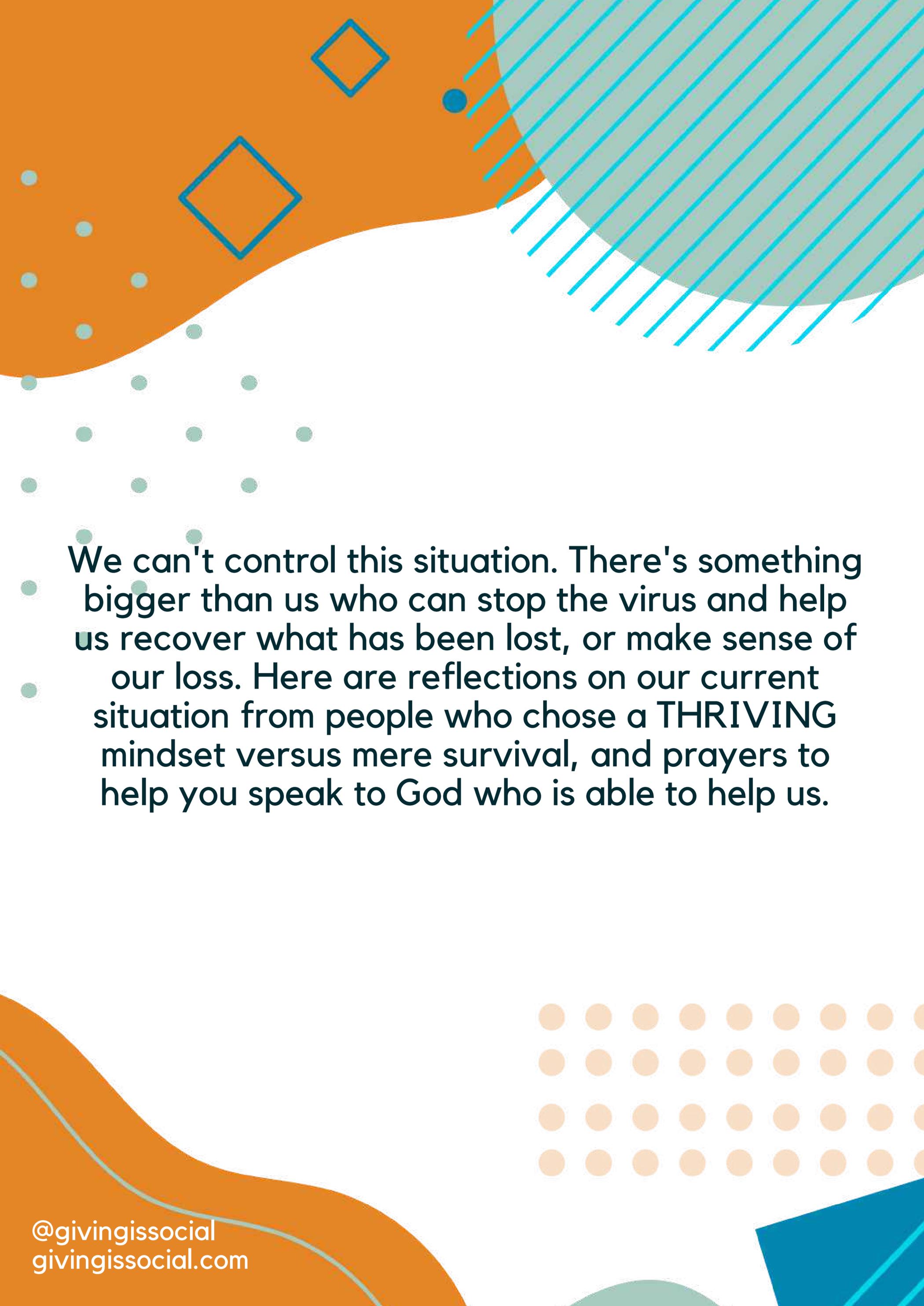


REFLECTIONS & PRAYERS DURING LOCKDOWN

Please pass along!



