

If you are a responsible person, you probably have insurance for your car and home, as well as medical and life insurance. But these insurance policies are only protecting you from economic dangers. What about your safety and life? Is your family protected in this more important arena?

Are you adequately prepared for a disaster or emergency situation? You can be.

Whether your thoughts naturally gravitate toward the possibility of a major storm or earthquake, social upheaval or economic downturn, pandemic or apocalyptic event, preparation for an emergency situation is critically important for all of us.

Are you unprepared and destined to be a victim, or a victor and prepared to be part of the solution?

“A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences.”

Proverbs 22:3

As I’m writing this article, news reports continue to come out of the northeastern United States describing the aftermath of a freak storm. Now, more than a week after the storm hit, nearly a million people are still without power, many without running water, and roads are cut-off due to fallen trees. If you were living in one of these communities, would you be prepared?

Emergency preparations are at least as important as the protection offered by insurance policies. Given the option, what responsible person goes without insurance? After all, you never know when you will need it. But unlike insurance policies which protect us against economic disaster,

emergency preparedness may literally save your life, or the life of a loved one or neighbor.

For those who follow the teachings of the Bible, they know that God expects us to be prepared. We are to accept personal responsibility for ourselves, and care of our family. Plus, the Bible admonishes us to demonstrate Good Samaritan care for our neighbors and community, too.

Are you equipped to face disaster? Are you ready to help others in their time of emergency need?



We need to be prepared—not just to survive, but to thrive in ministry. When people are hurting we need to be there to help. If we are prepared and able to care for our own basic needs, only then can we focus on providing meaningful help to others. At times of natural disaster and other emergencies, it’s our duty to be ready to help. Are you ready?

For Christians, it’s important to recognize that Jesus, in His final instructions to His followers just before His arrest and crucifixion, told them to be prepared for extreme circumstances. As recorded in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus instructed them to make deliberate preparations, to expect danger, and to be ready to decisively confront it.

Luke 22:35-36

35 “Then Jesus asked them, ‘*When I sent you out to preach the Good News and you did not have money, a traveler’s bag, or extra clothing, did you need anything?*’

‘No,’ they replied.

36 ‘*But now*’ he said, ‘*take your money and a traveler’s [provisions] bag. And if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one!*’ ”

Holy Bible, NLT

As we consider implementing Jesus’ instructions on preparedness, we need to remember that it’s often not the incident itself that is the main problem. It’s the aftermath. This after-event period is our opportunity to prevent further death and injury, and a time when we can help alleviate pain and suffering.

When we are *unprepared* we can’t be much help to others because we are scrambling to meet our own needs. *If you care, you’ll prepare.* Will you heed Jesus directive? (It wasn’t a suggestion).

Most people agree that preparedness is an important subject, but unfortunately, serious preparations are often neglected until it’s too late. This is something we can change, and must change. In our 21st Century world we cannot afford this lack of preparation. To delay can be a deadly mistake.

Regrettably, our government agencies have bowed to ‘correctness’ and special interests. As a result, their publications and websites such as www.ready.gov are woefully inadequate. NGOs like the Red Cross are no better, so their campaigns on preparedness are too lightweight to be truly helpful.

On the other hand, those nonprofits who do offer substance generally fall into the ‘survivalist’ category, and their orientation is to help people develop remote micro farms and isolationist living. While helpful in their research, most of

these resources are overwhelming for the beginner who is just starting to get serious about following Jesus’ injunction on being prepared.

Since real-world practical resources for the ordinary person are in short supply, *36 READY* was formed. It’s a hub for family and church resources, and it is a crossroads where individuals can intersect with those who have expertise in a certain facet of preparedness.

A common problem we all share is a tendency to become well prepared in one facet of preparedness, while neglecting other important vantage points. For example, to stockpile a year’s supply of food but ignore self-defense readiness, translates into wholly inadequate preparation.

To help with this, *36 READY* is also a community where individuals with different focus and expertise come together. But unlike a forum, *36 READY* only posts information its reviewers deem reliable and helpful.

At *36 READY* will find information gleaned from knowledgeable individuals and organizations. This includes lists of what you need, consumer reports on products, recommended books, and especially important, overview summary articles by topic, making it much easier to learn and be balanced in your approach. The objective is to be completely prepared, and *36 READY* is a Christian nonprofit co-op that can help you do just that.

