



## Break It Up

**W**e received a distressing email from our Mom the other day. Both the tone and the content of her words as we read them on the screen were uncharacteristic, and alarmed my brothers, sisters and me to the point where we needed to pick up our phones.

Over a series of calls placed at different times from different coasts, we needed to check in with her and make sure she was okay.

Our Mom's message expressed a deep concern for everything that has been taking place in our nation of late. The political divides, the racial divides, the economic divides, and the fact that no one seems to be listening to anyone else, anymore, were all pressing issues of great concern to her.

She lamented how far we've gone as a country, so fast, and that, not in a positive or productive direction. She then went on to worry about the world her grandchildren would inherit, and what chance, if any, they might have to make a difference in their lives, and in the lives of others. Each thought she expressed conveyed that she was completely and deeply serious.

I know my Mom to be a realist. Better said, I know her to be an optimistic realist. But with all that has been shifting and colliding all at once these days, I also know she spends far more time than she once did in front of her favorite television, in front of her favorite news and news-related programming. "Um...Mom, I have an opinion...if you would care to

hear it," I offered cautiously after we'd spoken for ten minutes or so.

"Sure son, what would that be?"

Trying not to come across as a "know-it-all" type of son, I suggested, respectfully, that maybe it would be okay to *break it up*, to unplug for a bit and turn off the news at various points throughout the day. I suggested that the news

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is quite often negative, by design, and wants to keep us, not only glued to it, but in a constant state of fear and negativity.

I encouraged her to "pick up a great book again, listen to some beautiful music or watch an old favorite classic movie."

I did stop short of appropriating a quote from William Shakespeare and passing it off as a direct reference to our 21st century American media: "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

Although Shakespeare's quote may be how I see the noise the media loves to create around us, I realize I may not speak for her, or for anyone else for that matter.

Regardless of our political leanings, whether Republican, Democrat or Independent, liberal or conservative, the news and news-related programming never

seems to stop pushing its agenda. The media thrives in a time like this, a time where there is never a shortage of content to cover. So often, the content is downbeat and downright sad.

So often the media tends to focus on the problems, and not nearly enough on positive and creative solutions. I know for me, I've had to *break it up*, and at times, just turn it all off.

It can all be far too much to handle. It can be far too much to manage. That doesn't mean we don't keep in touch and remain aware of what's going on in the world around us.

We do. We need to.

But we can do so in a way that serves both ourselves and the real and honest challenges we face. We can *break it up*, unplug from time-to-time, and respond from a place that's not rooted in fear or negativity.

As Christ-followers, Jesus reminds us that, "...in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33 NIV).

That's for sure—and that's a great and reassuring comfort to us.

In Christ, we can come from that place of peace, from that place of comfort, no matter what the news media may be covering, and no matter how they may be doing so.

When we do stay in touch and keep up with what is happening around us, we can do so from our rest in him. □

—Ed Dunn