



7 Leadership Lessons While Navigating COVID-19.

BY LARRY STOCKSTILL

Dear Pastor,

In 50 years of ministry, we all pass through seasons. We pass through moments. Believe it or not, 50 years seems like a moment!

I've been through deaths. I've been through scarcity. I've been through moral failures. I've been through wrong decisions. I've been through staff division. I can tell you I have learned at least one lesson from each pitfall.

I want to give you seven of those lessons to use in your current battle with COVID-19:

01. GOD ALWAYS HAS ANOTHER STEP FORWARD.

- When someone leaves, He has their replacement ready. When a door closes, He has another door opening. When we cling to what WAS our eyes are closed to what IS.
- When Abraham gave Isaac fully to the Lord, his eyes were opened and he saw the ram in the thicket. Regardless of what happens in the next six months or year, God has another ram stuck in the thicket.

02. THE SECRET OF PROVISION IS TO ELIMINATE WASTE.

- Jesus required them to “pick up the pieces left over” even though the meal was over and the people were satisfied. George Mueller said that whenever he faced shortage he searched for the area where he was wasting and his income would go back up.
- You cannot control the flow of income but you can control the flow of outgo. God will never forsake you if you are a great steward. When ALL waste is eliminated, you can rest easily: new provision is on the way!

03. YOUR CHARACTER IS WORTH MORE THAN YOUR MINISTRY.

- In times of crisis, you may be tempted to do things that are against your values, against your convictions. You may become depressed and entertain sexual indulgences and lewd entertainment. We are all human and have to be on guard against Satan's attacks when our world is turned upside.
- *Transitions are life's most vulnerable moments.* Build yourself up in prayer, maintain your daily Bible reading, pursue closeness to your wife, and remain accountable to your brothers. Don't make a foolish mistake with your lifetime of reputation because all hope seems lost.

04. ONE GOOD DECISION CAN UNDO A HOST OF BAD DECISIONS.

- In crisis, we generally make mistakes. We get it wrong. We pursue the wrong priorities. We make hasty decisions. We panic and make unwise assumptions. “Wisdom” is the ability to live a life of order, find the will of



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God, and make good decisions.

- If you are completely lost in the woods, finding a compass on the ground is the beginning of your rescue. *The “compass” is Scripture and the indwelling Holy Spirit.* If (when) you make a mistake, seek the Lord in His Word and the Holy Spirit in prayer to speak to your inner man instead of your head. He will guide you with peace. He is the “decision maker”: you are just the HEARER.

05. KEEPING YOUR TEAM TOGETHER IS YOUR MOST IMPORTANT JOB.

- In crisis, people tend to fragment off and enter survival mode. Their true attitudes surface. Their complaining intensifies. You feel one step from division and mutiny. FOCUS ON THE CORE. Jesus gathered His team for a meal, a ministry time, and a prayer meeting on the night of His betrayal.
- A crisis will show you who is “in” and who is not. Your team will learn things in this season about themselves and about others. This is precious time to form your team into a wiser, stronger, more committed and battle hardened core.

06. MEET THE DAILY NEEDS OF THE SHEEP.

- What is the individual Christian in your flock facing? What are they feeling about their health, about their kids being out of school, about their finances, about their marriage, about their emotions? Design your entire ministry around meeting those needs however you possibly can.
- Re-deploy your staff to meet immediate needs, not to try to find a way to keep doing their regular job. This is crisis, this is war. General Motors is making respirators right now, not cars.

07. GUIDE THE FLOCK WITH YOUR FACE AND SCRIPTURE.

- People need you to be personally present in crisis. Your face communicates your faith. Moses spent time with God and came out with a “glowing face.” The people knew he had been with God. He received a Word from God on the mountain alone with God.
- A steady shepherd in expressions and voice calms an entire flock. You cannot be absent right now. Cancel your plans. Figure out how to get your face and voice (by way of technology) in front of each member, each family, each leader, each staff member.
- My generation has faced many crises through the years. Now, it's your generation's turn. This is the worst crisis the church worldwide has possibly ever faced. The good news is, it's on your watch. You have the thrill of being led by the Holy Spirit who has “set you over the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”
- We trust you, the Holy Spirit trusts you, and the body of Christ trusts you. Lead well and we will all rejoice when we reach the other side together.

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