

Believing is our Security  
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“Those who love me will keep my word...”

Nearly half of women fear life as a bag lady.

They might have good salaries, money in their purses, decent savings and investments — but still they are afraid that they will wind up broke, forgotten and destitute.

Bag ladies.

According to *The Washington Times* (August 23, 2006)\*, a recent survey of almost 2,000 women reveals that 90 percent of them feel financially insecure. Forty-six percent are troubled by a “tremendous fear of becoming a bag lady,” and this anxiety actually increases as incomes rise. Among those with annual incomes of more than \$100,000, 48 percent of women fear a life of destitution.

Lily Tomlin. Gloria Steinem. Shirley MacLaine. Katie Couric. “All admit to having a bag lady in their anxiety closet,” writes MSN money columnist Jay McDonald. They all suffer from the bag lady nightmare. What’s going on here?

Women have complicated fears about money, observes Judith Briles, a Denver financial adviser. “They fear failure, or making mistakes. They fear they are expendable.” Because of this, women are twice as likely as men to set aside a secret stash of money. Ladies, what’s hiding under your mattress! Two-thirds of the women surveyed said that the best thing about having money is the sense of security it brings.

Men might crave the power or status that comes with money. But women like the security.

How do we reconcile this with the words of scripture today?

In Lystra, Paul and Barnabas found an insecurity that seemed only to be met by the local gods worshipped by the people. The people were so desperate for some experience of their gods that when Paul and

Barnabas came and one of their own was healed they thought that they had been divinely visited.

In our reading of the Revelations those found at the throne of God and the Lamb are permitted to see God's face and his name will be on their foreheads. Again, in the biblical language we have an example of naming as ownership much like Adam had dominion over the earth and creatures he had named.

Lastly, the gospel speaks of the Advocate which is the Holy Spirit, sent in Jesus name to both teach and remind the disciples all that Jesus has spoken. Here security is in knowing the peace of Christ that the world cannot give. The disciples are anxious that with Jesus going away they will be left destitute. And yet, the promise he leaves them is that he is coming to them. Perhaps a promise may not have much value in today's world. Perhaps a promise may not mean much because it depends on one keeping his word. That promise and that word is in fact the very basis of our security today as it was of the disciples.

There is a connection between keeping Jesus word and promise and being loved. "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

This is not the warm and fuzzy kind of love that we might hope. This is not the security of the bag lady syndrome. This is the hope of all Christians. This legacy of Christ left to us in the written records is his testament and it is sure and binding. How do we know what Jesus says is real?

Jesus speaks of the witness of the Holy Spirit. In the Jewish faith, whenever there were two or more witnesses to a statement it was law, it was true and binding. Jesus goes one step further – he makes a prediction that he says will come true and when it does the disciples will know he is right and that his word is truth. That prophecy produces faith. That's the purpose for prophecy yesterday and today – to produce the belief that Jesus is the Son of God. His promise and his word are given to all as lasting prophecies that "those who love

me will keep my word” will have in themselves the witness of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit living at home with them.

You know the name Home Depot? Is it a name you can trust? What would Home Depot be without the goods it says it will have? Well, maybe 90% of the time it does have what you are looking for. Will God not deliver the goods my friends in the home he created for himself? Will God not dwell securely in those who love him and keep his word? You can go all the way to the bank on that.

George Taubmann did just that. He is director of Shelter Now International in Afghanistan. On his return to the country after his imprisonment by the Taliban, he said, “God has given me my life again, not to preserve it, but to give it again to the service of others.”

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May we all find our security in the Risen Christ whose words are true, yesterday, today and tomorrow. AMEN

\* Harper, Jennifer. “Nearly half of women fear life as a bag lady.” *The Washington Times*. August 23, 2006. [washingtontimes.com](http://washingtontimes.com).

\*\* Quoted in *Christianity Today*, October 7, 2002, 13.