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Good Friends

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Life and Books and Everything - Clearly Reformed

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Transcript

This is Life and Books and Everything hosted by Kevin DeYoung, Justin Taylor, and Collin Hansen. Welcome to this new podcast and it may be the first of many or maybe the first and the last, but we are here. I am Kevin DeYoung and I'm with my good friends.

Actually, good friends, not just I met this person on an email one time and now they're good friends, but actually good friends laugh a lot, talk a lot. Collin Hansen and Justin Taylor. Most people wouldn't know that we actually talk all the time.

I almost said a group of eighth grade girls, but that would be offensive to any number of people. Every day texting, emailing, usually did you see this funny, if this is a crazy video, it's from Justin. If it's some sort of macro theory of the way the world works, it's from Collin.

If it's a turret, it's from me. We talk often and obviously been talking in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic and we just had a thought, probably a bad one, but since we're talking so often, maybe we get it on the computer and we get it in joy talking to one another and we record it and maybe there's something that's helpful to other people that remains to be seen. I have been looking forward to getting to talk to the two of you.

So thanks for joining me. And I thought, you know, we would start, we're going to talk about coronavirus and we want to be sensitive to the difficult times that we're in. And I find that many people are walking this, this tightrope especially Collin, you know, this any sort of media output Justin would too.

On the one hand, people can't get enough coronavirus. They want COVID all the time. Give us your latest thoughts.

And yet then there's the folks that I'm so tired of this. And I'm really thinking about anything else besides another talk or sermon or podcast on COVID-19. So we're going to do a little bit of both.

But I thought we'd at least introduce who we are just a little bit Colin Hansen. You're the editorial director of editorial content, the grandpuba of all things editorial at the gospel coalition. I mean, you would like to give out your cell phone and if anyone disagrees with a TGC article, should they contact you directly.

My greatest feat, Kevin was convincing the world that you wrote my first book, Young Rest is Reformed, and that Justin runs the editorial work at TGC. So it really means that, I mean, yeah, there may be there's a couple of compliments that come through, but mainly it's the complaints. And I just, I'm able to just deflect.

So if it's at TGC, you don't like it. That's Justin. If it's from that book from, you know, 12 years ago, that's Kevin.

So easy. I just say a little bit. Where do you live? Tell us about your family and what do you do as editorial director? Yeah, the first question I normally get when I say, I work for the gospel coalition is editorial director.

I get the response of, is that a full time job? And I mean, sometimes it is, I guess. So I'm here in Birmingham, Alabama, and we don't have any headquarters for TGC. So the switch to sheltering in place and online work is pretty much a continuation of our normal work.

And so I get to work on things like our podcasts, Gospel Bound, which I host, and then also do, you know, sorts of things with planning our conferences and just sort of helping to keep everything going every single day with our, with our publishing output. So I'm an elder at our church, Redeemer Community Church here in the Avondale neighborhood of Birmingham. We've lived here since 2012, eight years now, and married to Lauren.

We met back in college and have been married since about 17 years. And then we have two children, Carter and Elise ages five and two. So we are hoping that Carter gets to start kindergarten in the fall.

We shall find out. I mean, we plan to do it. We just don't know what's going to happen in the fall.

We are debating, shall we school this child or shall we just raise him as an independent genius? Yeah, just, it's just amazing how many things are up in the air that suddenly you just assumed and you planned your whole life around and all of a sudden you're thinking, huh, I don't know what that's going to look like. Anyway, we're taking day by day, week by week, just like everybody else. Halfway serious question, but halfway not.

I mean, what in Alabama, are people genuinely getting concerned about the football season? I mean, that's a good question. That's not just a joke. That's a big deal.

Yeah. Well, not just a big deal for a lot of reasons, but I mean, social reasons or whatever, budget, economic reasons would be. I mean, I think with the size and scope of college football, it's not just Alabama.

Certainly it's, it's Justin's team Nebraska. It's everybody else. That floats the rest of the sports.

So if that doesn't happen, all kinds of different dominoes start to fall. So no, there's, I would say this week was the week when the worry started to kick in and where we started to think, wait a minute, 2 30 p.m. on Saturdays. There's not going to be anything there.

And so, I mean, I think colleges, as we've seen, seem to be especially vulnerable because the sports are obviously tied to actual education, at least in theory. And, and if you don't have people on campus, I just, I don't know how you do football separately from that, but it just makes me think how are Christian colleges. I don't know how a lot of private schools or other schools are going to make it if they don't have anybody showing up in the fall.

So, a lot of questions, no answers, but yes, very serious. I actually had a good friend of mine who is close to the situation reached out to me wondering what do you think's going to happen. And I knew that was probably pretty bad when he was reaching out to me wondering, I thought, man, even the people who are in the middle of this stuff, they don't know.

They just don't know. I've just never been. I've never seen something like that before.

We're going to come back to all that just a minute. Justin, you, you wrote the ESV or you, what do you do it cross way. I just wrote the Old Testament part.

That's most of it. JE P or D. Who knows? Yeah, the J obviously. Yeah, that's true.

The J is the J is the J is the J. And the J is the J is the J is the J is the J is the J is the J. With his mother and an apartment in Minneapolis, and added on the book side of thing of some late seventies. And then added the ESV in 2001. So, book publishing site is what I oversee and Dean.

