

A Biblical Pursuit of the Simplified Life

A Life of Simplicity Calls for Preparedness

Opening thoughts

- Lessons from Katrina
 - My talk this week with Phil Jeansonne.
 - Review of one year of work there.
 - What I learned about preparedness. (A culture of preparedness will save lives.)
- The World is in a rapid state of change and not necessarily for the better.
 - Global warming (Whatever is causing it) and its ramifications.
 - Natural disaster: (In Idaho last week)
 - Terrorist attack
 - Pandemic - Avian Bird flu
 - Energy crisis or economic crash
 - War and global power shifts
- There is a Biblical balance between faith and preparedness

Proverbs 3

21My child, don't lose sight of good planning and insight. Hang on to them, 22for they fill you with life and bring you honor and respect. 23They keep you safe on your way and keep your feet from stumbling. 24You can lie down without fear and enjoy pleasant dreams. 25You need not be afraid of disaster or the destruction that comes upon the wicked, 26for the LORD is your security. He will keep your foot from being caught in a trap.

John 16:33

"In this world you will have tribulation...." 33I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

- Biblical examples
 - Noah
 - Hezekiah
 - Joseph
- My fear of sounding too radical or fanatical. I am the eternal Boy Scout.
- What can it hurt to prepare a bit?

- Things we have done as a church staff
 - CERT – (Community Emergency Response Training)
 - Red Cross partnership
 - Joseph fund.
 - U of I extension class on the Avian Flu
 - Barnabas Center preparation
- Three responses to disaster
 - Denial
 - Despair
 - Awareness and response. (Prepare to be in a position that will benefit others.)
Greatest Biblical example other than Noah is Joseph.

Joseph – The master Simplifier [7 Characteristics]

1. He was no stranger to adversity – He knew that life has its bumps and learned to make the best of bad situations.
 - Betrayed by his jealous brothers & sold into slavery.
 - Years in prison on false accusations.
2. He was an administrator, organizer. (A spiritual gift – “The Lord was with him.”)
 - In the Potiphar’s house.
 - In prison with the chief jailor.
 - In the Pharaohs service

Genesis 39

1Now when Joseph arrived in Egypt with the Ishmaelite traders, he was purchased by Potiphar, a member of the personal staff of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Potiphar was the captain of the palace guard. 2The LORD was with Joseph and blessed him greatly as he served in the home of his Egyptian master. 3Potiphar noticed this and realized that the LORD was with Joseph, giving him success in everything he did. 4So Joseph naturally became quite a favorite with him. Potiphar soon put Joseph in charge of his entire household and entrusted him with all his business dealings. 5From the day Joseph was put in charge, the LORD began to bless Potiphar for Joseph's sake. All his household affairs began to run smoothly, and his crops and livestock flourished. 6So Potiphar gave Joseph complete administrative responsibility over everything he owned. With Joseph there, he didn't have a worry in the world, except to decide what he wanted to eat!

3. His gift of simplicity brought blessing to others.
 - The Potiphar
 - Chief Jailor
 - Pharaoh

Genesis 39

19After hearing his wife's story, Potiphar was furious! 20He took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king's prisoners were held. 21But the LORD was with Joseph there, too, and he

granted Joseph favor with the chief jailer. 22Before long, the jailer put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. 23The chief jailer had no more worries after that, because Joseph took care of everything. The LORD was with him, making everything run smoothly and successfully.

4. He was a person of revelation and awareness of the potential of disaster.
 - o The cup-bearer & chief baker
 - o Pharaoh
 - o Jesus told us to be aware of what was coming.

Luke 21

34"Watch out! Don't let me find you living in careless ease and drunkenness, and filled with the worries of this life. Don't let that day catch you unaware, 35as in a trap. For that day will come upon everyone living on the earth. 36Keep a constant watch. And pray that, if possible, you may escape these horrors and stand before the Son of Man."

