

More than *Social Security*

By:
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We are all born with an intrinsic need for security. Whether this security is emotional, spiritual, physical or financial we strive to find safety, protection and contentment. We not only strive, we are driven to find security. Our innate desire for refuge and solace can prove to be life sustaining or deadly, depending on where we look and what motivates us. Let me illustrate this point with a practical illustration. Many Americans invest part of their paycheck each pay period toward retirement. Most of us plan how we will survive and exist financially as we grow older in years. This preparation can prove to be wise financial stewardship or a false security. Though not all of us are called or feel it necessary to do so, many of us choose to invest in the future and wisely so. We feel at peace with the knowledge we have money and assets set aside or investments procured so our family is provided for. Many people experience a restful night's sleep knowing once they retire, their bills will be paid, food will sit on their table and a roof will cover their head. This is neither bad nor reckless. The Bible encourages a good, solid work ethic as well as preparation for the future. Regarding the folly of insolence and the need for good stewardship, the Book of Proverbs tells us, *Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest.*¹ In fact, God, through Joseph, preserved the well being of the Egyptians and Israelites by storing up food during the season of plenty to prepare for the season of scarcity. “But Chris!” you may say. “Jesus sent out the disciples in Matthew 10:9-10, saying, *Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts, nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.* And what about the parable Jesus taught in Luke 12 regarding the foolish rich man who stored up the abundance of his harvest? God rebuked him and took his life!” True, but we must make the distinction in Scripture between preparing for the future out of wise foresight and storing up goods for the sake of greed. Selfishness leads to a false sense of security in the goods rather than reliance in God. A few verses later in Luke 12, Jesus informs us we should not have an anxious mind rather we are to direct our attention on the kingdom of God. As we focus on God everything else will fall into place. Jesus notifies us that the source of our focus, desires and dreams will point and lead us to our heart.² The distinction between desire driven security and problem solving solace is as minute as a millimeter yet as infinite as an endless chasm – you are wise to prepare for the future and trust in God but foolish to stockpile and find security in riches, goods or possessions. Both may look good on the outside but it is the inward motivation that makes all the difference in the world. Jesus taught His disciples a valuable lesson on life, relationships and God. Relentless trust in God to meet our needs not only impacts us but our witness and testimony as well. We are good stewards as we stay mindful that God is the One who provides for our needs and has ownership rights to everything we possess. Otherwise, we

¹ Proverbs 6:6-8, NKJV

² Luke 12:29-34, NKJV

walk the slippery slope of finding security in something other than God. Regarding wisdom and folly the author of Proverbs 14:12 tells us, *There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*³ It is not merely the action in and of itself as much as the *intent* of the mature person God is after for His Bride. When we forget this morsel of truth we are prone to fall into legalism and asceticism or swing to the other side of the pendulum into complacency and vanity.

To avoid spiritualizing the whole security issue let us look at another facet of security. This type of security begins at home with our personal people. Mother, father, family members and community have the potential to provide a secure base for a child to grow, develop and prosper. Consistent interactions and sensitive attunement to the child's signals lead to a solid foundation for emotional and mental health. Developmentally, we thrive when our family unit, churches, neighborhoods and schools provide safety and protection. Any reputable literature on attachments will tell you this much. Because children are like softened clay in the process of hardening, children require a life-giving atmosphere to foster emotional, mental, physical and spiritual health. Clay forms in the image that the hands who fashion it desire. If or when trauma occurs something critical transpires in the developmental process. I liken it to throwing a wrench into a running engine. Loud noises erupt, sparks fly and the engine sputters. We do not recover well when something tragic happens to our body or our soul. God allowed a wrench to be thrown into Job's engine. This 'wrench' or unforeseen calamity deeply impacted and scarred him. At one point in his suffering Job reminds God of his frailty then questions the Most High, *Your hands have made me and fashioned me, an intricate unity; yet You would destroy me. Remember, I pray, that You have made me like clay. And will You turn me into dust again?*⁴ Job reminds God he is breakable. Job questions whether God will return him, that which was delicately formed by God's hands, back to its first state - dust. His circumstances did not match his beliefs or his perceptions. Though Job's security was wavering he remained steadfast to serve, trust and worship the Most High. We gain security from our personal people then our secure reality extends to the world around us. If and when our family and community fails to instill a secure base we are left to find somewhere else to drop our anchor.

All humanity sputters and requires repair because bad things happen. Many of us lack necessary good things in life.⁵ A disruption in development and identity occurs in children who are exposed to violence. Research and logic reveal that children who are exposed to violent images on television, in video games and music are more prone to act out violently. Children are negatively impacted by images and stories that promote hostility and aggression. The same process of alteration occurs during emotional development. If parents are unavailable, inconsistent, fearful or abusive, children learn distortions about the world, people and themselves. Instead of personal people and familiar faces that represent and provide well needed security, other avenues become attractive for safety, connection and comfort. Some of these avenues may not be healthy or godly. Take Saddam Hussein, for example. Many of us are familiar with the horrible

³ Proverbs 14:12, NKJV

⁴ Job 10:8-9, NKJV

⁵ These two types of Trauma, both A and B are *Life Model, Living from the Heart Jesus Gives*, concepts.

exploits of the notorious cold-hearted tyrant. What many do not know is his childhood story. His childhood was filled with extreme violence, abandonment and rejection. His mother wanted nothing to do with him so he was cast off. Eventually an older uncle raised him intermittently. Abuse, neglect, violence and torment defined his childhood. Torturing animals became a hobby. Instead of love he received pain, affliction and who knows what else. Most likely, security was not in his vocabulary. I do not excuse or condone this man nor do I approve of anything he represents. Nor do I attribute this man's condition solely to his environment, childhood or circumstances. There is a lot of information we do not know.⁶ However, I want to use him as an example, extreme nonetheless, of what can happen when we lack security and our place to belong becomes deadly and full of wrenches. It not only creates havoc on one person but can effect generations to come.⁷

To close, I encourage you to take a self quiz. Prayerfully spend time contemplating where you find your security and how you handle your innate desire for security. Examine different facets of your life like family, work, church, finances, relationships, reputation, self worth and your personal health and well being. How do you fare in each category in terms of security, safety and contentment? What role did your mother have in teaching you security? What about your father? Did society have an impact on your beliefs pertaining to security? What about school? Do you relate more with the rich man who found security in his belongings or with the disciples who found their security in God and His faithful provision? Do you have any areas you feel you need to surrender or invite God into? How do you do when the storms of life come knocking on your door? Do you fearfully stay in the boat and hope things will settle down or gallantly ask God to give you permission to walk out, like Peter, in Mathew 14 and approach His presence? Because security is a relational issue and, in my humble opinion, an impossible issue to separate from relationships and maturity, I encourage you to discuss security or the lack thereof with others you trust and feel comfortable with. If you find you need support, find several people with whom you can prayerfully work toward your maturity, healing and recovery.⁸

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⁶ I do not know the precise history of his family and other childhood factors, genetic disposition, spiritual issues and the extent of abuse, neglect and so on.

⁷ Mr. Hussein's sons were not the nicest of guys. I would strongly speculate and contend the behavior of their father had a direct impact on their emotional, physical, mental and spiritual well being. Countless people either lost their lives or were negatively impacted by Saddam and his sons.

⁸ I highly recommend resources such as the *Life Model*, *Living from the Heart Jesus Gives*, the *Life Model Study Guide* and *Living With Men* among other resources available from *Lydia Press* for a broader understanding of maturity and security.