We can't control this situation. There's something bigger than us who can stop the virus and help us recover what has been lost, or make sense of our loss. Here are reflections on our current situation from people who chose a **THRIVING** mindset versus mere survival, and prayers to help you speak to God who is able to help us.

REFLECTIONS & PRAYERS DURING LOCKDOWN

SPEAK UP. BUT AFTER YOU LISTEN.

Communication during this period is so important not just across households but also within households.

Isn't it effortless to communicate now because our immediate family is in the same house anyway 24/7? Not really.

My husband and I find that we need to let each other know exactly when we need our alone time and when we expect to interact with each other.

We also need to communicate with our toddler when we can play with him and when we need to work.

"Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." Proverbs 16:24

Dear God, you've modelled to us how it is to communicate. Jesus listened to people before speaking his own thoughts. Sorry for not listening to others before I speak. Thank you for having this precious time to spend with our family. Help us remember to speak with grace to each other all the time. Amen.

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NO FEAR IN LOCKDOWN

Global lockdown. Six months ago, these words would have sounded sensationalist, even impossible. But here we are, staring into the unknown, wondering what the "new normal" looks like.

Scrolling through news stories, wishing for a different reality, and hoping for a vaccine will not put our hearts at rest. The control we thought we had wasn't really control, after all. But the Bible offers us something much better than a tiring search for answers. Isn't it liberating to imagine lockdown with "no fear of bad news?"

God's kind invitation is to trade our anxiety for a steadfast heart.

"They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord." Psalm 112: 7

Dear Father, you knew about this global lockdown long before COVID-19 was on anyone's radar. And you remain fully in control. Thank you for this generous, incomparable offer that we can live without fear of bad news. Please shape our hearts to trust in you instead of science, political leaders or news stories. Amen.

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Reflections & Prayers During Lockdown

GRIPPED

Like an abseiler on a steep cliffside grasping for a foothold or a cleft to grip onto, it is in moments of crisis and grief we find ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually coming to grips in dealing with how our situations affect us. Some may try to grip onto careers, finances, relationships with family and friends for security and definition. When these things are brought into question, or even lost, and we have not developed an ability to process through grief and pain, we can find ourselves lacking anything to hold onto.

Lamentations is a book in the Bible which was written by the prophet Jeremiah in a time when he was entrusted with a similar message of warning for his people of oncoming oppression from outside forces, if they did not turn. No-one listened, and he found himself expressing his pain towards God throughout the book. In it he expresses his grief towards God, but holds the tension between this grief that he is facing, and the promise of who God is. In the midst of his crying out to God in Lamentations, Jeremiah still declares that “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end, they are new every morning, great is your faithfulness.

God reminds us that in pain, he is still sovereign, powerful, loving and HE IS STILL GOD. So while we grasp for anything in trial that may prove to be something that we can grip onto, to hold us up, may we be reminded that he is the one who has us firmly and tightly gripped in His hand. May you find home in His grip.

“Our Father refreshes us on the journey with some pleasant inns, but will not encourage us to mistake them for home.”

— C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

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Reflections & Prayers During Lockdown

GRIPPED

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."

—Lamentations 3:22-23

God, thank you that you never leave or forsake us. Help us to process GRIEF and loss with you, that you would immerse us in the comfort of your beautiful presence! We come with GRATITUDE for all that you've done in the past, and acknowledge your faithfulness. Help us see the GIFTS presented to us in trial. It may be hard to see past loss, we recognise amongst many other things, the gift of new breath, new mornings and new life in your son Jesus, AMEN.

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Reflections & Prayers During Lockdown

IT'S A CHOICE

Toddler, husband working from home, in-law, chores, cabin fever, 24/7. There is no space for "me".

But I was reminded that we have a choice to focus on the negatives or to celebrate what's been entrusted to us. Family.

My toddler won't stay this young for too long. My husband still has a job. My in-law helps us in many ways. Time will not rewind itself. So I choose to be grateful at a time like this.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." Psalm 118:1

Father in Heaven, you are good and your love for us is unconditional. Thank you for my family. Though sometimes they may drive us up the wall, I choose to see them through your eyes and to cherish them because you love them too. Give me Your wisdom to navigate my relationships with each member. Bless them with great health and peace this season. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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WHAT'S BURNING?

