

Finding Comfort Within An Economic Crisis

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©2004

Introduction: Over the past year I have read in multiple business and finance magazines and newspaper articles, of at least 12 major threats to the USA which could cause a future economic crisis:

1. another probable terrorist attack;
2. the growing violence of Muslim clerics;
3. the increasing hatred of Israel and the desire to eliminate her;
4. the cycles of the sun which have been causing shifts in weather patterns and the trend of more violent hurricanes to the coasts of the USA;
5. a major shift in the USA's work force;
6. the possible failure or collapse of the US dollar;
7. another epidemic or plague killing millions of people world-wide;
8. the non-USA investors moving their money from investments in the USA to Europe,
9. China's failure to correct their currency in relationship to the USA's currency,
10. China's growing demand for raw materials and oil;
11. China building its military forces faster than US intelligence and military analysts expect, prompting fears that Beijing will attack Taiwan prompting US involvement; and
12. Iran and North Korea's threat of nuclear weapons.

God's Word tells us many things about economies.

1. We know that prosperity and famine come in cycles, (Gen. 41:25-50).
2. We know that "money can fail," (Gen. 47:15).
3. We know the Lord can give and the Lord can take away, (Job 1:21-21), because God owns everything, (Hag. 2:8; Ps. 50:10-11; 24:1; 100:3).
4. We know that if government officials do not practice righteousness, they can "decrease the prosperity" of a nation, (Dan. 4:27).
5. We know that trials, in various forms, will come our way which could include "economic stress," (1 Pt. 4:12).
6. We also know that the Devil seeks to devour Christians, which could include "financial devastation," (1 Pt. 5:8).

Based on the above factors, we should expect an upcoming economic upset in the near future. What if you experienced a financial trial? How would you handle one or more of the following situations?

1. an unexpected health problem
2. decreased health insurance coverage
3. increase of costs of health insurance
4. increase of prescription costs
5. an unexpected death of a loved one
6. a severe accident
7. civil unrest that affects your community
8. a cut in wages
9. unexpected job loss
10. unexpected lay off

11. a cut in employee benefits
12. a war
13. a reversal of business cycles
14. a natural disaster
15. an unexpected plague
16. a health disaster
17. a life threatening emergency
18. an unexpected law suit
19. unexpected maintenance on house
20. unexpected appliance failure
21. costly vandalism
22. costly theft
23. large insurance deductible
24. a product obsolescence
25. imposing legislation
26. investment reversals
27. gasoline price increase
28. an unexpected transportation problem
29. a car accident
30. utility price increase
31. stock market drops
32. a mortgage rate increase
33. property tax increase
34. a rent increase
35. inflation increases
36. a terrorist strike
37. failure of the banking system
38. collapse of our government
39. commodity price increases
40. EU's monetary system replaces US currency

When one of the above happens to you, what will you do? How will you handle the situation? What principles from God's Word would guide you through it?

With the USA living on a shaky economic footing and several critical impending world events, you must be prepared for an economic crisis on the horizon. I would like to share with you several principles from God's Word that will help you within an economic crisis or struggle.

1. DON'T BE SURPRISED.

There are economic cycles and set backs which will affect all of us at one time or another, (Joseph's financial insights, Gen. 41:25-36). Economic trials will come our way in some form or another. The apostle Peter states we should not think it "strange" when trials come our way, (1 Pet. 4:12).

2. REVIEW YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE.

Many times God uses trials to either bring about a conversion or a change in direction. Review your relationship to God and the spiritual condition of your heart. You may need Jesus as your personal Savior. You may need to make some major spiritual adjustments.

3. TALK TO THE LORD ABOUT IT.

The Christian should pray about the things in his or her life including personal economic trials, (Phil. 4:6; Joel 1:24). The apostle Paul writes, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made to the Lord, (Phil. 4:6). God knows all about you, (Mat. 6:31).

4. REST IN THE FACT THAT GOD DOES KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR SITUATION.

God knows all about your situation, including your financial needs. David wrote, "You know my sitting down and my rising up; you understand my thoughts afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways," (Ps. 139:2-3).

5. BELIEVE THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL.

In the Old Testament, a man named Job suffered great trials which included economic setbacks. Within all of his economic trials, he said this, "The Lord gave, and the Lord taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," (Job 1:21). He knew God was still in control.

6. UNDERSTAND THAT GOD'S PLAN MAY BE BIGGER THAN YOUR SITUATION.

Financial trials happened to the nation of Israel. This happened because of national sin. God brought the Assyrians and Babylonians to judge the nation of Israel. However, there were several individuals within the nation, such as Daniel, that had not sinned and didn't deserve the judgment of financial ruin. These individuals, including Daniel, still experienced the judgment of God even though the judgment was not a result of something they did personally, (Dan. 1-2).

7. REALIZE GOD OWNS EVERYTHING.

God owns everything including our possessions and finances, (Hag. 2:8; Ps. 50:10-11; 24:1; 100:3). Since God does own everything, if He wants to take back something He entrusted us with, or move it to someone else, He is free to do it.

8. LIVE WITHIN THE STANDARD OF CONTENTMENT.

Understand you do not need huge amounts of money or possessions. Sometimes we think we need so many things, yet we do not. In the Old Testament, Agur writes, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with the food allotted to me; lest I be full and deny you, and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God," (Prov. 30:8-9). The apostle Paul writes, "Having food and clothing let us be content," (1 Tim. 6:8).

9. WORK ON MAINTAINING YOUR TESTIMONY.

Job lost all of his wealth and all of the position in life he worked for over the years. Yet he maintained his testimony and trust of the Lord through it all. It was stated that "In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong," (Job. 1:22). The apostle Paul states that godliness is not the same as self-sufficiency based on what one has accumulated in wealth and he writes, "...Godliness with contentment is great gain," (1 Tim. 6:6).

10. AVOID LIVING LIFE FROM A "PLEASURE-BASED" WORLD VIEW.

There is more to life than fun and pleasure. The apostle Luke records Jesus words, "...Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses," (Luke 12:15). The apostle Paul states, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows," (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

11. BE CAREFUL NOT TO PRAY INCORRECTLY.

We must be careful that in our prayer life we do not ask for things incorrectly, especially in financial trials. James warns, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss (wrong motives)... (James 4:3). Many will pray for God to remove the crisis or set back, rather than learn what God may be doing through it.

12. LEARN TO LET GO OF "THINGS" THAT DO NOT MATTER.

Our Lord stated, "Life does not consist in the abundance of things," (Lk. 12:15). The apostle Paul writes, "For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out," (1 Tim. 6:7).

13. TRUST GOD FOR HIS SUPPLY.

To trust or depend on things other than the Lord for security and pleasure is "idolatry." All things will work out to God's glory, not always our own glory, (Rom. 8:28). We must not trust in "riches," (1 Tim. 6:17).

14. LOOK TO HELP OTHERS.

God will take care of our needs if we are helping other Christians in theirs, (Phil 4:19).

15. LOOK FOR GOD'S WAY OF HELP.

God always has a way to bear up under severe testings, (1 Cor. 10:13).

Conclusion: The prophet Joel's (Joel 1:) response to economic crisis was threefold: (1.) he fasted, (2.) he gathered together with God's people, and (3.) he cried unto the Lord in prayer.

We must remember as Christians: (1.) God never promised a trial free life prior to heaven; and (2.) God never promised that "prosperity" always refers to "physical riches."