

DODGING TREES!

This “social distancing” might be taking a toll on many people. My policeman friend with the Durango PD told me last week that domestic violence is spiking. This and other anomalies make us wonder just how immature our culture has become.

Certainly the “shelter at home” orders take their toll on us, but we must be strong, resilient and hold fast to our maturities, spiritual and practical. For instance, I decided I finally needed to go to the grocery store. As I was driving, just after dark, an amazing thing happened – I found myself dodging trees in the roadway, back and forth repeatedly. As I was wondering what happened, a squad car stopped me and the officer approached cautiously. He asked, “What is the world are you doing with all that swerving?” I answered that I was dodging the trees in the road. He looked around for a while, then finally fixed his eyes on my rear view mirror. He said, rather indignantly, “Sir, that is your air freshener swinging back and forth!”

OK, so that didn’t really happen. But for a comparison, let’s consider the situation of missing our weekly gatherings. Due to the “shutdown” we just might, if we are not careful, lose our skills, our edge, our sensitivity to God, to His word, or to one another, the precious face to face fellowship, the spiritual intimacy of sharing the Lord’s Supper, our interest in learning from class and worship (no comments from the peanut gallery!).

Researchers tell us that a habit is easily formed when we repeat the same thing for about 6 weeks. It would be rather easy to consider missing corporate worship for 6 weeks and simply *feel* like this is the new norm. No wonder the Hebrew writer warned against missing the assembly with the word “habit.” No wonder the early Christians, “...devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers,” Acts 2:42, ESV.

As life comes at us hard and fast, whether it’s a panoply of practical problems or a pernicious pandemic, we all have “trees” to dodge that might be real or might be perception. Regardless of the challenge, we must stay attached to the life-giving vine, Jesus, if we are to produce fruit as His branches. That is best done when we abide in Him and let His words abide in us. And *that* is best done when we stay connected to “one another.” A great exercise this week would be to look up “one another” verses in the Bible and realize the connectedness God has planned to for us, so that we can better “encourage one another.”

Ray Wallace

Further study: John 15:1-11; Hebrews 10:23-31; “one another” passages