

God's Protective Covering

To Cover (v.)—to guard from attack; to afford protection or security

Cover (n.)—something that protects, shelters, or guards

Several years ago, a certain event in our lives caused me to think a lot about the meaning of the word "cover". The roof of our home, the "covering" that was supposed to shelter and protect the occupants, developed a large leak. I noticed several things during the weeks that followed which were a direct result of that leak:

- the sense of security that we felt during a storm was suddenly replaced by anxiety
- we found ourselves limited and inconvenienced in the use of our home, not only for our own purposes but in offering hospitality to others
- permanent damage was caused to our home

God's covering, on the other hand, has no leaks. Psalm 91:4 says, "He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge." His feathers are waterproof! Isaiah 51:16 says, "I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of My hand." Even the *shadow* of His hand provides leak-proof shelter and protection.

But what is the context of those comforting verses? There are two kinds of promises in Scripture; some are true for all times and all situations, and others are conditional promises. What are the conditions of these promises of God's covering?

Psalm 91 starts out by saying "***He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High***"...will rest in His shadow and will be covered with His feathers. Earlier in Isaiah 51, the Lord identifies those to whom His promise applies. In verse 1 He says, "***Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord***". Verse 7 says, "***Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have My law in your hearts***".

In Matthew 7:21, Jesus says, "Not all people who sound religious are really godly. They may refer to Me as 'Lord', but they still won't enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The decisive issue is whether they obey My Father in heaven." (NLT)

When we stop making obedience to God our first priority; when we falter in pursuing Him with all our hearts and seeking first HIS kingdom...then we begin to experience "leaks" in that roof of God's protection instead of dwelling securely in His shelter. The result can be anxiety, limited ministry opportunities, or even permanent damage.

Our roof had not yet reached its lifespan. Those who inspected the roof said that it was not put on correctly to begin with; the work was sloppy and it wasn't done "by the book", so eventually it did not hold up under the storms. The entire roof ended up having to be replaced, which was very costly. We can learn an important lesson from that leaky roof! Let's continue to be committed to following God in obedience, living our lives "by the Book"; and avoid the costly mistake of leaving His protective covering.