Orton overseas the Bible publishing side of the company. And Justin, you have a wife. How many kids? Five kids, one wife, one wife.

Very good. And, and you moved from Chicago. You still work at cross way, but, you know, we tend Chicago downers growth Metroplex.

And you moved to Sioux city and the three of us know all of us know Sioux city in different ways and we have great. And then we have a steam in a city that can boast of a monument to the only man who died in the Lewis and Clark expedition is a very fine city. But, so it survived everything else except city.

Not to mention the airport code. Don't the airport code. Yes, I flew out of sucks many times.

And you're trying to sign yesterday that said, roofing sucks, it was like company. I'm like, so Justin, why did you, why did you move to Sioux city. And, and how's it been? I mean, it's not the move that you typically see, you know, 40 something's making from Chicago to Sioux city.

Yeah, we were really attracted to kind of the art museums and the sports. First teams out of Sioux city. Are there still the explorers.

They don't think they're still there. Yeah. Yeah.

There's here. Yeah, my wife and I grew up in Sioux city. She actually grew up in was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, but moved to Sioux city and elementary school where we met.

So I'm a Sioux city native, but we got married right out of college the summer after we graduated and moved up to Minneapolis. We're up there for. Seven years and then down to Chicago land for 14 years.

So it means our whole married life. 22 years now. We've never lived within hundreds of miles of our family.

Her parents are both in their 70s. Both my parents are in their 70s. I've got a brother with six kids in town.

She's got a sister with six kids in town. So in terms of both of our families, it's kind of the hub. And when the possibility opened up that I could continue to work for a crossway remotely.

Since August, I've kind of been in a pattern of flying back there every other week and leading the publishing meetings. We kind of bunch them together. So it's worked pretty well until the whole world started working remotely a few weeks ago here.

How have you found it? On the scale of boy, I miss living in a big city and all that it affords to boy, this is my Rod Dreier experience moving back home, which I don't know if that actually did go well or not. It didn't get moved away. Yeah.

He moved to Baton Rouge. Yeah, so those are not the two poles, but is it a dream or it's just another place and at least families nearby? Yeah, I think it's been a little bit of both. I mean, one of the things that I've realized, which I knew intellectually and I think Colin

knows very well from his own story is that you can always have these idealistic things that maybe Rod Greier was in that camp to some degree.

You know, thinking, okay, all my problems will be solved if we can just move back home and be close to family. And of course, the problem is that you bring yourself with you to bring all of your problems and your quirks and your hang ups and your sin patterns and all those sort of things. But it has been really nice.

When I was a senior in high school, age 18 was the last time I could just see my parents or see a sibling anytime that I wanted off at college. You get to see them a few times a semester perhaps and then when you're married and then when you start having kids and you're talking about a few times a year. So to have that blessing as parents are aging, to be able to do a job that I still love, it's been really nice and especially nice for our kids.

You know, for them to have a dozen cousins in town that they can hang out with and connect with the Lord's mankind to us through the whole thing. That's really great. All right, I'm going to transition and we're going to, I have a lot of questions.

We'll see if how many we can get through just thinking about COVID-19. Let's start here. We were talking last week or so about leadership in the midst of a crisis and I don't want us to, there's lots of people who can do rank punditry on the president or the task force or their governor or their local county officials.

And I don't want to do that, but I want to think more broadly. What does good leadership look like in the midst of either this crisis or just a crisis and Colin start with you because you are so good at pulling in historical reference and you said something to the two of us about the generals in the Civil War, especially on the on the Union side, were pretty disastrous for a while so wax eloquent for us either historically or present day. Why is it so hard to find good leadership in the midst of a crisis.

Tell us what does bad leadership look like good leadership. Give us some thoughts. We've heard it said before, Kevin, that generals are always fighting the last battles.

And so we're oriented toward those crises that we have experience with we're oriented toward those events that we understand. And this may have been something that, you know, some people warned about that's for sure. One thing that's emerged is that President Bush George W. Bush apparently had read, I guess, about the 1918, you know, flu, influenza pandemic right.

And so he took it upon himself to to create task forces and you've all the Veen wrote a really interesting article about having worked in the Bush administration and having no idea why they spent scarce time on this and didn't necessarily really amount to much but that kind of leadership is rare. And I immediately began to think about how whether

this is a two month thing or a 20 month thing or I mean, I was talking with a family member today who said she's been telling their kids that this is something that they'll read about in their history books coming up. And I do think not because of necessarily the mass death, though, of course, the death totals have just been distressing but just because of how it's going to change our patterns, I think going forward to prevent things like this in the future.

But what you look back on with the Civil War and also I would add World War one is a good example of this as well, is you have people who are equipped and trained and developed to be able to fight a certain kind of threat. And so the Civil War, it was more or less like the Napoleonic wars and with World War one, you had like the Franco Prussian war and things like that that had come earlier. And so you have things like in World War one, these massive British cavalry charges.

Anything. Are you serious into machine gun fire and entrenched artillery? Yeah, absolutely. They did because that was seen as the heroic that was seen as, you know, the Elan that was so was seen as like the epitome of, you know, the, the esprit de corps of the army.

