

GOSPEL-CENTERED HEART CHANGE

The Idol of Security

ISAIAH 36

10 1Lt., overtake
4s. 1:27; 51:11 bIs.
25:8; 30:19; 65:19; Rev.
7:17; 21:4

1 2 Kin. 18:13
2 Chr. 32:1

2 H.A., launderer's
2 Kin. 18:17, 20:11;
2 Chr. 32:9-34; Is. 36:2;
36:8 Hs. 7:3

RBC

concerning His Servant

CHAPTER 42

whom I uphold;
My soul delight
in Him;
the nation
voice,
street.

ISAIAH 38

INTRODUCTION:

We all want to feel safe.

We want to know our families will be okay. We want enough money in the bank. We want our health to hold up. We want our children to make wise decisions. We want stable jobs, dependable relationships, and plans that do not suddenly fall apart.

There is nothing wrong with those desires. Many of them reflect good gifts God has given us. Scripture regularly commends wisdom, preparation, diligence, and care for those entrusted to us. The desire for security is not inherently sinful.

The problem begins when security becomes more than a gift. It becomes a necessity.

Without realizing it, our hearts can begin to believe, “I must feel safe.” We arrange our lives to minimize uncertainty. We attempt to protect ourselves from every possible disappointment, loss, or danger. We become anxious when we cannot predict the future, angry when our plans are disrupted, or controlling when people make decisions we cannot manage.

Instead of asking, “How can I trust and honor God in this situation?” we begin asking, “How can I make certain that nothing goes wrong?”
When that happens, security has become an idol.

This idol can be especially difficult to recognize because it often disguises itself as wisdom or responsibility. Sometimes planning ahead is wise. Saving money, caring for our health, protecting our children, and preparing for difficulties can all honor God. But even good preparation can become an attempt to create a life in which we no longer need to trust Him.

Life has a way of exposing that desire. A doctor’s phone call. A job loss. An unexpected bill. A struggling marriage. A child who wanders. A relationship that changes. Suddenly our world feels unstable, and fear begins to take over. Those moments reveal something important. They reveal where our hearts have been looking for security.

This booklet is not intended to make you feel guilty for wanting safety or stability. It is designed to help you examine whether security has quietly become a ruling desire in your heart. Together we will see that God created our desire for security, how that desire can become disordered, and how Jesus offers something far greater than a predictable life.

He offers Himself—the One in whom our eternal security can never be shaken.

UNDERSTANDING THE IDOL OF SECURITY

A. God Created This Desire

The desire for security is not something we invented. God created us to live under His loving care.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed complete security in God's presence. They had meaningful work, abundant provision, perfect relationships, and unhindered fellowship with their Creator. There was no death, disease, betrayal, scarcity, or fear. Before sin entered the world, security was part of God's good design.

Throughout Scripture, God continues to reveal Himself as a protector and provider. He provided food for Israel in the wilderness. He defended His people from their enemies. He cared for widows, orphans, strangers, and the poor. The Psalms repeatedly describe Him as a refuge, fortress, shield, shepherd, and strong tower. Jesus taught His followers to pray for daily bread. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, calmed storms, and welcomed frightened people into His presence. He also taught that a wise person prepares for the future and counts the cost of important decisions.

God is not against security.
He created our desire for it.

He delights to care for His children, and He frequently uses ordinary means to provide for us. Work, savings, medical care, healthy relationships, wise planning, and supportive communities are all gifts from His hand.
The problem is never God's gifts.
The problem is our hearts.

Because of sin, we take good things and make them ultimate things. Instead of receiving security as a gift from God, we begin trusting created things to provide what only God can give.

That is where idolatry begins.

B. What Scripture Says About Security

Few passages address our longing for security more gently—and more powerfully—than Jesus' words in Matthew 6.

READ MATTHEW 6:25–34

Jesus speaks to people concerned about the most basic needs of life: food, clothing, and tomorrow. He does not mock their concerns or pretend their needs are unimportant. Instead, He directs their attention to their heavenly Father.