But becoming prepared isn’t a difficult assignment. It’s simply about individual and family preparations, acknowledging personal responsibility, and understanding that more government services aren’t the answer.

It’s our job to be prepared, not just so that we can survive a disaster or hard times, but so that we are equipped to thrive in ministry at times such as these. This is what Jesus expects of us. It’s not just about survival.

Working together and through our churches, we can increase readiness, and in the process aid others with their preparations, too. 36Ready.org is a network which was developed to help.

Operated as nonprofit, *36 Ready* is an online community of knowledgeable experts who want to help. The objective is to assist those who are looking for reliable recommendations, and to share information on trustworthy resources.

The *36Ready.org* website is updated weekly with articles covering a wide range of preparedness topics, product reviews and recommendations, links to other helpful websites, and a host of other preparedness resources.

Personally, after having personally experienced a number of disasters and emergency situations first hand, I understand how important it is to approach this subject from a practical real-world perspective.

But in addition to this, many people are sensing a new level of urgency in regard to this topic, and this response is affirmed by the government and NGO reports and briefings that I receive. World-wide and nationally, we are experiencing a growing number of serious emergency incidents, so this is a vitally important topic for today.

Those who read the newspaper or watch the news on television have come to this obvious conclusion. We need to do a better job with personal preparedness.

Those who downplay this urgency often cite their desire to avoid overreaction, and this is valid. But regrettably, in this effort to “calm” they are inadvertently compromising public readiness at a time when we can’t afford inaction. They are right that we shouldn’t live in fear, but we should be motivated to constructive action.

A proactive response needn’t be concerned with the inadequacies of government readiness pro-

grams. This isn’t helpful. It’s better to use our energy to get prepared, and to help other responsible people become ready, too.

We’re in this together. If your church isn’t interested in participating, find a few friends who are, and build a *36 READY* team.



Disasters and emergency situations often occur suddenly and spread without warning.

Though I am a retired police officer who worked in the Los Angeles area of California, I don’t mind quoting a friend of mine. He often quips, “When *seconds* count, the police are just *minutes* away.”

Unfortunately, in my experience with emergency situations, it’s not always just minutes. It might be much longer, especially during a major disaster or national emergency. You simply can’t depend on the government to come to your aid—at least not quickly. Personal responsibility and personal preparation is absolutely essential.

As a young kid, by misfortune I found myself in the midst of the Watts Riots of 1965. A peaceful summer ride on the back of my friend’s new motorcycle quickly turned into a frightening experience. After getting lost in the maze of LA, we found ourselves driving down an unfamiliar street which suddenly, and without warning, erupted into flaming chaos and gunfire.

Finding ourselves in the midst of anarchy, we jumped off the motorcycle and hid under a parked car. People were setting fire to occupied buildings, rioters' looted stores and homes, people were attacked, and gangbangers were shooting at passing motorists just for the fun of it. Police officers, and even the firefighters who responded, were often targets. In seconds and without warning, the city was embroiled in unexpected, violent chaos.

Without prior warning, our calm evening had erupted into life-threatening pandemonium. But we were fortunate. Thankfully, we were on the periphery of the uproar. Others were not so fortunate. Many spent the next five days in hiding, praying for help because the police were too busy to assist.

Though barely a teen at the time this happened, being confronted by an emergency situation was not a totally new experience for me. Just the year before, I was on the periphery of another disaster; the 9.2 magnitude Alaskan earthquake.

At school when the earthquake hit, I remember crawling under a table as the brick walls of the school started to crack and crumble. Looking out the windows I saw the street undulating like waves on the ocean.

After it was over, I remember the eerie sensation of being able to see my fellow students in the hallway below—through a crevice that had opened in the hallway floor. At the time, I didn't realize how dangerous the situation was, and how unstable the four storey building had become. A few more seconds of shaking would have collapsed the entire structure.

We were more than a thousand miles from the epicenter, but we were in the danger zone. In addition to the dangers of the quaking action, a tsunami wave was generated by this Alaskan earthquake that brought death to places as far

away as California. This taught me another important lesson.

Even if you are not in the center of the incident, you still might suffer serious consequences. Peripheral effects, panic, or ensuing lawlessness often amplify the disaster.

In a disaster situation or emergency incident, the focus of rescue and response efforts will be on Ground Zero. But oftentimes other people are also adversely affected; people who are far from the center of the problem. Sometimes severely injured or at risk; sometimes requiring rescue as well. So we need to think of ourselves as civilian first-responders.