And of course, all of that, you know, you're basically just harvesting the cream of your crop to death. Immediately before finally a couple years pass and the politicians get thrown out, the generals get thrown out, and you find people who have been able to innovate on a local level. So, I mean, taking World War one is an example there you had people develop certain kind of infiltration tactics tactics, excuse me.

And so had people develop obviously defensive tactics tanks, you know, for the first time. And so those kind of people emerge because they've learned to adapt and usually they've been the people who have been implementing things at the lower levels. So what I'm looking for right now are those people and I certainly includes church leaders as well.

Looking for the church leaders, the state and local leaders and the national leaders who are going to emerge in medical professionals, obviously as well, who have learned how to implement things on a local basis. And all of a sudden we're able to see that we're being spreads and it can adapt other places, you know, at the outset of this, we kept hearing so much about ventilators. My brother works for General Motors in Detroit and so all kinds of things we're going to have to turn this around right away, you know, inventing invoking the Defense Production Act to be able to take over and nationalize these industries to make ventilators.

And then this, then recently the New York Times comes out with a major profile, major analysis of New York City that shows that doctors are trying to keep anybody off ventilators that they can. Because it's now seen as a drastic step that's very problematic and they're trying to address it with all sorts of other, you know, other means. That's

what I'm getting at here.

That's what leadership looks like. It's probably going to be not the top down leaders. I'm not picking on President Trump here.

I'm talking at any level. It's going to be solutions that come from, you know, that bubble up and those people gain credibility and they will gain then influence across the country and even also the world. You mentioned the book.

Two good books. So you mentioned John Berry. Great influenza.

So that's the big sort of texts of reading about the 1918 Spanish flu. I admit, I have it on my phone and I was listening to it and the same guy who narrates it. He does a very good job but he narrates a lot of books.

And he narrated the first book I had him narrate on my audible was a spy thriller. So I just hear him talking about the dead. I just can't do it.

So I switched over. It was a bit too much. So I switched over to pale writer by Laura Spiny spiny.

It's very good as British read and it's, it has more international scope than just America. So those two books are good and it's so sobering to think about 50 to 100 million people died in 1918 more than World War one, probably more than World War one and World War two put together. It's sort of a strange like providential coincidence at the start of this whole outbreak.

Ross Douthit was trying to set out on his book tour for the decadent society. And it's a very specific definition of decadence there which we won't get into. But it does, it does dovetail into this because you think about what we've been on both sides of the aisle what we've been talking about for, you know, political leadership, it has been a kind of reality TV show.

And that just cuts across the board and the sort of things that we fight about and the sort of brush fires that come up and personality conflicts and now suddenly it seems like the ideal leader would be someone who's is actually not ideological, you know, ideology is good in some sense, but in this case, somebody who's absolutely level headed doesn't care who gets the credit wants to just give me the best solutions, get me all the best information I can. Justin, how else would you think about whether it's had a national international local or just a pastoral level even what what does good leadership look like when we deal with the crisis like this. So, good leadership requires study and faithful and measured communication.

And I think all three of those are probably important. You know, if you don't know what to think about something it's tempting just not say anything at all, but as a leader you

don't have that luxury just to remain totally silent and to let somebody else lead because we're all going to follow leaders right unless you're in such a way that you're a lewd age or very monkish we're going to be listening to some voice so as a leader I think we want to be speaking into the situation. And yet the great temptation especially in the age of social media is I need to become the conduit for the world of the latest medical advice or the latest death count or the latest update on the testing protocols.

So therefore I'm going to tweet every 15 minutes the latest breaking news. It is tempting the way that I'm wired I'm inclined toward that and some people might think why is he saying that this is that's exactly what he does try not to. But the problem with that is manifold and Kevin maybe at some point you might want to talk about spirituality of the church.

I'm not operating as a as a minister of the gospel per se or with a specific office but as a Christian leader. We need to be cautious to stay in our lane to have epistemic humility to realize I don't know everything. But more quick we are to speak into try to be a virtual CNN that's constantly running updates is that we're undoubtedly going to say things incorrectly.

We're going to lose proportionality. More importantly for a Christian I think is the fact that we have something that CNN can't provide won't provide Fox News won't either. A larger perspective it's God's perspective.

We see through glass dimly but God has given us his revelation and as careful interpreters being guided by the spirits operating out of church tradition and history we should be able to speak into this moment and to give a unique message that nobody else is. I think we need to be able to pull back and actually think and be careful about what we're saying and how we're saying it but not just to go silent. Just to give two quick examples I think of what Andy Crouch did early on with his writing on analyzing the situation and making some recommendations.

Andy was spending hours and hours and hours a day, day after day, week after week working on this well everybody else was just ignoring the situation or firing off things. You know he did his homework John Piper I think from another level theologically wrote a book very quickly on coronavirus in Christ, but he essentially locked himself in his study for a few days and drew upon 50 years of pastoral ministry and even longer Bible reading to produce something I think for helpful for the world. Yeah, I don't know if anyone I would say anyone but our moms will listen to this but I think it's optimistic to think our moms are going to listen to this.

