



# Loving Your Neighbor in the COVID-19 Pandemic



## INTRODUCTION

This manual will help you respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in a wise and loving way.

The manual does **not** provide complete training on prevention and response. Whenever possible, it should be used with other materials that give more extensive information and instruction related to the pandemic.

The COVID-19 virus is so dangerous because most people who are infected don't even know it. You may not feel sick, but you can still be infected. And when you are infected, even without even knowing it, you can make others sick!

Therefore, one of the ways you can love and protect your neighbor is by keeping physical space from each other. You should not meet in groups, except with those living together in the same house.

The four lessons of this manual are intended to be used by a small group living together in the same house, or for personal study. You are strongly encouraged to share by a text or phone call what you are learning with others. As you communicate with each other, you can practice interactive learning. You can share Bible verses from the manual that have been meaningful to you. You can ask questions of each other. You can pray for each other.

At the end of each lesson, you will write out an **Action Plan** to accomplish before you move on to the next lesson. These are to be done in a way that keeps physical distance between you and others, except from those living together in your house. You may call or text someone and ask them to pray for your Action Plan. God works through prayer!

At the end of the manual are a number of biblical principles concerning sickness and healing. The **Parable of the Good Samaritan** from Luke 10:25-37 is also printed there.

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We believe that God will never abandon his people. God comes to protect and deliver them as he did for his people led by Moses. *Read and think about Exodus 14:10-13, 21-22.*

Throughout the Bible we see how God loves and saves his people. We see this most clearly in Jesus. *Read and think about John 3:16-17.*

Finally, God shows his great love for us by sending us his Spirit to be with us. *Read and think about what Jesus said in John 14:16-19.*

We know we are not alone. God is with us. He will give us the wisdom and strength we need to love our neighbor in the COVID-19 pandemic.

May you be strengthened in your faith and in your service of the King of kings.



## Lesson 1

# The Value of Human Life

1. Begin by praying. Ask God to help you understand his Word and his wisdom.
2. We can show that someone is a valued friend or family member in so many ways! Think about a family member or friend who you value and love. *How do you show that person that he or she has a special place in your life?* Share your answers, or write it down if you are studying this manual on your own.

3. Psalm 8:3-9 is a prayer to God. *Read this prayer.*

*What does the Lord do?* List all of his actions.

*Who are important people, according to this text?*

4. Genesis 1:26-27 tells the story of God creating human beings. *Read this passage.*

*Do you know someone who looks and acts like someone else? In what ways is this person in the “likeness” of the other person?*

*Why do all human beings have such great value?*

In Genesis 1, the word “rule” means that human beings are responsible to develop and to care for life on the earth: human life and the life of plants and animals.

Read Genesis 2:15. *According to this text, how are we called to contribute to the good development of life on the earth? Give examples of how development has happened in your area.*

Think of the goodness of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. *According to Genesis 2:15, what is God’s view of work?*

Think of your own situation. Some of us are not working. Some of us have lost our jobs. Others of us have a lot of changes in our work.

If you are not working, you may be anxious about lack of money. You may be sad about the job you have lost. You may be unhappy with changes in your work. *Take time to tell God your grief.*



If you are still working, pray for those who do not have jobs right now. Express your gratitude to God for the job you have. *How are you using your job to show value for human life?*

5. Read Genesis 2:19. *What did God invite Adam to do? How did that activity help Adam in his responsibility to develop life on the earth?*

*Can you remember a time when you learned something new? What did you feel at that time?*

*What discoveries have you or others made that have contributed to your personal development?*

6. Read the story of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:30-35 (it is also printed on the last page of this manual).

*Who in this story did not show concern for human life? How did they show this lack of concern?*

*Who in this story showed that human life has great value? How was this shown?*

## 7. ACTION PLAN

**Activity 1:** What is one thing that you will do in the coming week to show that someone in your family or neighborhood is of value to you? How can you do it if you are not together in the same place? Write down your activity.

**Activity 2:** Pray regularly for those who are suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Read Isaiah 40:28-29, and think of God's love and care as you pray.

