PSALM121

STUDY GUIDE

STUDY 2

THE KEEPER WHO NEVER SLEEPS

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INTRODUCTION: BACK ON THE ROAD

Psalm 121 is a psalm of providence: the LORD keeps his people at every step of the journey, and he never stops watching.

Last week, in Psalm 120, we met a pilgrim far from home. He felt as if he were living in "Meshek" and "Kedar," surrounded by lying lips and people who wanted war. The psalm ended with a decision: *I don't belong here. This week he is on the road. Eugene Peterson gave each Song of Ascents a one-word title. Psalm 120 is "Repentance," the turn toward God. Psalm 121 is "Providence," God's care over every step that follows.*

The Songs of Ascents. Psalms 120–134 were sung by pilgrims going "up" to Jerusalem for the yearly feasts (Exodus 23:14–17). Jerusalem stands high in the Judean hills, so every road to it climbs.

A small detail in the title. Every other Song of Ascents is headed *shir hamma'alot*, "a song of the ascents." Psalm 121 alone reads *shir lamma'alot*, "a song *for* the ascents." The meaning is the same: this is a song for the climb.

A psalm for farewells. On the morning of 17 November 1840, David Livingstone got up at five, read Psalms 121 and 135 with his family, and prayed. Then he and his father walked to Glasgow, where they parted for the last time. Many of us know that kind of goodbye, at Alicante airport or on the day we left the UK.

🕮 PSALM 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?

2 My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.

4 Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand.

6 The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.

8 The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

WHAT PSALM 121 IS ABOUT

Psalm 121 is about how God takes care of His people. One Hebrew word comes up again and again (verses 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8): keep. It means to watch over, guard and look after.

It is the same word used in Genesis 2:15, where God put Adam in the garden "to keep it." Adam's job was to look after the garden. In this psalm, God is the One who looks after us.

Psalm 121 is one of the "Songs of Ascents" (Psalms 120–134). God's people sang these songs as they walked up to Jerusalem for the yearly feasts (Exodus 23:14–17). The journey was long and could be dangerous, with robbers, wild animals and harsh weather along the way.

The psalm has two voices. In verses 1–2 a traveller speaks to himself. In verses 3–8 someone answers him with encouragement, perhaps a friend in the travelling group.

This psalm is for us too. God made a covenant promise to Abraham: to be his God and the God of his children (Genesis 17:7). Everyone who trusts in Jesus is a child of Abraham and part of that one family (Galatians 3:7, 29). So, the God who kept Israel on the road to Jerusalem is the same God who keeps His church today.

Their walk to the earthly Jerusalem is also a picture of our walk-through life. We are pilgrims too, travelling toward the heavenly city God has prepared for His people (Hebrews 11:13–16; 12:22).

The psalm does not promise that nothing bad will ever happen. Jesus said we would have trouble in this world (John 16:33). But it does promise that God is always in control, and that His care lasts forever (Romans 8:37–39).

LOOK UP, PAST THE HILLS (VERSES 1–2)

Has anyone here climbed Puig Campana, or another really steep hill? How did your legs feel at the top?

Many of us already know this psalm as the old hymn "I to the hills will lift mine eyes, from whence doth come mine aid." For the first people who sang it, the hills were very real. The walk from Jericho up to Jerusalem is about 24 kilometres, and the road climbs about 1,060 metres. That's about three-quarters of the height of Puig Campana, on foot, often carrying food and small children.

Families made the trip together in big, noisy groups. When Jesus was twelve, he went up to Jerusalem for Passover with Mary and Joseph. On the way home, they walked a whole day before they realised he wasn't with them (Luke 2:41–45)! So, Jesus knew what it was like to be a pilgrim on the road.

In the Bible, "lifting up your eyes" often comes just before someone sees God at work. Abraham "lifted up his eyes" and saw the mountain where God would provide a ram in place of his son (Genesis 22:4, 13–14). Centuries later, the temple was built on that same mountain, Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3:1)."

Questions.

