

The Informer

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HOW CHRISTIANS CAN SURVIVE THE TROUBLED ECONOMY

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(reprinted from the Hillcrest church of Christ bulletin, Neosho, MO)

The troubled economy is a source of great exasperation and stress for Americans. Consequently, our lives and relationships suffer. Seeking relief from these pressures people seek a variety of remedies, many of which are destructive. Accordingly, the answers remain elusive as these individuals grope blindly for them. Nevertheless, God has a way to endure the struggles.

Initially, we must realize that God will not simply banish the problems that Christians face (Matthew 6:34). For God's people, the problems remain. Fuel prices break records almost daily. Grocery prices are increasing faster than they have in seventeen years. Foreclosures remain a very real possibility for millions while jobs become increasingly scarce as businesses cut back to handle escalating costs.

God knows our struggles and will always take care of Christians by providing a way to endure hard times. Three quotes from Jesus illustrate His loving concern. "*I will never leave you nor forsake you*" (Hebrews 13:4 NKJV). "*I am with you always, even to the end of the age*" (Matthew 28:2). Finally, "*Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden*" (Matthew 11:28).

Scripture prescribes that we live simply and within our means (I Timothy 6:6-10). Accordingly, when money is scarce we must lower our cost of living. Christ tells us that He will take care of His children by providing food, shelter and clothing (Matthew 6:25-34).

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However, God does not provide designer labels, fine cuisine or palatial homes. He provides basics, so we can focus on serving Him (Luke 16:20-25).

The economic downturn can destroy our spiritual lives and homes unless we act decisively. Four dangers exist for Christians in a troubled economy:

1. **First, economic problems can cause us to give less to the Lord in contributions.** Ostensibly, this is abandoning God when we need Him most. The widow in Luke 22:1-4, gave all she had out of her poverty. Accordingly, we must continue to give God that which is rightly His (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).
2. **Second, the discouragement from financial problems can lead to apostasy as we give up on God and seek other answers (Hebrews 6:6-9).** We can turn to alternative methods of obtaining wealth such as gambling and crime. Soon, the lottery replaces God as the impetus to our hope. Instead, we must remain connected to God spiritually to remain strong.
3. **Third, economic problems can cause strife in the home and marriage.** When we begin fighting about money, tempers can spill over into the hearts and bodies of children and they can be hurt emotionally and physically. Likewise, we can doom our marriages and forget that we promised to persevere through hard times (Genesis 2:23-24).
4. **Fourth, our spiritual lives can grow cold as we spend less time in worship, prayer and communion with Scripture.** As we do, we grow increasingly weak and sick spiritually as we stop walking according to our calling (Ephesians 4:1).

In Revelation 2:8-11, we find Christ praising the church at Smyrna who was suffering through persecutions and extreme poverty. However, they remained faithful and were promised a "*crown of life*" (Revelation 2:10). God remained with them and they saw the true focus of a life of righteousness.

We can take their lives, instill their values in our hearts, and persevere through smaller struggles that they ever endured. As we become less materialistic, we may just find the proper spiritual focus that we have been missing all along.