



Pandemic

3/22/2020

4 Comments

A global pandemic is scary and dangerous, and it's also good for a few things.

It reminds us we are not invincible. The coronavirus reached my part of the world just after our celebration of Lent, when we heard the words "from dust you came, and to dust you shall return." These words are powerful because they let us off the hook of trying to be God. We are small and we are temporary. We can enjoy all we have as a gift, knowing that this earthly existence is only one piece of our eternal reality. It's okay to be mortal.

It slows us down. Although coronavirus has kicked my job into high gear (SO much work to do!), it has also cleared my personal calendar of all social gatherings, corporate events, and worship services. For others, it has led to even more disruption, such as job lay-offs or physical quarantine. Having an altered schedule (even in the midst of very real stress) can give us a chance to learn a less harried pace, to practice Sabbath, and to enter new rhythms of rest.

It provides solitude. However you feel about people in general, it is true that we need one another. It is also true that we need silence and solitude. The preventative practice of social distancing due to coronavirus forces us to confront our discomfort with solitude, our anxiety about silence. It teaches us about how much we care about each other, how important connection is to us - and it also provides us an opportunity to learn from silence.

It sheds light on our auto-pilot responses to stress. Whatever you are doing to respond to the virus provides a lot of information for you about your typical responses to anxiety. Are you sticking your head in the sand, obsessively watching news, lashing out at those who think differently from you? Or maybe you're focusing attention on what you can control, reaching out with kindness to those in your circle, or using humor to get through? Notice your go-to responses in this situation, and notice how effective these are in supporting positive coping and divine trust. This is helpful information for other stress-inducing situations throughout your life.



It forces us to release our grip on perfection. There are so many ways we push and pull and jerk on life most days, thinking that if we just did more of the things and followed more of the tips then we could get it all right. Coronavirus has reminded us that we cannot make the world perfect. There are forces outside of our control, and times where we cannot keep everything running just right. It's okay to be imperfect.

However you're experiencing this global pandemic right now, I send you some lovingkindness as we walk the journey together:

- **May you be safe.** God is looking out for you. May you find rest in his caring hands.
- **May you be happy.** Life in God's kingdom is filled with joy-kernels, even in the most trying of times. May you be surprised by the pleasure of small things.
- **May you be healthy.** No matter your physical state in the midst of this health crisis, may you be as healthy as you can be and experience tangible comforts for body and soul along the way.
- **May you live with ease.** The world doesn't make things easy, but Jesus says that his "yoke is easy." When the world is asking you to panic, may you instead receive God's ease.

God has our good at heart, and he is seeing us through. I'm reminded often these days that we are living a story, and what an exciting story it is! Full of plot twists, surprises, and sheer terror at times - but God is the author of our story, and we know that the end is good.



Created by: Milo, age 9

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4 Comments

Steve Herbes

3/22/2020 10:27:30 pm

Really pertinent. Thanks, Irene. May you be healthy and safe.

Reply

Irene →

3/23/2020 05:22:07 am

Thank you Steve!

Reply

JOY

3/22/2020 11:43:11 pm

Our dear friend, Benjamin Reisterer, out of the blue, sent us your book, The Mindful Christian.

Through a series of unfortunate events, God used it to move us toward being mindful. First with Dr. Caroline Leaf's 21 day brain detox... Then the book DARE by Barry McDonagh...Climaxing with your book. We can't be more thrilled over your book and the timing of receiving it.

What a great amazing God we have to give us tools to help us on our journey to be mindfully aware of HIM.

BLESS YOU AND YOURS,
JOY

Reply

Irene →

3/23/2020 05:25:17 am

I love how God gives what we need, just when we need it :). Thanks for sharing your story here, Joy!