- 🕮 Look at verse 1 in a few different Bibles. Does it ask a question, or not? How does the pilgrim seem to be feeling?
- 🕮 Apart from God, what do people around Benidorm trust to keep them safe and happy? Think of things like money, doctors, sunshine and family. Which one is easiest for you to lean on?
- 🕮 Verse 2 says God "made heaven and earth." Why is that good news when we need help?
- 🕮 When you're worried, where do you usually go for help first? What could help you turn to God sooner?

THE KEEPER WHO NEVER SLEEPS (VERSES 3–4)

Who has ever tried to stay awake all night, maybe on New Year's Eve or with a new baby? How did you feel the next morning?

Everybody needs sleep. Most of us spend about a third of our lives asleep, so someone who lives to 90 has slept for around 30 years! Even the strongest person in the world has to close their eyes in the end.

In Bible times, cities had watchmen who stood on the walls all night, looking out for danger. Shepherds kept watch over their sheep in the dark, just like the shepherds near Bethlehem on the night Jesus was born (Luke 2:8). But watchmen got tired. Psalm 130, another Song of Ascents, describes them longing for the morning to come (Psalm 130:6). Every human watchman needs to go to bed sometime. Psalm 121 tells us about the only Watchman who never does.

Questions.

- 🕮 Verse 3 can be read as a hope: "May God not let you slip!" Verse 4 answers: "Look! God never sleeps." When you're worried, who reminds you that God is still looking after you?
- 🕮 Psalm 44:23 says, "Wake up, Lord! Why are you sleeping?" Have you ever felt like God wasn't paying attention? What helped?
- 🕮 Jesus slept in the boat during a big storm. Why do you think he could sleep so calmly?
- 🕮 Verse 3 talks to one person, and verse 4 talks about all of God's people. How can we as a church help each other remember that God is looking after us?

- 🕮 What sometimes keeps you awake at night? How could remembering that God never sleeps help you rest?

THE SHADE AT YOUR RIGHT HAND (VERSES 5–6)

Imagine a night with no street lights, no torches and no phone screens, just the moon and the stars. How would you feel walking home?

That's what nights were like for the pilgrims. In the dark, travellers worried about wild animals, robbers and getting lost. In the daytime, the sun brought dangers of its own.

Remember Jonah? After his adventure with the big fish, he sat outside the city of Nineveh in the heat. God made a plant grow over him to give him shade, and Jonah was delighted. The next day the plant withered, the sun beat down on his head, and he felt faint (Jonah 4:6–8). Jonah found out how much he needed shade!

Verse 5 says the Lord is at our right hand. The New Testament adds something wonderful: Jesus is at God's right hand, praying for us (Romans 8:34). God stands beside us, and Jesus speaks up for us.

Questions.

- 🕮 The psalm calls God our "shade," like the cool shadow of a tree on a hot day. What does that picture tell you about God?
- 🕮 Long ago, people were afraid of the moon. What kinds of things do people worry about at night? (You don't have to share your own.)
- 🕮 Revelation 7:16 uses verse 6 to describe heaven. What are you looking forward to about being with God forever?
- 🕮 Can you remember a time when God felt close to you, like a cool shade on a hot day? Would you share it with the group?

KEPT FOREVER (VERSES 7–8)

How many times a week do you think you go in and out of your front door? Let's guess!

In many Jewish homes, a small case called a mezuzah is fixed to the doorpost. Inside is a tiny scroll with

words from the Bible, as God asked in Deuteronomy 6:9. Many people touch it as they go out and come in. It reminds them that God is with them on both sides of the door.

Psalm 121 is part of a similar custom. For a long time, Jewish families have hung a copy of it in the room where a baby is born and on or near the baby's cot. From a child's very first "coming in" to the world, the family wants them surrounded by God's promise to keep them.

One more word to notice. The Hebrew word for "evil" in verse 7 is ra'. It can mean wickedness, but it can also mean harm or disaster. That's why some Bibles say, "The LORD will keep you from all harm.

Questions.

- 🕮 Verse 7 says God will keep us from all evil, but Christians still get sick or hurt. So what do you think God is promising here?
- 🕮 "Going out and coming in" means all our comings and goings. What trips, changes or big days have you had this year? Where did you see God looking after you?
- 🕮 The psalm says God keeps us "forevermore." How does that help us when someone we love dies?
- 🕮 If you were sure that God is always keeping you, what would you stop worrying about?

