

“MY LOVE WILL COVER YOU”

“I do not slumber. I do not sleep. I am your Keeper—the One who goes before you and stands beside you, your rear guard. You have never left My sight. I have gone to great lengths to guard and protect you. I have defended and sheltered you when you were unaware. Time and time again, I have hidden you in the shadow of My wings (Psalm 91:4). *I am* your hiding place, your refuge, your present help in time of need! When you are weak, call out to Me and I will lead you; My right hand shall hold you (139:10). I shall preserve you from trouble and surround you with songs of deliverance (32:7).”

As time drew near for Christ to “*depart from this world to the Father*” (John 13:1), He covered His disciples in the Word and in prayer. They were not left exposed and vulnerable but equipped for the trials and temptations that laid ahead. Christ was their Keeper and He would see to it that they were given “*all things that pertained to life and godliness*” (2 Peter 1:3), so that they would endure and forever be with Him where He was (John 17:24).

If you knew what trials and temptations lay before you, would you listen to and heed Christ’s instructions with greater vigilance? Why or why not? _____

Weak

After an evening of sorrow and shaken confidence, Peter, James and John closed their eyes and drifted to sleep. As they lay motionless in the garden, Jesus knelt and prayed. When He returned, He found them too weak to stand, too discouraged to stay awake. “*Watch and pray,*” He said, “*lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*” (Matthew 26:41). Little did they know what trials and temptations were before them.

When you are tired or under a great deal of physical or emotional stress, when you feel as if you are standing alone, how do you behave? _____

How can prayer keep you from temptation? _____

Read the account in Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, and Luke 22:39-46.

Jesus had asked the disciples to “*stay...and watch*”, not because He was unsure when His betrayer would appear, but because *the betrayer* was lying in wait.

What is meant by the phrase, “*the spirit is... willing, but the flesh is weak*” (Matthew 26:41)? Describe a time when Christ’s statement applied to your situation. _____

What did Jesus understand about the enemy that caused Him to repeatedly wake and warn the disciples? Read Deuteronomy 25:18, 2 Samuel 17:2, and Luke 4:1-2, 13. _____

The Keeper

While enroute to the garden that night, Jesus went before the Father in intercession. He began His prayer for His disciples by declaring ownership of their lives. His words reveal that He had assumed full responsibility for their lives—their care, protection, and sanctification.

Read Christ's prayer in John 17:6-19.

Describe love that "covers". _____

How did Christ accomplish this per this passage? _____

John 17:11b says, "*Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me.*" The Greek word for "keep" in this passage is *tereo*, which means to attend to carefully, take care of; to guard; to keep in the state in which he is; to observe¹; to keep in safety, preserve, maintain.²

In verse 12, Christ stated, "*I have kept them; none of them is lost*" (NKJV). Other versions state, "*I guarded them*". How does this speak to you? _____

Now read Psalm 121:1-8. According to this passage, how else does God "keep" you? _____

"*The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand*" (v.5). The Hebrew word for *keeper*, *samar*, paints a vivid picture of God's protective hand upon you. It means to "to maintain in safety from injury, harm, danger". Not only is He a hedge about you, but a covering that guards, protects, and shelters.

Write 2 Thessalonians 3:3 in the space provided. _____

Does this mean that God will prevent you from sinning³, or that your life will be free from trial⁴? Explain. _____

How does Jude 1:24 apply? _____

Consider what difficulties the disciples would soon face. How had Christ equipped them? _____

¹ Strong, James: *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Showing Every Word of the Text of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996, S. G5083

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000).

³ Review 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 and James 1:12-16.

⁴ Review 1 Peter 1:6-7.

The Word

As Jesus continued to pray, He said, *“I have given them Your word”* (John 17:14). Return to John 17 and reread verses 13-19.

What does Jesus ask of the Father in the following verses:

- v.11 _____
- v.13 _____
- v.15 _____
- v.17 _____

Jesus placed great emphasis on the observance of God’s Word and the protection of His disciples. Undoubtedly, there is a correlation between keeping His Word and joy, practicing His Word and resisting the adversary, applying His Word and sanctification.

Christ gave the disciples His Word as an act of love. How do the following verses speak of Christ’s covering love?

Psalms 119:9-11, 133, 165 _____

Psalms 1:1-3, 19:7-14 _____

Proverbs 2:1-8 _____

John 15:10-11 _____

Ephesians 6:10-18 _____

Jesus had spent much time equipping His disciples for the battles of life—including those before them. He had bathed them in His Word—giving them instruction and assurance, and now He interceded for them.

Why do we often neglect the things that will give us the greatest “success” in life? _____

Covered

When Jesus exhorted the disciples to pray in the garden that night, for what should they have been praying? _____

If Peter were able to relive that night, what would he have done differently? Read his words in 1 Peter 5:8-9. _____

The Father knew the disciples' frailties, just as He knows ours. Well before they arrived in Gethsemane that night, He knew that they desired to be strong, but their flesh was weak. As their Keeper, Jesus covered them in prayer *before* they understood that it was needed.

Think on Hebrews 4:14-16.

Read the following Psalms and record God's faithfulness to "cover" you.

Psalm 32:6-8 _____

Psalm 57:1-3 _____

Psalm 63:6-8 _____

*"Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. **But I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail**"* (Luke 22:31-32, NIV, emphasis mine).

In closing, read Psalm 91.