It may not be necessary, or even appropriate for us to rush to Ground Zero to help. That will probably be well covered by trained emergency workers. But we may still need to be *responders*.



Our best opportunity to serve may be those who are nearby and need assistance. We may be their only source of help. As Christians, we need to think of ourselves as civilian first-responders. Jesus expects us to do what we can to help others, and we can do a lot more if we are prepared.

In a major incident, government and professional resources will be overwhelmed. This is where we step into the gap as the hands and feet of Jesus.

With both natural and manmade disasters, it's important to note that these events are usually a total surprise to those affected. Not only are most people physically unprepared, they are also disoriented by how quickly their life has changed, and stunned and out of action they often remain. Even if they don't need physical help, they may need emotional and spiritual counsel.

In my own experience with disasters, let me fast forward to many years later when I was participating in a SWAT training exercise at Fort Ord, California. While working on SWAT tactics, disaster struck. It was the San Francisco earthquake. And, my friends and I were close to the epicenter.

Surprisingly, we all survived the quake itself, which was actually a surprise given the circumstance. Yet, this was not a time to lick our wounds. We were immediately mobilized, and returned to the city. With my SWAT friends, I spent the following days patrolling the streets. What I observed was sobering.

It was like a scene from *Apocalypse Now*. Pockets of natural gas formed after gas lines were severed, and as the pockets grew they would eventually be hit with a spark, and ignite. Not just into fires, but explosions with huge fireballs. The quake was over, but the dangers multiplied.

Each SWAT operator was well equipped, and we were outfitted as a team, too. We each had our own gear, and mine included such things as water purification and weapons, and as a team we had radios and boxes of MREs (military, Meals Ready to Eat). Unfortunately, most ordinary people weren't similarly ready to face the days ahead.

Many homes and businesses were destroyed, and people were homeless. Some were injured, trapped, missing, and thousands were displaced and separated from loved ones. Many were without potable water or food. It was our job to patrol the streets to stop looting and violence.

We wanted to help, but we didn't have access to relief supplies. Everything was chaos.



If you prepare now, you can be ready. Once the event is upon you it's generally too late. Advance preparation isn't just a prudent idea, it's essential.

On Day-2, I remember seeing a woman exit a grocery store with two shopping carts full of toilet paper. I asked her, "What's with all the toilet paper?" She answered in a desperate tone of voice, "That's all they had left in the store. I was looking for food, water and batteries, but this is all they had left."

It didn't matter that she had credit cards and cash. There wasn't any food to purchase. Not in that store, nor in any store in the area. And this was only the first day after the disaster.

If you're not ready, to one degree or another you will probably become a casualty of the incident. You'll be helpless; a victim. Thankfully, this isn't necessary. You don't need to accept victim status.

Even if you can't afford survival gear and a big stockpile of water and food, you can make some preparations. Even modest preparations are significant. A few extra cans of food added to your shopping cart now, on every trip to the store, will quickly add up to a significant amount. Add to this a few other essentials and you will have made a great start toward being prepared. You are ready to face a minor disaster.

That's all it takes to get started. Yet, most people are totally unprepared. Once the incident occurs they scramble and quickly grab a few things, but at that point it's too late to really prepare. However, it doesn't need to be that way.

After hurricane Katrina, a million families were without electrical power for a month. It took more than two weeks to get food and water into some communities. Not only was there little aid, there was literally no police presence in many neighborhoods throughout the entire region.

What I have observed is that even "good" people often become desperate, and things can get really ugly once desperate people become thirsty or hungry. Most American's are not used to doing without, at least not for very long. Add fear and frustration to the mix and you have a recipe for unrestrained anger and violence.

When you experience a disaster or emergency situation, expect ugliness. Hopefully it won't happen, but prepare for it nevertheless. Unprepared people are not demonstrating their holiness and faith in God, they are weak and willful.

What did Jesus tell us to do in Luke 22:36? He gave us specifics. He expects His followers to heed these instructions, and many other similar directives that are found throughout Scripture.

In any major disaster or emergency incident, chaos often reigns for a period. Just as happened after hurricane Katrina, unchecked by the presence of the police, criminals, street gangs, and even normally law abiding people went on wild rampages.

It wasn't just the criminal element, either. Impatient people in food lines succumbed to vio-

lent behavior. Normally well-mannered people found themselves in angry confrontations. Those who normally wouldn't steal became looters. When the thin veneer of society is peeled away, godlessness always emerges.

