

Love Protects

Protects, Preserves, Frees

4/2/24

Review 1 Corinthians 13: 1-7

Part One: God's love **always protects** us physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and relationally. It protects us in every area and always. The Greek word for "protects" is **stegēi**, which literally means "**to cover,**" which includes **protecting, preserving, and freeing.**

Your banner over me is love. (Song of Solomon 2:4)

The Lord's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in Him. (Psalm 32:10)

The Armor of God (Ephesians 6: 10-18)

I love this simple reminder of God's protection (Instagram video)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vyb-sTrY_Y8 start at 2:25

God protects us in the Macro and the Micro.

PROTECTS

God Has our backs. He fights for us. He avenges us, saves us from enemies, and exalts us above our foes. (Psalm 18: 47-48)

He never slumbers. My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to slip; your protector will not slumber. (Psalm 121:3)

He watches over the details of our lives. The Lord will keep you from all harm—He will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore. Psalm 121: 7-8

He intervenes/prays for us. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. Romans 8:26

PRESERVES

Equips us—Equips us for every good thing to do His will. (Hebrew 13:21)

Guidance —Gives us the Word and His Holy Spirit for guidance.

Always there—He is with us through it all.

Gives us the bigger picture by changing our perspective to the eternal spiritual realm. (2 Corinthians 4:18)

FREES US TO BE OUR BEST SELVES

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Freedom (2 Cor 3:17). Because our identity is in Christ, we are free from death and from being defined by our circumstances. His death brought freedom for us who were enslaved to sin so that we could be adopted into God's family. (Galatians 4:5)

Protects us from being Tied Up —The Jews were tied up with rules and ceremonies. God saves us by removing our heavy burdens. He frees us from worry, unforgiveness, fear, guilt, shame, difficult relationships. **What ties you up and stops you from fully living?**

The key is to turn to God honestly and remember His faithfulness.

Reading Scripture, Praying, and Selah

Selah means to pause and reflect (carefully examine, measure, and value what is being said. This word occurs 71 times in 39 Psalms and thrice in Habakkuk 3: 74 times in the Bible.

God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling. Selah. (Psalm 46: 1-3) In the older translations (King James, English Standard, New American Standard).

Transformation happens in the Pause—by **grappling** with the Word, **processing** with God, **contemplating**, and **remembering** God’s goodness.

Read John Mark Comer’s Book, titled Practicing the Way, p.49 & 50

Reflecting on God’s Protection over our lives

The Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12) Like that sermon that spoke directly to you.

The key is to turn and remember.

The LORD is my Shepherd [to feed, to guide, and to shield me], I shall not want. He lets me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still and quiet waters. He **refreshes and restores my soul (life)**; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the [sunless] valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod [to protect] and Your staff [to guide], they comfort and console me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You have anointed and refreshed my head with oil; My cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy and unfailing love shall follow me all the days of my life, And I shall dwell forever [throughout all my days] in the house and in the presence of the LORD.

The 23rd Psalm says much about God’s Protection/Provision, Care, Refreshment, Generosity, Guidance, Strength, Comfort, and Abundance. I came that they may enjoy life and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]. John 10:10

Part 2—Protecting One Another Through Love

When God commanded us to love others, He also intended us to protect one another. The way to love others is to **realize God loves us**, warts and all. It's in that humility but security that we can love without having to prove ourselves. Humility is a relationship builder. Love covers a multitude of sin. (1 Peter 4:8)

Love also has boundaries. Above all, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. (Proverbs 4:23) Concentrate on the desires that keep you on the right path. Make sure your affections push you in the right direction. Keep your eyes fixed on your goal, and don't get sidetracked by detours that lead to sin.

1 Corinthians 10:23—Setting Boundaries for Edification: “I have the right to do anything you say—but not everything is beneficial. I have the right to do anything-, but not everything is constructive.” This verse addresses the need to set boundaries based on what is edifying and beneficial. It encourages discernment in personal choices and actions, emphasizing their impact on spiritual growth and others.

As Iron Sharpens Iron, so one person sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17)
The Bible says much about our relationships and does not want us entangled. Love is the supreme way, so sometimes, instead of reacting and rehashing, it is better to pray and protect. It is vital to have boundaries to focus on the higher ways of love and compassion.

LOVE PRAYS! Psalm 141:2 and Revelation 5:8 show how precious our prayers are to God – incense before the Lord in golden bowls.

The Prayer of a Righteous One is Powerful and Effective. (James 5:16)
Susan Kim's Story on the Power of Prayer,

Questions:

1. What area of God's protection spoke to you personally today? Was it how God Love Protects, Preserves, or Frees?
2. What ties you up and stops you from fully living?
3. Selah – what does God want you to pause and think about from today?
4. How does the idea of contemplating, meditating, and processing with God apply to you personally?
5. Did anything come to mind when we meditated on Psalm 23?
6. What attribute of God do you most appreciate right now, and how can you share that with others?
7. How does knowing our prayers outlast our time on earth bring you peace?