



Small Footprint

how to live simply and love extravagantly



Big Handprint

weekly discipleship track



reflect, relate, receive, respond

A Five-Day Devotional Journey

June 7 - 13, 2009

 7th Step:

Do your best, prepare for the worst

and trust God to bring victory.

Proverbs 21:31

Being Ready For Come What May

1 No need to panic over alarms or surprises

Read. Proverbs 3:21-26 msg

Dear friend, guard Clear Thinking
and Common Sense with your life;
don't for a minute lose sight of them.
They'll keep your soul alive and well,
they'll keep you fit and attractive.
You'll travel safely,
you'll neither tire nor trip.
You'll take afternoon naps without a worry,
you'll enjoy a good night's sleep.
No need to panic over alarms or surprises,
or predictions that doomsday's just around the corner,
Because God will be right there with you;
he'll keep you safe and sound.

Think.

- "There are three possible responses to disaster: denial, despair, or awareness with a righteous response." Which of these three responses best describes your response to potential global or personal crisis?
- What keys to personal preparedness do you see in this passage of Scripture?

Pray.

Sovereign Lord, you are the Maker of heaven and earth. Give me wisdom to look ahead and prepare as best I can for what life holds, and faith to trust you with all outcomes.

Live.

Do your best, prepare for the worst, and trust God to bring victory.
Memorize this verse (Proverbs 21:31) this week.

Repeat it. Meditate on it. Pray it daily.

In today's world, very few are ready for a disaster of any magnitude. Most live from day to day, going to the store as needed, living from paycheck to paycheck believing nothing would ever go wrong in America. If even the utilities were turned off for any extended period of time, many would go without heat, refrigeration, or even light. Calamity of any kind has a tendency of striking fear and panic into the hearts and lives of those who are caught unexpected.

So, what does this have to do with a life of simplicity? Lack of preparedness can steal away the very peace and contentment that security brings.

There are three possible responses to disaster: denial, despair or awareness with a righteous response. Jesus told his believers they were to be aware of the signs when bad things began to happen and disasters increased in frequency and intensity. "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken."¹ The awareness that things won't always be status-quo on the earth, and that bad things do happen, should prompt Christians to prepare themselves spiritually, emotionally and physically for whatever may come. Again Jesus said, "In this world you will have tribulation, but take courage, for I have overcome the world."²

¹ Luke 21:25 ² John 16:33

2) You don't have to be a genius

Read. Luke 12:54-59 msg

Then he turned to the crowd: "When you see clouds coming in from the west, you say, 'Storm's coming'—and you're right. And when the wind comes out of the south, you say, 'This'll be a hot one'—and you're right. Frauds! You know how to tell a change in the weather, so don't tell me you can't tell a change in the season, the God-season we're in right now.

"You don't have to be a genius to understand these things. Just use your common sense, the kind you'd use if, while being taken to court, you decided to settle up with your accuser on the way, knowing that if the case went to the judge you'd probably go to jail and pay every last penny of the fine. That's the kind of decision I'm asking you to make."

Think.

- To what extent do you feel confident that you "have your finger on the pulse" of our times?
- How well do you maintain the balance of being informed and information overload (24/7 news coverage)?
- How important do you really feel it is to "understand the times"? Why?

Pray.

Lord, help me to find the 'radical middle' of being aware and prepared in a society that typically slumbers in apathy or overheats in fanaticism.

Live.

Make a list of potential crises you expect to possibly encounter.

4) Hezekiah went to work

Read. 2 Chronicles 32:2-6 msg

When Hezekiah realized that Sennacherib's strategy was to take Jerusalem, he talked to his advisors and military leaders about eliminating all the water supplies outside the city; they thought it was a good idea. There was a great turnout of people to plug the springs and tear down the aqueduct. They said, "Why should the kings of Assyria march in and be furnished with running water?"

Hezekiah also went to work repairing every part of the city wall that was damaged, built defensive towers on it, built another wall of defense further out, and reinforced the defensive rampart (the Millo) of the old City of David. He also built up a large store of armaments—spears and shields. He then appointed military officers to be responsible for the people.

Think.

- What did Hezekiah do when he got wind of what the king of Assyria was up to? Read the rest of 2 Chronicles 32 to see how things turned out for him and Jerusalem.
- What future battles do you need to be preparing to face right now? What lessons do you learn from the way Hezekiah prepared for his future crisis?

Pray.

Lord, when it comes to preparing for life's battles, make me as wise as a snake and harmless as a dove.

Live.

Consider setting aside enough food and water to get your household by for a few days in case of an emergency.

3) Grain held back to be used later

Read. Genesis 41:28-36 msg

The meaning is what I said earlier: God is letting Pharaoh in on what he is going to do. Seven years of plenty are on their way throughout Egypt. But on their heels will come seven years of famine, leaving no trace of the Egyptian plenty. As the country is emptied by famine, there won't be even a scrap left of the previous plenty—the famine will be total. The fact that Pharaoh dreamed the same dream twice emphasizes God's determination to do this and do it soon. So, Pharaoh needs to look for a wise and experienced man and put him in charge of the country. Then Pharaoh needs to appoint managers throughout the country of Egypt to organize it during the years of plenty. Their job will be to collect all the food produced in the good years ahead and stockpile the grain under Pharaoh's authority, storing it in the towns for food. This grain will be held back to be used later during the seven years of famine that are coming on Egypt. This way the country won't be devastated by the famine.

Think.

- What financial and household preparations have you made to prepare for a potential time of "severe famine"? What one practical step in this area can you take this week?

Pray.

Lord, deliver me from a lifestyle that is stunted and myopic; grant me to live with wide-angled vision.

Live.

See what steps you can take to begin a "Joseph fund" that will be there to help you through tough times.

5) Time is of the essence

Read. 1 Corinthians 7:29-35 msg

I do want to point out, friends, that time is of the essence. There is no time to waste, so don't complicate your lives unnecessarily. Keep it simple—in marriage, grief, joy, whatever. Even in ordinary things—your daily routines of shopping, and so on. Deal as sparingly as possible with the things the world thrusts on you. This world as you see it is on its way out. I want you to live as free of complications as possible. When you're unmarried, you're free to concentrate on simply pleasing the Master. Marriage involves you in all the nuts and bolts of domestic life and in wanting to please your spouse, leading to so many more demands on your attention. The time and energy that married people spend on caring for and nurturing each other, the unmarried can spend in becoming whole and holy instruments of God...All I want is for you to be able to develop a way of life in which you can spend plenty of time together with the Master without a lot of distractions.

Think.

- What is Paul's counsel to believers facing hard times in the near future? How prepared are you to alter your daily routines so that you can have greater freedom of movement in responding to hard times we may face?

Pray.

Father, remind me daily that the world as we see it is on its way out, that I might live a prepared, uncluttered life of simple devotion to you.

Live.

Take this prayer and pray it repeatedly through the day.