

Presbyterian Counseling Center

CENTERPOINT

I've presented a study called *A Faith for Hard Times* in a number of churches over the last few weeks. I've tried to provide some historical perspective which reflects the numerous (more than most people might realize) economic panics and depressions our nation has faced, as well as the encouraging likelihood that we will survive the current downturn. I've also sought to push folks to think through our traditional Christian values, some of which we may have lost sight of during the last decades of unusual affluence that many in the Presbyterian fold have experienced and enjoyed.

I've challenged these good Presbyterians to consider cultivating more simplicity in their lives and seizing the present opportunity to learn to live with less and to think more about what they really need rather than simply what they want. Such a decision should, if not out of necessity, be made as a free one. Instead of feeling victimized or forced to reduce one's wants, one can make a free decision to change one's habits of buying and consuming and to simplify one's life.

The New Testament certainly provides a good precedent, "For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world, and yet lose his own soul?" I'm willing to bet that, as you learn to live more modestly, you'll feel better, more confident, and even more secure during good times as well as difficult ones.

George R. Slaton