What is worth fighting for?

During this season things are burning all around us—the economy, our finances, a career, a relationship, our health (mental/physical), and maybe even our dreams, hopes & aspirations for 2020.

But what is left behind? What is the old being burnt for the new to be birthed?

As I navigate through this season, I have had to make hard decisions. But what is being activated? Like fires that burn down a forest, allows for new plants to rise.

What am I dreaming about that needed a fire to activate this dream?

What is God trying to activate in you this season?

Read Daniel 3.

God, we love You.

May you reign completely in our lives in every aspect.

God, speak to us.

May Your Holy Spirit come and refine us, just as the fire in Daniel refines our heart, soul and mind.

God, align us.

Refresh our spirit, God, to see things the way you see things. Give us new dreams in this seasons and allow the fire to burn away impure thoughts, actions or old dreams.

We know the best is yet to come and we hold on to the promises you have given us.

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IT'S ALL IN THE HEAD

I battled with insecurities many times during the lockdown. I was feeling insecure about motherhood. I had just lost a son, and I felt I was losing my grip on my parenthood over my firstborn. Working from home while my kid is at home (because of school's suspension has been tough. I feel like i'm neither at work nor with my child. There was a time when my husband announced the time while he was also working from my home office. It triggered something nasty. I felt he was reprimanding me for still being on work mode when I had planned to homeschool our kid at that time. I was angry, frustrated, and felt defeated that whole day. Then my husband asked that we talk. I poured out to him about how I feel like a failure as a mom. And then he said, "I never think that. I announced the time because it was time for me to take a break from work. It was not to call you out. Sorry if it made you feel that way.

I think you're doing great as a mom."
Phew. All in my head.

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Philippians 4:8

Dear God, please fill up my mind with thoughts that are pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy. May I always think of these things and not the negative thoughts that my emotions bring. You are aware of my emotions, nonetheless. You acknowledge them. And you will quiet my insecurities. Help me believe in the identity I have in you.

All of these I pray, in Jesus' name, Amen.

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Reflections & Prayers During Lockdown

THE POWER OF PRAYER

A month ago, I enrolled to become an online tutor to teach English to non-English speakers. The platform required me to promote myself to gain an audience. Some did trial classes but there was no follow-up after.

There were two weeks that were quiet. Although this isn't my full-time job, I still desire to be "wanted". I prayed a passing prayer, probably when I was washing the dishes. It was as simple as "Lord, give me students."

A few days later, within just a day, I had 6 lesson requests! That practically filled up my week. It was a nice surprise from my Heavenly Father.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us." 1 John 5:14

Dear Father, you are all-knowing. I am grateful that you know me to the smallest detail. Because you are my Father in Heaven, I can come to you for anything. I have full confidence that You will hear me. Soften my heart to trust You for my needs and desires. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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Reflections & Prayers During Lockdown

FAITH TO TRUST

The Gospels tell stories of Jesus both calming the storm and walking on the water—and in both cases, Jesus questions the size of his disciples' faith. Over the years, I have learned that God gives us both mountain-moving faith and mountain-climbing faith. Faith to trust that Jesus will calm the storm, and faith to trust that Jesus will hold us up when we walk on water amidst the waves. God may be calling you to trust that he will speak to your personal storm and calm the waves in your life. On the other hand, God may be reaching out to you to trust him and walk on the water even though it seems impossible.

Either way, God is asking us to have faith. To put our trust in him, and to acknowledge him as our deliverer and rescuer. He will pull through for you. Trust his ways.

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God." Psalm 20:7

God, today I trust in you as my deliverer. You are my strength, my shield, and my hope. I run to you, knowing that whatever it is you're calling me to do, you will uphold me and keep me safe. No matter what I see around me, I know that my reality lies in your Word. You are a good God, and I put my faith in you. Lead me in your ways, and help me to obey your instructions for me. In Jesus' name, amen.

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