Those searching for food or water can quickly degenerate into mobs of looters. You need to expect this. With some of these individuals, their behavior will deteriorate even further. Expect antisocial behavior to become rampant.



In the weeks after hurricane Katrina, violent crime, particularly against those who were alone or defenseless, increased exponentially. Looting and burglary, robbery, rape, and arson of occupied buildings, all became common occurrences.

Katrina was not an anomaly. In any incident, as soon as participants feel they can't be identified, ad hoc mobs often swarm and disperse, only to form again in another area. It's common for anarchists and hate-filled organizers to emerge, and they

fuel and expand the violence. Suddenly, it's a warzone. Expect it. And, plan for it.

Oddly, the anonymity provided by darkness and crowds, combined with anger, can lead not just to rioting and arson, but also arbitrary violence and even the irrational destruction of relief supplies.

In New Orleans, relief workers were stoned and beaten when supplies ran out. Random attacks against firefighters and emergency medical personnel further hampered relief efforts. Emergency aid supplies were stolen, and equipment and emergency vehicles were capriciously damaged and destroyed.

At times like these, acts of serious violence become rampant, and perpetrators operate without restraint because the authorities are

already stretched thin by the emergency. At times like these, if God's people aren't part of the solution, they are part of the problem.

If you think the government is going to solve your problems, or quickly respond to protect you or come to your aid, you'll probably be sorely disappointed.

***Anticipate violence.
Don't expect assistance.***

Don't bet your life, and the lives of your family, on government relief efforts. You need to prepare to meet your own needs. You must be self-reliant.

Does violence always occur during a disaster? Thankfully, "No." Is it commonplace for violence to erupt? "Yes," particularly in densely populated urban areas.

Once anger, frustration and fear are combined with a shortage of food or water, expect violence. Plan for it. If it doesn't happen, wonderful. But if it does, don't be surprised; be prepared. Have a contingency plan which includes defense.

Our personal planning needs to take this likelihood of violence into account. In most situations we should avoid confrontations if possible, but yet we need to be prepared to face violence when it's unavoidable.

Being invisible to the perpetrators of violence and lawlessness may help. And, a fortified location will certainly provide some measure of defense, but as uncomfortable as this might be to some Christians, preparedness must also include the ability to stop an attacker. This was Jesus' point when He told His followers to arm themselves (Luke 22:36).

Plus, our ministry plans must include operating in this type of environment. Though all types of

ministry are valuable, the ministry of providing protection and defense to others may actually be the most important. If you find yourself in a lawless environment, organizing protection for your neighbors may be even more important than distributing relief supplies.

In urban and suburban areas, when the police are in short supply, violence and a surge in criminal activity generally follow within a few hours. Why? Without peacemakers, lawlessness erupts as miscreants feel that they can operate with impunity. If unstoppable, they will perpetrate all forms of evil because they no longer fear being caught.

"All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing."

- Anonymous

So what should you do? Should you flee to an isolated rural area? Not necessarily.

Each circumstance is different. You need to evaluate the situation, and then take decisive action. A decision based on the information you have is far better than indecisive inactivity. Because many people avoid making a decision, irrationally hoping that things will get better, they are swept away by circumstances. They become a fatality or a victim.

The decision to evacuate is best made quickly. To minimize risks, evacuations generally need to be rapid. However, they also must be well conceived, including contingency planning.

Long-term safety often has more to do with adequate defense and a unified group of defenders, then rushing pell-mell to find a rural, unplanned, untested retreat location. If you get out of town early, you'll probably be okay, but if you delay you may be caught out in the open when violence strikes. Or, blocked roadways may simply leave you stranded in the open. Many people come to harm in route to their place of retreat.

If the emergency continues for more than a few days, urban violence may extend to suburban and rural areas, anyway. Rural people are not immune, and they must also prepare for defense. Though a rural area may have the benefit of a delay, giving them more time to prepare, violence and predatory criminals will come if the emergency situation is protracted.

In the city of New Orleans, more than 300 police officers left their posts and deserted the city, claiming that it was too unsafe for them to stay. Additionally, police officers have families, too, and in a disaster many of them may leave to care for their own families.

Don't expect a 911-call to bring help. It might, or it might not. You need to be prepared to fend for yourself, and to protect yourself and your family.

