Body of Christ and We are still Connected

Social Distancing is not Emotional Distancing

Just about every day, I have had the privilege to be on Zoom Video Calls with staff, church leaders, and clergy from around our district.

Beginning this Sunday, we will not only continue to offer Livestream worship for both a Traditional Service and a Contemporary Service, we will also offer two different opportunities for a Zoom Video Coffee Hour after each service (we can fit up to 100 people in each Zoom time slot).

It is not the same as being together.

But it does bring great joy to "see" each other!

We hold to the unity we have in the Body of Christ.

Paul says, " I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.
Ephesians 4: 1-1

We are One Body, in this together. The inconvenience of not being physically together is a worthy sacrifice for the health of our community.