

Just in Case

Our area of the country was expecting a major winter storm, starting with snow, then sleet, and coating everything with all-day freezing rain. Forecasts predicted a possible half-inch of ice, which would turn all hard surfaces into ice-skating rinks. It was a nationwide storm destined to affect tens of millions of people, and we were going to get a front-row seat. We were warned to prepare for the possibility of being trapped in our homes for up to five days. To make matters worse, there was a fear that the storm's severity could cause power lines to come down. We heard these forecasts for a week, so we had plenty of time to prepare – or to panic. Our choice.



As you can imagine, the threat of a catastrophic storm caused people to panic. Generators and ice melt flew off the shelves. People were buying firewood and filling every gas container they could get their hands on. Grocery store lines were long because of panic buying, especially for bread, milk, and eggs. Empty shelves at the grocery stores were all the evidence people needed to go to multiple stores, “just in case.” As items were becoming scarce, it became an obsession to get some for yourself, even if you didn’t need them. The result of obsessive buying created a shortage, and some people were without the items they really needed. Social media added to the panic. All it would take would be for someone to even suggest a shortage on Facebook, and it would become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Do you remember the toilet paper scarcity during the pandemic? Even if you didn’t need toilet paper, you purchased it in bulk, “just in case.” The toilet paper shortage became a reality only because of panic buying.

Fear drives us to make irrational and selfish decisions. We are afraid of running out of something, even if it wasn’t a need for us in the first place. We feel rushed into decisions. In the business world, salespeople thrive on our fears, telling us to “act now before it is too late” (and before we think things through).

We are called to live by faith, not fear. Wisdom is the result of spiritual discernment. Those who walk in faith are called to a different path, one that brings God into the conversation rather than ignoring His wisdom and blindly going our own way. Our provider and protector is the Lord Jesus Christ. *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (Isaiah 41:10).* The Bible tells us not to be anxious but to be wise and prepared. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6). The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps (Proverbs 16:9).*

Stay calm. There is a difference between wants and needs. Make your plans according to what you actually need. If you are trying to satisfy your wants, you are taking things into your own hands and not trusting God. God knows what you need to be safe. Pride makes it all about you and “how good you are” instead of how good God is. Trusting the Lord is an act of worship because we know He will take care of us.

Ask the Lord what you really need. Be smart. Consider the facts, make solid plans, worship the Lord by trusting Him, and He will be with you through all that you face.

Prayer: Lord, give us the wisdom to know what we need and not covet what we want. Let us act on that wisdom, to do our part, and trust You will walk beside us through the storms of life. Amen.