If you do that I don't listen to a podcast she might. Yeah, well it's my mom's birthday today so happy birthday mom if you ever listen to this a few days later. But you know you mentioned the spirituality of the church and I don't have to launch into a lecture on on that which has its detractors and understandably so but what what I mean by the

spirituality of the church is my sense and feeling of constraint as a gospel minister that I speak to things that I have some authority and expertise to speak to, and that is not epidemiology doesn't mean I can't be a good reader and know something.

It doesn't but it means I'm not a mathematician I'm not one who's modeling these things and so I have had some dismay to see folks, any people we know friends but just people even that we follow in our Twitter feed. You know it's one thing if you were the former head of the FDA. Yeah you could be wrong for sure but you do have some some reason to speak to these things, whereas as a minister the gospel what what I want to speak to are the gospel implications how this might relate to church history might relate to text in the Bible and that's what you said that's you know it's what Piper did he didn't write a book about coronavirus he wrote a book about how does this particular moment in history how does the Bible speak to it in the Bible speaks to every moment in history.

I think it's really important as leaders that we you know it's a cliché but that we stay in our lane and all of a sudden, we know for sure that the worst case scenarios are true and if you don't believe that, then I'm going to tweet you into the grave or we know that this is hashtag just the flu or barely more than that or all of our governments over react. It's not to say that you know there might not be right or wrong answers on all those questions but I want people to think that when they come to my church or when they if they have any reason to listen to me or to anyone like the three of us. It's because of careful work we're doing to try to think God's thoughts after him and apply them to situations not to be an expert in mathematical work and the latest pathogen.

And we should say that there is such a thing as having more than one location I think of somebody like Lyman Stone who's a missionary in Hong Kong who has expertise on modeling and research and numbers and so he can speak into it. For me. Yeah, Miguel Nienz.

Yeah, he's a great example did a wonderful article but TGC early on. But I think a good rule of thumb is you know if it was New Year's Day 2020 and you didn't know how to spell the word epidemiology movies at this point out in terms of your analysis of the science of the situation. No, I keep waiting when there's the international crisis on what really happened at John with her spoons life and then I'm on it.

I'm tweeting all day, every day until that happens I'm going to show some restraint college you have anything before. Yeah Kevin do you do you remember you were talking about that non ideological leadership. You remember that's exactly what happened with Spanish flu.

Do you remember which leader was elevated in the aftermath of it as that sort of non ideological efficiency driven leader. I didn't get that far in the book yet. Herbert Hoover.

Yeah, that was my educated guess there you go so. Get into a spoiler alert Colin. It's

true.

Oh spoiler alert from almost 100 years ago so. Yeah, I like spoiler alert trolls movie is about celebrating differences. Okay guys.

I just. Sorry to ruin it for you. Hoover was, you know he was the guy who helped lead the US efforts for recovery in Europe, and was amazingly good not with only with the flu but obviously with the wars and with the war and there is, I think one of the things that we're talking about here is the myth of the transference of expertise.

Hoover was very good at that. He was a very bad president. And what happened to him.

He didn't know how to adjust to those changing circumstances, which you know in the Great Depression which unfortunately is the next level of historical example that we're going to be dealing with now but that was that was one thing I was just thinking about there of, you know, just you're good at one thing doesn't mean you're good at other things and the other is that this stuck with me I just saw David Brooks write something that he said the worst posers make pessimistic predictions about what the next year is going to look like they have no clue but I admire their attempts to project gravitas. I saw that. And it occurred to me that you know you can do this in so many different directions so you can pretend like you know better than everybody else and that this is all just a flu and it doesn't mean anything.

You can also pretend like you're the only person who sees that this is going to change everything and if you don't prepare right now, then you're going to be in big trouble. I think one group of people is attracted to one. I think kind of the the in crowd on Twitter is attracted to I think more of what Brooks is warning about here but this has just been hard.

I like to keep up with things I like to be able to feel like I know what's going on and I feel like a month later. I still have no clue. I heard one commentator say that they should call it the confirm your priors virus.

No kidding because especially early on. It just seemed you thought socialism was great. Corona virus tells us that's what we need capitalism was good coronavirus tells us you know you didn't like Trump.

Well you really don't like him now you're you're all in for Trump. So coronavirus just for a lot of folks confirms everything that they already thought everything they already thought about the world already thought about politics. Corona virus confirms it.

I want to go to something that Justin you said a week or so ago you're going to tweet and I apologize I don't see every single one of your tweets so I don't know if you did tweet this or not. But I can email do if you want to get them on alert. But it was something to the effect of, hey sometime when this is all done.

A bunch of people are going to say what we should have done was really obvious and why didn't we do it. And it reminds me of a book almost by that title by Duncan Watts and I'm hoping to write up a little blog post on it in the next week. So it's called everything is obvious and then as a little asterisk on the bottom it says once you know the answer.

And it's it's kind of against some of Malcolm Gladwell's popularization of certain theories about how decisions are made or influencers or the wisdom of crowds. But the basic basic thesis of the book is there's a whole lot of looking at a situation after the fact and then saying, wow, it was so obvious we should have done X and he has a lot of examples of the sort of circular argument that says X worked because X contained the characteristics of X and it's it doesn't really advance any argument. I remember one, one example of the book is he was talking about a book review of Harry Potter.

