



January 5, 2020

A Little Bit at a Time Adds Up in the End

I have met a lot of people who are overwhelmed by emergency preparedness and so they avoid it, put it off, or don't do anything. This is a normal reaction to overwhelm or uncertainty. However, there is a great deal of wisdom in following the council of Church leaders and preparing for future difficulties in this way. It doesn't have to be a huge natural disaster, attack from enemies, or the Apocalypse for basic preparedness to come in handy.

Because we have the idea that things have to happen all at once or that you need to do something and then be done with it ("Got the T-shirt"), people have purchased huge amounts of food storage all at once, put it away in their basement, garage, or wherever they can and then left it alone thinking they could check it off their list forever. As they get into the "golden years" and they are empty nesters they realize they have a lot of old food they have never used and may never use, and they feel defeated and like they wasted a lot of money in the name of preparedness.

There are two things I would like to say about these situations.

1. Anything is better than nothing. A gallon of water would even be very welcome if it is needed. Starting with something simple is a good start. One of my favorite verses in the Book of Mormon is Alma 37:6: "...but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise." If you accomplish one thing every month, even if it seems small, by the end of the year you will be much farther ahead. By the end of five years you will be amazed at what you can

have in place. I have been writing these papers for five years. If everybody in our ward had started doing one small thing each month in the beginning we'd be in good shape. However, now is the next best time to start. This year we'll cover easy ways to accomplish something toward better preparedness each month.

2. If you have old food storage I can sympathize. We did what we thought we should, and we were an example of obedience. That's a good thing. However, there is more you can do to improve your lot. Preparedness isn't a once-and-done thing. It is kind of like washing dishes. You have to keep doing it to keep up. While that may sound discouraging, it shouldn't be. It means that you don't have to exhaust yourself or your budget to be on top of preparedness. In fact, it is probably more beneficial if you don't do it all at once. You just have to keep trying and working on it a bit at a time. You need to check, organize, rotate, and replace on a regular basis. I don't know of anything that can just be ignored for 30 years and come out perfect without losing value or quality. This year's *Provident Papers* will have ideas of things that you can do each month to improve your preparedness no matter where you are.

Make This a Year of Accomplishing Goals

I recommend making one goal a month for preparedness and following through on them. To do a good job of accomplishing goals you will need the following:

1. Be specific every month about what you want to accomplish. Make it realistic and do-able. Schedule it into your month, and give yourself a deadline.
2. Know why you are doing it. If there isn't really a purpose it is easy to push it to the bottom of your priority list and procrastinate. Find a purpose if you don't have one.
3. Celebrate when it is done. Choose what you will do to celebrate ahead of time. Celebrating can be as simple as congratulating yourself for a job well done, or it can be something more. This step is important because the positive reinforcement of celebrating an accomplishment helps you

establish a pattern of success and accomplishment within yourself. You are more likely to succeed the next time if you do this step.

Announcements

This year there will be a monthly paper. It will be an extension of the preparedness guide from last year. You can either treat it like secret mission instructions for a special assignment in which you absorb the information and destroy it, or you can add it to the back of each month's section in last year's binder to keep as a reference and reminder.

You don't have a binder with each month's section from last year? You can fix that too! By February there will be a website, <https://www.ProvidentPapers.com>, where you can download and print any of the sections you missed. It is formatted to keep in an easy-to-store half-size (9x7 inch) binder.

Provident Living Skills and Preparedness

There are classical skills that are never a waste of time to learn and don't ever go out of usefulness. They will always help you to be better prepared in case you need to watch budget more carefully or times become hard in other ways. These are valuable skills for life and especially in times of need. You may consider polishing or learning one of these skills this year even though they will not be on the monthly list of topics or goals. These are things like cooking from scratch, sewing, gardening, home repairs, or car repairs just to name a few.

Ideas for January Goals

Beginner Level

- Start washing and saving any PET 1 plastic bottles and lids. These are the clear bottles that sports drinks, carbonated beverages, and many fruit juices come in. They're good for storing water and dry goods.
- Evaluate your house to find places you might be able to store things that you can easily access. Make room if needed. If you

need to purchase bins, January is a good time because they are often on sale.

- Take a field trip to the Lindon Home Storage Center. It is on Center Street, just east off of Geneva Road. Meet the missionaries and see what is available in basic supplies.

Intermediate Level

- Go through last year's papers or topics. Determine which ones are your strongest and which ones need some work for you to feel prepared.
- Inventory your storage and storage areas. Get rid of any food that you would not want to eat now. Tabitha's Way in American Fork will take canned and other goods that are not more than 3 years past expiration. DI will take clothing and household items you will not be using.
- Decide to learn or brush up on a new provident skill.

Advanced Level

- Offer to help one of your children or someone else learn a provident skill.
- Consider organizing an "extra credit" kit or set of supplies.
- Study history and learn what things those in the past did when living a very basic life. Find something that might help you.

Notes from Red Hen

Dear Journal,

I decided to keep a record this year. Silkey's colony is doing OK. They got sick in December, but thanks to our stash of herbs they are all well. We are grateful that we have a winter supply. Still, the seed catalogues I swiped from farmer's garbage can last week give us hope for spring on cold days. Cat, Pig, and Dog came by today when we were baking, but they have learned to offer some good or service if they want to eat our bread. This makes for better harmony all around. Cat brought us by a ball of string. Dog offered to dig out our old straw, and Pig offered some clean straw from her unused corner. We get along well.

