

Positively Speaking

By Mark Wilson

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In Times like These

The recent economic downturn has had a devastating impact on many families in the Hayward area. I've served as a pastor here in the northwoods for nearly 18 years, and have never seen conditions like this before.

People are being laid off. Homes are going into foreclosure. Businesses are folding. Families are running out of food. Bad news from Wall Street leads to less business on Main Street.

Though we're in hard times, these are the only times we have -- thus, we need to keep a proper perspective.

Here are some important reminders as we face adversity:

1. God is far bigger than the problem. If the financial crisis looms like a mountain, remember -- God is the mountain mover! There's no challenge too great for the Almighty. There is not one situation beyond His ability. Instead of telling God how big your problem is, tell your problem how big God is!
2. Hard times teach us wisdom. Difficult days force us to stop and evaluate where we are, what we're doing, and why we're doing it. Nobody becomes wise with ease. It takes trouble to grow in patience and understanding.
3. The valleys are where we grow. We rejoice on the mountaintops -- but we grow in the valley. Hardship forges character and makes us better people. The sweetest people I've ever met are those who have gone through the most difficult experiences.
4. There's always a reason to be thankful. If we look for blessings in the darkest days, we will find them. Thanksgiving brings a special joy and peace.
5. We are never poor if we are rich in love. In loving relationships, we find true wealth. Money can buy things, but not true happiness.
6. It's only money. My dear friend, Gerry Anderson, served on our church Stewardship Committee until he passed away last year. I recall several times, when the budget was tight, he would say, "It's only money." Life is much more than money. We must never let money troubles take our focus off the more important matters of life.

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7. We're blessed to be a blessing. Not everybody is suffering right now. If you are one of the lucky ones, you have a two-fold obligation: a) be thankful, b) be a blessing to somebody else that is less fortunate.

8) There's always hope at the end of the day. No matter what happens, you'll get through it. The sun will rise tomorrow. When all is said and done, all will be well.

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