I said Harry Potter was a runaway bestseller because it had a Cinderella story and it had three friends and two of them were men and one was a woman and it had some of the real world and some of the magic world and it. You pretty much just said Harry Potter work because it was Harry Potter. And so if our if our if there are 15 theses that could be true with the given evidence, then it's hard to say that the answer was really as obvious as we thought.

Justin, what did you mean by that tweet which I probably butchered what you were actually going to say but I think I got the gist of your concern and any caution you have for folks as inevitably the the looking back will come fast and furious and articles and books for many years to come. Yeah, I think the way that I put it was whatever you're doing right now stop and write down what you think is going to happen over the next month and save that because there's going to be entire books written about whatever you thought you're a complete doofus. And the whole point and I never did end up tweeting it.

I was saving it for a podcast. I get to unveil it. The whole point of saying that is hopefully to get us to have a little epistemic humility.

Colin and I both had a professor John Woodbridge at Trinity at church historian who used to talk about how historians can move the players and their narratives around like chess pieces. And to Woodbridge's credit he always had empathy for them because they're dead and they can't talk back. There's a bit of that going on and so it's some of it's to give us a little bit epistemic humility and by epistemic humility I just mean humility kind of a chase and realization that I don't know a lot and therefore that should give me some pause about my level of confidence whether in predicting or critiquing.

And also give a little bit of humility or empathy rather towards those in the past who hindsight is 2020 and it's much easier for us to judge now. But we are dealing with unlimited amount of information and we are reliant upon experts. I think the three of us

agree we should not just be looking for a talk show radio host who doesn't have any expertise and relying upon his opinion we should be listening to the guy who used to run the FDA and is thinking about this every single day and has been thinking about it long before any of us ever thought about pandemics and infectious diseases.

The trouble there is that they even relying upon experts is difficult. They're operating with limited amount of information as well and they disagree with each other. So yeah I don't know what the solution to that is other than to just acknowledge when speaking that we see partially and this may be incorrect and this is what I think might happen and to own up when we make mistakes.

Don't you think the only solutions just in our time or divinity. I mean and we can't be divine so the three of us love history because you always have the answers in history. But the beautiful thing about history is that good history gives you a sense of contingency and it occurs to me that the I mean I'll put it this way.

I have just been exhausted lately and I was asking a friend of mine today. Is Twitter changed or have I just changed and he said no Twitter is the same Colin because I said I'm having a hard time here because it looks like everybody knows all the answers and they just hate everybody else. And this is just exhausting like give me the optimist give me the builders I want to know I want to see something hopeful here I want to see people investing in something instead of just tearing each other down.

And it occurs to me that any you know list of great Western leaders of the 19th and 20th century. We certainly include Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln and Lincoln for pretty much his entire presidency until 1864 65 was seen a late 1864 65 was seen as a total failure. Was a horrible president I mean who caused this great calamity Churchill obviously you know through into 1940 when he becomes prime minister and then it becomes anything but obvious after that when he presides over the greatest military defeat in British history at Dunkirk.

Which we now of course we understand differently we make movies about that's not how it was seen at the time. And so the only answer if you're not God and we're not God thanks to God. But then you only have time that's the only thing that can solve that problem I don't know that there is another one so I love that solution Justin because now we're living in sort of like real time history with the way social media works.

And we project so much confidence on so little basis. I don't get the thing that I was going to say earlier going right in line with that Colin is that this isn't great opportunity for us to be self critical. Kevin was talking earlier about confirming your priors and for me it's really easy to say oh yeah look at that guy he's he's out there doing that and that guy's doing it from the opposite perspective.

But in what ways am I tempted to do that so I have been on the perspective that this is

going to be really bad and going to be really catastrophic and all the social distancing is necessary. And therefore finding myself saying like I want the numbers to confirm what I've said publicly and what I believe and as I get into arguments within my family. That temptation of confirming your priors is not just for those bad people out there talking on CNN or Fox News, but it's inside my heart that's a temptation for me to care more about me being right than the truth prevailing and all of us should want a President Trump to be successful and this all of us should want the virus to stop all of us should want everything to be able to reopen, but our political inclinations and our predictions of record getting in the way of rational thinking along those lines.

That's a difficult issue. It reminds me of whoever said this phrase that I've stolen but we are not so much rational beings as we are rationalizing. That's how we tend to think we're not just cool rational actors but we're always looking for a way to process information that rationalizes not always but that's sort of endemic to the human fallen nature.

I want to piggyback up to some things both of you guys were saying and I don't want to ask for a prognostication Colin had a really good article a week or two ago on this looking at some, some general but but measured kind of predictions. I want us to think optimistically, maybe silver lining what what do you think on the other side of this whatever the other side is months or years. What what things might be different that whether small or large that would actually be positive.

And I have a few because I knew I was going to ask that question. One I think at least initially and I hope it lasts. I think you're going to find Christians absolutely thrilled to be together and corporate worship now it's not going to be flipping a switch you're going to.

It's going to be rolling into it and smaller groups. But I don't think that virtual church I think this is people are thankful for what we can get I don't think this is leading to a boom of virtual church I think people are going to realize I really miss singing together with brothers and sisters in church. So I think there's going to be a renewed enthusiasm for meeting together for corporate worship.

