

Paranoid?

by Wayne Goff

“**Paranoid**: unreasonably or obsessively anxious, suspicious, or mistrustful: *you think I’m paranoid but I tell you there is something going on.*” [Apple Dictionary, version 2.3.0]

The coronavirus pandemic has certainly caused all of us to develop a healthy(?) fear of germs. “Wash your hands. Don’t touch your face. Sanitize door knobs, keyboards, cell phones, counter tops, or anything else you might ever touch!” Certainly these instructions are meant to keep us healthy and safe, but if we are not careful, we will develop an *unhealthy* paranoia. If we get to the point that we cannot leave our house without fear of doom, then we have developed an unhealthy attitude. Be careful of that and perhaps consider again your priorities.

Regarding the death of a saint, Paul reminded us that, as Christians, we do not “*sorrow as others who have no hope*” (1 **Thessalonians 4:13**). So even in the **worst case**, we have something about which to rejoice.

But permit me to apply the **principle** to the present concern. **Christians do not worry as others who have no hope!** In all of the instructions given to keep us “safe,” not one word has been uttered by the media about prayers to God to keep us safe and well. If you ask me, that should precede everything else!

Consider again the words of Jesus regarding **needless anxiety**. In the Sermon on the Mount, He told His disciples not to “*...worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?*” (**Matthew 6:25**). In other words, God cares for you and me, and we need not forget that! Jesus is not saying that we should not take every precaution – we should! But Jesus also wants us to keep our Heavenly Father’s providential care foremost in our minds as well.

In His greatest hour of need, facing certain death, Jesus “**learned**” to defer to the Father and said, “**Not My will, but Your will be done**” (**Matthew 26:39, 42; Heb. 5:8**). So if I have done everything I can to prevent contracting this deadly virus, and I still get sick and face death, may I have the strength of mind, and the courage of my convictions to say, “Lord, Your will be done, and not mine.” I am convinced that this will stave off **needless** worry, anxiety and paranoia. As Christians, we do not have the mindset that this is the only world, the only hope, and the only life. We are simply “*strangers and pilgrims*” passing through (**Hebrews 11:13**).

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