

CHAPTER 12

How to Face the Coming Crisis

In the last chapter we learned that nations are not immune to certain calamities such as war, severe shortages, energy crises, economic collapse and even government overthrow. Such things are certainly possible, especially if a nation continues to turn its back on God and ignore the warnings found in His Word. The nation Israel was told about all of the calamities that they would experience if they should forget God and disobey His Word (see Deuteronomy chapter 28 and all the curses).

If there really is a great calamity coming, how can I prepare for it? As the song writer put it, "How can I face the coming days, the future dark, unknown? All steep and stormy are life's ways, and I afraid, alone!" (compare Luke 21:26) As the world situation worsens, what should I do? How can I bravely and realistically face the problems of our day?

Unrealistic Solutions (Escapism)

One very popular method of facing a crisis is not to face it at all! Every effort is made to divert the mind in order to escape from reality and to avoid thinking about the serious problems which confront a person and his world. The object is to get the mind occupied with other things so that the person does not have to think about the terrible realities of our day. After all, who wants to think about such things as financial trouble, wars, violence, famine, starvation and eventually death?

Following is a list of some of the diversions and pastimes which offer temporary escape from life's realities. Many of these things are not wrong or sinful in themselves, but all of these things can be used to keep the mind from thinking about a very real world and very real problems.

1) **Drugs**

Drug abuse offers a very obvious escape from the world of reality. Certainly a drug journey is a trip taken to escape the world of reality. When the Lord Jesus was offered a drugged wine (wine mixed with bitter myrrh which would have a stupefying effect and which would dull the Saviour's senses), what did He do (Matthew 27:34; Mark 15:23)?

_____ The Saviour wanted a clear mind to face the horrible realities of the crucifixion. He did not choose to alleviate His sufferings for us.

2) **Drinking**

Have you ever seen a drunk person overly concerned about the stability of the United States dollar or the threat of international terrorism? It takes a sober mind to face the sobering realities of the world.

3) **Excessive Eating**

Overindulging in eating can be a way to escape the unpleasant realities of the world.

Many would rather think about food than about the problems of the world.

4) **Music**

The person with earphones who is occupied with his favorite music recordings is probably not worrying about the woes of the stock market!

5) **Sports**

In the middle of an exciting baseball, basketball or football game, who is thinking about the threats of terrorism?

6) **Outdoor Activities**

Many people have a desire to "get away from it all," and a hike in the woods or a day at the beach is just what they need to get their minds off the problems and pressures of life.

7) **Shopping**

The world of the shopping mall seems far removed from the real world that we hear about on the news, with its wars and potential crises. There is only one problem that the shopper cannot get away from--**inflation!**

8) **Sex**

A person obsessed with sex is not overly concerned about the energy crisis or the national debt! Lustful passions can occupy the mind for long periods of time.

9) **Reading**

The one wrapped up in a best selling novel is often lost in an imaginary world of mystery or romance. The issue of equal rights is not foremost on his mind!

10) **Entertainment**

Television, movies, the Internet, electronic games, etc. all offer an escape from the real world. Those shuddering before a horror film are certainly not thinking about the political and economic horrors facing our nation and world today. The world of the Internet can provide an easy escape from the realities and responsibilities of life.

Can you think of other diversions that people engage in to avoid thinking about the real world?

Please note: There is nothing wrong with healthy diversions and activities which may serve to rest the mind from the pressures and problems of life. Everyone needs this. There is nothing wrong with healthy recreation which may involve music, entertainment, sports, reading, outdoor activities and searching the Internet. The danger comes when people repeatedly refuse to face reality in the right way and they use such diversions as an escape from their responsibilities before God and man in this world. Did Jesus teach that "escapism" was the real answer for the believer (John 17:15)? _____

Realistic But Wrong Solutions

There are others who realistically face the coming crisis--they see the problems and they recognize how serious these problems really are. They see the storm coming and they want to do something about it. They do not want to escape into an imaginary dream world. They want to **survive**. They want to conquer the crisis. Here are two ways that have been suggested for *survival*:

1) The Squirrel Method



Squirrels gather and store up nuts and other provisions for the difficult days ahead. In much the same way, there are some people who store up water, canned goods and other necessary items so that they will survive when the disaster strikes. Some people carry this to an extreme and have large storage rooms in their houses that are filled with cans and provisions. They have a large supply of emergency items so that when the crisis comes they are ready for it and able to survive for a long time.

Suppose a devastating crisis should come and, after a week or so, only one home in the neighborhood has food and water. The other homes are lacking these necessary supplies. When the neighbors learn about the one home that has rooms filled with food and water, they would hope that this family would be willing to share! Hopefully they would not resort to violence to get the food they so desperately need. It is a sad fact that when the city of Jerusalem was going through a time of a severe famine, some people actually ate their own children (2 Kings 6:28-29; compare also Leviticus 26:29 and Deuteronomy 28:53). How sin sick the human heart really is (Jer. 17:9).

