

## **An addendum on preparedness**

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By AC, a man who strives to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

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If you read my previous article on preparedness (a 12-page document written July 25, 2023), then this addendum is for you. The aforementioned account stands by itself, but I still wanted to add a few thoughts on the topic, and also provide a short errata list. However, If you have not yet read *A Guide to Preparedness*, I suggest that you obtain the PDF-format document and start there.

Like the previous occasion, I am writing primarily from the experience gained during the 3-month-long societal collapse that followed Hurricane Maria in 2017, here in the Caribbean. Before going any further, let me emphasize that spiritual preparation is the number one priority. *Change your life, repent and seek God; love and respect God above everything else; and pray a lot.*

Disclaimer: I have no commercial relationship with the persons or products endorsed here, and any recommendation springs up from the sole fact that I find them useful or instructive. I am not responsible for damages resulting from the use of this information. Put into practice at your own risk. I am just sharing what has worked for me so far, and this guide is for educational purposes only.

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### **A. Mental resilience is essential**

In my experience during the collapse brought by Hurricane Maria, the people that better coped with the disaster were those with good mental resiliency, as well as those who possessed skills in areas like radio communications, portable generators and treating water. In addition, people who had started preparing beforehand by stockpiling food, hygiene supplies and medicine, did considerably better than average.

Mental resilience means not breaking down—and not complaining—when exhausted after an entire day of physical work, or after a month of showering under a daily gallon of water (or maybe not at all), or after 3 months of heavy sweat and mosquitoes under a burning tropical sun. It means going the extra mile and assisting your relatives and neighbors, even when you find yourself at the limit of your physical strength and material resources. It means staying sharp and focused even in the middle of chaos, after weeks in a row when all you see around you is death and destruction. You get the idea.

## **B. Survival skills are important**

A line of argument states that the rich will inevitably get ahead in preparedness—compared with regular people like you and I—simply because of their resources. But I dispute this claim, because rarely will a high-net-worth individual put the time and effort to learn the skills necessary to survive. A few will do, but mostly they just pay other people to do things for them, becoming what I call "preppers by proxy". In my opinion that is a big mistake, because your survival should never be delegated to others.

Start your preparedness journey by acquiring the skills needed to survive an extended off-grid event. I could name dozens of desirable skills, but in my opinion the following five are important: (1) learn at least two methods for treating water; (2) learn at least two methods for starting and controlling a fire; (3) learn the basics about electricity; (4) learn how to build a basic shelter using a tarp, cordage and anchorage; and (5) learn about shortwave radios, and two-way radios using the Family Radio Service (FRS), which can all be operated without a license. Please, go now and start learning today.

Household skills like cooking, sewing and quilting, and washing clothes by hand, are useful in survival scenarios and can be put into the market during a long-term disaster. The same applies to trades, and a good friend of mine—a successful engineer who additionally completed an MBA—is now teaching himself to make and repair shoes. He is wanting to diversify as a hedge against economic uncertainty. If the economy tanked, a shoe repair trade could become more profitable than his current line of work.

Becoming skilled in survivalism will not cost you anything, but will put you ahead of big money. A set of survival skills is more valuable than even owning a bunker. If you ever start running short on food or supplies, you can simply go and trade whatever skills you possess for the goods that you need. I submit that, in prepping, the acquisition of skills should be prioritized over the mere stockpiling of goods.

## **C. Water is the most valuable asset**

Potable water is the most valuable asset when disaster strikes, and the first dollar that you ever invest on prepping should go toward building up a supply of water and acquiring the means to treat it. You will need to budget 8 liters (2 gallons) of water daily for each person, at the very minimum. Potable water, meaning water that is meant for ingestion, should always be purified. Obtain the best filtering system that you can get, and do not forget to learn how to use chlorine or iodine to disinfect water.

The best investment that you can ever make for preparedness is a reliable water system. Indeed, the first prepping project we ever undertook as a family was the acquisition of a large water cistern, 25 years ago. If I were now getting started, and if I had the blessing of a couple thousand dollars at hand, I would put most of the money into a rainwater collector or at least a cistern alone. Lacking that kind of money, I would opt for a 200-liter (55-gallon) industrial blue drum, or a bunch of 20-liter (5-gallon) buckets.

## **D. Prepping on low budgets**

I am now going to give an idea on how a family can get prepared on a low budget, which I have arbitrarily set at US\$50 per month. Bear in mind that there are many possibilities for prepping on low budgets, and this is just one possible scenario. As you will recall from my previous article, a prepper always builds up gradually over time, slowly but consistently, with clear and defined goals. Start by putting away \$50 each month for prepping. If you cannot spare \$50, you better start cutting expenses such as dining out, leisure travel, and unnecessary subscriptions like streaming media services.

