

# Surviving A Recession

Proverbs 2:1-5 NIV

## Preface

The government recently acknowledged that the US is in a recession and we have been in one since last December. This was not news to anyone. With housing sales and construction plummeting over the last year and fuel all but reaching \$5.00 per gallon, who wouldn't recognize we are in a recession.

So how should Christians face the challenges of a recession? I have long believed that God's Word holds the answers for believers on how to overcome life's obstacles.

The Bible provides insights and truths that require faith but when observed, we discover peace and wisdom even in the most difficult of times.

## Scripture Proverbs 2:1-5

*My son, if you accept my words  
and store up my commands within you,  
<sup>2</sup> turning your ear to wisdom  
and applying your heart to understanding,  
<sup>3</sup> and if you call out for insight  
and cry aloud for understanding,  
<sup>4</sup> and if you look for it as for silver  
and search for it as for hidden treasure,  
<sup>5</sup> then you will understand the fear of the LORD  
and find the knowledge of God. Proverbs 2:1-5*

## Introduction

Fortunately for God's children our hope and joy is not built on the foundation of money. God's word instructs us in Hebrews 13:5; *"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

As Christians we believe in hard work and enjoying the fruits of our labor. However, our joy does not rest in our property and possessions. Instead the riches of our soul are stored up in the

promises of God. What greater promise than to know the God of the universe will never leave us and will never forsake us.

Some Christians make their financial decisions motivated by fear of the future. Still others base their decisions on complete optimism without any thought to what the future holds.

Neither approach is biblical. God would have us trust in Him for our provisions and recognize that He is able. At the same time, God would have us live, spend and plan based on the principals taught in His word.

In other words, we should not rely on our gut feelings or instinct but rather on God's word. For some this is simply impossible. Some people are just too smart and too self confident to ever trust their future to God's Word.

But for true believers who place their trust in God's word and God's provisions, a recession is not something that threatens our joy and happiness.

I am no economist and have no idea how to fix our economy. However, I would like to address a few things I believe God's Word teaches us that are keys to surviving a recession.

## 1. Spend Conservatively

I believe a practical and biblical approach to surviving a recession begins with spending our money conservatively and wisely.

Proverbs 17:16 says, *"<sup>16</sup> Of what use is money in the hand of a fool, since he has no desire to get wisdom?"*

In other words we must not be foolish in our spending. A recession is a great opportunity for making wise investments. The price of many goods and services are down.

There are many "good deals" out there. However, we must be wise in our spending and spend our money very conservatively.

Christians should be cautious not to incur debt during a recession with the exception of wise investments in things that will help produce income.

A recession is a time to use wisdom and discipline. Listen to the experience of your parents and the teaching of God's Word. Spend your money conservatively.

## 2. Work Liberally

I always cringe when I hear someone say something like, “I am just not going to work for that.” Usually those words are coming from someone who is unemployed and looking for that dream job and refuses to take anything less. They will never work their way up the ladder because the lower rung is beneath them and the higher rungs are out of reach.

Business people often take similar attitudes of pride. A few months ago I was speaking with a roofer who said he only likes the big jobs and refuses to cut his rate to get a job. The other day that same roofer was in my office looking for any kind of work he can get.

Work liberally. Take whatever work you can get and work hard at it. Work with pride and give it your absolute very best.

<sup>23</sup> *All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty. Proverbs 14:23 NIV*

<sup>19</sup> *He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty. Prov. 28:19 NIV*

We live in a day when old fashion customer service is unheard of. If you make a purchase you are lucky to get a “have a nice day” remark as you leave. No one seems to know how to say “thank you” any more.

Illus: At Easy-Haul, our people are trained to always be friendly and thank customers for their business. When a customer is finished with a container we always thank them for using us and ask them to call us the next time they need a container. We even follow-up with a post card thanking them one more time.

A recession is no time to be cocky about what work you will do. Take whatever work you can get, give it your absolute best and be thankful for it. Honor God with the work you do.

## 3. Count Blessings

Recession or no recession, a Christian should always have a grateful heart for the blessing from God. We should view all that we have as a direct blessing from our Heavenly Father.

During difficult times it is especially important for use to count our blessings rather than focusing on our problems.

Illus: Who would you rather do something for, someone who is ungrateful or someone who is extremely grateful for what you do?

The Bible teaches that God is the same way. He blesses those who are grateful and loves rewarding them by answering their prayers.

Count your blessings even in the difficulties of a recession.

As believers, we do not take inventory of our life based on worldly possessions. We are instructed to “not love the world or the things in the world” which is “passing away along with its desires” (1 John 2:15, 16).

We must count our blessings focusing on the things God gives us that have nothing to do with monetary value.

## 4. Give Generously

Often, when Christians are prompted by fear of their financial future, they cut back on their giving. Their tithes and offerings become a first step in their attempt at financial stability. Doing so is like cutting off your nose to spite your face.

Honoring God's mandate to tithe our income and keep our offering vows to God is the way to ensure that we will not become victims of financial downturns. When commitments are made they should be honored if we expect God to bless us.

Giving generously isn't limited to our giving to the church. In difficult financial times such as a recession, Christians should keep a steady eye out for opportunities to help others.

<sup>24</sup> *One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. <sup>25</sup> A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. Prov. 11:24-25*

A recession is a perfect time to discover opportunities to help others. When the recession is over will you be known for your greed or your generosity?

Illus: Imagine taken a small child to a movie and buying them popcorn and a drink. Suppose you ask for some of the popcorn the child tells you “No.” The child doesn't understand several things: 1) You have the power to take it from the child at will. 2) You are the one who provided the treat to begin with. 3) You have the resources to provide more popcorn than the child could eat. We must understand the same is true of God.

God will bless the generous not the greedy.

### **5. Pray Aggressively**

As you face the challenges of a recession, there is no better time to shore up your prayer life. This is a time to learn to prayer earnestly, openly and aggressively to our Heavenly Father.

The Bible teaches us that God wants to hear from our hearts. He knows our hearts and is eager to have us discover our true desires and lay them before His throne.

This is a time to be candid with God. Don't be afraid to ask God to help you find a job or to help you find ways to make more income. Just keep in mind that God is not going to bless or answer your prayers if you aren't going to be faithful to Him. Those of you who show up in church once every 4 to 8 weeks, don't waste your time asking God to bless you because you are not serious about committing to Him. All sorts of things take precedence over worshipping God.

God wants us pray aggressively but he also wants us to back up our prayers with solid devotion to Him.

We must decide if we truly believe God is able to supply our needs or if we are just saying we believe it.

### **Conclusion**

When we lived in Mississippi there was a man who used to do the oddest thing every year. Sometime in February when the grass was all brown and dormant, he would set his yard on fire. His entire yard would quickly burn and become completely covered in a black soot finish.

But then in the spring, his yard would always grow back into a nice luscious green lawn. The burning was temporary. It seemed to purge the weeds and insects and allowed the lawn to really grow when the sunshine returned.

If you place your faith in God and follow the principals of his Word, not only will you survive the recession, you will prosper and grow from the experience.