Please note: It is not unreasonable to save and store certain items in the case of an emergency. Joseph in wisdom had the Egyptians store up grain to prepare for a severe famine that he knew was coming (Genesis chapter 41). It is good to be prepared for when stormy weather comes and electrical power may be lost. When the winter comes, squirrels are ready and prepared. It is not unwise to plan ahead, but all the while trusting God who knows all about the uncertain future. The believer must never forget that God is the One who can supply all our needs according to His rich resources (Philippians 4:19). May we always be looking to Him and trust Him to meet our daily needs. God is faithful!

2) The Bobcat Method



Bobcats (also called Wildcats) inhabit the United States, but they are rarely seen. They shy away from population centers and from people and problems. They prefer to live alone, undisturbed by modern day society. They love to live in the wilderness!

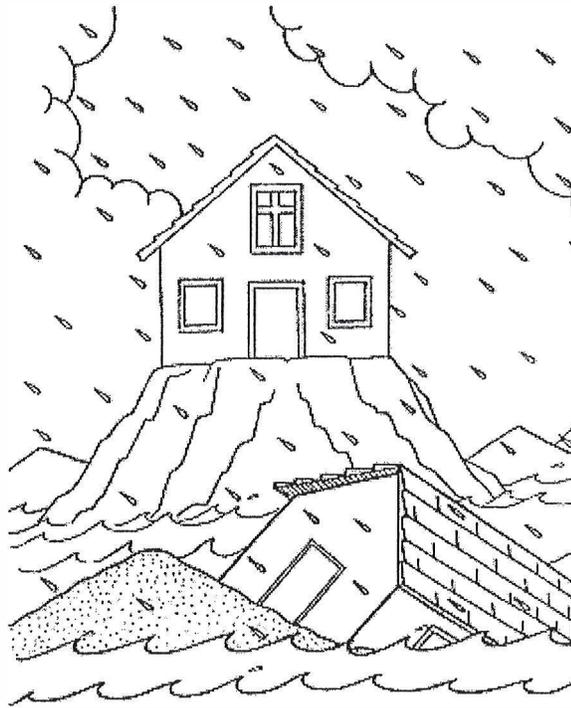
Similarly there are some people who have headed for the wilderness, seeking to survive alone, without any help from modern society. Instead of depending on trucks or supermarkets, they depend on their own farming and hunting. For transportation, they merely walk or go on horseback as did the early pioneers. For energy they burn wood. Their desire is to return to the "simple life" and to become self-sufficient. They want to be able to live and function without being dependent upon outside help. They want to be isolated and completely independent from society and its many problems.

Note: There are certainly some very positive aspects of this lifestyle. There is nothing wrong with living in the wilderness and becoming as self-sufficient as possible. There is nothing wrong with farming and utilizing natural resources to one's advantage. As we think about living away from the hustle and bustle of normal society and being isolated in the wilderness, here are some questions to consider:

1. Were the early pioneers free from problems?
2. Are there calamities and disasters that can take place in the wilderness?
3. Are there benefits and blessings which modern society has to offer? (hospitals, electricity, modern plumbing, various modern means of transportation, etc.)
4. Can a person ever get away from his greatest problem (Jeremiah 17:9 and Mark 7:21-23)?
5. Does God want believers to go where people are and offer them a message of hope (Mark 16:15)? God's witnesses (Acts 1:8) must not isolate themselves from those who need to hear about God's great Saviour!

God's Realistic and Right Solution

Surviving the Flood (Matthew 7:24-27)



Which man survived the great flood (storm)? _____ What was the difference between the wise man and the foolish man? According to this passage, is it necessary for the flood (storm) to come? _____ Is it necessary to be destroyed in the flood? _____ Is it possible to survive? _____

Surviving The Drought (Matthew 6:19-34)



The God who takes care of the sparrow, how much more will He take care of you!

What are some of the problems which are connected with hoarding (verse 19)? Does God's provision and supply ever run dry (compare Philippians 4:19)? _____ Can God take care of the physical and material needs of His children? _____ What is the greatest "shortage" problem man faces (verse 30)? He lacks F _____

What is the one thing the Lord tells believers to do in these verses (circle the correct answer):

1. Stock up on food and needed items.
2. Store up gold and silver.
3. Worry about the future.
4. Isolate yourself from society.
5. Try not to think about the serious problems of our day.
6. Give God first place in your life. What verse teaches this? _____

In the next and final chapter, we will study how the believer can conquer any crisis in God's way. To do this you must not only face the reality of the crisis, but also you must face the reality of the God who is greater than any crisis you will ever face!

God is Greater Than Any Problem I Have

"He (God) appointeth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names. great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:4-5).

He is an awesome God who finds His galaxies a very small expression of His great Person. God is beyond and bigger than His finite universe. Yet **God can hear** your cry, your whisper, your silent thought. **God can see** so small a tear: **God can tackle** so big a problem. "Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy" (Psalm 33:18).

God is here right now to reach each and every believing heart: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "There is no other God apart from Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:21-22).

God is very near. He is only a step away. Believe and receive Christ Jesus with all your heart today, without delay. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1:12). "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:12-13).

The God who was able to solve your biggest problem, your sin problem, is more than able to handle any other challenges obstacles life has to offer. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart" (Proverbs 3:5).