



March 30, 2020

Dear Friends,

As we begin the second week of classes on our digital campus, I want to offer a small word of motivation to help you persevere in your calling as a student. Your professors are undoubtedly thankful in these unexpected circumstances for your general academic capability and determination. But we all realize this isn't easy. Many of you face significant challenges as you continue in your studies. We all feel disrupted, distracted and discouraged. The extraordinary impact this pandemic is having on our lives feels at times as if America is at war.

Well, in the fall of 1939, shortly after Great Britain found itself at war against Germany, C.S. Lewis preached a sermon entitled, "Learning in War-Time." In this tough message, he addresses the question of whether it is sensible and appropriate to continue learning when the nation is at war. He identifies "three enemies which war raises up against the scholar." The first of these enemies is excitement -- "the tendency to think and feel about the war when we had intended to think about our work."

In response to this enemy, he observes,

[T]he war has not really raised up a new enemy but only aggravated an old one. There are always plenty of rivals to our work. We are always falling in love or quarreling, looking for jobs or fearing to lose them, getting ill and recovering, following public affairs. If we let ourselves, we shall always be waiting for some distraction or other to end before we can really get down to our work. The only people who achieve much are those who want knowledge so badly that they seek it while the conditions are still unfavorable. Favorable conditions never come. There are, of course, moments when the pressure of the excitement is so great that any superhuman self-control could not resist it. They come both in war and peace. We must do the best we can.

There it is. Your primary job at the moment is to learn. Sadly, social distancing restrictions have eliminated many other ways you could spend your time. So, don't let unfavorable conditions stand in the way of this unique opportunity. This is what resilience is all about – and Grovers have grit.

Finally, remember that this way of thinking should also be true about our spiritual lives. The apostle Paul writes, "But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil 3:13, 14) By the grace of God, we are called to "do the best we can."

Pressing on for the prize,

Paul J. McNulty
President