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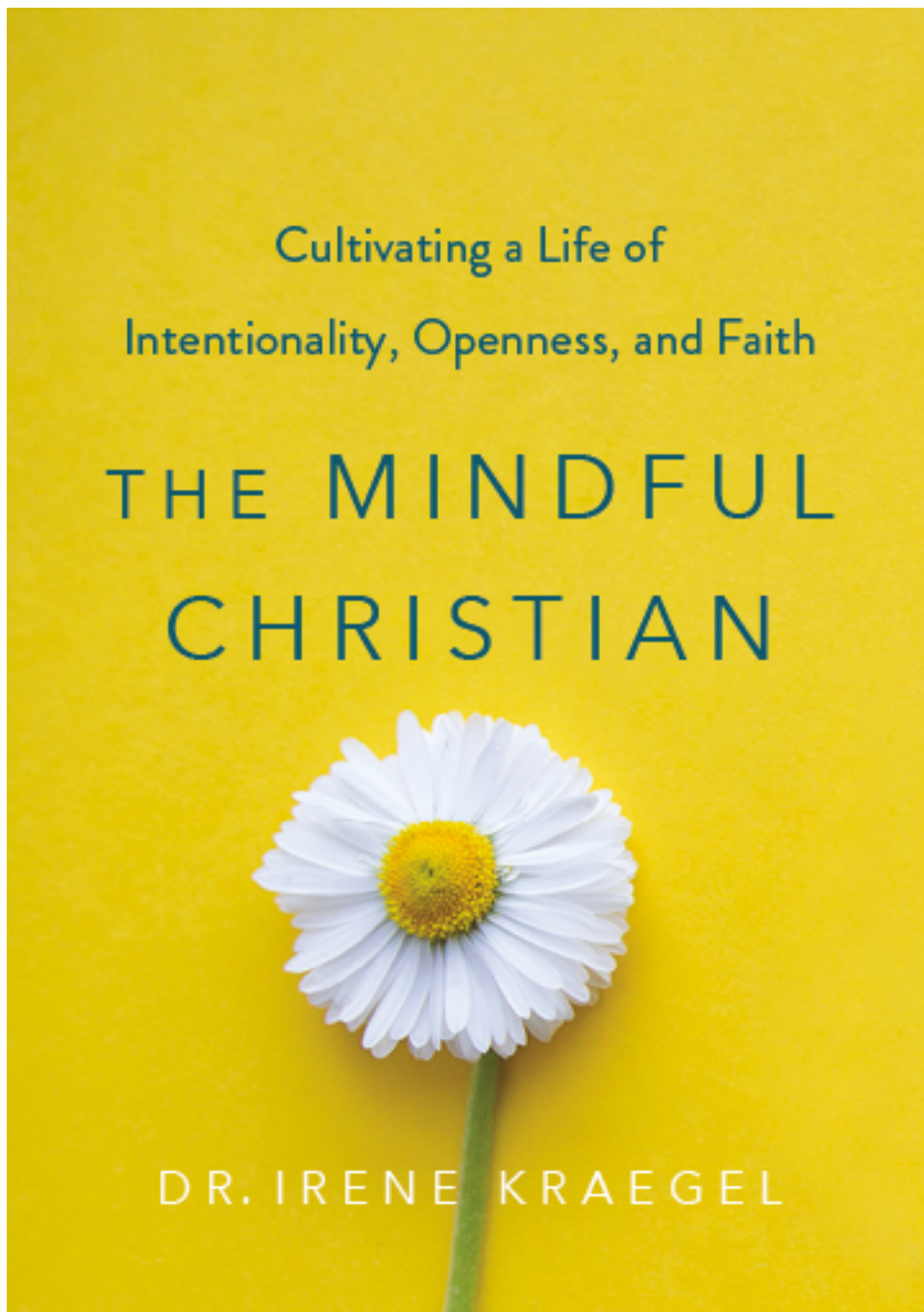
Author

I am Irene Kraegel. I work as a clinical psychologist and teach mindfulness on a faith-based university campus. I practice mindfulness because it opens me up to God (a.k.a. brings joy). I am writing here in hopes of sharing some of my experiences and thoughts related to the practice of mindfulness in the life of a Christian. Thanks for reading!



Looking for more?

Check out my new book - *The Mindful Christian* - now available wherever books are sold!



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April 2020
March 2020
February 2020
December 2019
July 2019
January 2019
December 2018
April 2018
January 2018
December 2017
October 2017
September 2017
August 2017
July 2017
March 2017
February 2017
December 2016
August 2016
July 2016
June 2016
May 2016
April 2016
March 2016
February 2016
January 2016
December 2015
November 2015
July 2015
May 2015
April 2015
March 2015
February 2015
January 2015
December 2014
November 2014
October 2014

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