Genesis 41 (The Cup-bearer tells the Pharaoh about Joseph's ability to interpret dreams)

11One night the chief baker and I each had a dream, and each dream had a meaning. 12We told the dreams to a young Hebrew man who was a servant of the captain of the guard. He told us what each of our dreams meant, 13and everything happened just as he said it would. I was restored to my position as cup-bearer, and the chief baker was executed and impaled on a pole." 14Pharaoh sent for Joseph at once, and he was brought hastily from the dungeon. After a quick shave and change of clothes, he went in and stood in Pharaoh's presence. 15"I had a dream last night," Pharaoh told him, "and none of these men can tell me what it means. But I have heard that you can interpret dreams, and that is why I have called for you." 16"It is beyond my power to do this," Joseph replied. "But God will tell you what it means and will set you at ease." 17So Pharaoh told him the dream. "I was standing on the bank of the Nile River," he said. 18"Suddenly, seven fat, healthy-looking cows came up out of the river and began grazing along its bank. 19But then seven other cows came up from the river. They were very thin and gaunt--in fact, I've never seen such ugly animals in all the land of Egypt. 20These thin, ugly cows ate up the seven fat ones that had come out of the river first, 21but afterward they were still as ugly and gaunt as before! Then I woke up. 22"A little later I had another dream. This time there were seven heads of grain on one stalk, and all seven heads were plump and full. 23Then out of the same stalk came seven withered heads, shriveled by the east wind. 24And the withered heads swallowed up the plump ones! I told these dreams to my magicians, but not one of them could tell me what they mean."

25"Both dreams mean the same thing," Joseph told Pharaoh. "God was telling you what he is about to do. 26The seven fat cows and the seven plump heads of grain both represent seven years of prosperity. 27The seven thin, ugly cows and the seven withered heads of grain represent seven years of famine. 28This will happen just as I have described it, for God has shown you what he is about to do. 29The next seven years will be a period of great prosperity throughout the land of Egypt. 30But afterward there will be seven years of famine so great that all the prosperity will be forgotten and wiped out. Famine will destroy the land. 31This famine will be so terrible that even the memory of the good years will be erased. 32As for having the dream twice, it means that the matter has been

decreed by God and that he will make these events happen soon. 33"My suggestion is that you find the wisest man in Egypt and put him in charge of a nationwide program. 34Let Pharaoh appoint officials over the land, and let them collect one-fifth of all the crops during the seven good years. 35Have them gather all the food and grain of these good years into the royal storehouses, and store it away so there will be food in the cities. 36That way there will be enough to eat when the seven years of famine come. Otherwise disaster will surely strike the land, and all the people will die." 37Joseph's suggestions were well received by Pharaoh and his advisers. 38As they discussed who should be appointed for the job, Pharaoh said, "Who could do it better than Joseph? For he is a man who is obviously filled with the spirit of God." 39Turning to Joseph, Pharaoh said, "Since God has revealed the meaning of the dreams to you, you are the wisest man in the land! 40I hereby appoint you to direct this project. You will manage my household and organize all my people. Only I will have a rank higher than yours."

5. He understood timing and patience.
 - Sometimes things didn't happen right away
 - 2 years longer in prison (Gen. 41:1)
6. He prepared in times of plenty for times of great need.
 - He took advantage of times of plenty and used them to prepare for times of need.

Genesis 41

47And sure enough, for the next seven years there were bumper crops everywhere. 48During those years, Joseph took a portion of all the crops grown in Egypt and stored them for the government in nearby cities. 49After seven years, the granaries were filled to overflowing. There was so much grain, like sand on the seashore, that the people could not keep track of the amount.

- Most people live day to day for food and week by week for pay checks.
 - Characteristic of most baby boomers - we have only lived in times of prosperity.
 - Challenge for action –
 - Disaster preparedness list.
 - Incorporate this value as a lifestyle in your 7 year plan for simplicity.
7. He used his preparedness for the blessing of others.
 - He not only saved Egypt, but Israel and his own family from disaster.

Genesis 41

53At last the seven years of plenty came to an end. 54Then the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had predicted. There were crop failures in all the surrounding countries, too, but in Egypt there was plenty of grain in the storehouses. 55Throughout the land of Egypt the people began to starve. They pleaded with Pharaoh for food, and he told them, "Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you." 56So with severe famine everywhere in the land, Joseph opened up the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians. 57And people from surrounding lands also came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph because the famine was severe throughout the world.

- Our plan for VCF Boise – Be ready to serve.
- Question – Who is in control of your lives – Who will you look to for help in a time of disaster? Those who looked towards insurance companies and government aid in New Orleans are hurting.