

Confronting Crisis

By Mark Mayberry

6/26/2016

INTRODUCTION

How do Christians effectively confront the crises of life?

English Definition

The noun “crisis” [plural: crises] is variously defined as, (1) a stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events, especially for better or for worse, is determined; turning point; (2) a condition of instability or danger, as in social, economic, political, or international affairs, leading to a decisive change; (3) a dramatic emotional or circumstantial upheaval in a person's life; (4) Medicine/Medical: (a) the point in the course of a serious disease at which a decisive change occurs, leading either to recovery or to death; (b) the change itself; (5) the point in a play or story at which hostile elements are most tensely opposed to each other” (dictionary.com).

Greek Definition

Sometimes knowing the derivation of a word is helpful. The English word “crisis” can be traced back through the late Middle English to Latin and finally, to ancient Greek. The Greek word *krisis*, derived from *krinō* (to judge, decide), is defined as “a decision, judgment.” It may refer to the legal process of judgment, such as the activity of God who stands in judgment upon all mankind (both in the past, present and future), the judgment of a human court, such as the Sanhedrin/Jewish Council, or personal decisions regarding right and wrong. In times of crisis, when faced with making a decision, we must choose between two or more options. In physical journeys, do we continue going forward, or turn around? Do we go straight ahead, or turn aside to the left or the right?

- The Greek word *krisis*, derived from *krinō* [to judge, decide], refers to “a decision, judgment” [Thomas 2920].
- BDAG define it as a “(1) **legal process of judgment**, *judging, judgment*; (a) of the activity of God or the Messiah as judge, especially on the Last Day; (b) of the judgment of one person upon or against another, in the nature of an evaluation; (2) **a board of judges, court**, specifically *a local court*; (3) **administration of what is right and fair**, right in the sense of *justice/righteousness*.”

Summary

On a recent trip, Sheryl and I stopped in Meridian, Mississippi. We spent the night at the Country Inn, located on Bonita Lakes Drive, across from Bonita Lakes Mall. I thought, “Tomorrow morning, I’m going

to run around the lake.” Awaking at 5:30 a.m. on Saturday, I donned my running attire, and took off in the wrong direction, and continued 3 km into the country, looking for the lake, which never appeared. Finally, I stopped at the top of a long and steep hill, saying, “This isn’t right.” So I turned around and headed back. The good thing about running, is that it really doesn’t matter where you run, as long as you can get back to where you started. When I made it back to the motel, the sun was up, the fog had lifted, and I could now clearly see that Bonita Lake was just over the hill, ½ km east of the motel, in the opposite direction from which I had run.

Spiritually speaking, we often face similar situations. We may be lost, headed in the wrong direction, etc. Do we continue pursuing our present path, or do we stop, turn around, and go in the opposite direction? If we are striving to do right, will we continue going forward, drawing nearer to God, or will we be guilty of backsliding, and turn away from God?

A TURNING POINT

Negatively

In the definition of “crisis” provided above, one of the spiritually significant meanings is “a turning point.” Consider the negative example of the naïve young man, described by Solomon, who foolishly pursued an illicit affair: “Passing through the street near her corner; and he takes the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, In the middle of the night and in the darkness...” (Prov. 7:1-27).

Proverbs 7:1-27 (NASB95) — 1 My son, keep my words And treasure my commandments within you. 2 Keep my commandments and live, And my teaching as the apple of your eye. 3 Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” And call understanding your intimate friend; 5 That they may keep you from an adulteress, From the foreigner who flatters with her words. 6 For at the window of my house I looked out through my lattice, 7 And I saw among the naive, And discerned among the youths A young man lacking sense, 8 Passing through the street near her corner; And he takes the way to her house, 9 In the twilight, in the evening, In the middle of the night and in the darkness. 10 And behold, a woman comes to meet him, Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart. 11 She is boisterous and rebellious, Her feet do not remain at home; 12 She is now in the streets, now in the squares, And lurks by every corner. 13 So she seizes him and kisses him And with a brazen face she says to him: 14 “I was due to offer peace offerings; Today I have paid my vows. 15 “Therefore I have come out to meet you, To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you. 16 “I have spread my couch with coverings, With colored linens of Egypt. 17 “I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. 18 “Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses. 19 “For my husband is not at home, He has gone on a long journey; 20 He has taken a bag of money with him, At the full moon he will come home.” 21 With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him. 22 Suddenly he follows her As an ox goes to the slaughter, Or as one in fetters to the discipline of a fool, 23 Until an arrow pierces through his liver; As a bird hastens to the snare, So he does not know that it will cost him his life. 24 Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, And pay attention to the words of my mouth. 25 Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, Do not stray into her paths. 26 For many are the victims she has

cast down, And numerous are all her slain. 27 Her house is the way to Sheol, Descending to the chambers of death.

