



"The desire for safety stands against every great and noble enterprise."

—Tacitus

02-Jan-04

Feeling Secure?

As the winter holidays surged into full gallop, the government raised the color-coded terror alert system to "orange," meaning the chance of terrorist activity is "elevated"—and only one tier down from "red," which evidently signals the end of [the world](#) as we know it. This, of course, threw the travel industry into a tizzy, as heightened security measures slowed the processing of travelers and goods through airports, ports, train stations, and bus terminals to a crawl at a time when these transportation hubs were the busiest. Officials should be thankful that Americans are so compliant, or they would also have domestic insurgencies to deal with.

We need to take a step back to contemplate what security is these days. Not that long ago, most people in the United States did not worry about locking their front doors or their car doors. The odds of a thief choosing one's house or automobile to burgle were miniscule, so few people—especially those outside the larger cities—gave security a second thought. Some felt so secure that they left the keys in the ignition overnight!

Then came rising murder rates, gangs, drive-by shootings, home invasions, car-jackings, and a host of other criminal activities—all reported breathlessly

as lead stories on the local evening news—and many of us no longer felt safe even in our own homes. The *coup de grâce* hit on September 11, 2001, in the form of four fuel-laden airplanes used as flying bombs against 3,000 of our fellow citizens. This had the planned effect of terrorizing large segments of our population to the point of extreme vulnerability: No one was safe anytime or anywhere.

Consider, too, the gargantuan task the government has in securing America against terrorism. First, the U.S. has literally thousands of miles of open borders along both seaboards, as well as with Canada and Mexico. Second, thousands of domestic and international flights cross our airspace each day, taxing both our air-traffic control systems and potentially our air defenses. Third, America is so large—both in terms of area and population—that terrorists have little problem hiding among us. Fourth, our free society allows and encourages freedom of religion, speech, and association, not to mention the right to bear arms, so that our laws do little to impede terrorist groups from supporting violence against Americans. Fifth, Americans are generally a tolerant people who put up with a great deal of grief before they react.

Feel secure?

Possibly the worst part of security in America is the constant media bombardment of anxiety-raising "news." Every peep of intelligence concerning al Qaeda raises questions about its plans, and we had better believe that its operatives could strike anywhere! Every hole in our Homeland Security plan is scrutinized and condemned, making Joe Citizen feel that his government is failing in its prime directive to provide for the common defense. Every stratagem devised to prevent the next terrorist strike receives challenges on constitutional grounds, fueling fears that Americans are not only susceptible to attack but losing their freedoms in the bargain!

How can we feel secure when we are constantly told we are not?

Christians have an advantage over others when it comes to feeling secure; we have the comfort of the Scriptures to give us contentment, [peace](#), and hope despite the terrors of the times. We truly believe that "all things work together for good to those who [love God](#), to those who are the called

according to His purpose" ([Romans 8:28](#)). We can cast "all [our] care upon Him, for He cares for [us]" ([I Peter 5:7](#)), and we are confident, even if we must suffer "a while, [He will] perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle" us (verse 10).

Throughout the Bible we see the examples of God's people in times of trouble, yet with God's help, they endure it in [faith](#) and emerge victorious. Even those who die, sometimes horribly and unjustly, have the hope of the resurrection ([I Peter 1:3-5](#)) and the comfort of God's promise of eternal life to those who believe ([John 3:15](#); [I John 5:13](#)). Our confidence and contentment are not in any way a resignation to fate but full assurance that God has never once failed to perform what He has said He will do ([Numbers 23:19](#); [Isaiah 55:11](#); [Hebrews 6:18](#)).

With this surety, we take [Hebrews 13:5-6](#) seriously: "For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The LORD IS my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (see [Psalm 56:11](#); [118:6](#)).

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Be Still!](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

The end-time proclivity of "running to and fro" like so many ants is not something of God. He did not intend for us to live in such a fast-paced, stress-filled world. We need to cultivate the practice of slowing down, getting out of the "rat race" and being still, stopping our frenetic lifestyles to get in sync with God. Being still (curtailing movement and speech) is to our mental, emotional, and spiritual health as fasting is to our physical health. It helps us to get in the right attitude, to see righteous reasoning, to receive instruction, to see God at work in and for us, and to know God.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[What, Me Worry?](#)

by Mike Ford

It is not uncommon to worry about one's financial situation. It has never been easy for most people to make ends meet, causing anxiety. Yet, in His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ commands us not to worry about our lives, food, drink, or clothing. Considering what life was like in His day, Mike Ford explains, Jesus' simple solution to this common problem will work for Christians just as well now as then.

If you would like to subscribe to the C.G.G. Weekly newsletter, please visit our [Email Subscriptions page](#).