In New Orleans after Katrina, violent gangs took control of entire sections of the city. Once the police were gone, what do you think happened to the residents? Many found themselves alone and defenseless. Many of those who died or were victimized could have been saved had they been prepared. Unfortunately, most weren't ready.

In the post-Katrina New Orleans area, after a few days even more police officers left so that they could care for their own families. At this point, most government services completely broke down.

Within a few days, thousands of National Guard troops entered the area. In spite of this, street gangs and criminals continued to rule vast portions of the city. For the most part, rural and city dwellers alike were left to fend for themselves. Many of the government-sponsored shelters weren't safe places, either.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, but after Katrina, law enforcement authorities focused on easy tasks, rather than the important tasks.



Though there was no longer a significant need, National Guard troops and the police spent their time evicting honest citizens from their homes. Most law enforcement assets were wasted on enforcing the no-longer-needed evacuation order rather than interdicting violent crime.

Interestingly, in this situation both the National Guard and police lock-step followed the verbal orders of the incompetent police chief. His orders were both nonsensical and violated citizen Rights protected by the U.S. Constitution and 2nd Amendment, and importantly they sidetracked efforts to provide the much needed public safety.

In this situation, the police undertook the task of door-to-door searches of the homes of good citizens, without provocation or search warrants. They disarmed responsible citizens who legally owned guns, rather than the dangerous criminals and marauding gangs. Regrettably, the authorities undertook the easy (and illegal) course of action, rather than face the dangerous and important task of stopping crime and violent offenders. People were left to fend for themselves. Hopefully this will never happen again, but the point is that even the "good guys" make mistakes and may fail to respond effectively.

Beyond the seriousness of this breach of trust, the people of Louisiana who needed help didn't get it for a very long time. The violent criminals continued to operate while law enforcement resources were squandered.



Today, various government agencies suggest that every family should have a 72-hour kit containing emergency supplies, including enough water and food to last for

three days. Previously, most "experts" thought that this is sufficient. And it might be, if we're only talking about being prepared for an annual winter storm.

But what about a more serious disaster like Katrina? What about a period of social unrest and anarchy such as during the Watts Riots, or worse?

In dire situations, even a week of supplies may not be enough. Especially if you want to do more than just survive the situation.

If the incident is more widespread, the effect will be far more catastrophic. An economic collapse, a multi-city terrorist attack, a biological or pandemic event, or widespread anarchy in the wake of any of these incidents may have long-term effects. Recovery may be painfully slow. Expect government assistance will be minimal at best.

In our economy, our just-in-time supply methods mean that there is only enough food in grocery stores for a few days. And this doesn't take into account depletion due to looting, panic buying, or hoarding. Add to this that warehouses are often some distance away, and that roads may be damaged or travel unsafe, plus truck drivers may be staying at home with their families, and resupply becomes impossible.

Most families are in a similar situation with their own food pantry. Most only have enough food for a few days, and their critically important need for 1-gallon of water per day can't be met by the few water bottles they have on hand.

For most families, their supply of pure water is exhausted within the first 24-hours unless they had the foresight to fill their bathtubs before their taps ran dry. As a result, contaminated water is often consumed, and illness follows in as little as a few hours.



As an absolute minimum, we must be prepared to spend a week fending for ourselves. This means 7-days of water and food for each person in the household (and don't forget guests and your pets). Plus, heat, sanitation needs, medical supplies, camping-style cooking and lighting, extra fuel for these items, and safety/defense resources.

Essential Preparations Include:

1. A few personal emergency supplies carried with you at all times (in a pocket, purse, or briefcase);
2. An emergency-supplies GOOD Bag (Get-Out-Of-Dodge knapsack) and extra clothing kept at work or in the trunk of your car; and
3. One-week (absolute minimum) emergency supplies kit at home; plus additional long-term supplies kept either at home or at a safe location.

For details and lists of items to include, visit:

36READY.org

Think about it. If you couldn't leave your home for a week, and you were without electricity and fuel, no working stove, no running water, no heat or air conditioning, and no phone, how would you fare? We all need to be ready for this scenario.

Additionally, if you need to evacuate, do you have supplies pre-packed that would fit into your car? Do you have extra gas? If you had to flee on foot, are you ready to bug-out right now? What would you take with you to help you face several days of travel alone and on foot? Are you ready?

Few of us are adequately prepared, including those who *think* they are prepared. In reality, most people who consider themselves "ready" are woefully unprepared in one or more categories of preparedness. For example, I have a friend who has stockpiled an entire year of food, but has no viable plan for defense.