Positively

Reflect upon the positive example of the prodigal son, described by Jesus, who after committing a succession of bad choices, came to his senses and decided to return to his father (Luke 15:11-32).

Luke 15:11-32 (NASB95) — 11 And He said, "A man had two sons. 12 "The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.' So he divided his wealth between them. 13 "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. 14 "Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. 15 "So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 "And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving anything to him. 17 "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 'I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men."' 20 "So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate. 25 "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 "And he summoned one of the servants and began inquiring what these things could be. 27 "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him back safe and sound.' 28 "But he became angry and was not willing to go in; and his father came out and began pleading with him. 29 "But he answered and said to his father, 'Look! For so many years I have been serving you and I have never neglected a command of yours; and yet you have never given me a young goat, so that I might celebrate with my friends; 30 but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.' 31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you have always been with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 'But we had to celebrate and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found.' "

A CONDITION OF INSTABILITY

Internal

Again, in the aforementioned definition, another spiritually significant meaning of "crisis" is "a condition of instability." We overcome internal instability by taking advantage of the gifts Christ has given that help us grow and become more spiritually mature (Eph. 4:7-16).

Ephesians 4:7-16 (NASB95) — 7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it says, "When He ascended on high, He led captive a host of captives, And He gave gifts to men." 9 (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things.) 11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

External

We overcome external instability by trusting in the Lord (Psa. 46:1-11).

Psalm 46:1-11 (NASB95) — 1 God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. 2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; 3 Though its waters roar and foam, Though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah. 4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High. 5 God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. 6 The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted. 7 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah. 8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, Who has wrought desolations in the earth. 9 He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. 10 "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." 11 The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.

REFLECTING UPON AN EXAMPLE

Several years ago, the family of Melissa Anderson suffered a grievous loss. Her twin sister, Kimberly Peck, passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. She was only 27 years old. As Sherelyn and I attended the family visitation at the Navarre Funeral Home in Baytown, TX. I was amazed at the calm composure that the family manifested as they spoke with 100s of friends, family and brethren who came to offer their condolences. Yesterday, as we were travelling home, I called Melissa and asked if she would be willing to write a few lines, expressing how she and her family were able to face this ordeal. Here is what she said:

How We Faced a Major Crisis:

I believe it was a tremendous help being trained in the Word and being raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It gave us the knowledge and tools to be prepared to face the trials and tribulations to come (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:15).

Proverbs 22:6 (NASB95) — 6 Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Ephesians 6:4 (NASB95) — 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

2 Timothy 3:15 (NASB95) — 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Having that upbringing allowed us to each be rooted and grounded in the Word of God and also lean on each other (Col. 2:7).

Colossians 2:7 (NASB95) — 7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

It was a great deal of comfort to be able to trust in the Lord and His plans, knowing that He cares for us and no matter what the answer may be, all things work together for good (Prov. 3:5-6; Jer. 29:11; Rom. 8:28).

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NASB95) — 5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NASB95) — 11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

Romans 8:28 (NASB95) — 28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Keeping a positive attitude and counting our blessings was necessary to be able to go to God in prayer, giving everything to Him **with** thanksgiving (Phil. 4:6-7).

Philippians 4:6-7 (NASB95) — 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Being able to glory in tribulations and allowing others to see the hope and peace within us gives us a sense of purpose (Rom. 5:3).

Romans 5:3 (NASB95) — 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

We faced our trials, knowing that we could draw strength from Christ (Phil. 4:13; 2 Cor. 12:9).

Philippians 4:13 (NASB95) — 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NASB95) — 9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

We held fast to our faith, knowing that He is faithful (Heb. 10:23).

Hebrews 10:23 (NASB95) — 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

Watching someone who was prepared and ready to go made the acceptance of the circumstances much more bearable (Phil. 1:21-23; 2 Tim. 4:7).

