

## Your Money and Your Life

*Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit. In the blink of an eye wealth disappears, for it will sprout wings and fly away like an eagle (Proverbs 23:4-5 NLT).*

Like most everyone else, I have been paying close attention to the headlines about the worldwide economic situation. What is happening today will not only affect me now and in coming years, but will potentially affect every member of my family - including my grandchildren.

Debt that is being incurred now will be born by those tomorrow. Reading articles like "The Next Generation's Debt Burden" on [gop.gov](http://gop.gov) and staring a few moments at [usdebtclock.org](http://usdebtclock.org) can be very depressing. Ignoring the reality, however, will not make this money problem go away.

News from other countries is now instantaneous. Bloggers and tweeters share opinions immediately. A crisis in one part of the world - no matter what it is, economic, war, weather, political unrest, etc. - is felt around the world. The domino effect of this financial crisis has shown us that we are all part of a global community. It is truly worldwide.

Recent research done by Britain's University of Cambridge has revealed that the suicide rate in the United States more than quadrupled between 2008 and 2010. Aaron Reeves, who led the research, submitted his results to the Lancet Medical Journal. Obtaining his data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, his analysis showed that around 1500 more people in the U. S. committed suicide compared to what would have been expected or forecast if trends from 1997 to 2007 had continued.

Rising unemployment was blamed for at least one quarter of the rise in suicides in the U.S. since the beginning of the Great Recession. Greece, Spain, Britain and other countries with similar rises in unemployment have also produced a similar increase in their suicide rates.

Before this report was released, The American Journal of Health reported that the largest increase of suicides occurred during the Great Depression. Obviously money woes - or more accurately, how you deal with money issues - can have a disastrous effect on your health and your life.

This problem seems to be predominately in affluent cultures. Luxuries are considered necessities. Where abundance is available, it comes to be expected and missed more sorely if it becomes scarce or disappears.

Helen Steiner Rice, a well-known poet, married Franklin Rice in 1929. Franklin, a wealthy man, was so confident that the nation's problems were short-term and would recover from the economic downturn that he invested even more heavily in the stock market. Shortly after losing his fortune due to that unfortunate decision, Helen discovered that he had killed himself, leaving her this note:

"Darling, the only thing I'm sorry about is that I never could give you all the things I meant to. I hope you believe that I really wanted to give them to you, and I could have given them to you before everything went....Keep the picture of me in my uniform and think of me once in a while...You'll get along fine, I know. You'll always go on. I only knew one world. I just can't go down and become a bum-I have to go out with the band playing."

Of course, what Franklin did caused Helen much more pain than the loss of any material things. She not only no longer had her husband by her side, but after the estate was auctioned off to pay creditors, she had to go back to work. A strong Christian woman, Helen never remarried, but recovered from her loss by seeking God's direction in her life.

As a missionary, I am privileged to have friends around the world who are extremely happy without any possessions to speak of. Some of them have never known the kind of luxuries that many in the developed western world have become accustomed to. Often they don't have enough to eat, but that doesn't stop them from loving God and others. It is not that they are unaware of their lack. It's just that their perspective is on the eternal, not the temporal. Just like Jesus, doing the will of God is their food. Even though there may be instances of suicides in these places, I am unaware of any. My friends are too busy being productive in God's work to worry about what they don't have.

Helen Steiner Rice says,

"Our greatest comfort is to know that 'the same God who helped us before is ready and willing to help us once more.' All God asks of us is that we believe, and we must believe enough and have enough faith in Him that we will refuse to let anything shut Him out of our lives.

Life is a mixture of sunshine and rain,

Laughter and teardrops, pleasure and pain -

Low tides and high tides, mountains and plains,

Triumphs, defeats and losses and gains -

But there never was a cloud that the SUN didn't SHINE THROUGH

And there's nothing that's IMPOSSIBLE for Jesus Christ to do!"

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\* Quote and poem taken from *In the Vineyard of the Lord: Lights and Shadows from the Life of Helen Steiner Rice*, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1979, p. 112, 113