


# END-TIMES ISSUES



**#46** Commandment #1 – The god of security.

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1

\* Two weeks ago, we shared about the translation team that had all their hard work burned by an angry group from their community. The persecution continues: all four translators have lost their jobs because their employers learned they were involved in translating Bible passages. Let's continue to pray for our brothers in Christ. Pray for...

**THEY LOST THEIR JOBS BECAUSE THEY WERE CHRISTIANS! I'M GLAD THAT DOESN'T HAPPEN HERE!**

**IT DOES HAPPEN HERE. MANY CHRISTIANS HAVE LOST THEIR JOBS, BEEN PUNISHED, OR BEEN REFUSED PROMOTIONS – ALL BECAUSE THEY REFUSED TO DENY CHRIST!**

**OTHERS HAVE GIVEN-IN TO COMPROMISE, BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO LOSE THEIR JOBS.**

**THEY REFUSED TO LIE ABOUT MORAL ISSUES, OR PARTICIPATE IN ILLEGAL PRACTICES. SOME WERE EVEN PUNISHED FOR THEIR USE OF THE BIBLE WHEN THEY WERE NOT AT WORK!**

(From actual report, used with permission.) 2

**THE ISSUE HERE HAS TO DO WITH SECURITY.**  
Wealth, possessions, safety, happiness...

- Nobody wants to find themselves destitute – unable to provide for their needs... and perhaps even with no place to go.
- But what if you have to choose between security and God... and are not permitted to choose both?

✓ We will start by affirming that a life with security *can* be a legitimate gift from God. But that's only *part* of the issue.

Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil – this is **a gift of God**.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 (NIV)

3

⇒ **SCRIPTURE SAYS A LOT ABOUT PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE.**

- It even tells us to learn from the example of ants!

Ants are creatures of little strength, yet **they store up their food in the summer**; ...

Proverbs 30:25 (NIV); also Proverbs 6:6-8.

- We can even have something for future generations to inherit – Proverbs 13:22.
- In contrast, Old and New Testaments both *strongly condemn laziness*.

⇒ **BUT THE PURSUIT OF SECURITY CAN ALSO BECOME ONE'S GOD.**

**Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But **store up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For **where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**.

Matthew 6:19–21 (BSB)

4

**WE FIRST NEED TO LOOK AT THE TOPIC OF "WORK."**  
Much of our security is related to the money we earn from working.

**WORK IS A MORAL ISSUE – WHETHER OR NOT WE EARN MONEY FROM IT!**

⇒ **WORK GOES ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE TIME OF CREATION.**

- Some of the first commands God gave Adam involved work.

"... fill the earth and **subdue it**; **rule over** the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that crawls upon the earth."

Genesis 1:28b (BSB)

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to **work it** and **take care of it**.

Genesis 2:15 (NIV)

- His first job was to "name" (learn about) some of the animals that were in the garden – Genesis 2:19.
- God also gave us his own example, by his *work* of creation.

5

⇒ **THE BURDENSOME ASPECT OF WORK DID NOT EXIST UNTIL SIN ENTERED THE WORLD.**

- Work *remains* a moral obligation... but now it's often more difficult.

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through **painful toil** you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Genesis 3:17b-19 (BSB)

6

⇒ **WORK IS A MORAL OBLIGATION.** It's also a means of "doing good."

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must **work, doing good** with his own hands, that he may have something to share with the one in need.

Ephesians 4:28 (BSB)

Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and **working** with your hands, just as we instructed you before. Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others.

1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 (NLT)

We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we **worked** night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you.

... we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to **work** shall not eat."

2 Thessalonians 3:7-8, 10b (NIV)

7

✓ **REMINDER: Doing GOOD is a moral obligation at all times.** (WORK is just one aspect of "doing good.")

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us **do good** to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Galatians 6:10 (NIV)

I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to **do good** while they live.

Ecclesiastes 3:12 (NIV)

Love your enemies, **do good** to those who hate you ...

Luke 6:27b (BSB)

- People who are saved are able to do good in a way that is *truly* good and honors God!

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to **do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

8

✓ **LAZINESS is a moral evil.** This way of life is described as the *opposite* of doing what is GOOD.