Philippians 1:21-23 (NASB95) — 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose. 23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;

2 Timothy 4:7 (NASB95) — 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;

We mourn with hope (1 Thess. 4:13).

1 Thessalonians 4:13 (NASB95) — 13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.

We were surrounded by those of like faith to weep with us, rejoice with us and bear our burdens (Rom. 12:15; Gal. 6:2).

Romans 12:15 (NASB95) — 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

Galatians 6:2 (NASB95) — 2 Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

We have comfort for our future (1 Thess. 4:16-17; Rev. 21:4).

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NASB95) — 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

Revelation 21:4 (NASB95) — 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE

How should believers react when faced with either physical or spiritual crises? We should rise to the challenge by being calm, consistent, thoughtful, and prayerful.

Calmly

Be calm. In Psalm 4, entitled an evening prayer of trust in God, David praised God for having relieved him in his distress. Offering counsel to his readers, the Psalmist said, “Tremble, and do not sin; meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still” (v. 4). Before Elijah was taken up by a whirlwind to heaven, the sons of the prophets confronted Elisha, saying, “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” Each time this occurred, Elisha responded, “Yes, I know; be still” (2 Kings 2:1-6, esp. vv. 3 and 5). In contrast with the frenzied rituals of paganism, made all the more frantic because of the muteness of idols (1 Kings 18:25-29), the Lord God securely sits upon His heavenly throne, powerfully and perpetually present, accomplishing His eternal purpose in the face of all human and satanic opposition (Psa. 2:1-6). Therefore, let all the earth be silent before Him (Hab. 2:18-20).

Psalm 4 (NASB95) — For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of David. 1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Be gracious to me and hear my prayer. 2 O sons of men, how long will my honor become a reproach? How long will you love what is worthless and aim at deception? Selah. 3 But know that the Lord has set apart the godly man for Himself; The Lord hears when I call to Him. 4 Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. 5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And trust in the Lord. 6 Many are saying, “Who will show us any good?” Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O Lord! 7 You have put gladness in my heart, More than when their grain and new wine abound. 8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O Lord, make me to dwell in safety.

2 Kings 2:1-6 (NASB95) — 1 And it came about when the Lord was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, “Stay here please, for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.” But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. 3 Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” And he said, “Yes, I know; be still.” 4 Elijah said to him, “Elisha, please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.” But he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they came to Jericho. 5 The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, “Do you know that the Lord will take away your master from over you today?” And he answered, “Yes, I know; be still.” 6 Then Elijah said to him, “Please stay here, for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.” And he said, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on.

1 Kings 18:25-29 (NASB95) — 25 So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under it.” 26 Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, “O Baal, answer us.” But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made. 27 It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened.” 28 So they cried with a loud voice and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until the blood gushed out on them. 29 When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.

Psalm 2:1-6 (NASB95) — 1 Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 “Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!” 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying, 6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain.”

Habakkuk 2:18-20 (NASB95) — 18 “What profit is the idol when its maker has carved it, Or an image, a teacher of falsehood? For its maker trusts in his own handiwork When he fashions speechless idols. 19 “Woe to him who says to a piece of wood, ‘Awake!’ To a mute stone, ‘Arise!’ And that is your teacher? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all inside it. 20 “But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.”

Consistently

Be consistent. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Spiritual leaders manifest similar stability. Therefore, may we all endeavor to be constant, dependable, reliable (Heb. 13:7-9). Christ’s death, burial and resurrection constitute the heart of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-11), demonstrating God’s saving power, providing the basis of our hope for the future, and compelling us to steadfast devotion (1 Cor. 15:50-58). Vacillation has no place among the faithful; rather, we live with cheerful purpose, trusting in the promises of God (2 Cor. 1:15-22).

Hebrews 13:7-9 (NASB95) — 7 Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. 9 Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (NASB95) — 1 Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; 7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. 11 Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (NASB95) — 50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this

mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57 but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

2 Corinthians 1:15-22 (NASB95) — 15 In this confidence I intended at first to come to you, so that you might twice receive a blessing; 16 that is, to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you to be helped on my journey to Judea. 17 Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no at the same time? 18 But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. 19 For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. 20 For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. 21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, 22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

Thoughtfully

Be thoughtful. In times of crisis, we should attempt to quiet “the lizard brain.” This concept has been popularized by Seth Godin, an American author, entrepreneur, marketer, and public speaker. The lizard brain is that small voice in your head that resists your dreams, holding you back, and causing you to fail. Lizards only seek survival, desiring the warmth of the sun and living fearfully of others. They don’t take chances. They only want to eat and be safe. The lizard brain will fight (to the death) if it has to, but would rather run away.

