

## Part 8 Final Thoughts for Preparedness

### *Learning to be an overcomer*

**E**mergency preparedness is more than just an accumulation of food, water and other supplies. While these are important, they are incomplete without spiritual convictions, some of which we considered in **Part 4**. Another critical component of your preparation has to do with your mind.

### How the Brain Learns

In recent years, many new insights have come through scientific research into how our brain learns. The psalmist proclaims, *“You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.”* (Psalm 139:13-14) When we ponder the intricate capabilities of the human brain, we should echo those words of praise.

Each of us has unique qualities. Nonetheless, God has designed our brains to function much the same. Therefore, we can gain insight from the research that has been done, especially its application to emergency preparedness.

Through your five senses, your brain receives massive amounts of information every second. Of course, not all that information is useful or necessary, so the brain is designed to filter out the irrelevant. On the other hand, it is also wired to pay attention to certain things, and to determine how long it will retain that information.

What this means is that we tend to remember what catches our attention and what we consider important. In fact, there are two key questions your brain uses to filter input.

- 1) The first is, **“Does it make sense?”** If something doesn't make sense and you cannot understand it, your brain does not have a category by which to process it. That is why explanations, stories, and examples are useful. They provide a connection for the brain to process the new information and compare it to what is already known. Once the information makes sense, the brain can process it.
- 2) Secondly and perhaps more importantly, the brain asks, **“Is the information relevant to me?”** The answer to this question determines whether the information catches your brain's attention. This is critical for your learning and teaching of others. Since people are different, what is important for you may not be to someone else. The brain must assess the significance of the information. If it is significant, the brain puts it into your memory.
  - Interestingly, research has also discovered that emotions play a part in remembering. If we are tired, bored, distracted, frustrated or unhappy, the logic center of the brain goes dormant. On the other hand, when we enjoy a topic, hear a joke or funny story, our brain pays attention. *“A wise person makes learning a joy.”* (Proverbs 15:2a LBT)

Because your brain receives massive amounts of information every second, it also has a protective mechanism to prevent overload. In a sense, it just shuts down. It stops processing information and does not pay attention. We have another protective process known as “cognitive regurgitation.” Basically, just like eating too much can trigger an involuntary response to regurgitate, your brain can as well. When there is too much input, your brain can forget everything it has just taken in, and in some cases even unlearn things it knew before you started.