One big problem is that most preparedness advice focuses on your home. Preparation for the home is helpful, but definitely not enough.

You likely won't be at home when disaster strikes, so your preparations need to take this into account. You need to have access to supplies, and you need a plan to rendezvous with your family at home, and other predetermined "Plan-B" locations. Without advance planning, your family may be separated for an extended period of time. Don't take this risk. Plan now, and make sure each family member knows what to do, and where to go.

In the three major incidents that I have personally experienced, I wasn't at home for any of them. I was at school (Alaska earthquake), driving (Watts), and at work (San Francisco earthquake).

If you are considering a Get-Out-Of-Dodge retreat location, it needs to be reasonably close. If you intend to drive, it is *imperative* to leave quickly before roads become clogged or otherwise

impassible. Have maps, including USGS topographic maps (www.usgs.gov), and practice alternate routes. You may have to get there on foot, so plan for that possibility.

With this away-from-home likelihood in mind, develop plans for the most likely scenarios where each family member is away from home when the disaster or emergency hit. Plan for it.

Develop various contingency plans for uniting with our family and/or reliable friends. This needs to be done now, in advance, and you need to remind each other of these plans, often.

Lastly, though we can each expect to experience a disaster or a serious emergency situation sometime in our life, we also need to embrace the possibility of facing a Perfect Disaster.

What the term "Perfect Storm" is to a weather-related incident, a Perfect Disaster is the confluence of events which, in combination, lead to a quickly spiraling social decline.

This can be a geographic-specific incident such as New Orleans in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina, or it can be national in scope. Remember, the larger the disaster area, the government response will be perceived as smaller and less effective.

When several streams of disastrous events converge, an emergency situation can even become a very long-term condition. No one can be totally prepared for such a Perfect Disaster, but preparations are nevertheless essential to survive and thrive in ministry. It's part of our mandate from Jesus.

One disaster can be serious, but in combination the effect can quickly become catastrophic. The northeastern storm mentioned earlier became serious because fall leaves were still on the trees when an early-season snow storm hit. Laden with snow held in tree branches by the fall leaves,

thousands of trees collapsed under the weight, snapping power lines and blocking roadways. Within hours, millions were cold and in the dark.

Ordinarily, a severe winter storm like this is serious, but the magnitude of effect in this instance was the result of a confluence of conditions and events. This is usually how catastrophic events develop.

Just as our major roadways can handle volumes of high speed traffic, here in the U.S. we are equipped to navigate traditional emergencies quite well. But when an incident of unexpected intensity develops, or events start colliding and the unexpected happens, things change quickly. At some point, societies coping mechanisms are overrun, and a Perfect Disaster emerges.

Social decline is a harbinger of cultural upheaval, but it's generally a Perfect Disaster which plunges a society into chaos. Unlike trends of decline, the confluence of events which trigger a tipping point often happen suddenly.

When the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union collapsed, these events seemed to happen overnight. The pundits were taken completely by surprise. The Soviet people were living life-as-usual one day, and the next they were immersed in social and economic chaos.

For us, it's important to understand that decadent, self-absorbed and pleasure-seeking societies are particularly fragile. But these social factors rarely initiate collapse; they just remove the solid foundation which makes it possible for a society to weather a social storm.

Unfortunately, since the social foundations of American life have eroded and our government has become adversarial to God, at some point we can expect God to withdraw His hand of protection. Just as the Old Testament prophets warned the people of Israel, today we need to read the signs of our own times.

The natural forces of this world eventually coalesce and sweep over any society built on sand. We are now living in such a time, and though God may stay His hand for a season, we can't expect this forbearance to continue forever. I'm not talking about the end-of-the-world prophecies either. I'm only pointing out that at this point a Crunch seems inevitable.

This isn't the place for a discussion on the causes; suffice to say that many factors are driving this spiral of national decay. Absent a revival, the trend is clearly toward eventual calamity. Among the informed, the only debate is *when* it will happen, not *if* it will happen.

On the international front, the social and economic problems of the European Union are a harbinger of what we can expect in the United States. Add to this the geographic expansion of terrorism, and the growth of militant Islam in Africa, Asia and Europe, and the world-as-we-know-it cannot seemingly survive the amassed pressure.

Radically different worldviews are simultaneously competing for national and world dominance. Those who don't recognize this as a serious problem need to reevaluate.

