

Do Christianity & Survivalism Mix?

Introduction

With all the chaos and crime in our society and all the signs of the collapse of our economy and the decline of our civilization, many people today, including Christians, are very much concerned about the welfare of themselves and their families. And so, in response to the great instability in our world, Christians and non-Christians alike, are advocating survivalism, meaning, preparing for the worst: a total collapse of society. Usually the way of preparing for such a collapse involves stockpiling food and other goods that may become scarce if a natural, economic or terrorist-caused disaster should occur. Another way of preparing for the worst involves moving out of the cities and suburbs to rural homes and living off the land with the focus on being as self-sufficient as possible.

What does the Bible teach?

Naturally, as Christians, we want to do what is biblically correct in responding to issues of life such as this. And in that light, we as Christians, need to ask the question “Do Christians and Survivalists mix?” Probably the best place to start, in answering this question is Matthew chapter 6 where we read:

Matthew 6:24 - “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. 25 Therefore I say unto you, **Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?** 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? 28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Wherefore, **if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?** 31 **Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?** 32 **(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:)** for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33 **But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**”

Now what is the Lord saying in the above verses? Well, it seems He is certainly not advocating survivalism or self-sufficiency. He is advocating a heavenly focus that includes trusting God to meet our needs rather than

worrying about the things that the Gentiles worry about (or the survivalists worry about for that matter). Granted, God is not saying we should be irresponsible about managing our households and providing for our families, but we must be sure to differentiate between providing for our families versus hoarding goods that we will have to protect by buying guns and building fortresses.

What matters is our motives

It really boils down to this:

Is survivalism just another way of providing for one's family?

We can answer that question by asking ourselves some other questions:

- 1. Am I interested in survivalism for the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom?**
- 2. If I do stockpile supplies and someone tries to rob me of them during a crisis, am I going to trust the Lord to protect and provide at that point?**

If we can answer the above questions in the affirmative, then we can say that our motives for disaster preparation are scripturally sound. For instance, if I stockpile Bibles and Gospel literature for distribution during a crisis or disaster, I am doing something of benefit to the kingdom of God. If I stockpile food and medical supplies to aid those who are in need, in the interest of spreading the Gospel and to be a good testimony for Christ, then indeed, my approach to survivalism is not contrary to scripture. However, if I shoot anyone who tries to take my supplies during a crisis, I am not glorifying God because I am not trusting Him to protect and provide. I am trusting in my own strength and my own self-sufficiency and I am telling the world that I am selfish and unmerciful. And as Paul asked in 1 Corinthians 4:7: "what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" We dare not kill people over things that are a gift from God in the first place. Perhaps if we have a survivalist philosophy, we should examine ourselves to see if we may be coveting *our own self-provided security*.

What about Noah?

Didn't Noah warn people and prepare his family for disaster? Oh yes, he most certainly did. But the story of Noah is a spiritual picture, not a material-world picture, especially in light of Matthew 6:33 mentioned above: "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness". Noah's story is not meant to be an example of **survivalism** for the **unsaved** to learn from. *His story is not supposed to be used to justify barn-building and self-preservation. Rather, Noah's story is a great example of evangelism for the saved to learn from. It is an example of God's mercy and grace to be used to show how God warns the lost to prepare for spiritual disaster – the coming wrath of God. Attempting to hold onto that which we can't keep forever anyway (material*

things), instead of sharing that which we can never lose (salvation), is not a scripturally wise use of our time, energy and resources. This even applies to our own children too. If God wants to take them home with Him, it does not matter how hard we try to hold onto them. It is to no avail.

Must we help people who ignore our warnings?

What if we warn people about a potential crisis or disaster and they do not prepare for it as we do? Should we help them when the disaster strikes, if they have ignored our warnings? The above questions are only legitimate if our disaster preparations are for the glory of God. Assuming our motives are OK, I believe that the Bible's teachings on mercy and forgiveness provide the answer to these questions:

Matthew 5:7 - "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

Matthew 18:21 - "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

We must remember that we are sinners saved by grace, as powerfully noted in Luke 18:13 where Jesus talked about the publican (tax collector) who "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner". We must remember that Christ shows His mercy to us every day, even though we continue to sin. Therefore, we need to realize that if there is an opportunity to glorify God by showing mercy to people, we need to do so. And yes, it will cost us.

Can we use any scriptures to justify withholding mercy to someone?

Christians certainly must be as wise as serpents and gentle as doves, so we are not compelled to help people who squander their money on unnecessary things or who will use food or money to buy sinful things (such as drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, pornography, etc.). However, if someone has a need caused by genuine hard times, and we can meet that need, we are compelled to do something:

Matthew 5:38 - "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. 43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. 44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and

persecute you; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? 47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? 48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Shouldn't we do everything we can to protect our families?

Most certainly we should protect our families provided we do not put our families or anything ahead of God and His will. A true believer's primary focus should be spiritual and not physical:

Matthew 6:33 - "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Luke 14:26 - "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

The Bible tells us not to be unnecessarily preoccupied with this world and the Bible makes it clear that God provides for our needs "according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus," (Php 4:19) that is, according to God's plan by which He bestows upon us the riches of heaven.

Matthew 10:29 - "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Planning for which future, which world?

We need to do our best as Christians to remain debt free and to plan for the future, so that we are not a bad witness to the world and so that we are not an unnecessary burden to others. We also need to be faithful providers for our households. But that does not mean that we should be thinking like those whose only hope is in this world, else why would the Lord have said:

Matthew 6:19 - "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal"

It is very important that Christians do all that they can to let the world know that they prefer to store up treasure in heaven. It is also very important that Christians do all that they can to tell the world that they seek a better kingdom, as Abraham sought:

Hebrews 11:10 - "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Conclusion

While it is admirable to provide for one's family as best as one can, we can even take this activity to an extreme. I believe that God desires that we never lose sight of the fact that His kingdom is not of this world. Also, He commands us to be in the world but not of it. So we are not to isolate ourselves from the world, protecting just ourselves and our families with our stockpiles when a catastrophe hits that others have not prepared for. Where would the redeemed be if Christ had taken that approach and stayed in glory in heaven, safe and secure from the crowds who would one day shout "Crucify him! Crucify him!"? Indeed, where would the elect of God be if Christ had not humbled Himself and come into this sin cursed world to share His eternal riches and glory with worms like us who are so reprobate that we would demand the death of the blessed Creator of heaven and earth? May God have mercy on us if we as true believers lose sight of our purpose here on earth and start to live as if this world is all there is.

**"For whosoever will save his life shall lose it:
and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."
Matthew 16:25**