

***"The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it."***

Proverbs 27:12

It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark. But Noah and his family survived the flood by building the Ark and stocking it in obedience to God (Genesis 6:11-22).

God led Joseph to use the years of plenty to store up sufficient grain to feed his people through the seven-year famine (Genesis 41:33-36).

One only has to look North of the Limpopo River to see a worse case scenario of what can go wrong. As Christians, we are to wisely anticipate danger and to make provision for times of scarcity. However, we are not to fear the future. We are to fear God alone. Yet, we are warned to plan for the future and prepare ourselves for adversity.

***"... man is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward."*** Job 5:7

The Apostle Paul wrote: "We must go through many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God." Acts 14:22. He should have known. On his missionary journeys, Paul was imprisoned frequently, flogged severely, five times he received 40 lashes, three times he was beaten with rods, once he was stoned, three times he was shipwrecked, once he spent a night and day in the open sea. He frequently knew hunger and thirst, betrayal and danger (2 Corinthians 11:24-28).

***"If you falter in times of trouble, how small is your strength!"*** Proverbs 24:10

The will to win, the determination and resilience to persevere in the face of all adversity is basic to survival.

***"I have learn the secret of being content in any and every situation ... I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."*** Philippians 4:12-13

To be mentally and emotionally prepared for adversity and to cultivate the spiritual strength necessary to endure hardship and threats, is essential.

Firstly, we should not fear circumstance, situations or people. We should fear God alone.

***"Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be your confidence ..."*** Proverbs 3:25-26

Those who have a rock solid faith in the sovereignty of God, who fear Almighty God, are freed from the fear of man.

***"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose ...if God is for us, who can be against us? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all Creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*** Romans 8:28-39

A personal relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and a vibrant devotional life, provide a strong foundation for adversity. The Lord Jesus spoke of two types of people. Those who build their houses upon the rock of God's Word and those who build their house on the sand of human effort. Both houses may look pretty much the same from the outside. They may be equally as comfortable, but when the rain falls, and the wind blows, the storm rages and the floods rise, the house that is built upon the sand will fall. Only those who build their lives upon the rock of God's Word will be able to endure such intense storms of life (Matthew 7:24-27).

So the question is, who or what do you fear? Do you fear the future? The political situation? People? Jesus said that we should not fear man who can only kill the body and after that, they

can do nothing else. Jesus said that He would tell us whom we should fear. We must fear God, alone. God has the power to not only kill the body, but to throw body and soul into hell, forever. Yes, I tell you, fear God (Luke 12:4-5).

Mental, emotional and spiritual preparedness is foundational. Physical fitness is also important.

"Physical training is of some value ..." 1 Timothy 4:8

We need to carefully build up and consistently maintain our physical strength and stamina by healthy eating habits and regular exercise (1 Corinthians 9:24-27). Regular walking, running, hiking, swimming and other exercises will help keep us fit.

Then, we need to make practical physical preparations for emergency and crisis situations. The four G's of survival are: Groceries, Guns, Gold & God.

### **Groceries**

Famine has often been used by God as a form of judgement - through drought, wars, riots and the breakdown of the transportation infrastructure. Just as Joseph had stored up enough food to feed all of Egypt and much of the surrounding territories during the seven years of famine, so too we should use times of plenty to make provision for the trying times that may lie ahead.

Zimbabwe used to export food, yet now, its once highly advanced agricultural economy has been destroyed by racism, socialism and political opportunism. However, some Zimbabweans have fared better than others. They are the ones who had made provision years ago. When shops are closed or empty, or when the water and electricity supply are cut off, how self-sufficient would you be?

Some families in Zimbabwe sunk boreholes, rigged up their gutters to drain rainwater from their roof into large water containers by the side of the house, and obtained water purification systems. Many folks stockpiled months of high-protein food, canned meat, beans, vegetables, soups, condensed milk, cooking oil, vitamin tablets, medical supplies, candles and matches, torches and batteries, soaps and disinfectants. Today there are those who made provision and

those who have to spend days standing in queues outside empty shops.

### Gold

In the Bible we find many references to gold and silver. Gold has always been found to be an excellent medium of exchange. Gold is durable, portable, consistent and it has intrinsic value. Gold is real money - much more stable and value than paper currency. Someone we know in Zambia bought a car in 1964 for 140 Kwacha. At Independence, 1 Kwacha equalled £1. Today Kwacha 8000 = £1. Far from buying a car, a bottle of Coca-Cola now costs ten times what a car cost 40 years ago.

When I was being brought up in Rhodesia, the Rhodesian Dollar was three times stronger than the American Dollar. Today people will offer you Zimbabwe \$2000 for US\$ 1. One person we know in Zimbabwe sold his house in 1980 and put the money in the bank. Even with high interest rates and not touching the money thorough these last two decades, but when he finally withdrew his investment, it could not even pay for one week's groceries!

In a world awash in debt and inflation, we need to be sure that our investments offer real long-term value.

### Guns

When Lot's family were captured by an invading army, his Uncle Abraham mobilised his armed and trained servants to rescue them (Genesis 14:14-16). The armed servants of Abraham and Isaac managed to restrain the murderous intentions of the Philistines (Genesis 26:15-22). The armed servants of Jacob enabled his household to escape the exploitation of Laban (Genesis 31:17-24).

Armed defence played an important role in the early expansion of the church. Not even the Roman Peace (Pax Romana) was effective enough to protect travellers from murderous thieves. Jesus related the story of the brutal robbery of a traveller whose battered and bleeding body stirred the compassion of the Good Samaritan. And at the Last Supper, the Lord ordered His followers: "If you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one." Luke 22:36

The Apostle Paul taught: ***"If anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."***

1 Timothy 5:8

The founding father of the United States, George Washington, declared: "Firearms stand next in importance to the Constitution itself. They are the American peoples liberty teeth and key stone under Independence. To secure peace, security and happiness, the rifle and the pistol are equally indispensable. The very atmosphere of firearms everywhere restrains evil interference - they deserve a place of honour with all that is good."

In any time of violence, crime and instability, it makes sense to obtain firearms for personal and home defence. Training in the safe and efficient use of a firearm is essential. When handled correctly and responsibly, firearms save lives and prevent crime.

### God

However, our trust must never be in our own strength, stores or strategies - our faith must be in our Sovereign God alone. The Word of God must be our constant source of inspiration, guidance and strength. God alone is all-knowing, everywhere present and all-powerful.

When David walked into the valley to confront the giant Goliath, he declared: **"You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the Name of the Lord Almighty."**

1 Samuel 17:45

Although David was an extra-ordinary fighter who had successfully defended his sheep from both the bear and the lion, he did not trust in his own abilities. Although he took the weapon he was most familiar with, the sling, he placed all his faith in the Lord alone.

The great Russian writer, Alexander Solzhenitzen, survived many years in Stalin's Siberian concentration camps. He described the importance of spiritual strength in this way: *"The strength or weaknesses of a society depends more on the level of its spiritual life than on its level of industrialisation. Neither a market economy nor even general abundance constitutes the crowning achievement of human life. If a nation's spiritual energy has been exhausted, it will not be saved from collapse by the most perfect government structure or by any industrial development. A tree with a rotten core cannot stand."*

There is nothing more important than our personal relationship to God. If we are to survive the storms and floods of life, then our lives need to be firmly rooted in obedience to the Word of God.

***"Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: as fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in the snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them."*** Ecclesiastes 9:12

### How prepared are you?

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