



# Sharing Hope in a Fearful World

## Serving Leaders in Ministry

This article was written by David Ferguson. David is Executive Director of The Great Commandment Network.

**NOTE:** sharing **hope** reduces anxiety and **fear!** God has wired you in such a way that you can't be both **hope-filled** and **fearful** at the same time!

*"...but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15).*

**Pastors**, along life's journey, as we relate with people, who need Jesus, our *listening to others' stories* along with our *vulnerable and caring response* brings us closer relationally and allows us a *bridge to share the Jesus' story!*

1. First, be purposeful in having *relational-connecting* conversations during these fear-filled times of the COVID-19 pandemic as you *ask*:

*"What are you looking forward to after this COVID-19 crisis passes?"*

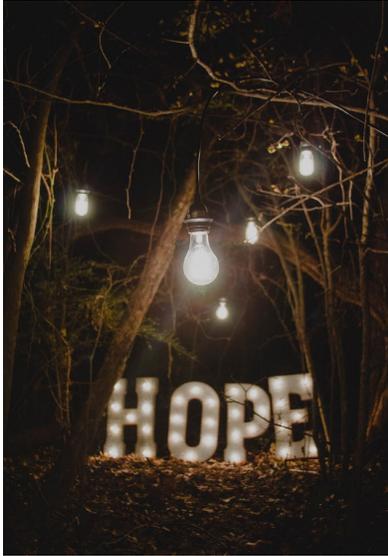
*"I know I'm looking forward to spending more time with my grandchildren and eating out with my wife and close friends at a sit-down restaurant ...how about you?"*

2. Next, as you *listen*, plan to respond "heart-to-heart" through sharing one of *three* responses: your *celebration*, your identifying *common interests*, or your *compassion*.

Here are some **practical** "how to" suggestions:

- Learn to listen for *"no brainer moments"* in your **sharing** and **listening** when the conversation opens the door to **spiritual conversations**. For example:





**NOTE:** your **hope** in this present crisis can rest on the confidence that God is faithful to His Word, and just as He has brought hope to you in the past, **He can do it again!**



A spirit-empowered disciple lives His mission through Attentive listening to others' story, vulnerably sharing of your story, and a sensitive witness of Jesus' story as life's ultimate hope; developing your story of prodigal, preoccupied and pain-filled living; listening for others' story and sharing Jesus' story.

After asking the question, "What are you looking forward to after the virus passes?"

- Add to your **celebration:**

*"I'm excited for you to see your grandkids more, and I'll be | **praying** that happens soon."*

- Add to your sharing **common interests:**

*"I'm excited **God** brought along someone who is **also** looking forward to dinner at a nice **sit-down restaurant!**"*

- Add to your sharing **compassion:**

*"I'm hurting for you as you're going through this...and **Jesus** is too."*

3. As we have been the **bridge** into deepening **spiritual conversations**, and as our relationships continue to deepen, we listen for the **next no-brainer moment** to **bridge** all the way to sharing "*the hope that is within you!*"

*"...who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us..."* (2 Corinthians 1:10).

Take the time to share the following sentence with your own story:

*"I would love to take a few moments to share about **Jesus** being **my hope** in this COVID-19 crisis because \_\_\_\_\_."*

*i.e., "He has already delivered me over and over, beginning when He took this 21-year-old, immature, and rebellious husband and father—who had no clue how to be a husband to his wife or a father to his daughter—and taught me how to give priority to truly knowing Him and making one of my greatest joys, loving my wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren well. He's come through for me so many times before, and He'll do it again!"*

As we courageously share of "the hope within us," we bring pleasure to our Lord as we are found **not** just reading and believing His Word, but actually "**Doing His Book!**"

*"Therefore, having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech" (2 Corinthians 3:12).*