We hear that some among you are **idle and disruptive**. They are **not busy**; they are **busybodies**. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and **earn the food they eat**.

And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of **doing what is good**.

2 Thessalonians 3:11-13 (NIV)

Our people must learn to devote themselves to **doing what is good**, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live **unproductive lives**.

Titus 3:14 (NIV)

He who has been **stealing** must steal no longer, but must **work, doing good** with his own hands, that he may have something to share with the one in need.

Ephesians 4:28 (BSB)

9

⇒ **HOWEVER, WORK ITSELF CAN BECOME A GOOD.**

- Certain types of work can be sinful, and must *never* be done; but even *good* types of work can become sinful, if it takes over our lives and becomes our god.

- ✓ An example of someone who did this:

There was **no end to his toil**, yet his eyes were **not content with his wealth**.

"For whom am I toiling," he asked,

"and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?"

This too is meaningless—  
a miserable business!

Ecclesiastes 4:8b (NIV)

- ✓ Who/what do you love?

**Whoever loves money** never has enough;  
**whoever loves wealth** is never satisfied with their income.

This too is meaningless.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 (NIV)

10

**WHAT ATTITUDE SHOULD WE HAVE REGARDING "SECURITY"?**

(The "fruit" of our work, along with any blessings we may receive by other means, as God provides.)

⇒ **THE ATTITUDE THAT PEOPLE TEND TO HAVE TOWARD THIS ISSUE INVOLVES A FOCUS ON SELF.**

Rarely is there any focus on one's obligation to love God and people.

- People tend to spend their lives self-absorbed, using their wealth to express "love for self," with little regard for the needs of others (or even the *eternal* needs of others).
- *This attitude even influences how they pray!*

**I HAVE A RIGHT TO USE MY HARD-EARNED MONEY ANY WAY I WANT!**

**JESUS, PLEASE BLESS ME, SO I CAN HAVE SOME FUN!**

... you ask with **wrong motives**, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

James 4:3b (NIV)

11

⇒ **GOD OWNS EVERYTHING WE HAVE.** People tend to ignore this.

- Even if we have just a little, *it belongs to God* – and God has entrusted us with it. We will answer to God for what we do with it.

"Whoever is **faithful with very little** will also be faithful with much, and whoever is **dishonest with very little** will also be dishonest with much.

**So if you have not been faithful with worldly wealth, who will entrust you with true riches? And if you have not been faithful with the belongings of another, who will give you belongings of your own?**

No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

**You cannot serve both God and money."**

Luke 16:10-13 (BSB)

→ A person can be poor, and crave wealth as much as a rich person can (or even more than the rich person).

12

⇒ **A PREOCCUPATION WITH SECURITY – LIVING FOR SELF – IS NOT AN OPTION!** You are just preparing yourself for destruction.

You have lived on earth in **luxury and self-indulgence**.  
You have fattened yourselves in **the day of slaughter**.

James 5:5 (NIV)

- We need to *learn* to do good, instead of being self-preoccupied.

Our people must **learn to devote themselves to doing what is good**, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.

Titus 3:14 (NIV)

- In salvation, God changes people's hearts and minds. So this *learning will occur*. Saved people *learn* to trust God and to repent of their former values and conduct.

For Christ's love compels us, ... that those who live [in Christ] should **no longer live for themselves but for him** who died for them and was raised again.

2 Corinthians 5:14a, 15b (NIV)

13

⇒ **GOD WARNS US TO NOT TURN OUR WEALTH AND SECURITY INTO A GOD!**

- **Greed:** it's idolatry!

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or **greedy** person—such a person is an **idolater**—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for **because of such things God's wrath comes** on those who are disobedient.

Ephesians 5:5-6 (NIV); see also Colossians 3:5b.

- **Wealth and prosperity** can easily take the place of God. ("Mammon," an Aramaic term referring to wealth or prosperity, is often translated as "money" – as it is here.)

No one can serve two masters: Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve both God and money.**

Matthew 6:24 (BSB)

14

**SECURITY – WEALTH, POSSESSIONS, HAPPINESS, ETC. – IS NOT SECURE. IT IS A VERY UNRELIABLE "GOD"!**

- It can *quickly disappear*.

