

Father, Protect Them

Prayer for Spiritual Covering

By Lisa Crump

As followers of Jesus Christ, do we really need spiritual protection? Since we have an enemy whose goals are nothing short of “to steal and kill and destroy” (John 10:10), it is clear. Yes, absolutely all Christians need divine protection! I expect we all have a testimony to prove it.



Yet what is the foundation of our spiritual protection? In the prayer with His Father, recorded in John 17, Jesus gives us the answer:

“I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me” (v. 11, emphasis added).

Jesus continues in verse 13:

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one” (emphasis added).

Jesus expressed in His prayer that the power of His Father's name (in turn given to Jesus) delivered the disciples from the enemy. Can His name alone carry such authority in the spiritual realm? Yes!

Last fall I was horseback riding with two young girls. In a flash one horse took off too fast. Its rider was being dragged beneath it, and I knew the young girl's life was in danger. Horses are beautiful creations of God's hand. However, their power in motion is fearsome when they are out of control. Immediately I screamed, "God! God! God!"

Within moments the endangered girl's boot came off, releasing her from the binding of the stirrup. I ran as fast as I could to her. She had some scratches but was otherwise unharmed. Instant relief and joy flooded my senses. I knew the Holy Spirit had guided my "SOS prayer" with no other words than His name.

Many times, when under assault, I have quietly called Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in my spirit and released the battle to Him as 2 Chronicles 20 teaches. Jehoshaphat called upon God when surrounded by enemies—and God spared the Israelites by turning their enemies on each other. When Jehoshaphat did not know what to do, he cried out to God and stayed focused on Him. He knew God's very name has ultimate authority.

Jesus Knows Warfare

We will go through spiritual warfare just as Jesus did. He personally experienced Satan at work when He "was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry" (Matt. 4: 1-2). Fasting draws one deeply into the Lord's presence and purposes. Certainly the enemy despised Jesus' victory and preparedness.

What an opportune time for warfare! Jesus was weary from the wilderness, hungry from a long fast. Satan's approach is

always intentionally timed. But Jesus was victorious in walking in the Spirit with His Father. All three of the recorded temptations in Matthew 4 point to ways Jesus would have brought division to the holy relationship of God the Father and God the Son (Himself) if He had given in to the devil. His response, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only'" (v. 10), serves as a model for us.

Protection from Division

One of Satan's most effective strategies is to create mistrust, suspicion, and division. Let's look at two relationships where the enemy seeks to divide:

First, Satan wants to divide us from our Lord God Himself.

Again, we see Satan's attempt to get Jesus to worship him. The top need of my own personal prayer is based on Psalm 91:1-2: "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"

I believe the word dwelling implies inhabitation, not an occasional visitation. It is an intentional, daily, abiding time with our Lord God. It is the most satisfying relationship we can ever have.

Again Jesus is our best model: "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:16). He knew the importance of meeting with His Father—often. This statement in Luke comes in the context of His extensive preaching and healing (v. 15). Jesus "rested" with the Almighty, in His presence.

As we hope to model Jesus' time with His Father, maybe your warfare arises like mine. There are so many things to do today that I must get right to it! I have come to dislike the four-letter word busy, simply an acronym for "being under Satan's yolk."

When I hear this word busy used so frequently by many Christians, I want to scream No! A precious sister in the Lord has reminded me three times in the past six months that our Lord is telling her, "My children are not spending enough time with Me."

Of course, the enemy helps us rationalize and thus keeps us under his yolk—too busy to spend time alone sitting, listening, thanking our great I AM. How grieved the Lord must be as He waits for His children to simply be with Him.

Certainly Mary's investment of time proved better than Martha's, as recorded in Luke 10:39: "[Mary] sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said." In Martha's time of need, Jesus told her, "Few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (v. 42). The enemy cannot steal what we glean in our time with the Lord. It is priceless, a place of protection.