Wars and rumors of wars proliferate, Israel is threatened with genocide, a nuclear arms race is beginning in the Middle East, and formerly stable governments are toppling or teetering on the abyss. Many nations have failing economies, and bailouts have brought us to the brink of universal economic collapse.

The economy of the United States is linked to the rest of the world. Even if we recover from our own economic plight, we cannot insulate ourselves from international maladies. We're already infected.

Is doomsday inevitable? No, absolutely not. But absent a new Great Awakening, at the very least

we can expect to experience serious life-changing consequences. And, the Crunch of a Perfect Disaster is likely as these conditions and circumstances collide. Timing is uncertain. And Americans are a resilient and innovative people, but sooner or later, when the rubber-band of society is stretched taut as it is now, it will only take a sudden jerk to make it snap.

Severity and duration are the key questions, not will we experience adversity. Will it be the Crunch of a Perfect Disaster or something less dramatic? Either way, we can expect to experience dramatic economic and social change. However, if we face the signs of the times and accept our personal responsibility, planning and preparation will help us mitigate the effect.

For most people this Crunch scenario is too frightening to contemplate, so they live in denial. Just as our politicians keep spending money we don't have and think it's going to be okay, many people are ignoring the signs of the times. God expects Christians to be different.

Jesus said, *"When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?"*

Matthew 16:2-3

Whether as a simple act of obedience to Jesus (Luke 22:36) or as a result of reading the signs of the times, we need to be self and church dependant, not government dependent.



For Christians, there are 4-tiers of preparation to consider. Start with the first, and work your way into the mindset of preparation. Once you get going, involve your family, and then your church. Every Christian needs to consider these questions, and then take action.

- 1. Are you and your family prepared for 14-days of totally self-sufficient living?***
- 2. Are you ready to flee with your GO-Bag (Get-Out Bag) bag at a moment's notice?***
- 3. Have you done everything you can to prepare to survive, and to minister, during an extended period of crisis?***
- 4. Are you ready for a Perfect Disaster (Crunch)? Are you ready to withstand tribulation?***

"They [Jesus' disciples] questioned Him, saying, 'Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?' And He said, 'See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near. Do not go after them. When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately.'"

“Then He continued by saying to them, ‘Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.’”

“But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name’s sake. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.”
Luke 21:7-13

Are you active and doing everything you can to become ready? This isn’t just desirable; it’s part of our duty to God as His faithful followers. Our biggest opportunities for ministry may be during these difficult circumstances.



Catastrophic events can unfold without warning. It doesn’t take a terrorist’s nuclear bomb or international pandemic to start the dominoes tumbling. A Perfect Disaster only needs timing and the right combination of factors to initiate a life-changing event.

Once a tipping point is reached, it will likely flip quickly. If you’re watching from your rooftop you won’t have time to come down and then prepare to leave, you’ll need to run for the hills. Those who aren’t ready to go will be the hardest hit. Like a falling row of dominoes, disaster gains momentum when other negative things happen in the same timeframe. Once the pace increases and more dominoes topple, a Crunch becomes inevitable. But though we may not be able to stop the crash, we can control our response. Revival has more to do with our response than the severity of the disaster.

As in the days of Noah and Lot, today most people are consumed with everyday life and living under the assumption that things will continue status quo. As in the days of Noah and Lot, most people will continue to ignore the signs right up until the end.

Americans have a natural tendency to shun as improbable anything that is outside their experience. Yet, as any student of the Bible or history knows, things do change; and occasionally they change radically.

Thankfully, those who contemplate these changes, and prepare, needn’t be afraid. When we accepted our responsibility to prepare and make ready, we can rest in God’s capable hands, confident that we have done our part.

Though the Bible tells us to expect difficult times, most people seem to expect these events to be in the distant future, or that they will affect someone else. American Christians have a tendency to think that adversity is something that will be faced by a future generation, not them. But “surprise” disaster scenarios aren’t just reserved for apocalyptic times. A disaster may be just around the corner. Are you ready?

And, what are the signs-of-the-times today? Importantly, it’s not enough to recognize these signs. We need to be ready spiritually and with physical preparations, too.

We have a natural tendency to think that things will remain essentially the same. Yet, history teaches us a different story. It’s our Christian duty to be prepared, and ready. This is what Jesus taught that Last Supper night.

If we’re willing to actually face this serious and sobering topic, we don’t need to worry about it.

Rather than wasting mental energy on worry, we need to let these “signs” motivate us to action.