Cast but a glance at riches, and **they are gone**, for they will surely **sprout wings** and **fly off to the sky** like an eagle.

Proverbs 23:5 (NIV)

- It's *easy to lose* through random unfortunate circumstances.

The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither is the bread to the wise, nor the wealth to the intelligent, nor the favor to the skillful. For **time and chance happen to all**.

For surely no man knows his time: Like fish caught in a cruel net or birds trapped in a snare, so men are **ensnared in an evil time that suddenly falls upon them**.

Ecclesiastes 9:11-12 (BSB)

- It can be *stolen or destroyed* – Matthew 6:19-21 (a passage we saw on a previous slide).

15

- Sometimes, it's the *wicked* who seem to have it all.

(Read all of Psalm 73 – describing the frustrations and the conclusion of one who experienced this fact.)

For I envied the arrogant when I saw **the prosperity of the wicked**.

... it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.

Psalms 73:3, 16b-17 (NIV)

**But what about all those promises about prosperity?**

The Old Testament contains many such promises. They are not a *guarantee* that every individual will prosper. These promises describe the "average" that can be expected when a *nation* is influenced by the teachings of Scripture. As far as *individuals* are concerned, many factors will influence things, and may increase or decrease the blessings. Injustice and random, unfortunate circumstances will also influence matters.

16

- Someday, you are going to *die and lose it all*.

**Why** would anyone want to live for something you're *guaranteed* to lose?

Do not be amazed when a man grows rich, when the splendor of his house increases.

**For when he dies, he will carry nothing away;** his abundance will not follow him down. Though in his lifetime he blesses his soul—and men praise you when you prosper—he will join the generation of his fathers, who will never see the light of day.

**A man who has riches without understanding is like the beasts that perish.**

Psalms 49:16-20 (BSB)

Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and **as everyone comes, so they depart**.

**They take nothing** from their toil that they can carry in their hands.

Ecclesiastes 5:15 (NIV)

17

**THE DESIRE FOR SECURITY CAN EASILY CONSUME AND DESTROY A PERSON. IT CAN LEAVE A PERSON WITHOUT GOD.**

- ❖ Jesus warns us with a story about someone who had this focus.

... I will store up all my grain and my goods. Then I will say to myself, "**You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry!**"

Luke 12:18b-19 (BSB)

There was only one problem!

"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night **your life will be required of you**. Then who will own what you have accumulated?'

**This is how it will be for anyone who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God.**"

Luke 12:20-21 (BSB)

[You can read the full story, beginning in Luke 12:15.]

18

✓ **PEOPLE WITH SECURITY HAVE MORE DIFFICULTY RELYING ON GOD.**

**A FOCUS ON RICHES.**

"Truly I tell you, it is **hard** for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven."  
Matthew 19:23b (BSB)

**JESUS SAID THESE THINGS!**

**A FOCUS ON PROSPERITY AND "THE GOOD LIFE."**

"But **woe** to you who are **rich**, for you have already received your comfort.  
**Woe** to you who are **well fed** now, for you will hunger.  
**Woe** to you who **laugh** now, for you will mourn and weep.  
**Woe** to you when all **men speak well of you**, for their fathers treated the false prophets in the same way."  
Luke 6:24-26 (BSB)

**HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO VERSES SUCH AS THIS? (Most people refuse to accept Jesus' warnings.)** **Most respond this way:**

In our country, even the poor are richer than most people in the WORLD!

**YET APPROXIMATELY 100% OF PEOPLE RESPOND THIS WAY:**

**THAT DOESN'T REFER TO ME!**  
I MAY BE RICH, BUT PEOPLE CAN BE RICH AND STILL BE SAVED – LOOK AT ABRAHAM AND KING SOLOMON... THEY WERE RICH!

