

KIRBSTONES

ALONG THE NARROW WAY

curb-stone (kürb'stōn') - *noun* - one of the stones or a range of stones forming a curb, as along a sidewalk or roadway. Historically, the curbstones were placed vertically along the edges of the roadbed and the paving material was backfilled against the row of curbstones. The curbstones served ⁽¹⁾to hold the material in the roadbed, ⁽²⁾to prevent the scattering of the material along the edges, and ⁽³⁾to define the road itself from all the adjoining areas.

¹³ "ENTER THROUGH THE NARROW GATE. FOR WIDE IS THE GATE AND BROAD IS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO DESTRUCTION, AND MANY ENTER THROUGH IT.
¹⁴ BUT SMALL IS THE GATE AND NARROW THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO LIFE, AND ONLY A FEW FIND IT." - MATTHEW 7:13-14 - NIV

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Psalm 46 references wars, natural disasters, and political and governmental collapses. As we read Psalm 46 we see no indication that a financial crisis or health emergency exists, yet we cannot disregard the current state of our planet in the face of COVID-19. Consider the anxiety and the fear that people around the world continue to convey, as they struggle to manage the quake-like shift away from their familiar cultures and their predictable and scheduled lives.

How do we—as individual believers within the Christian community—help others identify the source of their confusion, as we help them cope with the situational stress that seems to be dominant in their lives and prevalent in our present time? How can we be a *non-anxious presence* for persons, who are living under an umbrella of fear in every facet of their lives?

The simple answer is that we know how the story ends. We know that even with the unspeakable agony of Jesus' suffering on Good Friday, we found an empty tomb on Easter morning. Anyone, who believes that sin, which separates us from our Father in heaven, can and will be forgiven by asking and acknowledging Jesus' divine mission, and by realizing that he died for our sins and those of the world—*once for all, who would believe*. And, that, dear people, is the simple, complete, and biblical answer to our anxiety.

In the meantime, we encounter many family members, friends, neighbors, colleagues, or complete strangers, (1) *who need to share*, (2) *who need to be socially connected*, and (3) *who may just need to talk*. How can we help them process all their uncertainty, their fear, and their anxiety that is being fueled by the media or by their lack of a paycheck? What then?

My plan, *THE FIVE ESSENTIAL STEPS*, which if executed well, will cause anyone to shift from an anxious state to a place where coping occurs. Check it out.

10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

11 The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Psalm 46:10-11 — NIV

1. *Express thankfulness to God.* When you express your deep, sincere gratitude for the blessings in your life, you realize that (1) *God is in control*, (2) *there is stability in faith in God*, and (3) *God will never abandon you*. A newfound mindfulness of your personal gratitude toward God opens you to receiving even more, and it alters your emotional and mental bearings! Express *thankfulness!*

2. *Persevere in a routine.* Identifying and sticking with your daily spiritual and physical habits will strengthen you emotionally, and it will reinforce your desire to continue to be productive and to engage in all things familiar. Drop that television remote! *Now!!*

3. *Develop a natural curiosity.* Without being tied to the outcome, ask yourself powerful questions that will have you thinking about myriad possibilities and options. If you were curious as a child, remember your childhood *and go there!*

4. *Learn how to be still.* This is a tough one for most people because we want to be active, we want to fix things, and we want to move the needle forward. What part of *be still and know that I am God* do you not understand?

5. *Grow a visionary mindset.* Learn how to look beyond, far beyond where you might be right now. Give yourself permission to daydream with no guard rails. *You can sort it out later*, but you will have grown in your mindset.

We are plagued by *false assumptions* and *limiting beliefs*. I call these two culprits exactly what they are: *baggage*. These are the burdensome suitcases full of lies we (1) *carry with us*, (2) *use to form our opinions*, and (3) *hamper our best decision making*.

What is holding us back? What kinds of questions should we be asking? *We are facing a tremendous opportunity!*

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