In a blog post entitled, “Quieting the lizard brain,” Godin says, “How can I explain the never-ending irrationality of human behavior? We say we want one thing, then we do another. We say we want to be successful but we sabotage the job interview. We say we want a product to come to market, but we sandbag the shipping schedule. We say we want to be thin but we eat too much. We say we want to be smart but we skip class or don't read that book the boss lent us. The contradictions never end. When someone shows up and acts without contradiction, we're amazed. When an athlete just does the sport, or when a writer just writes the words, we can't help but watch, astonished at the purity of their actions. Why is it so difficult to do what we say we're going to do? The lizard brain” (http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2010/01/quieting-the-lizard-brain.html).

Spiritual parallels abound: Paul communicates a similar concept in describing the conflict between the flesh and the spirit (Rom. 7:14-25). Yet, victory over the flesh is made possible through Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:1-8). Over and over, God says, “Do not fear!” When Israel departed from Egypt, and was seemingly trapped between the advancing army of Pharaoh and the waters of the Red Sea, God said, “Do not fear” (Exod. 14:13-14). After having suffered an initial setback, Joshua was told to courageously attack the city of Ai (Josh. 8:1-2). Foreshadowing the persecution that must inevitably befall Christians, the Lord Jesus Christ said, “Do not fear” (Matt. 10:24-31; Rev. 2:9-11).

Romans 7:14-25 (NASB95) — 14 For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. 16 But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good. 17 So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. 19 For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. 20 But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. 21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. 22 For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, 23 but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

Romans 8:1-8 (NASB95) — 1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. 3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Exodus 14:13-14 (NASB95) — 13 But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. 14 “The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.”

Joshua 8:1-2 (NASB95) — 1 Now the Lord said to Joshua, “Do not fear or be dismayed. Take all the people of war with you and arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. 2 “You shall do to Ai and its king just as you did to Jericho and its king; you shall take only its spoil and its cattle as plunder for yourselves. Set an ambush for the city behind it.”

Matthew 10:24-31 (NASB95) — 24 “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. 25 “It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household! 26 “Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. 27 “What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. 28 “Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 “Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 “But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 “So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

Revelation 2:9-11 (NASB95) — 9 'I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.'

Prayerfully

Be prayerful. We should pray at all times (1 Thess. 5:16-18), but especially when problems are too big for us to handle alone (1 Pet. 5:6-7). When confronted by the Assyrian army, and the insulting ultimatum of Rabshakeh, personal representative of Sennacherib king of Assyria, Hezekiah entered the house of the Lord and prayed, laying his problem and peril out before the Lord (2 Kings 19:14-19). God marvelously answered. Remember that God is our helper. In the words of the Psalmist, "I will not be afraid, what can man do to me?" (Psa. 56:1-13; Heb. 13:5-6).

1 Peter 5:6-7 (NASB95) — 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

2 Kings 19:14-19 (NASB95) — 14 Then Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it, and he went up to the house of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord. 15 Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, "O Lord, the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, You are the God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16 "Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see; and listen to the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. 17 "Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have devastated the nations and their lands 18 and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men's hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them. 19 "Now, O Lord our God, I pray, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O Lord, are God."

Psalms 56:1-13 (NASB95) — 1 Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me. 2 My foes have trampled upon me all day long, For they are many who fight proudly against me. 3 When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. 4 In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me? 5 All day long they distort my words; All their thoughts are against me for evil. 6 They attack, they lurk, They watch my steps, As they have waited to take my life. 7 Because of wickedness, cast them forth, In anger put down the peoples, O God! 8 You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? 9 Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call; This I know, that God is for me. 10 In God, whose word I praise, In the Lord, whose word I praise, 11 In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me? 12 Your vows are binding upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings to You. 13 For You have delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living.

Hebrews 13:5-6 (NASB95) — 5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," 6 so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?"

CONCLUSION

Remembering that a crisis represents both a turning point, and a condition of instability, let us turn back to God and seek the stability that He affords through His word. Reflecting upon examples from the Bible, and also from our own circles of association, let us rise to the challenge, meeting crises in a calm, consistent, thoughtful, and prayerful manner.