We are traumatized by COVID-19 even if we are not infected.

Even if you have not been diagnosed with COVID-19, you likely have experienced symptoms such as overwhelming fear, emotional heaviness, hyper-vigilance—yes, trauma. It is clear to say that we are in a “national state of trauma” resulting from the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on our lives and the economy.

When we experience traumatic situations like this, our sense of safety is destroyed, explained Dr. Tim Clinton, on an IFA Prayer Call. The result of this traumatic state is that your brain goes on hyper alert. It is exhausting, depressing, and consuming. But as Dr. Tim Clinton also shares, there are things we can do to alleviate this condition of trauma. There may not be a coronavirus antidote, but there are antidotes to trauma.

How do we respond to trauma biblically?

The key antidote to trauma is RELATIONSHIP. This may seem counter-intuitive to what we are going through at the moment. Right now we are separated. Confined. We are being told to minimize contact. People are cautious and purposefully keeping to themselves. But in that very directive of staying away from others, we are removing the very antidote we need for dealing with trauma.

Here are four steps to healing from the trauma that affects us:

1. **Become aware of what TRIGGERS you.**

   Notice how you react to social media, news, other interactions. Pay attention to what makes you feel anxious or fearful. If you can, reduce your interactions with the things that trigger you to trauma.

   **Help us, Father, understand what causes us to feel fear and anxiety. Help us recognize and then eliminate these triggers.**

   *Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.* (Ps 139:23)
2. Seek TOGETHERNESS.

Stay connected! When we are locked-in, our minds become vulnerable to “stinking thinking.” Our kids are overdosing on the coronavirus crisis whether we realize it or not. And ingesting a steady diet of news and overdosing on social media hysteria is not good for children OR adults. We grow what we feed. Feed the relationships not the hysteria. Twenty minutes a day of “command-free togetherness” will calm them and us.

Reach out to other family members regularly to feel connected. If you can, use a video calling app or program to satisfy your need for being together. Find ways to still meet as a small group (conference call?), FaceTime your usual lunch friends as you each eat in your own homes, and be creative with “virtual or safe-distance play dates” for your kids.

Lord, remind us of Your presence. You are a refuge and help in times of trouble. Give us an overwhelming sense of your presence. Bind our hearts together. Enable us to be soul-care ministers in this time.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. (Ps 46:1-3)

3. We need reassuring TOUCH.

Touch calms and connects us. Kids need 100 touches every day. In this climate of “no-touch” we are starving our innate God-designed need for touch. We also need the touch of our Heavenly Father. We are the hands and feet of Christ to one another, especially in this time of crisis.

Father, we know that it was through the actual physical touch of Christ that many were healed. There is something that is healing about a gentle and consoling and personal touch. May we have our need for human touch met in our families through a hug, a pat on the back or a simple squeeze of the hand.

...for he had healed many, so that all who had diseases pressed around him to touch him. (Ma 3:10)

4. Take time to TALK.

An anxious heart needs to have someone to talk to. 62% of Americans are concerned about a loved one contracting the virus. Nearly 50% are concerned about getting it themselves. We need to process these concerns and so do our kids. (Remember to keep your COVID conversations age-appropriate.) As you talk, keep in mind that we are only as sick as our secrets, meaning that the more transparent we are, the more we can heal.

Remember, it feels good to be listened to—yes, talk about your own concerns, but make sure you are deliberately and intentionally listening to others as well.

God, we pray that we would feel the touch of heaven. We need You. We can’t do anything without You. Reach down from heaven. help us share words of life with one another. Help us to understand what it means to not let our hearts be troubled.

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. (Jn 14:1)

As you integrate these mental health steps to dealing with trauma, remember that prayer is a critical part of dealing with, healing and rising above the trauma we are feeling. Journal your prayers to Jesus, writing letters to him to share your worries, concerns, fears and thoughts. Spend additional time in the word to allow God to minister His wisdom to you. Permeate your home with worship music to welcome the Spirit of God, and reinforce the biblical principles you are meditating on through your study. Now is a good time to keep a prayer notebook so you can see answered prayer, and chronicle God working, healing, and leading you through this tumultuous time.

This prayer guide is based in-part on content shared on a prayer conference call with Dr. Timothy Clinton of Light University.