In late 2007, eighty-three year-old Raymond Bunte confronted two young thugs helping themselves to his neighbor, Dolores Hendershot's valuables, out of her suburban San Antonio home. Clutching his shotgun, he blocked their exit and ordered the men to lie down on the ground. They ignored the old-timer and threatened him. He pulled the trigger. One criminal is dead; the other is behind bars.

A few months earlier, just south of Little Rock, 93 year-old Willie Hill woke to find a hoodlum stuffing his pockets with Willie’s money, his pocket knife and his hearing aid. 24 year-old Douglas Williams was mighty surprised when Willie reached for his revolver and shot the home invader in the throat.

Finally, in May of that same year, sixty year-old Shirley Reed was about to get into her car outside her apartment in Dallas. 19-year-old Charles Poursoltani suddenly materialized beside her, pointed a gun at her and demanded the keys to her car. Grandma Shirley declined to comply and instead she wrested the gun out of her assailant’s hand and shot him.

These true stories help us ask how the good Lord wants us to relate to our possessions. Of course we are morally obliged to defend our lives, even with deadly force, but how far should we go to defend our property?

Ancient Jewish wisdom probes the protection of possessions in this verse:

*If the thief be discovered breaking in and he is struck and dies, there is no blood guilt.*

(Exodus 22:1)

Ancient Jewish wisdom explores the nuances of this verse over many pages, but one concept drawn from the verse is that you are not morally obliged to let someone escape with your property.

You originally obtained your possessions honestly. It follows that you used...
Dear Rabbi,

I have just finished reading your book *Thou Shall Prosper* and I found it mind blowing. I am Zimbabwean, living through one of the worst periods of hyperinflation ever seen, and I have many unanswered questions. I am a born again Christian and I love God dearly. I found the commandments you spoke of in your book insightful and I have practiced many of them for some time now.

My question is how does one make it through a hyperinflationary environment? How can those who believe in God stand apart and prosper in times like this?

Priscah

See Rabbi Lapin’s Answer

Ask a Question

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