One of my favorite things to do is to spend time with my granddaughter. When I hear her call me "Nana," my heart leaps because I love her with all my heart. In a similar way, spending time with the Lord builds our love for Him too. Time is our most limited commodity. The more of it the Lord has, the less room for our foe. Even though I still go through seasons of struggle with this dwelling time with my Lord, I have determined to keep growing in this sacred time. His grace is truly sufficient. He will not abandon or move away. He remains near.

Second, Satan wants to divide God's people and destroy our unity with one another.

When key relationships are in peril, it is all-consuming. We find it difficult to focus. And we can easily lose our effectiveness.

Working with diverse people can be the most rewarding part of ministry life for me. But working with people can also be the

most humbling.

I remember the time I had to do an annual performance evaluation for one of my employees. For this particular review, supervisors had to choose pre-worded “categories” of performance. The word in the category that seemed to fit this employee best was one I would not have chosen. However I felt locked into the structure of the review, so I went with that word. Lesson learned: pray before you act!

The employee fixated on that one word and immediately exploded in anger, “I quit!” (Sometimes anger is the outward action when hurt is the underlying emotion.)

Satan loves to divide God’s people. There we can isolate ourselves and let our imaginations run away from God. A multitude of negative reactions and emotions are poised, often by the enemy’s nagging prompts, to flood our minds: anger, assumptions, resentment, jealousy, comparison, insecurity, fear, envy, and more. But what is God’s plan? “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity, . . .” David wrote. “For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore” (Ps. 133:1–3).

David wrote this song as one who experienced the personal pain and national price of disunity. King Saul pursued him out of jealousy and insecurity, intending to kill him. David knew the stark contrast of disunity against the place where the Lord designed blessing leading to life. Absalom, David’s own son, targeted his father’s kingship later on. The deepest divide in David’s kingdom existed within his own household. The “I quit” day launched Psalm 46:10 as my life verse. These powerful, yet simple words flooded my mind that morning: “Be still, and know that I am God.”

Initially, I didn’t know what to do to redeem the employee situation. With emphasis, the Lord brought this short passage to mind. There were no words I could say that the person would

hear at the moment. The emotion was too high. God was speaking clearly in my spirit, Still yourself, be silent, let Me be Who I am and trust Me to work now. As calmly as I could, I resumed my work and kept still.

Within a few hours, the employee came to me, and we talked it all through. God redeemed the situation. Serving with others before the Lord provides ample opportunities to trust God and ask Him for wisdom and grace to love more like He does.

Tethered to Jesus

Not all ministry relationship trials are repaired this well. I continue to pray over a few. Many times, contrary to the enemy's intent, the trial actually deepens the connection of His people when, with respect and honor, we mutually apply the principles of humility, confession, accepting responsibility, and serving under authority.

A sudden, explosive situation can feel like a "sucker punch" coming out of nowhere, as our National Day of Prayer Texas State coordinator, Rex Tonkins, describes it. Yet, that attack can be traced back to the enemy's schemes. He wants wounded victims, isolated and alone without reinforcements from trusted others. Then we easily listen to thoughts and words of deceit and accusation, "for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). If Satan can keep our primary relationships broken, this is a direct assault on Jesus' prayer for us to be "one" (John 17:11).

When spiritual warfare is rising, health and financial battles on the front line (or to those nearby) often seem to increase. Yet we can face all battles victoriously when we're tethered to Jesus and connected to one another in brotherly love and mutual intercession.

Let's make this our daily prayer:

Lord God, in the name of Jesus the Christ, we praise You. We

are blessed by Your Word and by the indwelling of Your Holy Spirit. We are awed by Your everlasting love and protective care for us. Foremost, firmly establish our time with You. Keep us from fruitless activity. Keep us about Your business. Govern our key relationships with unity—a oneness that commands Your blessing. Grow us in love for You and one another every day. In Your name, amen.

LISA CRUMP is vice president for volunteer mobilization for the National Day of Prayer Task Force in Colorado Springs, CO. She helps coordinate thousands of volunteers across America, calling the nation to prayer. She is also a member of America's National Prayer Committee.