

God's Got You Covered

by David Cannistraci

My wife and I recently took a drive in a nice convertible. The top was down, the sun was shining and we were heading for the coast. As we stopped to get a couple of coffees to go, rain clouds gathered and it started to sprinkle. We were disappointed but not concerned for our comfort because the car had a built-in system to move the top into place.

Spiritual covering works much the same way. Scripture reveals that though God's protection is present and available in Christ, it is carried to us through two delivery systems He has set up.

Prayer. We're encouraged to use constant intercession with the shield of faith to quench the attacks of Satan (see Eph. 6:16,18). There is nothing like a prayer shield to provide covering over the life of a believer.

All of us should continually pray for one another, our nation and our leaders. Prayer activates the heavenly host (see Ps. 34:7), erects a hedge of protection around us (see Job 1:5,9-11) and seals the gaps through which our spiritual enemy tries to gain access to our lives (see Ezek. 22:30).

With the covering system of prayer in place, we can move forward in our lives without being continually knocked back by the devil.

Divinely appointed relationships. Isaiah prophesied of our day: "The Lord will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there will be a covering ... for shade in the daytime from the heat, for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and

rain" (Is. 4:5-6).

The covering over every home speaks of family relationships. The covering over every assembly speaks of the local church.

Don't miss this: God's covering is released to us when we are rightly connected in our families and churches. Those relationships are the joints that supply us (see Eph. 4:16). Right relationships have always been vital to our safety (see 1 Cor. 11:11-12; Eph. 5:21-25; Heb. 10:24-25; 13:17).

Still, whenever the word "covering" comes up, a lot of us want to run and hide under a pew. We've seen the tragic abuses of authority and control that can surface when we fail to view all this correctly. Here's some advice:

- Don't allow anyone to control you or make you fearful by twisting Scriptures that relate to covering.
- Beware of top-heavy leadership structures that overemphasize tithing, authority and headship.
- Think twice when you hear legalistic messages about submission that rob you of your freedom in Christ.
- Be cautious when you see an overuse of titles and holy hierarchies that keep you dependent on spiritual "big shots."
- Don't play into the unhealthy control of those who desperately seek importance in your life. These imbalanced arrangements grieve the Holy Spirit and hurt people.

For sure, legalism, ignorance and abuses of authority have attached themselves to the subject of covering. But does that mean we should banish it as revelation altogether? I don't believe it does.

The accountability and care I've enjoyed by being part of a believing family, praying local church, and dedicated network of friends and ministries has been an indispensable part of my growth and success. So in my

view, it's far better to stay covered and connected, if we can keep it balanced.

Allow the Lord to guide you into the blessing of divinely appointed relationships at home and in the local church. Whenever Satan seeks to divide, strive to stay united in love and order, knowing that Christ has shed His blood for us all.

Position yourself to both offer and receive continual prayer. Let His precious blood anoint the doorposts of your life and the crimson cords of His love protect you in the day of battle.

There really is a safe place for each of us in God. The natural and spiritual threats out there are real, but we should never be afraid of what they can do to us. When we're positioned in Him and connected to His provision, the canopy of His protection rises high and strong over us.

The next time you're caught in a storm or you sense the attack of your spiritual adversary, settle it in your heart that things will be OK. Just stand strong in your faith and remember: God's got you covered!