CLOSE: **CHRIST OUR KEEPER**

Psalm 121 began with a question: "Where does my help come from?" The New Testament answers with a name: Jesus.

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). A watchman guards the city, but a good shepherd does even more: he gives his own life to keep his sheep safe. That's what Jesus did on the cross, and because he rose again, he is still keeping us today.

The letter to the Hebrews picks up the very word from verse 2: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear" (Hebrews 13:6). It comes right after God's promise, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

HOMEWORK FOR THE WEEK

- 🕮 Memorise verses 1–2. Pray them if you wake up in the night.
- 🕮 One short reading a day:
  - 🕮 **Monday**, Genesis 28:10–22: What exactly does God promise to "keep" for Jacob? What does Jacob do the next morning?
  - 🕮 **Tuesday**, 1 Kings 18:20–39: Baal stayed silent all day. What's the difference between his silence and God's answer?
  - 🕮 **Wednesday**, Mark 4:35–41: Jesus asks, "Have you still no faith?" How would you honestly answer him this week?
  - 🕮 **Thursday**, John 17:6–19: Underline every "keep" or "guard." Who is keeping whom, and from what?
  - 🕮 **Friday**, Romans 8:31–39: Paul lists things that can't separate us from God's love. Add one from your own life to his list.
- 🕮 Your "hills" card. On one side of your index card, write what you've been looking to for security lately. On the other side, write verse 2. Keep it by your bed.
- 🕮 Be the second voice. Read Psalm 121 with someone this week: a friend in hospital, a grandchild on the phone, someone flying back to the UK. Come next week ready to tell us how it went.
- 🕮 Look ahead. Read Psalm 122. What has changed for the pilgrim since Psalm 121?

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- God is our Keeper. He watches over us, guards us and cares for us.
- Our help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth, not from anything He made.
- God never sleeps, never gets tired and is never surprised.
- Hard things may happen, but nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ (Romans 8:38–39).
- Psalm 121 is our psalm too. Everyone who trusts in Jesus belongs to God's one covenant family.

CHRIST IN PSALM 121

Every promise in Psalm 121 comes to us through Jesus.

Jesus is the Keeper. Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd and says of his sheep, "*no one will snatch them out of my hand*" (John 10:28). On the night before he died, he "*lifted up his eyes to heaven*" (John 17:1), just as the pilgrim lifts his eyes in verse 1. Then he prayed, "*Holy Father, keep them in your name*" (John 17:11), and "*keep them from the evil one*" (John 17:15). Psalm 121:7 echoes all through that prayer.

Jesus is there. In the storm on the lake, Jesus slept in the stern while his disciples panicked (Mark 4:35–41). He could rest because his Father "*neither slumbers nor sleeps*." Then he calmed the wind and the sea with a word and asked, "*Have you still no faith?*" (Mark 4:40). The one who seemed to be asleep was Lord of the storm all along.

Jesus walks the road with us. God promised Jacob, "*I am with you and will keep you wherever you go*" (Genesis 28:15). Jesus makes the same promise to his followers: "*I am with you always, to the end of the age*" (Mt 28:20).

Jesus, the last pilgrim. Luke tells us that Jesus "*set his face to go to Jerusalem*" (Luke 9:51). He went up for the Passover like thousands of other pilgrims. But at the cross, everything Psalm 121 promises was taken from him:

Psalm 121 promises	At the cross
"He will not let your foot be moved" (v. 3)	His hands and feet were nailed fast (Luke 24:39–40)
"The LORD is your shade on your right hand" (v. 5)	On his right hand hung a criminal (Mark 15:27)
"The LORD is your keeper" (v. 5)	He cried, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34)
"He will keep your life" (v. 7)	He "breathed his last" (Mark 15:37)
"The LORD will keep your going out" (v. 8)	He "went out, bearing his own cross" to die outside the city gate (John 19:17; Hebrews 13:12)

He went without the keeping so that we could be kept for evermore. That is why we can sing this psalm with confidence.

