

## March COVID-19 Newsletter

Parents,

What a time to be alive! My heart hurts knowing that our time of being present physically with you and your teens will be severely limited over the coming weeks, however, I know that ***our God knew about COVID-19 and its impact on our lives in 2020 well before the foundations of the earth were laid.*** And while our mode of ministry may shift out of necessity, our philosophy and purpose in ministry remains the same—to *make disciples through worship, community, and service.* Most of you have already received [Heritage's church-wide communication on the impact of COVID-19](#) for our church family, so I won't rehash those details here; however, I do want to answer some HSM-specific FAQs I've received.

### **What's cancelled and what's not?**

For all intents and purposes, all official HSM programming is postponed until further notice.

### **What suggestions do you have for helping my teen continue to grow in their spiritual walk?**

At Heritage we firmly believe that you as a parent/guardian are the primary disciple-maker of your children. This may seem like an overwhelming responsibility (it is!), but graciously God has given parents access to a community of believers (local churches!) and resources (Scripture!) to help in the process. Even in this unique season of life, our ministry will continue to partner with you to provide direction and encouragement for your student(s).

With this in mind, ***our vision for HSM during this COVID-19 crisis will run through our existing D-Group model.*** In saying this, I realize that each group and age/gender is unique. I also realize that individuals and families have differing interpretations of the CDC's/Fed's current guidelines of "gatherings of 10 or less"—side note: here's a [great article](#) on extending grace to differing viewpoints. All this essentially means—the *growth process for individual students and specific groups during COVID-19 may look different across the board...and that's okay!* Many leaders have already done so, but if not, all leaders plan to connect with you and your students over the coming days to set up a plan of action moving forward.

### **Okay...But I was looking for specific resources for my student(s)...?**

Due to the rapidly changing nature of COVID-19, I'm still developing the best methodology and delivery for content, however, I'm committed to resourcing you and your students. This may include articles, reading plans, podcasts, etc. Most content will likely live on our HSM website page, but I'll seek to use both email and social media to communicate. So with that being said, see the start of some recommended content below...

### **Recommendation Corner**

(1) [HSM 2020 Bible Reading Plan](#)—This links to our website and both the Reading Plan and COMA template are available for download. We're finishing up Week 11 tomorrow, but I

encourage you to jump straight into Week 12 or even back at Week 1 if you'd like! It shouldn't take a global crisis to run to God but what a great opportunity when the calendar is as empty as it'll ever be! *Maybe use this resource as a private devotional and then gather together in the evenings to discuss one of the chapters.*

(2) [Don't Waste Your Family Quarantine](#)—Title is pretty self-explanatory. Definitely worth the read!

(3) [How can a Church not Gather?!](#)—One of my favorite podcasts is Al Mohler's *The Briefing*. He provides Christian worldview analysis on current events five days a week. The first 15 minutes of today's podcast are worth the listen.

(4) [Praying the Psalms](#)—This super short book has impacted my life and perspective on prayer in ways few other resources have. You could read one chapter with your teen per day or week, get together to discuss, and then practically apply through Whitney's model of prayer. I've linked to the book on Amazon, but also have a copy available in my office if you'd like to borrow it.

So even in this season of uncertainty, I encourage you to commit yourself and your family to spiritual growth. It may feel different. It may require some outside-the-box thinking. It may seem unique or awkward at first. *But though life as we know it seems to be on hold at the moment, our call as Christians to love God and love others certainly isn't on hold.* Lean into meaningful relationships in community. Send texts. Write notes. Invite small gatherings to your home. Share articles on social media. Engage. Communicate. Love.

Our HSM team and I are here for you and your family. Please reach out with any suggestions or questions. Praying for you during this unique season of life.

Blessings,

**Joel Felten**

O: 863.644.5590 | [jfelten@hbclakeland.com](mailto:jfelten@hbclakeland.com) | [www.hbclakeland.com](http://www.hbclakeland.com)