I wonder if and I hope this may be sticks in my own life. I wonder if there'll be some good simplification. No we're all missing things we're missing sports things were I'm so I love the Olympics and I love the tour de France I love all these sports things and those are you know lesser things compared to so many other issues out there but we're all missing things and yet there is something in our simplified lives.

I know my family of 10. We're having dinner around the table every night. That hardly ever happens when kids all have sporting events and youth group and I'm here for those things that come back but there's a simplification of life which I hope we learn from and we don't just rush back into the madness.

I was just give one more which is not original to me but it has been heartening in the midst of this to see what you might call lower esteemed sort of professions receive a lot of paths on the back doctors being a doctor has for all time been a higher esteem profession. You know nurses you know maybe but but for nurses to get that for truck drivers for grocery store workers and you go to the grocery store and you see you know the 18 year old kid checking out there with a plexiglass in between you and him now at my grocery store so there's no thing that you might have to do with that and you think thank you well absolutely don't think it hopefully you say it to some of these people thank you for working so I hope that maybe some of that will stick the value and dignity of work in a way that can often be missed unless you're in one of those options and the sort of work that we often take for granted right now are literally keeping our country open and I hope some of that appreciation sticks with us. Other things optimistically that you think maybe on the other side of this we have some silver wandings.

I think that's one of the things that I think about the families. My next door neighbor when this was that first weekend for the shutdown and they just announced schools were going to be closed for me like two weeks or something and I said to her. I'm not sure if I was going to go to the hospital and she just looked at me shocked like eight weeks that's not possible.

I can't do that as a family both of them both of them work. So usually the kids are taking care of and she's having to think work at home. I'm going to be working full time at home and take care of my kids without any school of course that's impossible to be able to do.

And yet clearly we're all carrying a lot of strain. And I think that's one of the first things there's also be like a collective exhale that says whoa we were carrying a lot when this thing starts to let up. But I think a lot of families are going to realize it wasn't quite as bad as they thought or that it drew them together with a formative memory that helped them to understand that created a sense of resilience and solidarity and bond between them.

So in the predictions piece that I did I tried to pair the positive with the negative because I because I think the predictions they're not going to go in one direction. That's part of worrying about I not wanting to confirm my priors, but just to understand that this is going to be a complex dynamic. And so that's why I mentioned with the families that I think there might even be increased rush to to marriage.

But just an appreciation that, you know, we don't need the big fancy wedding or things like that. We just we need each other together before God. And do I do think at the same time, I'm not sure the family sizes, the young family accepted are going to increase in general here.

So anyway, but I think I think that some, you know, I think I think my family is my

immediate, you know, nuclear family is pretty close, but it's been remarkable how much closer we've gotten and just how much stronger. We've gotten because of what of going through this. That's what I'm hopeful about.

Justin any silver lining, Steve, you're hoping for. Yeah, I agree with what you guys just said and Kevin when you were talking about the unsung of vocations that we don't usually think about. I saw a little video on Twitter of a nursing staff applauding the cleaners at the hospital.

Somebody has to clean up after surgery. Somebody has to bleach the floors every night. I mean, that's, you know, we think about nurses and we think nurses when we're in the hospital.

We never think twice about somebody who has to clean and, you know, they're doing heroic work. So, yeah, I think there's going to be a lot of that. A couple of additional things in terms of the church.

I think communion, the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, in particular. Whether a church celebrates virtual communion and tries to let families do it at home and do it in conjunction with the video service, just leave aside the agreement through the church. I still think there's a palpable hungering to do that as a gathered body.

And I think that's been a weakness in evangelical churches in particular. And when you take something away, people begin to miss it and not just think that it's just this little ritual that we did weekly or monthly or quarterly or whatever. So I think that's going to be a positive thing.

Another, and maybe this is extra optimistic, but I wonder if subtly over time, some worship and congregational singing practices will change. I think if you are in a mega church and you go and you basically just sit there and listen and the predominant sound is not congregational singing, but rather performance and it's not especially singable, but it sounds great. That may be attractive and feel fine, but when we're in this weird situation of watching stuff online, you know, service that I've watched is just a husband and wife.

He's got the guitar and the two of them are singing together. It's very simplified and stripped down and it's beautiful. And the lyrics of certain songs and hymns, whether it's the old Fanny Crosby songs or it's a modern Getty song, those resonate in a way that kind of even very good, even very good contemporary rock style worship songs just don't.

I mean, again, they might be fine at a certain level and the theology might be fine. It's not the sort of thing that you're going to be sitting around when somebody's dying on their deathbed, singing some of these songs. So there may be a greater recovery of

simplicity and singability with congregational worship in particular.

There are a couple things that can combine on my end. We're coming up on probably testing our five listeners patients, but if anyone's made it this far, they're surely eager for us to go five more minutes. So my last question, which is a great question to end any podcast with you guys is whether it's related to the virus or not.

I mean, you could talk about, even if you're not reading it, what are you publishing books? And I know right now we can't get books from some places in two days like we're used to, although Crossway will probably get it to you. lickety split. So any books that you've been reading, I'll give you a few though the first one you probably don't want to read right now, but I finished it right before all this started.