**Change:** Write down one change you expect to see happen by next week because of your activities.

8. Many people need encouragement now. If possible, call or text someone and tell them what you learned about God's value for human life. Ask how you can pray for them. Ask them to pray for you and your Action Plan.



## Lesson 2

# Dangers to Human Life

### 1. ACTION PLAN Reports

- If you texted or called someone about your plan, share with them what God did through your Action Plan.
- Take time to praise God for what he did through your Action Plan.
- May the Lord bless you and take good care of you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

### 2. Review of Lesson 1: *Summarize why human life has great value.*

### 3. Many dangers threaten human life. For example:

- Dangerous and harmful people
- Dangerous natural forces that can be seen, for example violent storms
- Dangers from invisible sources, for example, viruses and bacteria that cause sickness like cholera
- Dangers from injustice

*Make a list of at least 10 of these dangers that you have experienced or observed.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

### 4. As we saw in Lesson 1, human life is of great value to God. For that reason, God acts to protect those whose life is in danger. *Thank God for a time he protected **you** from big or small danger.*

*Remember, read, write down, or tell aloud a **Bible story** when God protected a person or a group in danger.*



Read Psalm 121. *What does this Bible text tell us about God's power and protection?*

Read Romans 8:35-39. *What does this Bible text tell us about God's power and protection?*

5. God protects us and saves us. He is with us during times of difficulty. We are thankful for his loving care. One of the ways we show our thankfulness is by caring for people who are in trouble or whose lives are in danger. It may be our **own life** in danger, or the **lives of others**.

*Think about times that you have shown care for people who were in trouble. What were your reasons for showing care?*

God is our Protector. He asks us to protect others as we follow him. Read Hebrews 13:20-21.

*How can we protect others according to Hebrews 13:20-21?*

*Can you remember an experience when you protected someone (a child or an adult) from danger? If you are with someone, share what happened.*

*What might be ways to protect others in danger from COVID-19? After you complete the next lesson (lesson 3), come back and add to your answer here.*

For the rest of this manual we will reflect on invisible dangers that cause sickness, and especially by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 6. **Sickness in Human History**

Many pandemics have existed down through the ages. For example, in the year 1387 the pandemic of the Plague did great harm in Europe. Historians estimate that over 25 million died of that sickness.

During that period, fear spread throughout Europe. In the city of Strasbourg (France), people came to think wrongly that it was Jews that caused the sickness. More than 900 adult and children Jews were burned alive to stop the pandemic. In other European countries, people thought that the pandemic was transmitted by lepers, which was not true.

Around that period of history, false treatments were practiced to heal the sick. For example, sometimes much blood was drawn from the sick because their blood was considered contaminated and the cause of their sickness. But, instead of healing them,



this practice only made the sick weaker.

Medical discoveries made by Alexandre Yersin in 1894 led to the development of antibiotics through which the Plague was overcome.

From the beginning of the Church, Christians have invested resources to battle sicknesses of many kinds. The first church buildings were often places in which the sick were treated and cared for. Throughout history, many hospitals and health clinics were established by churches and Christian missions.

*Do you know of hospitals or health clinics that were established by churches or Christian missions?*

*In your opinion, why did Christians commit to treat and care for sick people and also do engage in research to find the causes of sickness?*

7. Read again the story of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:30-35 (it is also printed on the last page of this manual). *What were the specific needs of the man who was attacked?*

*How did the Samaritan meet the man's specific needs?*

*What are some of the specific needs of those who fear or are suffering from COVID-19? How can we best show love in response to their specific needs?*

We know and have experienced dangers in this world. We also know about God's power and protection. We have seen how God calls us to protect others. *How does protecting others show love?*

## 8. ACTION PLAN

**Activity 1:** God cares for and protects people. He calls us to protect people too. How can you help protect your family or neighbors? List some ideas. Then write down one thing that you will do in the coming week to protect someone?

**Activity 2:** Pray regularly for someone who is caring for the sick, particularly for those caring for people who are infected with COVID-19.