On the first month, do this: put \$25 into water, which might go to gallon water, a 20-liter bucket, and supplies like filters and iodine; then put \$15 into non-perishable food; and lastly, put \$10 into cleaning items like soap and baking soda. On the second month do the same, but instead put the \$10 into over-the-counter medications. Repeat on the third month, but instead put the \$10 into matches, lighters and candles. Keep doing this in order to reach your initial milestone of a 3-week food supply, which puts you ahead of 90% of the population. If possible, continue working toward a 3-month stockpile, which will get you to the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile. As soon as you get some extra money, go and buy a few lanterns and flashlights (with the appropriate batteries), and also a portable gas stove (with the appropriate fuel).

MREs (i.e., *Meal, Ready-to-Eat*) and freeze-dried foods are nice, but expensive. Focus instead on cost-effective options that you can get at the grocery store, like rice and beans, and canned food like meat, fish, vegetables and fruit; just remember that you will need to repackage your rice and beans into oxygen-free containers. You can also shop at warehouse clubs and even dollar stores. Do not forget about seasonings! The three essential condiments are salt, honey and oil; get them now, and know that pure salt and pure honey will never expire. Oils last for years, but can go rancid. Start rotating your food stockpile to move expiration dates as much into the future as possible. Avoid putting all your eggs on one basket, building smaller stockpiles around the house rather than keeping everything together.

You can learn a lot about food preparedness from a woman known as [Alaska Granny](#), who is on YouTube. I consider myself experienced in this area, yet still find useful information on her videos.

## **E. References I recommend**

A beginner who is starting to delve into preparedness will soon stumble into government websites on "readiness", but I would advise the reader to stay away from those sources. With few exceptions, the information in these websites comes from bureaucrats who are more interested in government continuity than in assisting the people. The advice they provide to store water and food for 5 or 7 days does not cut it, because in an actual disaster you could be thrown off-grid for months, and you will need a lot more than that. I am not philosophically averse to government—nor have ever been—but I do believe that on this topic, one should listen to experienced preppers and survivalists, rather than to politicians.

On general preparedness, seek out texts written by people who have actually gone through a long-term disaster, but please note that there is not much in the North American market that fits this specific criterion. My two favorite books on preparedness are: Selco Begovic (2018), *The SHTF Anthology: Survival Lessons from the Balkan War*; and, Fernando Aguirre (2009), *Surviving the Economic Collapse*.

I would like to reemphasize the book by Piers Paul Read (1974), *Alive*, which should be read and studied by anyone with an interest in survivalism. Get this book first. I also want to restate the value of video tutorials, for learning specific survival skills. My top recommendation remains [Survival Lilly](#), a woman with one million subscribers on YouTube, who recently opened a new channel on Rumble.

It is worthwhile to educate yourself, but do not put off your actual prepping until you are done studying. Start gathering your supplies now, while at the same time putting some regular time to read and study.

## **F. Unrealistic scenarios**

In his 2018 book, Selco shared a story that I wish to summarize here. He wrote: "I met out in the field a person that asked me a question that was very important to him in his prepping philosophy: Do you have any idea how to hide yourself from a helicopter with thermal imaging and similar high technology that is

chasing you? At the same time, that person could not start a fire in a field in the middle of the woods during perfect weather with a lighter." Selco continues: "He failed in map reading, water collecting, fire making ... he did not see that as an important. He did not see that as a big problem in his prepping philosophy. All he was interested in was how to run from the helicopter that will chase him."

Selco wraps up the story with this: "A helicopter chase is not so probable. A bad rash because of poor hygiene or pests in your food are more probable issues." The lesson here is to forget about unrealistic scenarios, and to focus instead on the basics of survival, namely, water collecting, fire making, etc.

### **Errata list for my previous article**

Page 5, line 41: As explained before, the first two → As explained before, these four items

Page 6, line 11: dental health and first aid → dental health and dental first aid

Page 7, line 31: Gasoline and diesel last only for about 6 months. *This is not a mistake, but I will add a comment here.* Diesel fuel is less processed than gasoline; it is made out of heavier, more stable hydrocarbons, meaning it should last longer than gasoline, at least theoretically. But shelf life depends on many factors, including the amount of sulfur impurities contained in the fuel. Clean diesel could last for years, but a high sulfur content might reduce shelf life to just a few months. Having explained this, let us stay with my original figure of 6 months, while clarifying that this refers to a worst-case scenario.

Page 10, line 29: In a disaster situation, cash is king. *Not a mistake, but I would add the following: cash is king, and you should save a month worth of expenses in cash, preferably in small denomination bills.*

### **Final considerations**

You need to start preparing now, when things are calm, because when a disaster strikes it will be too late. Be like the five wise virgins who kept extra oil in their lamps, and not the five foolish ones whose lamps went out. Become skilled at survival and start stocking up while supplies remain affordable. You will need to prepare because, in a disaster, it is unlikely that the government will come to your help.

Following a disaster, do not assume that your preps will guarantee you ease and relaxation. No, your life will be miserable, and I speak from experience. The purpose of prepping is survival, not comfort.

Spiritual preparation is always the priority, but for years God has also been encouraging material preparedness. Contemporary prophets tell us that God is asking the faithful to have water and food on hand—ideally 3 months—if they have the means. However, those lacking the resources have nothing to fear, because if they have a sincere love of God and are attuned to His will, He will miraculously provide for them. *Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

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