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# Good News for America's Families

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# Good News for America's Families

by **Dr. Robert Parr**

**W**ith job loss, the mortgage crisis, and declining investments, today's families are among those facing the worst of the economic strain. Although it is easy to overlook the benefits of a wavering economy, a sociological perspective demonstrates that America's families may have much to gain as they face the crisis together.

Looking at evidence from both Scripture and society demonstrates that a tough economy reinforces the value of family. Often in Scripture, the destitute who received special treatment were individuals who had no family ties (James 1:27), whereas those with relatives were to be cared for by such (1 Tim. 5:8).

Children may actually be blessed from a harsh economy because the divorce rate drops due to the high cost of dissolving a union when children are involved.

Young singles may benefit by being compelled to stay home, which not only saves them money on living expenses but also provides accountability as they transition into adulthood. Young adults who reside at home are also more likely to continue attending church.

In addition, the need for families to live closer together for survival often means someone is there to care for aging family

members who might otherwise depend on assisted-care facilities.

Remember the Genesis account of Joseph's family? They were reunited due to a vast famine, and through this hardship, his brothers' hearts were changed. They became willing to die for one another and were more sensitive to the needs of their aged father. The guilt of the past was washed away in a flood of forgiveness and in renewed relationships. God's timely and perfect provision allowed Joseph to tell them, "It was not you who sent me here, but God. ... I will provide for you, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise, you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute" (Gen. 45:8-11).

The Lord still provides through families, whether we are connected through birth or by His Spirit. Where others see only despair, may we recognize hope and rejoice in the Lord's provision. ■

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Dr. Robert Parr serves as professor of sociology at Cedarville University. He earned his Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in 1987 and has taught at Cedarville since 1980.

