

Ten Things To Remember in an Economic Downturn

2009 has been a challenging year financially, thus far, for many people around the globe. In the midst of such struggles, it is good to be reminded of some truths about money from God's word.

1. God creates wealth, not the Federal Reserve.

Moses reminded Israel in Deuteronomy 8:18 – “And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.” A nation who has forgotten God can print money at a mind-numbing rate and still never truly prosper.

2. Just one soul exceeds the value of everything else.

Jesus asked rhetorically in Mathew 16:26 – “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” One eternal spirit is worth more than any amount of money one can even imagine (which is a whole lot more than you may have lost in your retirement account recently).

3. Debt is slavery.

Proverbs 22:7 – “The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.” We may not consider it to be slavery in the formal sense of the term, but the servitude is real enough. Do everything within your power to live debt-free. Don't allow the bank or credit card companies to become your master!

4. Prosperity is not the Christian's top priority.

Our Lord instructed His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:33 – “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” It is good to labor and earn money to provide for our families. But, may we never forget that prosperity is not our chief aim.

5. A good life is not founded on an abundance of possessions.

Jesus warned in Luke 12:15 – “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.” Possessions may entertain and excite (for a while), but a good life (as defined by God) is not based upon such (cf. Eccl. 12:13).

6. There is more value in giving than in receiving.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus – “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). This is true even for those who are struggling economically. God will always bless a cheerful giver!

7. Subsidizing the idle is wrong.

Whether it is called “welfare” or is known by some other name, to provide for one who is capable of providing for himself is wrong. Paul plainly preached in 2 Thess. 3:10 – “If

anyone will not work, neither shall he eat." It is not compassionate to feed the lazy. This is one case in which we should not give.

8. Look to God for your substance, not the government.

Abraham did not want any earthly king to make him rich. Genesis 14:22-24 records – “But Abram said to the King of Sodom, ‘I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, “I have made Abraham rich” – except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.”

9. Greed is not good; in fact, it is idolatry.

Colossians 3:5 – “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” When a person, whether rich or poor, loves money, he is an idolater.

10. Sin is our greatest national problem by far.

Proverbs 14:34 – “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” This was true in Solomon’s day, and it is still true today. An economic recession (or even a depression) is never the greatest problem of a country. America, for example, is more afflicted today by a lack of righteousness in the lives of its citizens than it is financial difficulties.

Donald