**THAT DOESN'T REFER TO ME!**  
I'M NOT RICH, LIKE [insert rich person's name] IS!

**THAT DOESN'T REFER TO ME!**  
JESUS DIDN'T REALLY MEAN THAT! OR MAYBE HE WAS JUST EXAGGERATING!

**APPROXIMATELY 0% OF PEOPLE RESPOND THIS WAY:**

**THAT DOES REFER TO ME!**  
I NEED TO REPENT AND LEARN HOW **THE BIBLE** SAYS I SHOULD USE MY RICHES!

**THAT DOES REFER TO ME!**  
I MIGHT NOT HAVE MUCH... BUT I SURE **CRAVE** IT!

**THAT DOES REFER TO ME!**  
I NEED TO DECIDE WHO I AM GOING TO FOLLOW!

✓ *Most people seem to think that all such verses have ceased to have any meaning – and could be safely deleted from the Bible! (They didn't ask God if he wanted to delete those verses.)*

⇒ **YES, IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A PERSON TO BE RICH AND STILL TRUST GOD.**

- Scripture *and* history both tell us that **it is not common**. Both prove what Jesus said: It is *hard* for a rich person to enter God's kingdom.
- In fact, when it comes to using wealth (money, things, etc.) for God's kingdom, *the poor tend to be more generous than the rich!*

**EXAMPLE:**

Now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the churches of Macedonia.

In the terrible ordeal they suffered, their abundant joy and deep poverty overflowed into **rich generosity**. For I testify that they gave **according to their ability and even beyond it**. Of their own accord, they earnestly pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.

And not only did they do as we expected, but **they gave themselves first** to the Lord and then to us, because it was the will of God.

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 (BSB)

**RICHES AND SECURITY CANNOT BE TRUSTED EVEN IN THIS PRESENT LIFE! ★ WE NEED A DIFFERENT FOCUS! ★**

- ✓ We should learn from the Old Testament examples of people and/or nations living in security... then suddenly (often without warning), being overtaken by calamity and destruction.
  - Consider the example of Job – one of the most righteous of people – who lost *everything* in a matter of minutes.
- ✓ It's demonstrable throughout world history. *It will also happen during the end times – and in the days approaching the end.*

But mark this: There will be **terrible times** in the last days.  
2 Timothy 3:1 (NIV)

While people are saying, "Peace and safety," **destruction will come on them suddenly**, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and **they will not escape**.  
1 Thessalonians 5:3 (NIV)

⇒ **WE CAN PURSUE A MORE REALISTIC GOAL THAT IS LESS LIKELY TO FAIL.**

- Here, we repeat the obvious ... for riches are **not forever**, ... that most people forget. ⇒ Proverbs 27:24a (BSB)
- Those who trust in their riches and the righteous** are NOT in the same category!
 

Those who trust in their riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.  
Proverbs 11:28 (NIV)
- FINALLY!  
Here is a good perspective to have!
 

... **give me neither poverty nor riches! Give me just enough to satisfy my needs.**  
For if I grow rich, I may deny you and say, "Who is the LORD?" And if I am too poor, I may steal and thus insult God's holy name.  
Proverbs 30:8b-9 (NLT)



⇒ **WE CAN HAVE ETERNAL GOALS THAT ARE GUARANTEED TO SUCCEED!**  
That will influence how we look at present-day goals.

- Look to the "eternal focus" that will never fail... instead of to the riches and security that we can lose.

Whom have I in heaven but You?  
And on earth I desire no one besides You.  
**My flesh and my heart may fail,**  
but **God is the strength of my heart**  
and my portion forever.

Psalms 73:25-26 (BSB)

- We can have a greater focus on our *eternal* security. This is something we can actually strive to attain!

Therefore, brothers, **strive to make your calling and election sure**. For if you practice these things [in verses 5-9] you will never stumble, and you will receive a lavish reception into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 1:10-11 (BSB)

25

- We can follow the example found in John's prayer: He gives physical well-being a *lower* priority than spiritual well-being.

Dear friend, I pray that **all may go well with you** and that you may be in **good health**, **just as it is well with your soul**.

3 John 1:2 (NET)

#2 PRIORITY

#1 PRIORITY

- We can *still* plan for the future, *aware that those plans will not necessarily succeed*. (We can leave the end results to God.)