Jesus' coming in. His going out led to the cross, but it did not end there. On the third day he rose. Then he "*entered… into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf*" (Hebrews 9:24). Hebrews calls him our "*forerunner*," who has gone ahead of us (Hebrews 6:20). Because his coming in is complete, ours is certain: "*I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also*" (John 14:3).

He keeps us to the end. "*He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ*" (Philippians 1:6). He "*is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy*" (Jude 24). So, we lift our eyes, not to the hills, but to "*Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith*" (Hebrews 12:2).

PSALM 121 ACROSS THE WHOLE BIBLE

The promise that God "keeps" his people runs from the first pages of Genesis to the last pages of Revelation. Psalm 121 gathers it into one short song.

Passage	What it says	Links to Psalm 121
Genesis 2:15	God puts Adam in the garden "to work it and keep it" (the same verb, *shamar*).	We were made to be keepers; in v. 5 the LORD keeps us.
Genesis 4:9	Cain asks, "Am I my brother's keeper?"	Cain refused to keep his brother. "The LORD is your keeper" (v. 5).
Genesis 28:15	God to Jacob, asleep on a stone: "I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back."	Keeping, sleeping, going out and coming home (vv. 3–4, 8).
Exodus 13:21–22	A pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night leads Israel through the wilderness.	God's shade and light, day and night (vv. 5–6).
Exodus 23:20	"I send an angel before you to guard you on the way."	God guards travellers on the road (v. 8).
Numbers 6:24	The priestly blessing: "The LORD bless you and keep you."	Psalm 121 is this blessing spread over eight verses.
Deuteronomy 28:6	"Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out."	"Your going out and your coming in" (v. 8).
1 Samuel 2:9	Hannah sings, "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones."	"He will not let your foot be moved" (v. 3).
1 Kings 18:27	Elijah mocks Baal: "perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened."	Israel's God never sleeps (v. 4).
Psalm 91:1, 5	"The shadow of the Almighty"; no fear of "the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day."	Shade, day and night (vv. 5–6).
Psalm 127:1	Another Song of Ascents: "Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."	Only God's watch keeps us safe (vv. 3–4).

Passage	What it says	Links to Psalm 121
Isaiah 27:3	"I, the LORD, am its keeper… I keep it night and day."	The Keeper on duty every hour (vv. 4–6).
Isaiah 49:10	Exiles coming home: "neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them."	"The sun shall not strike you" (v. 6).
John 17:11–15	Jesus prays, "Holy Father, keep them… keep them from the evil one."	"The LORD will keep you from all evil" (v. 7).
Romans 8:38–39	Nothing in all creation can separate us from God's love in Christ.	"He will keep your life" (v. 7).
2 Thessalonians 3:3	"The Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one."	Kept from evil (v. 7).
1 Peter 1:5	Believers "by God's power are being guarded through faith" for the salvation to come.	"From this time forth and forevermore" (v. 8).
Revelation 7:16–17	The redeemed in heaven: "the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat."	Verse 6, finally fulfilled.
Revelation 21:23–25	The new Jerusalem needs no sun or moon; its gates are never shut, and "there will be no night there."	No more day or night to fear; the pilgrim's last coming in (vv. 6, 8).

In the garden we failed to keep what God gave us. Ever since, God has kept us: on the road, through the night and into the city where the gates never close.

A BIBLE COMMENTARY VERSE BY VERSE

The title is slightly different. Psalm 121 is the only Song of Ascents whose heading reads *shir lamma'alot* rather than *shir hamma'alot*. It means "a song for the ascents," but the meaning is the same.

Two voices. Verses 1–2 say "I" and "my," and verses 3–8 say "you." Augustine heard God answering the pilgrim. Keil and Delitzsch suggest the poet answers himself: his own soul, at rest in God, comforts him. Either way, it works well read aloud in two parts.

Verse 3 may be a wish. The NET Bible translates it "May he not allow your foot to slip!" The Hebrew negative 'al usually expresses a wish, and verse 4 then answers it as a firm statement. So, the shape is a hope ("may he…"), then an answer ("Behold, he will not…").

