

WEEK TWENTY
DAY TWO

For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
the Lord bestows favor and honor.

No good thing does he withhold
From those who walk uprightly.

Psalm 84:11

For the Lord	יהוה <i>Yəhovah</i>	– the self-Existent or Eternal; Jewish national name of God —Jehovah, the Lord
God	אלהים <i>'elohiym</i>	– (plural) can mean rulers, judges; in this case the supreme God
is a sun	שמש <i>shemesh</i>	– to be brilliant; the sun
and shield	מגן <i>magen</i>	– a shield (i.e. the small one or buckler); figuratively, a protector
the Lord	יהוה <i>Yəhovah</i>	– the self-Existent or Eternal; Jewish national name of God —Jehovah, the Lord
bestows	נתן <i>nathan</i>	– to give, bestow, bring forth, deliver
favor	חן <i>chen</i>	– graciousness; kindness, favor
and honor	כבוד <i>kabowd</i>	– splendor, glory, honor, abundance
no good	טוב <i>towb</i>	– good, pleasant, agreeable
thing does He withhold	מנע <i>mana`</i>	– deny, keep back, refrain, restrain, withhold
from those who walk	הלך <i>halak</i>	– to walk, behave
uprightly	תמים <i>tamiym</i>	– entire, without blemish, complete, full, perfect, sincerely, without spot, undefiled, uprightly, whole.

WEEK TWENTY
DAY THREE

**“For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
the Lord bestows favor and honor.
No good thing does he withhold
from those who walk uprightly.”
Psalm 84:11**

This majestic verse first tells us what God is to His people...a sun and a shield. This has been called a counterbalance blessing.

- We could not bear the first blessing, if we had not the second. As a sun, God shows me more and more my sinfulness; but, then, as a shield, Jesus gives me divine protection from the Father’s just wrath and Holy Spirit power to oppose sin. We need God to shield us from God and light our way into new life!
- Sun: His distance, holiness and almightiness. Shield: His nearness, benevolence and gentle protection. U. R. Thomas said, “The God I sometimes dread is the God to whom to cling.”

Dear ones, everything that the sun is to the solar system, Christ is to us—the center, the light, the holding power, crucial to all life, the living power, the all in all. What a rich metaphor of Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being! As Charles Spurgeon said, “A sun above, a shield around. A light to show the way and a shield to ward off its perils.” Let us rejoice that we have no real reason to fear darkness or dread dangers on our pilgrimage of life.

The Psalmist also tells us what our God gives to His people—favor/grace and honor/glory—and to what extent He gives it: “No good thing does he withhold.” Grace is defined as unmerited favor and refers to the divine kindness, blessing, assistance, and influence that flow freely from God. Honor-rendered glory, in many versions of the Bible, speaks to the dignity and sublime happiness reserved in heaven for the righteous in Christ.

Charles Spurgeon charges us to notice the order of these two benefits: not glory first—that could not be. We are not fit for it. Grace must first blot out sin and change our nature or glory cannot receive us. He goes on to say that some apparent good may be withheld, but no real good. No, not one: no necessary correction or instruction or needed strength to do his will.

Prayer: Lord, we praise you for the promises in this Psalm, that all this in due time, as needed, to the full, with absolute certainty is ours in Christ Jesus.

~ Jeanine Dungan

WEEK TWENTY
DAY FOUR

**“For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
the Lord bestows favor and honor.
No good thing does he withhold
from those who walk uprightly.”
Psalm 84:11**

To fully grasp the glory of this passage, we must look back at the verse which preceded it. The author wrote that it was better to spend one day in the courts of the Lord than to spend one thousand days anywhere else, for Yahweh Elohim—a powerfully personal Triune God—is a sun and shield. Not only that, but He bestows favor and honor and doesn't prevent good things from happening to those who do what is right.

Essentially, the author is presenting us with attributes of God which prove, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that belonging to Him is better than belonging to anyone (or anything) else. He begins with calling God a “sun and shield,” which seem a rather odd combination at first. But then I started thinking about how hard it is to do anything when you're in the dark. I'm not talking about the kind that your eyes adjust to in a few minutes, but the pitch-black darkness often found in windowless prisons—terrifying and nearly impossible to navigate. For all of us, before Christ redeemed us, our spirits lived in this kind of darkness. We fumbled about with vain ambitions and stumbled through destructive, self-glorifying plans, not knowing how much they were damaging our souls and the souls of others. But when Christ's Spirit took hold of us, we were taken out of bewildering darkness and into marvelous light. Just as the rising sun gives light to the earth, so does the Son of God illuminate our lives, enabling us to see how we should live, move, and have our being.

Now we come to the shield. Just because everything has been illuminated by the light of the Truth doesn't mean we get to pull out a beach chair and some SPF. By no means! God asks us to move forward, to “do good works, which [He] prepared in advance for us to do” (EPH. 2:10). In a world that's growing darker and more hostile by the minute, it seems nearly impossible to do good works without experiencing some sort of resistance. Knowing this, He encourages us that we will not encounter obstacles alone—for He is our shield. What a wonderful image of the personal protection of the Lord! His defense of His children isn't stagnant or stationary but active and mobile. It is with them wherever they go, their safeguard in the daily battle with the world and its darkness. In light of the Lord's constant protection, we should not be afraid to do what he commands, no matter how risky or dangerous it seems, because reaching out to the hurting, the broken, the weak and weary, preaching the Good News of His salvation, involves some kind of risk. He is with us to protect and defend us. When we present ourselves in humble vulnerability to those that could hurt and wound us deeply, He is by our side, guarding our hearts wherever we go and in whatever relationship we enter into. So, when we take the fight to our enemy's door, the Mighty Lord of all creation stands in perfect power as our defense.

But He promises even more than illumination and protection (as if those things weren't

enough)! He promises favor and honor. These words carry a multiplicity of meanings: kindness, favor, beauty, grace, splendor, and glory, all of which are gifts from God. These things are not necessary for surviving this life but are given so that we might have abundant life. Out of His eternal wealth He pours out everything we need and didn't know we needed. And as long as we continue to walk in the integrity His Son has given us, according to the precepts set forth in the New Covenant, confessing our sins and repenting of our stumbling or sins every day, He will provide bountifully for our every need.

~ Joanna Toso

WEEK TWENTY
DAY FIVE

**“For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
the Lord bestows favor and honor.
No good thing does he withhold
from those who walk uprightly.”
Psalm 84:11**

I was talking with a neighbor when her son peeked out the door to find out more information about some cookies he found in the kitchen. His mother said they were left over from an event, and that he may have two. A spiritual analogy hit me later about God's yes's and no's. What if those cookies had been for an upcoming event? This loving and wise mother would have had to say, you may have none. Does she love him more or less in either scenario? Of course not! God may at times allow us to have something we ask for, and at others times He may allow us to have none. We can be sure that a yes or a no is equally loving—for our good and His glory.

Psalm 84:11 holds a special place in my heart. During a hard season, it *felt* like God was holding out on me. I've learned that we can, and must, take our hearts to Him no matter what shape they're in. With reverence, I was able to tell Him that I *felt* like He was holding out on me but that I *knew* His Word is true, and He never withholds what is good from His children. The truth sets us free, and it does us good to bask in it.

We are blessed to be called to the family of God through Christ. No matter how we may *feel*, we can *know* He is our bright light and protection, always providing what is good. We may be allowed two or none, but either way we can be sure that He will never withhold what is good. His every move toward those in Christ is favor and honor, that others might be drawn to Him, too.

~ Charlotte Travis