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business, and make a profit." **You do not even know what will happen tomorrow!** What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "**If the Lord is willing**, we will live and do this or that."

James 4:13-15 (BSB)

26

**REMEMBER: "FOLLOWING JESUS" HASN'T CHANGED!**

Then Jesus called the crowd to Him along with His disciples, and He told them,

"If anyone wants to come after Me, **he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me**. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and for the gospel will save it.

What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

If anyone is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels."

Mark 8:34-38 (BSB)

**And if you do these things, you will be able to...**

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⇒ **LEARN TO BE CONTENT, WHATEVER YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES.**

... I have learned to **be content** whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of **being content** in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:11b-13 (NIV)

But if we have food and clothing, we will **be content** with these.

1 Timothy 6:8 (BSB)

Keep your lives free from the love of money and **be content** with what you have, for God has said:

"Never will I leave you,  
never will I forsake you."

Hebrews 13:5 (BSB)

28

⇒ **RELY ON GOD, TRUST IN GOD, GET YOUR SECURITY FROM GOD.**  
**GET TRUE LIFE FROM GOD!**

Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to **put their hope** in the uncertainty of wealth, but **in God**, who richly provides all things for us to enjoy. Instruct them to **do good**, to be **rich in good works**, and to be **generous and ready to share**, treasuring up for themselves **a firm foundation for the future**, so that they may take hold of **that which is truly life**.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (BSB)

Our ultimate security can only be in the Creator God, not in a god who is guaranteed to betray us in the end.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil,  
for **You are with me**;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

Psalms 23:4 (BSB)

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**WE CAN SUMMARIZE THESE THINGS...**

- It is good to work, and to pursue a secure future.
- It is good to provide for our own needs; but we also need to consider the needs of others.
- We need to condemn laziness and a preoccupation with self.
- We should *never cease to be doing what is good* (= an expression of love for others), whether or not we have a source of income.

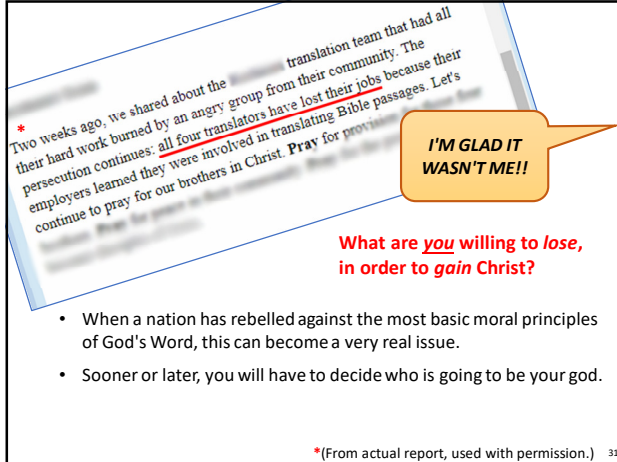
Since we live in a sinful world, we may find ourselves in a situation where we have to *choose between security and obedience to God*.

"You shall have **no other gods** before Me."

Exodus 20:3 (BSB); also Deuteronomy 5:7.

- In that case, we will have to choose one. We cannot choose both.

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\* Two weeks ago, we shared about the \_\_\_\_\_ translation team that had all their hard work burned by an angry group from their community. The persecution continues: all four translators have lost their jobs because their employers learned they were involved in translating Bible passages. Let's continue to pray for our brothers in Christ. Pray for provision.

**I'M GLAD IT WASN'T ME!!**

**What are you willing to lose, in order to gain Christ?**

- When a nation has rebelled against the most basic moral principles of God's Word, this can become a very real issue.
- Sooner or later, you will have to decide who is going to be your god.

\*(From actual report, used with permission.) 31

# Your MISSION

⇒ Make choices now that will prepare you for choices you may need to make in the future.

- You will be developing difficult-to-break habits that are either **good or bad**, that will either **help or hinder** you in the future.

**Does this First Commandment control your choices about finances and security?**  
(If not, you may have *already* denied Christ.)

"You shall have **no other gods** before Me."  
Exodus 20:3 (BSB); also Deuteronomy 5:7.

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