**Change:** Write down one change you expect to see happen by next week because of your activities.

9. Many people need encouragement now. If possible, call or text someone and tell them what you learned about God's power and protection. Ask how you can pray for them. Ask them to pray for you and your Action Plan.



### Lesson 3

## Good Prevention and Good Response

### 1. ACTION PLAN Reports

- If you texted or called someone about your plan, share with them what God did through your Action Plan.
- Take time to praise God for what he did through your Action Plan.
- May the Lord bless you and take good care of you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26)

### 2. Review of Lesson 2: *Name one thing about God's protection. Name one way we can show love to our neighbor during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

### 3. *What do you know about the COVID-19 virus? Make a list of what you know about COVID-19.*

There is a lot of false information shared about COVID-19. *What are trustworthy sources? How can you determine what is true and what is false?*

*Why does the COVID-19 pandemic make us afraid? If you are doing this with your family, it can be important to listen to your children about what makes them afraid.*

### 4. It is important that we act to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Remember that someone with the sickness may not feel sick or show any signs of sickness. Here are **Seven Rules for Good Prevention** to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your area.

#### **Seven Rules for Good Prevention**

Read these rules. *Which of these rules do you find difficult to follow? Put the letter "A" after the rule if you are **already** following it well. Put the letter "B" if you could follow it **better**.*

- 1) Stay at home whenever possible. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Keep apart from others at a distance of 2 meters. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Avoid shaking hands or touching anyone when you greet them. \_\_\_\_\_





- 4) Wash your hands regularly throughout the day with soap or bleach water, especially before eating and after going to the toilet. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Cough into the side of your elbow or in a tissue. Wear a cloth face cover when in public. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Keep surfaces that are touched frequently - like tables, phones, and door-handles - washed clean with soap and water or sanitizer. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Know where the closest health center is located in your area and how to contact it rapidly. \_\_\_\_\_

*Make a list of ideas you have for following the **Seven Rules for Good Prevention.***

5. When COVID-19 arrives in your town or area, it is important to know how to react in a way that the pandemic does not continue to spread. Prevention is the best way to protect and care for others. A good response can also help to restore health. Here are Seven Rules for Good Response.

### **Seven Rules for Good Response**

Read through the following seven rules. *Which of these rules would you find quite **easy** to follow? Put the letter "A" behind that rule. Which of these rules would you find quite **difficult** to follow? Put the letter "B" after that rule.*

- 1) If you get sick with a fever, a cough, and/or shortness of breath, stay in one place without travelling around. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Eat and drink enough. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Avoid touching or being touched by others, especially older people. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) If you have a fever or trouble breathing, contact your area health center. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) If, after a health exam, you are asked to go to be treated at the health center, accept to go there. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) If someone from your family is diagnosed with COVID-19, accept to stay under quarantine (living separately from other people) for 2 weeks without going outside. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Stay calm and confident, knowing God loves and values you. He will not abandon you. He is lovingly caring for you and your loved ones. \_\_\_\_\_



**6. Based on the Seven Rules for Good Prevention and Seven Rules for Good Response:**

*What did you learn?*

*What questions do you still have? Where might you find trustworthy answers?*

Go back to question 5 in lesson 2. *Do you have anything else to add to your list of ways to protect people?*

*How will you react if you or a member of your family becomes sick?*

**7. ACTION PLAN**

**Activity 1:** Write down one thing you will do this week to contribute to the prevention of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Activity 2:** Are there other people who need to hear about good prevention and good responses to COVID-19? Who might you help explain it to? Be specific in your action plan how you can share this information in a way that does not cause fear.

**Change:** Write down one change you expect to see happen by next week because of your activity.

**8.** Many people need encouragement now. If possible, call or text someone and tell them what you learned about God's power and protection. Ask how you can pray for them. Ask them to pray for you and your Action Plan.



## Lesson 4 Good Samaritans

### 1. ACTION PLAN Reports

- If you texted or called someone about your plan, share with them what God did through your Action Plan.
- Take time to praise God for what he did through your Action Plan.
- As we serve God, the Apostle Paul reminds us, “The power to do what we do comes from God” (2 Corinthians 3:5).

