

## Moments of Prosperity During Times of Recession

For a while, no one wanted to use the word "recession." It's become harder to pretend, though, that that isn't exactly where we find ourselves. Untold people are suffering in the present economy, and even the wealthy are feeling the pinch. Jobs have been lost, homes have been lost, and more people than ever before are struggling just to make ends meet. The present is bleak and the future is uncertain.

Is it possible, then, to create moments of prosperity during times of recession? It is, and here are some ways to do just that.

Save money where you can. Consider all your regular expenses and see if there are ways to reduce them.

- Compact florescent bulbs can save on the light bill.
- Low flow toilets and shower heads can reduce your water bill.
- Recycling may lower your trash expenses, and it's good for the environment.
- Consider whether you really need cable television, or whether you would be fine without it or with a smaller, less expensive package.
- Comparison shop and use up everything you buy, from not wasting groceries by letting food spoil, to getting one more season out of those shoes by replacing the heel.
- Try online bill paying instead of paying for checks.
- Evaluate your insurance deductibles and see if they could be higher, or if less insurance would be appropriate.
- Ask your doctor about generic medications.
- See if public transportation will work for you.
- Always pay your bills on time to avoid late fees.

Consider everything you pay for on a monthly basis, from cell phones to groceries and everything in between. Small savings can really add up.

Don't save money where it would be penny wise, and pound foolish. For example, do not put off routine medical and dental check-ups. Catching and repairing a small cavity is better for your health and less expensive than needing a root canal and crown later because of neglect. For the same reason, it is better to perform routine maintenance on your automobile and avoid costly repairs later on. Speaking of automobiles, a well-maintained car will get better gas mileage, resulting in more savings.

Remember your neighbors. Purchasing supplies in large lots can save money, but storing nonperishable supplies or using perishable supplies before they spoil can be problematic. Talk to your friends and neighbors and see if they would like to share a large purchase with you.

Look for inexpensive and free ways to have fun together. It is tempting to eliminate entertainment from your budget, but don't eliminate entertainment from your life. Even when times are hard, people still need to have fun.

These are all fairly common and well-known ways to save money and make better use of the money you have. But there is one item that we do not recommend cutting entirely out of your budget, and that is charitable giving or spending.

First, consider how much you can give. If your income has reduced you may need to reduce your charitable giving proportionately. However, if you are committed to creating prosperity, you will not cut it out all together. Creating an atmosphere of giving and a spirit of caring for one another is an excellent way to benefit your community, not to mention the personal satisfaction it can bring you.

Secondly, consider where your money is going, and choose charities that help in your local community. Perhaps you can donate through your church, or to a local food bank. The idea is to keep the money in your community or neighborhood and help people who have greater needs than you. Twenty dollars' worth of groceries may seem like nothing to you, but to a family struggling to buy food, twenty dollars can mean a lot of meals.

When you help others in your community, there are many benefits. It is easy to think that people who have significant needs will be helped by the government, but remember that the government runs on your money. The fewer hands money must pass through on the way to its destination, the more money gets where it is needed. Help put money directly into the community, and you can reduce the reliance on government-funded resources, and consequently the amount of money the government demands from all taxpayers. By keeping the money in your local community, you encourage spending in your local community. That bolsters the local economy, keeps people working, etc. and can have a positive cascading effect.

We are all worried about the economy and looking for ways to save money. Consider what you spend and how you spend it, and you will have moments of prosperity that can last and increase until the economy turns around.