‘Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’... Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.’
—Matthew 6:31–33 (ESV)

Jesus gives us several important truths.

First, He reminds us that our Father knows what we need. Our needs are not hidden from God. He is never surprised by the bill, the diagnosis, the lost job, or the difficult conversation. Before we recognize a need, our Father already knows it completely.

Second, Jesus reminds us that our Father cares for us. He points to birds that are fed and flowers that are clothed. If God cares for His creation in such detail, how much more will He care for the children He loves?

Third, Jesus reminds us that worry cannot control the future. Anxiety often feels productive because it keeps our minds occupied. We imagine every possible outcome and rehearse how we might respond. But Jesus asks, “Which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?” Worry promises control, but it cannot deliver it.

Finally, Jesus gives us a better pursuit: “Seek first the kingdom of God.” The answer to fear is not mastering every possible outcome. It is entrusting ourselves to our Father and faithfully obeying Him today.

Jeremiah 17:5–8 paints a similar picture through two trees. One places its trust in human strength and withers when the drought comes. The other trusts in the Lord and remains fruitful even during seasons of heat and drought. The difference is not the drought. Both trees experience it. The difference is where their roots are planted.

Scripture does not promise believers a life without uncertainty. It promises us a faithful God who remains with us in every uncertainty.

C. When Security Becomes an Idol

Because security is a good desire, it is easy to mistake our pursuit of it for wisdom. But there is an important difference between wisely preparing for the future and demanding that the future unfold according to our plans.

Security becomes an idol when we believe we must have certainty in order to have peace.

The language of the heart begins to change.

Instead of saying:

“I want to provide wisely for my family,”

the heart says:

“I cannot be okay unless I know we will always have enough.”

Instead of:

“I am grateful for good health,”

the heart says:

“I cannot face the possibility of sickness.”

Instead of:

“I want to guide and protect my children,”

the heart says:

“I must control their choices and guarantee their future.”

Instead of:

“I will plan carefully and trust God with the outcome,”

the heart says:

“My plans must succeed.”

The idol of security slowly reorganizes our lives around avoiding uncertainty.

- We accumulate money but never feel that we have enough.
- We constantly research symptoms because we need reassurance about our health.
- We attempt to control the people around us because their choices affect our sense of stability.
- We avoid obedience when obedience appears risky.
- We refuse to make decisions until we can guarantee the outcome.
- We repeatedly seek reassurance, but relief never lasts.
- We assume that unexpected circumstances mean God has abandoned us.
- We spend more time preparing for imagined disasters than trusting God with today.

None of these behaviors automatically proves that security is an idol. Anxiety may involve physical, emotional, relational, or medical factors, and wise care may include counseling or medical support. We should not reduce every experience of anxiety to personal sin.

Nevertheless, Jesus lovingly invites us to look beneath our fears and ask:

“What do I believe I must have in order to be safe?”

The question is not whether you appreciate security.

The question is whether security has begun to rule you.

Whenever we are willing to sin to obtain security—or tempted to respond sinfully when security is threatened—security has become more than a gift.

It has become an idol.



THE HEART MAP

Understanding the Heart. Applying the Gospel. Producing Fruit.



HEAT

Life circumstances apply pressure to us.

Job loss
Unexpected expense
Uncertain future
Health scare
Relationships change



THORNS

Our idols drive our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors.

Anxiety
Controlling behavior
Anger and irritability
Withdrawal and fear
Overworking
Manipulation



HEART

Heat exposes what we treasure most.

I tie my peace and safety to what I can see, plan, control, or accumulate.



GOSPEL

The Gospel confronts idols and gives us what our hearts truly need.

"My Father knows what I need."
(Matthew 6:32-34)
"My life is hidden with Christ."
(Colossians 3:2-3)
"He will never leave or forsake me."
(Hebrews 13:5)



FRUIT

Responding in faith produces Christlike fruit.

Peace that guards my heart
Contentment
Generosity
Courage
Faithful obedience



Security Idol
"I must be safe."



THE GOAL

Love the Lord your God with all your heart by repenting of other loves and trusting in Him above all.