2. Review the **Changes** that have taken place because of your Action Plans since Lesson 1. Make a list of some of these changes.

3. Read the story of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:25-37 (it is also printed on the last page of this manual).

*Have you ever met someone like the Good Samaritan when you were in need? How did you feel? Share your memory, or write it down. Thank God for the person he sent to help you.*

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, three people saw the wounded man lying there. The Good Samaritan saw the wounded man in a different way than the priest and Levite.

Make a list of everything the Good Samaritan did because he saw the wounded man differently than the other two. He:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

*Which of those actions would you have found most difficult?*



4. Read again the Scripture texts found in lesson 2, Psalm 121 and Romans 8:35-38.  
*How do these texts give you joy, confidence, and trust to be like the Good Samaritan and show God's love to those in need?*
  
5. So how can we love our neighbor during the COVID-19 pandemic? We have seen how important it is to prevent it from spreading. The best way to prevent the spread is to be physically distant from each other. That is why we are not encouraged to leave home or meet in groups. Also, if anyone has been together with someone who has COVID-19, he or she must live under quarantine for 2 weeks. Separation and distance from each other can make us feel powerless and lonely.

How can you be a Good Samaritan by caring for and protecting others during the COVID-19 pandemic? Here are some suggestions:

- Through social media and texting, share with others your trust and confidence in God. Ensure that what you share is true and uplifting.
- Pray for those who are lonely, those who are sick, families who are helping their children in school, health care workers, etc.
- Follow the **Rules** for Prevention and Response found in lesson 3.
- Volunteer to respond to the needs of those in difficulty, carefully practicing the Rules of Good Prevention and Rules for Good Response.
- Sew cloth face masks.
- Create a handwashing station.
- Provide the elderly and sick with a regular food supply so they can stay quarantined.
- Share this manual with others.

*What are other ways you can be a Good Samaritan in your area during the COVID-19 pandemic?*

6. Using the form on the next page, prepare an Action Plan for the next two months.
7. Share your Action Plan with someone else in your family or via a text. Invite them to pray with you for your Action Plan.
8. Go with God's blessing! You are not alone. He is with you. He will give you his power and his encouragement to love others.



## 2 Month Action Plan

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City & Country \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Activity 1: My personal plan to contribute to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Activity 2: My personal plan to share this manual with others.

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**Change:** What changes do you expect to happen by the time you finish the 2-month period of your action plan?

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## 10 Biblical Teachings on Sickness and Healing

1. God created life and values it. God restores life by healing. Genesis 20:17, Psalm 103:2-3
2. Since childhood, God has healed us many times. We can all give testimony to God's healing in our lives. Exodus 15:26, Psalm 103:2-3, Matthew 8:17
3. God does not promise to heal us every time we get sick. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
4. God uses many different methods to heal. For example, both prayer and medicine. Isaiah 38:21, 1 Timothy 5:23
5. The ministry of healing should include the proclamation that Jesus heals and saves from sin. Luke 9:6, James 5:14-16
6. Healing and good health are not necessarily signs of God's blessing. Deuteronomy 32:15, 2 Thessalonians 2:9, Revelation 13:3
7. It is more important to do God's will than to heal or be healed. Matthew 7:21-23
8. Our inner person can be renewed even when our body gets sick. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
9. Christians do not need to fear death. Psalm 73:23, 24; Romans 8:38, 39
10. God is honored by those who take care of their bodies. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

### The Parable of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:25-37

**25** One day an authority on the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to receive eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. "How do you understand it?" He answered, " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your strength and with all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' " "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do that, and you will live." But the man wanted to make himself look good. So he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

**30** Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robbers attacked him. They stripped off his clothes and beat him. Then they went away, leaving him almost dead. A priest happened to be going down that

same road. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. A Levite also came by. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side too. But a Samaritan came to the place where the man was. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him. He went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey. He brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins. He gave them to the owner of the inn. 'Take care of him,' he said. 'When I return, I will pay you back for any extra expense you may have.'

**36** "Which of the three do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?" The authority on the law replied, "The one who felt sorry for him." Jesus told him, "Go and do as he did."