

Six Things to Keep in Mind as You Weather the Storm

(Addendum No. 1 to a prophetic word titled "The Coming Perfect Storm" received by John Paul Jackson in August 2008)

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You don't have to look very far before you see the beginning swells of the coming perfect storm. It seems this theme has caught the attention of many pundits and prophets. Almost every day, there are multiple signs of the perfect storm's approach, and notice I said "approach"—meaning, it isn't here yet. These are merely the early winds of the storm. The scent of rain is in the air. Nearly everywhere we turn, we become more aware that without God's intervention, the world will not be the same 10 years from now. And we are correct in thinking that.

Here are five things to keep in mind as you weather this storm with the grace and, prayerfully, the glory of God resting on you.

1. Don't overreact to media hype and spin. They learned a long time ago that sensationalism sells, and they will play it for all it's worth. In the midst of the media flurry ... God [will reveal] His secrets to His servants—so look for one. God is not caught by surprise. In His omniscience, He has been preparing you for this very hour. You will not fail. Remember what God told Jeremiah: "Thus says the Lord: 'Do not learn the way of the Gentiles [those who do not know Me]; do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the Gentiles [those who do not know Me] are dismayed at them'" (Jer. 10:2, NKJV).

When there is panic, we tend to make decisions we later regret. Don't assume the worst, and don't be afraid. Should you plan? Yes. Is this serious? Yes. But it's not time to

panic.

2. Simplify and streamline your life. What things do you do that are pure convenience? Could you cut back on any luxuries? Keep your current car? Take in a roommate? How about reducing your latte count at the coffee shop? Selectively start looking to cut back in areas that don't really reflect your life's mission or calling, or aren't making a positive difference in others' lives.

This will be an opportune time to follow in the disciples' footsteps: "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart" (Acts 2:46).

3. Reconnect with friends and family. God is your Source—not your bank account, not your 401(k), not your gold, not your stock portfolio. Your friendships and other relationships are what feed your emotional health, and they stabilize you; you need them. Research shows that friendships play a dramatic role in getting people through difficult times. So reconnect today.

Remember that "a man who has friends must himself be friendly, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24).

4. Rethink your focus. You have a choice: You can live your life by *principles* or by *pressures*. Those who "fail" in life usually keep their eyes fixed on their current problems and lose sight of their life principles. As things change, it is vital to remind yourself of the principles you live your life by. Never lose sight of them during challenging times. They will help keep you focused. The difficulties we're facing now maybe God's wake-up call to remind you of your original vision and purpose and why He made you the way He made you.

Take this time to rethink and re-evaluate. "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). If you have no vision, your only other option is to go backward or decay.

5. Be an influence. Are you an influence in your culture? For many, this will be a time of innovation and invention. For others, it will be a time of study and preparation for the promotion that will come when this season eventually passes—which it will. Don't chase trends, but study them to see where the culture is going. You should always be looking for original and innovative ways to engage the needs of others. Needs are going to abound, so ask God for a solution to those needs, and you'll succeed when your secular peers are failing.

6. Take more time to listen. In the coming months and perhaps years there will be an entirely new set of needs that the people and this nation will have. The Lord wants to give innovative ideas and inventions to those who are close to Him. Set aside time to listen to Him. Prayer is great, but if all we do is make our needs known to God, it will be very difficult to listen. There is a lot we do not know about this coming time frame. God just might have something He would like to say to you.