THE PROMISE

God is at work in all of this for His glory and our good.
Ephesians 1:11

IDENTIFYING THE IDOL OF SECURITY

Most of us do not wake up thinking, “Today I am going to worship security.” Yet the desire for security can quietly influence countless decisions.

It shapes how we spend money, how we approach our health, how we respond to change, how we parent, how we handle relationships, and whether we obey God when the outcome is uncertain.

The purpose of this section is not to shame you for feeling afraid. It is to help you honestly ask a deeper question:

Has my desire for security become a ruling desire?

We often do not recognize what controls our hearts until it is threatened. When your sense of security is disrupted, what rises to the surface?

A. What Do I Fear Losing?

Our fears often reveal our treasures.

What possibility occupies your thoughts most often?

- Losing your job?
- Running out of money?
- Receiving a serious diagnosis?
- Being rejected or abandoned?
- Watching a child make destructive choices?
- Experiencing conflict in your marriage?
- Losing the respect of others?
- Growing old without someone to care for you?

Fear often begins with something we genuinely value. But it becomes spiritually revealing when the possibility of losing that thing feels like the loss of everything.

The idol of security says:

“If I lose this, I will not be okay.”

Faith says:

“Even if I lose this precious gift, Christ will remain faithful.”

Reflection Questions

What am I most afraid of losing?

Why does that possibility feel so threatening?

If I lost that thing, what would I be tempted to believe about God?

What would remain true about Christ even if this fear came to pass?

B. What Am I Trying to Control?

Control is one of the most common ways we attempt to manufacture security. We make detailed plans. We anticipate every possible problem. We try to manage other people's decisions and emotions. We rehearse conversations before they happen. We become frustrated when someone does not follow our advice or when circumstances refuse to cooperate.

Planning is not wrong. Scripture commends wisdom and preparation. The revealing question is: What happens when my plans are disrupted?

A controlling heart may become angry, demanding, manipulative, withdrawn, or overwhelmed. It may insist that others behave in a particular way before it can rest.

Beneath that desire for control is often a quiet belief:
"If I do not hold everything together, everything will fall apart."

The Gospel reminds us that we were never the ones holding everything together. Jesus is.

'He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.'
—Colossians 1:17

We are responsible to act faithfully, but we are not responsible to govern the universe. That position already belongs to Christ.

Reflection Questions

What people or circumstances am I most tempted to control?

How do I respond when someone rejects my advice or changes my plans?

Do I confuse being responsible with being in control?

What burden am I carrying that belongs to God rather than to me?

C. Where do I Run for Reassurance?

When uncertainty appears, where do you instinctively turn? Do you repeatedly check your bank account? Search the internet for medical answers? Ask several people the same question, hoping for greater certainty? Watch the news constantly? Review conversations for signs that a relationship is in danger? Distract yourself through entertainment, food, shopping, work, or social media?

Some of these actions may be reasonable in moderation. But they become revealing when reassurance never lasts.

The idol of security is never satisfied. Each answer produces another question. Each precaution creates another possible danger. Each attempt at control reveals one more thing we cannot control.

Temporary reassurance may calm us for a moment, but it cannot give lasting peace.

God invites us to bring our fears to Him. He calls us to pray, remember His promises, seek wise counsel, and take the next faithful step. An idol sends us into an endless search for certainty that God has never promised to give.

Reflection Questions

Where do I instinctively run when I feel uncertain?

What kind of reassurance do I repeatedly seek?

How long does that reassurance usually last?

Do I bring my fears to God before trying to silence them elsewhere?

D. How Do I Respond When Plans Unravel?

Unexpected circumstances can reveal the heart quickly.

- A carefully prepared budget is disrupted by an emergency.
- A medical test produces an uncertain result.
- A child makes an unexpected decision.
- A secure job suddenly changes.
- A relationship you depended upon becomes strained.
- A plan that seemed certain falls apart.

How do you respond?

- Do you become angry?
- Panicked?
- Demanding?
- Withdrawn?