So we had Phil Reichen giving his Lord of the Ring lectures at RTS Charlotte here about two months ago and they were excellent. If you guys have never heard him, seen him do that. If you ever does it, you're really good.

But we had lunch with him and I just said, give me a fiction book. I don't read a lot of fiction. And he said, oh, there's a guy David Walton who's at 10th Press, and he's won the Science Fiction Awards for writing.

He said his book, the Genius Plague, you won't be able to put down. So I don't read a lot of fiction book, but Phil was right. I read that in just a few days now it's about a plague.

So you may not. It's about a mushroom plague that spreads and infects the whole world and almost leads to nuclear Holocaust. So it may not be the uplift that you're looking for in this moment, but it was a different kind of book that I usually read in a page turner.

What else am I reading? I am just finishing the Mars in biography on Edwards. I read the short version. Can you guys believe I never read the longer version of it? Only because you've told us that.

I know. That was legitimately shocking. I know.

Isn't that a foreshame? I'm trying to think what else is. I'm reading a lot of stuff from my RTS class, which is fun. I'm reading to the Federalist Papers.

I've read through some of that before. And a book that maybe would be a separate subject and a subsequent podcast, but came out a couple years ago called No Property in Man. It's about the slavery, anti-slavery debates in 1787 for the Constitution.

And he's trying to push back a little bit on the dominant narrative of the last 30 years that the Constitution was basically just a capitulation to pro-slavery forces. Now, he says it's a paradoxical document for sure. And it certainly had capitulations.

Otherwise, it couldn't have passed and been ratified. But he's making, I think, a

convincing argument that Madison and some others, even though they were complicit in slavery in their own personal lives in different ways, made a stand not to include any language where there would be property in man. But that they made a principled decision with all the things that the 3/5 compromises demeaning and got wrong, that they wanted to call slaves persons in not property.

And in the 1830s and 40s, he points out that the abolitionists look back to that and they look back to Madison, even though he owned slaves, as really a precursor to their cause and found something there in the Constitution, although pro-slavery forces had their own argument. So that's just fascinating. It has some resonance with current debates.

I have about half a dozen other books that I'm reading on my shelf. But what else? Books. I'd love to talk about books.

I just, I'm adding this question, Kevin, to the end of my Gospel Bound interviews. I did that with Eric Larson. So there's one of the books that are splendid in the vial about Winston Churchill.

And that was so good. A lot of the people who've responded to me about that podcast have brought up that question in the end. I mean, I'm usually interviewing authors and so ask the authors what they're reading.

Just not a, you know, pretty basic idea right there, but one that pays off. So I think, I think, Kevin, I don't know anybody who reads as many books at the same time as you. And also, I remember seeing you coming to visit you once while we were both on the road.

And I think you had brought, I don't know how long this trip was. It was maybe like three days or something. I think you packed like eight books or something for those three days.

And, but the thing is, you've inspired me. I also love that you weren't using a Kindle on those eight books. You were hiking them along.

So now I've adopted some of your policy. I tend to read at least four books at the same time, mainly just because of my moods. I don't know.

And especially if I've had a long day of book editing or writing, I'm not usually wanting to jump in on something of the same genre. So I want to keep my, keep my options open there. So, is this a safe, is this safe space for me to mention that I'm reading.

Jane Austen for the first time. Jane Austen. You were close.

You were close. I've never read Sense and Sensibility. I've seen the movie a couple times.

Multiple versions. So, but I'm reading Jane Austen. And I said to Lauren, my wife last night, it takes a lot of concentration for me to read Jane Austen.

So this is not a, like a bedtime read. That's really easy. Like I'm having a lock in her sentences, the characters, the social dynamics that just don't come naturally to me.

But she, Austen in *Sense and Sensibility* has a moment where the kind of lout of the brother who abandons his sisters kind of finds that the sisters could make. They might be able to make an advantageous marriage. And he says that he was so much interested in the marriage as a way of atoning for his own failure to be able to care for them.

It was almost like he was so eager to do it precisely so that he could cover up for what he had failed to do. And I thought that was a brilliant insight of those human dynamics from Jane Austen. But since this is probably not a safe space, and I can't say those things, I will instead say, I'll stick more to my script here.

And I will say in the last week or so, I've finished a couple books that were really, really fascinating one. And I'm kind of a, I'm a bit of a snob reader. So meaning that if everybody likes something, it makes me a little bit skeptical.

You want to buy indie music? Exactly. I'm the indie music person. I'm an early like Steven's until everyone did.

Exactly. That is, that is who I am as a reader. And I think I just have to be honest and admit that.

I put aside those scruples and I took one of Justin Taylor's recommendations. And I read Robert Caro's working. Research, writing, Oh my gosh, that is a good book.

That's really good. Wow. Yeah.

If you listen to it audible, he speaks about this slowly. You can put it on four times speed. Very quickly.

It sounds normal. Well, Caro is, I mean, I think, you know, we all, we all love, love history, love writing, love reading, and he inspired me just to know that I don't think it's my life calling might be Justin's. I don't know that it's my calling to spend decades of my life writing about one person, but I am really glad for the people who do have that calling.