As we plan, we need to remember that these events are generally beyond our ability to control. And that whether we face a big disaster or small, we aren’t in this alone. We have each other, we have the Church, and we have the Creator of the universe who loves us and cares about our life.

As the Apostle Paul reminded us, *“If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. The temptations [trials] in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation [trial] to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted [tried by circumstances], he will show you a way out so that you can endure.”*

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

He is giving us a way out. It’s called preparation. It’s about being 36 READY.

Jesus told us ...

“And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.”

Luke 17:26-29

“The instruction of the wise is like a life-giving fountain; those who accept it avoid the snares of death.”

Proverbs 13:14

“Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit.”

Luke 12:35

“So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days.”

Ephesians 5:15, 16

Levels of Need & Timeline

Level 1: Immediate

- ▶ Move to Safer Location (if necessary);
- ▶ Emergency Life-Saving First Aid;
- ▶ Emergency Rescue of Others;
- ▶ Evaluate Rescue/Escape Options (and routes),
- ▶ Drinking Water;
- ▶ Food (Energy);
- ▶ Climate Protection (heat, cold, wet, etc.);
- ▶ Defense (protection from animals, criminals, special environmental problems such as disease, biological contamination, radiation, deadly insects, snakes, etc.).

Level 2: First 48-Hours (Day1-2)

- ▶ Situation Reevaluation;
- ▶ Water Purification, Sanitation;
- ▶ Food (nutrition and cooking);
- ▶ Medical Care & Health Considerations;
- ▶ Communication and Signaling;
- ▶ Safety, Shelter and Concealment;
- ▶ Rescue (and rescue others) / Escape.

Level 3: Short-Term Needs (Day 2-7)

- ▶ Psychological Factors and Self-Evaluation;
- ▶ Health Issues (Electrolyte imbalance, infections, disease risks, etc.);
- ▶ Water and Food Procurement;
- ▶ Foraging / Scrounging;

- ▶ Meeting Energy Needs (fuel, electricity, etc.);
- ▶ Planning for Extended Self-Reliance;
- ▶ Options for Mutual Aid (Help from others);
- ▶ Change of Location / Transportation.

Level 4: Mid-Term Needs (Month 1)

Sustainability; developing a reliable source of pure water and nutritious food, 2-way communication, help from others (establishing a mutual-support group with complementary skills), establishing a safe perimeter (safety zone), defense against marauders, reference and instructional resources, safe lodging and storage of supplies, escape and evasion, defense against unexpected attack, and serious environmental changes.

Level 5: Long-Term Needs

Develop and implement plans for living independent of outside assistance. Relocation, need for actual housing, transportation options; water and food storage; sustainable hunting, fishing, farming and foraging; food preservation; prep for seasonal and environmental changes; community for safety and mutual aid.

For more on emergency and disaster preparedness, visit: www.36READY.org.

About the Author

As a former Los Angeles-area police officer with a university degree in Criminology, Sig Swanstrom writes from the perspective of both scholarship and practical “street” experience. As described in this article, he has personally experienced a number of major natural disasters including two major earthquakes, was onsite after the eruption of Mount St. Helens, he has helped survivors from the wreckage of two different commercial airline crashes, was a police officer who worked for years as a member of a major urban SWAT team, and he lived in Guatemala during that country’s civil war where his installation was attacked by guerrilla’s on three separate occasions.

To be prepared and ready requires far more than just being armed and stockpiling supplies. It also involves contemplating various scenarios in advance—and then planning and preparing for them. Those who commit to being prepared and ready live by the...

6-P Code

I will diligently:

1. **P**lan for emergencies, and be aware and vigilant.

I will acquire...

2. **P**ractical Training to help me face real-world challenges, spiritual conflict, social and financial upheaval, and potentially hazardous events.

I will...

3. **P**repare my body, mind, spirit, and family for healthy living today, and for future times of adversity.

I will assemble...

4. **P**rovisions and cache supplies of water and food, essential gear, GO-Bags, firearms and ammunition, cash and means of trade.

I will undertake...

5. **P**ainstaking Logistics, and be systematic in my maintenance and management of the many different facets of preparedness.

Plus, I commit to engage in regular...

6. **P**practice; both personal and family/group exercises.

If you are connected to the Internet, [Click Here](#) to download a PDF copy of the 6-P Code. Or, you can visit the “Resources” page of the www.36Ready.org website.