- Accusing?
- Despairing?
- Do you assume the worst?
- Do you immediately conclude that God has forgotten you?

Strong emotions are not automatically sinful. Painful events should affect us, and Scripture gives us language for grief, lament, and fear. The question is not whether we experience emotion. The question is where we go with it.

Trials can either drive us deeper into our attempts at control or draw us nearer to the God who controls what we cannot.

Often our response to uncertainty reveals whether our peace rests in predictable circumstances or in a faithful Father.

Reflection Questions

Which kinds of uncertainty are hardest for me to tolerate?

What comes out of my heart when my plans unravel?

Do I interpret unexpected circumstances as evidence that God is absent?

What would trusting God look like in my present uncertainty?

JESUS IS OUR SECURITY

READ Romans 8

Security isn't found in controlling tomorrow.

Security is found in belonging to Christ.

The idol of security promises, "If you can make life safe, then you'll finally have peace." But life was never meant to be controlled. Jesus never promised His followers a life free from suffering. He promised something far better.

He promised Himself.

Because of Christ, I Am Completely Accepted

One of our deepest fears is rejection.

We wonder, What if I fail? What if I don't measure up? What if God gives up on me?

The Gospel answers those fears with one breathtaking sentence:

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."
—Romans 8:1

Think about those words.

-Not less condemnation.

-Not delayed condemnation.

-No condemnation!

Because Jesus took our condemnation at the cross, we never have to fear God's judgment again. The Judge has become our Father.

That is real security.

Because of Christ, My Father is Always for Me

The security idol whispers, "You're on your own. You'd better make sure everything works out."

Romans 8 says exactly the opposite.

"If God is for us, who can be against us?"

—Romans 8:31

Notice Paul doesn't promise an easy life. He promises a faithful God. How do we know God is for us? Paul points us to the cross.

"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"

—Romans 8:32

The cross forever settles the question of whether God can be trusted.

If the Father gave His Son when we were His enemies, He will certainly care for us now that we are His children.

Every time fear whispers that God has forgotten you, look back to Calvary.

The cross is God's eternal declaration: "I am for you."

Because of Christ, Nothing Can Separate Me from His Love

Every earthly security eventually fails. Money disappears. Health fades. Relationships change. Plans unravel. Even our own strength gives out.

But there is one thing that can never be taken away.

"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

—Romans 8:38–39

Paul searches heaven and earth for something capable of separating God's children from Christ. He can't find anything. Not your past. Not your future. Not your failures. Not your fears. Not even death itself.

If you belong to Jesus, your greatest need has already been met, your greatest enemy has already been defeated, and your eternal future has already been secured. That is the security your heart has been searching for all along.

Reflection Questions

When life feels uncertain, where do I instinctively run for security?

Which of the three truths in this chapter is hardest for me to believe today?

What fear am I carrying that I need to place into my Father's hands?

How does the cross assure me that God is for me?

What would it look like to seek God's kingdom first this week instead of trying to control tomorrow?

Gospel Meditation

Read Romans 8:31–39 slowly. Read it more than once.

As you read, notice what Paul doesn't say.
He doesn't say God's children will never suffer.
He doesn't say life will always make sense.
He doesn't say we'll always know what tomorrow holds.
Instead, he reminds us of something far greater.
God is for us.

He has already proven His love by giving His own Son.
If He has given us Christ, He will never withhold anything we truly need.

Then Paul asks a series of questions.
"Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?"
"Who is to condemn?"
"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"
The answer to every question is the same. No one.

Nothing in your past can separate you.
Nothing in your present can separate you.
Nothing waiting for you tomorrow can separate you.

Your security has never rested on your ability to hold onto Christ.
It has always rested on Christ's ability to hold onto you.

Today, release your grip on the things you've been trusting to keep you safe.
Rest instead in the hands of your Good Shepherd.

The One who gave His life for you will never let you go.
No circumstance is greater than your Father's love. No fear is stronger than your Savior's grip. Your security is not found in a safe life, but in a faithful Christ.

Verse to Carry with You

If God is for us, who can be against us?
—Romans 8:31