And I'm grateful for that. And so it just kind of inspires me and intimidates me to realize, man, that's not what I'm going to do. I don't think I'm going to do that with somebody as he did with with with Moses and then also with anyway.

Yeah, that's the name, right? Yeah, Robert Moses and then also with the different. Yeah, exactly. I had to clarify there.

I was like, I remember my context. The other I was going to quickly mention is one that we've talked about a little bit just personally, which is why I wanted to bring it up. And that is our friend Daniel K Williams, his book, *The Election of the Evangelical Jimmy Carter Gerald Ford and the Presidential Contest of 1976*.

I don't expect a lot of people are going to read this book, but I do hope I'll be able to do an interview with him about it because I think that the year 1976 is one of very significant ongoing implications for evangelical identity, as well as for American politics, which are, you know, important perennial topics there. So I'll leave it there, but I like nothing more than talking about talking about books and reading. One more, then I'll give Justin the last word back when it seemed like socialism was going to be a big deal.

Until every until Bernie wiped out in the coronavirus game. I read *Heaven on Earth, the Rise Fall and Afterlife of Socialism* by Joshua Miravitch and Marabh Chick. You don't know either way.

You can't wait confidence and say it loud. That's why you get it. Marabh Chick is really good.

It's not a, you know, he's not in favor of socialism, but it's not a quick fly by. It's a history book. It's a well researched history book.

People who actually grew up in socialism parents very committed to it and has come to see the dangers in it. Historically. And so people just interested in wanting to know the actual history from the French Revolution down through the present and all its many permutations.

It's a very worthwhile book. Justin, you get the last word on some books for us. Yeah, I don't really read books.

I just published them. So, a couple of horrible books. What's that? Say it is not a prerequisite to be a book editor.

Couple that have been listening to an audio or audible Eric Larson's book on Churchill and his early years, which has been enjoyable, especially with a nice British narrator. James K a Smith, another British narrator on the road with Augustine. Really, really insightful.

He is a, even if you disagree with Smith on things here and there is a very, very good writer. I sort of wish there was a blue collar version. It's a little bit of a hybrid book to some degree, but really have been struck by some of the insights in that book.

I mentioned just a few crossword books coming to the pipeline. Is it coming down the pipe or the pipe? I've always thought about the correct myself. I think I just combined Pike with pipeline.

And it kind of worked. Michael Scott of a line of Pike fish. It's coming down.

They're digging the pipeline right now. I also mentioned I'm reading Nathaniel Filbrick's first of his trilogy on the revolutionary war. That's amazing.

I read it before I go to sleep at night, so I get through literally two paragraphs. I've turned into my dad. I think he's taken like three years to finish a book.

Yeah, I fall asleep. Books that we just published that's getting a lot of attention. Dane Orton's gentle and lowly on the heart of Christ.

I'm really proud of that book and glad to see it getting attention. One of those, it's hard to publish a book in the midst of a once a century pandemic, but hopefully people will take advantage of that book and read it. Just this morning read the prologue for Steve Nichols biography of RC sprawl.

Really, really, really, and the introduction is takes us to sprawl's final sermon. And even sprawl's final line is, you know, the, it's good. His last public comment.

It's going to be really nicely done. Not a massive biography, but kind of a brisk one. And by somebody who knew him really well.

So an insider biography. So really, you can be happy to publish that in 2021. Next fall, Carl Truman's rise of prime for the modern self.

Rod Greer wrote the forward for it. And I think it's going to be a very insightful look at how we got to this place in terms of sexual revolution and beyond the 21st century. A couple books I'm looking forward to this summer.

David Murray did a book not only for teenagers, but also for parents and teenagers. The teenage one is called Why Do I Feel This Way and the parent one is called Why Does My Teenager Feel This Way? Both having to do with anxiety and depression. I don't think there's any books from a Christian perspective dedicated to that topic and a real accessible way to be read by teens.

And, you know, we talked about the optimistic side of what's going to come on the other side of this. I think one of the unfortunate side effects is going to be increase in mental health issues from all the social distancing and being at home. Also this fall, John Piper's Magnum Opus on Providence.

400 plus page book that he's really started outlining over 20 years ago. So it's going to be everything that Piper thinks about the Providence of God. And then final one I'll mention.

And then I'll show it up is Christopher Ash's three volume commentary on the Psalms called Praying the Psalms and Crank. So praying the Psalms in Christ commentary for all

who preach and those who pray. So going through commentary on every psalm, looking at it from a Christocentric perspective, how to interpret it, how to preach, how to pray it.

And then probably a fourth volume just on interpretive issues beyond just the actual commentary itself. So that's a few years out, but have been reading few of those entries as Christopher works on them. So when everybody finishes those books this week, then we'll come back next week, right? We'll come back next week.

We have more books. Hey, I didn't give you all the books. I'm saving some for later.

Justin, a column. Thank you. And really do thank you for the content that goes through you, Colin, for TGC and for all the books.

Keep buying them up. Anyone who's listening. But thank you, Justin, for your part in that.

And thank you guys for talking. We will see how this goes and maybe we'll do this again next week or sometime not too far in the future. Thanks, Kevin.

Thanks, Kevin.

[music] (bell dings)

[buzzing]