The psalm is honest. It doesn't promise a life free of trouble. Your sermon's Livingstone story makes this point well. Today, 17 November, is the anniversary of the morning he left home: on 17 November 1840 the family got up at five, David read Psalms 121 and 135 and prayed, and then he and his father walked to Glasgow to catch the Liverpool steamer.

One word, six times. The Hebrew word shamar ("keep, guard, watch over") appears six times, in verses 3, 4, 5, 7 (twice) and 8. It's the word God used to Jacob in Genesis 28:15 and the word in the priestly blessing in Numbers 6:24. Translations differ: the ESV says "keep" all six times, the KJV says "keep" three times and "preserve" three times, and the NIV mostly says "watch over." Count them in your own Bible, because translations differ:

Four sections. Each pair of verses answers one question:

1. **Verses 1–2**: Where does my help come from? From the LORD, the Maker of all.
2. **Verses 3–4**: Will he stay awake? He never sleeps.
3. **Verses 5–6**: How close is he? As close as your own shadow, day and night.
4. **Verses 7–8**: How far does his keeping reach? Over all of life, forever.

Verse 1: Looking up at the hills

The writer is on his way to Jerusalem for one of the yearly feasts (Exodus 23:14–17). The trip took several days, so travellers often camped in the hills at night. The hills were risky: wild animals, rough paths, and robbers hiding to attack people on the road.

No wonder he asks where his help will come from.

We sometimes feel the same way. The world can be a scary place, with sickness, crime, war and violence. Doctors, police officers and firefighters do good work, but they cannot keep us safe all the time.

So, we ask the same question: where does our help come from? The rest of the psalm gives the answer. Our safety and peace come from trusting God (verse 2).

Verse 2: Help from the Maker of everything

Here the writer answers his own question. His help does not come from the hills. It comes from the Lord who made the hills, and everything else too.

This mattered in his day. Some people in Israel worshipped false gods at shrines built on hilltops. King Ahaz of Judah even offered sacrifices on the high places and on the hills (2 Kings 16:1, 4).

The psalmist looks past the hills to the true God, the Creator of all things. If God made everything, then nothing is too big for Him. With a God that powerful as his helper, he had no reason to be afraid.

The Bible is honest: God does not promise us an easy, pain-free life on earth (Psalm 22:12–18; 25:16; John 16:33). But our loving Father knows everything and watches over us all the same. Nothing happens outside His knowledge or His control.

When Sarah laughed at the promise that she would have a baby, the Lord asked Abraham, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14). And when the angel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to the Son of God, he said, "Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37).

Verse 3: He will not let you slip

Now a new voice speaks. It may be another traveller answering the first one, like a friend saying, "Yes, you are right. The Lord will help you."

On rocky hill paths, it was easy to slip and get hurt. So the promise "He will not let your foot slip" was very real for them. In the Bible, a safe path and firm footing are also pictures of following God and being kept safe by Him (Psalm 1:1; 17:5; 73:2; 119:105; Jude 1:24).

This verse encourages us in both ways: in our bodies and in our walk with God. Even when hard times come (Psalm 22:12–18; 25:16), we know God is in control (Romans 8:37–39).

The friend also says that God never dozes off. He is never caught by surprise. Peter tells us that the Lord's eyes are on His people and His ears are open to their prayers (1 Peter 3:12).

As we travel through life as pilgrims, we can count on God to watch over us. No trouble reaches us without Him knowing about it, and nothing is outside His control (John 16:33).

Verse 4: The Keeper who never sleeps

The friend says it again to make it stronger: God never sleeps. People get tired and need rest, but God never does. He knows everything that happens, or will happen, and He guards His people every moment.

"Keeps" is the same word used for Adam in Genesis 2:15. God gave Adam the job of taking good care of the garden. In the same way, God promised to take care of Jacob: "I am with you and will keep you wherever you go" (Genesis 28:15).

Who is "Israel" here? In this psalm, Israel means God's covenant people, the family God promised to Abraham. That promise comes true in Jesus, the true and faithful Son of Abraham (Galatians 3:16). Through Jesus, believers from every nation are joined to that same family.

