

Part 3 Notes: Leading Through Crisis with Craig Groeschel

As leaders, you are the people who can make a difference, and I want to recognize we are in a broad amount of circumstances around the world.

For some of us, it's not so bad. You may still be getting paid. You're working from home. You have family time. Others may have lost their job, are on lock down, can't work and may struggle to feed their families.

Sickness:

- When it comes to sickness, some of you have sick relatives or have lost someone you love.
- Others know few sick people anywhere nearby.

Business:

- In the business world, there is a small percentage of businesses doing okay. Some are doing well.
- But many more are trying to survive. They have had to lay off employees or have already closed their doors.

Church:

- In the church world, there are churches who have figured out how to hold online services and have people giving online. For some, it's working really well.
- Other churches lost a majority of their income. They not only have the burden of caring for their church family, but also have the burden of meeting the needs of their community.

I understand there are massive extremes. As leaders, you feel more weight more than most! You are thinking not of just yourself, but also many others. You're thinking about things on a different level. I recognize that this is challenging. It may be testing your leadership and you may feel stretched. Leadership is hard right now.

I want to talk about what I'm learning and add value to each other's lives:

- Every crisis creates unexpected problems.
- Every crisis creates unprecedented opportunities.
- Don't allow the urgent problems to blind you from the emerging opportunities.

Innovation is born out of limitation!

There are three types of opportunities emerging right now:

1. Financial opportunities

- There are buying opportunities. For example, there may be real estate bargains.
- There are new investing opportunities.
- There are new business opportunities. There are a lot of new businesses that can add value and meet people's needs right now.

2. Strategic opportunities

- Now is a time when you have an excuse to address problems you've been ignoring. You have permission to deal with those problems.
- You may be able to eliminate some expenses, cut a program or even cancel a service. This season can help you be more strategic.

3. Missional opportunities

- More people have different needs.
- We have new ways to impact and serve people.
 - Some churches are having parking lot services.
 - Some churches use parking lots as testing centers.
 - Some churches are doing online discipleship and evangelism.
 - Others are donating blood, making masks or giving away groceries.

Look for the opportunities in the chaos in whatever context you're in!

Looking ahead at re-entry, rebuilding and redeeming

I want to give you context for where I am, because I know the situation is going to be different depending on where you are in the world.

- I live in the middle of the U.S. in a moderately populated state (unlike New York) that has not been hit nearly as hard as other locations and states.
- This week in my context, restaurants, salons, malls and churches are reopening. It's different for me than for others.

In my context, I'm thinking about three things right now:

1. Re-entry

2. Rebuild

3. Redeem

How and when we re-enter really does matter!

- I know I'm going to be criticized for going in early or late. There is no right time to not be criticized. There is no right or wrong way.
- As often as you can, clearly explain why you're doing what you're going to do. They are more likely to go along with the what when they understand the why.

Here is an example from my context:

Our church would be allowed to meet this weekend if we wanted to (May 1) and a lot of churches will. But we are not meeting. Why?

Here are my two biggest standards for deciding when we are going to meet again in person:

1. When do our leaders say we are safe to meet? And what are the parameters?
2. When are we going to be completely prepared to minister to people safely?

Here is an example in our context:

- We are not ready yet to meet in person. We have 50,000 masks coming in, but they are not here yet. We are currently working on creating a completely touchless environment. There will be no childcare, no snacks, no touching the doors, etc.
- What is going to be perceived is that it's a financial decision to open earlier, but what I'll explain to people is that our giving is at 100% or up because we transitioned our giving to online. It's not a financial decision to try to meet earlier because when we meet online more people are attending.
- Trying to meet together earlier is not a money decision, it's a ministry decision. But we have to have our gatherings safely set up for social distancing.
- When we can meet together safely, we want to have a safe place for those who are hurting and need ministry.

I told our leaders we're going to think long term, plan short term.

- We are going to plan week to week and day to day.
- Just because businesses are opening up on Friday, doesn't mean that we're going back to normal on Friday.
- There will likely be significant economic challenges. It could be 2021 that we are still dealing with this.
- Don't make long term promises or decisions, because things are changing rapidly every day.

Re-enter, rebuild and expect to make some mistakes! In this season and always—be lean, nimble, flexible and quick!

Communication:

- Be crystal clear communicating—over and over again.
- Communicate more than you think you should—then double it!
- Be honest even if the news is bad—tell the truth.
 - **People can handle bad news better than no news and the fear that comes with not knowing.**
- Don't project too far out into the future!
 - **That's why you speak confidently, but not definitely.**

Don't just Re-enter—don't just Rebuild...

Redeem this crisis.

"Never waste a good crisis." Winston Churchill

Somehow find something good! (Romans 8)

Don't go back to normal! As a leader, I want to get back to better than normal. In my context, there was a lot of spiritual apathy. I don't want to go back to that.

In your industry, whatever it is for you, try to redeem it.

3 questions every leader should ask to redeem this crisis:

If your business or non-profit is surviving, it is likely surviving without something that you previously thought was necessary.

1. What should we stop or reduce?

What does this mean for you personally? Organizationally?

Personally—You might say, we're not going have our kids involved in so many activities. You might say, we are going to block off one night a week for family time. You might say, we are not going to travel like we used to. You might say, we are going to focus on family.

Organizationally—You might cut unnecessary spending or unproductive expenses. You might cancel unhelpful meetings or unnecessary advertising. You might cut marginally activities. You might not hire back unnecessary positions.

If you don't eliminate or reduce something, you are probably wasting this crisis.

2. What should we start or increase?

Hopefully in this process, you didn't just face problems, but you saw opportunities: financial, strategic and missional opportunities.

By taking something away, it forced you to be innovative. Limitations are the breeding grounds for innovation.

For example, in my industry, we created a program called Church Online that is an interactive church engagement tool. It went from 3,000 to 25,000 over the last couple months. Now there are thousands of churches who have discovered that meeting in a physical building is not the only way to minister to people. There are new opportunities appearing!

You can also start to look at what you should increase, something that's working. What should you add fuel to?

For us, we have campuses across 10 different states, and we had to look at a new way to do leadership training. So, we started to do leaders training on YouTube live. It wasn't just training live that we are streaming, but there was interaction. It was profoundly personal. It's an innovation we are going to take with us.

3. How should we think differently?

The way you think matters.

Don't copy what someone does—learn how they think. In the context of the church, there are new ways to evangelize, there are new ways to view our front door, there are new ways to do leader training, there are new ways to help people be generous.

Even what we're doing right now—I can't be in London where I might speak to a group of 200 leaders, but I can do what we are doing right now, and we can have an even broader impact meeting with thousands of leaders on different continents.

Leadership is always important—never more important than now.

When you lead, lead with confidence and hope.

I'm confident we will figure it out—be wise.

I pray you have hope.

Bad news sells because people are always looking for a reason to be afraid.

But what is stronger than fear? Hope is the only thing stronger than fear!

In hard times, good leaders rise. There are problems, but there are opportunities. We are going to come out stronger and making a bigger difference. When it gets dark, your light shines brighter. We can make a difference in the lives of people.