

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 542 Numbers Can Scare Us and Take Our Eyes Off the Prize

The ugly numbers, the scary headlines, they seem endless. Where do we find hope in all this? I'm Jerry Roberts and I'll tell you where, next on The Extra Point.

There are a lot of numbers coming out about Sars Cov 2, the coronavirus we're fighting. On the surface, there's nothing good. There are the gloomy statistics we hear about daily, as tens of thousands of new cases are added, and many more people die.

We see the mathematical models presented, painting pictures of what we may face in a week, a month, and by the end of this viral onslaught. Among those pictures, none are pretty. None are anywhere close to pretty, but there is hope and we have a role in it.

The thing about these models is they're not perfect, not carved in stone, and the results will be influenced by behavior. Our behavior.

In example, the initial models indicated that we could see 70% of the world's population eventually infected, with a 1% overall fatality rate. That would bring over 50 million deaths after all is said and done, a number roughly equal to the Spanish Flu in 1918. That model didn't factor in the social distancing, nor a vaccine coming sooner, or drug treatments that could disrupt the ability of the virus to multiply — and thousands of scientists are now working on just such research.

Original models for the U.S. projected as many as 2.2 million Americans dying. The new models, released this week, show the U.S. could have 100,000 to 200,000 die, or it could be less if we continue to do the things we're now doing to keep our distance from others, as well as other key measures to offer added protection.

Social media gets the rap that it seems to promote the more extreme stories, not those that are more optimistic. I think mainstream

media is guilty of that, too. CNN turned news coverage into a 24/7 game. Then the Internet came along with alternative news sources, and the amplified race to be first changed the game forever. There are fewer restrictions today and a lot of things make it through that have marginal news value, but score high on sensationalism. They have to get our attention. If we weren't scared of this virus, would we be watching, reading, listening, or clicking links? No, we clearly would not.

We can't stop the scary headlines and numbers that come at us every day, but remember this: the high figures are based on behavior that preceded our leaders taking positive action to combat the virus, and by us making individual decisions to act in a safe and responsible manner. The low numbers in the models reflect what would be our best efforts to remain safe. No one knows how it's going to play out.

While we can't accurately predict the outcome, we certainly can influence it. In Guam we've already implemented the four social distancing measures officials say will give us the best end result: closing schools, shuttering non-essential businesses, getting residents to shelter-in-place, and restricting travel. We'll soon know how successful our efforts have been.

Keep doing the little things every day. Make them part of your daily routine. If you have a family, make it a team effort. Look for positive things and don't sweat the numbers. Control what you can control. That's how we all win.

That's The Extra Point. Stay home and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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