Paul compares God's people to one olive tree. Some branches were broken off, and others were grafted in, but it is still one tree (Romans 11:17–24). Believers who were once outsiders are now members of God's household (Ephesians 2:12–19). So "the One who keeps Israel" is the One who keeps every believer in Christ, Jew and Gentile alike.

History shows how faithful our Keeper is. He brought His people out of slavery in Egypt, kept a faithful remnant through exile, and has kept His church through every age of trouble. Jesus promised that He will build His church and that even death will not defeat it (Matthew 16:18). No one can snatch His sheep out of His hand (John 10:28).

Verse 5: Shade at your right hand

Travellers faced more than robbers and animals. The blazing sun was a danger too. Here God is pictured like a shepherd or guardian who looks after His people.

God is called our shade, the thing that protects us from the burning sun (Psalm 91:1). This points us to Jesus. On the cross, He stood between us and God's judgment and took it in our place (Isaiah 53:4–5).

David prayed, "In the shadow of your wings I will take refuge" (Psalm 57:1). Like a bird covering its chicks, God hides His people until the storm has passed. Peter says believers are guarded by God's power through faith (1 Peter 1:5), and Jude praises God, who is able to keep us from stumbling (Jude 1:24).

"Your right hand." In the Bible, the right hand stands for strength and ability. Here it is our right hand, not God's. God stands right beside us, guarding our strength where we need Him most.

Psalm 110 uses the same picture of the Lord at the right hand of His King (Psalm 110:5). The New Testament shows that this King is Jesus. He now sits at God's right hand and rules over all things for the good of His church (Psalm 110:1; Acts 2:33–36; Ephesians 1:20–22).

Verse 6: Day and night

In Israel the sun can be very hot, and people can get sunstroke. At night it can turn cold, and sleeping outside could make travellers ill. The pilgrims trusted God to protect them from harm both day and night.

This was a real, practical promise for people sleeping beside the road on their way to the feasts. It is also a picture of how God cares for us at every hour. Psalm 91:1 says that whoever lives under God's shelter rests in His shadow.

Jesus taught that we do not need to worry, because our Father in heaven knows what we need and provides for us (Matthew 6:25–33). Peter tells us to give all our worries to God, because He cares for

us (1 Peter 5:7). Paul says God will supply every need we have from His riches in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

Sometimes God allows believers to face hard and painful things (John 16:33; Psalm 25:16). But many times, He protects us or helps us without us even knowing it, in body, mind, heart and spirit. So, we thank Him every day for His care (Romans 8:37–39; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18; Philippians 4:4–8).

Verse 7: Kept from harm

The friend keeps celebrating God's wonderful care (Psalm 97:10). Here "evil" means harmful things such as accidents, sickness, injury, misfortune or violence. A "keeper" is someone who guards, protects and guides.

The Bible does not pretend life is free from trouble. Everyone faces hard times (John 16:33; Psalm 22:12–18). But trouble cannot destroy someone who belongs to God.

For believers, even death is not the end. It brings us home to be with the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:50–58; 2 Corinthians 5:8). That is why Paul was not afraid to die, and could say, "To live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

When Satan wanted to test Job, God allowed it, because the trials would show that Job's faith was real. But God set a limit: Satan was not allowed to take Job's life (Job 1:12). Satan could go no further than God allowed.

We do not know what tomorrow will bring (Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13–15). But we know who holds tomorrow. God keeps our lives here on earth, and one day He will bring us safely home.

Verse 8: Now and forever

"Going out and coming in" was a way of saying "everything you do each day." A man went out in the morning to work and came home in the evening (Psalm 104:23). From the start of the day to the end, God's people could be sure He was with them.

Knowing that God is with us all day can change how we work, study and play. Paul told workers to do everything with an honest heart, as if working for the Lord, because the Lord rewards faithful service (Colossians 3:22–24). That is true for children at school, parents at home, and everyone at work.

God's care does not stop at the end of the day, or even at the end of life. It lasts forever. Because God has promised never to leave us or abandon us, we do not need to be greedy or afraid (Hebrews 13:5–6).

This is the heart of God's covenant, repeated all through the Bible: "I will be their God, and they will be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33). It ends where our pilgrimage ends, in the new heaven and new earth, where God will live with His people forever (Revelation 21:3).



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