

# Provide and Protect

Trusting God when it's hard to see why you should (Part 1 of a 5-part series)

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Special to ChristianWeek*

Two things I ask of you;  
deny them not to me before I die:  
Remove far from me falsehood and lying;  
give me neither poverty nor riches;  
feed me with the food that is needful for me,  
lest I be full and deny you  
and say, "Who is the LORD?"  
or lest I be poor and steal  
and profane the name of my God.

(Proverbs 30:7-10, ESV)

Many nights around the dinner table our family prayer reflects these words: Lord give us all we need (to live), but not too much (to keep us humble). In considering this proverb, is it merely about food, or it can be applied in a much broader context of Christian life?

There's one need that's common among all the living things that our God has made. It's not spiritual, mental, or emotional. It's purely physical: a need to *survive*. At its simplest, survival is about food; every creature must receive nourishment or die. Next comes safety, whether that means being in some tangible shelter, or the security of being sheltered within a group. There's also the issue of generational survival – a drive to multiply.

But we're not plants, and contrary to the evolutionary belief system we're not mere animals. Made in God's image as the crown of His creation, we're created *with* much more – mind, emotions, and spirit; and to *do* much more – fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over it (Genesis 1:28), and to go out and make disciples of all the nations (Matthew 28:19).

As God's adversary, Satan knows how to use our multi-faceted image against us and render us ineffective. Often he uses "flanking" tactics that instill a *fear* of death (mind / emotions) rather than death itself (physical).

A significant proportion of people with addictions, mental / emotional problems, and spiritual indifference / rebellion actually have an underlying problem with their survival: a trauma of feeling unprotected or abandoned. Earlier in their history these people felt their lives threatened. In the brokenness of this sinful world

(Satan's attacks) they were victims of broken marriages, parental abandonment or death, abuse (especially sexual abuse) or bullying, or witnessed horrible events. And quickly came the thought: *I am going to die.*

If that thought becomes repetitive or unconscious, a difficult road lies ahead. Every step of life is taken in fear. Faith is shaken: God did not protect me last time, why would He now? So either He is not good, or He does not exist.

Satan wins.

Or does he?

Healing survival trauma requires the grace of God and a great measure of humility to come to the cross not knowing if you're going to survive it. It requires forgiveness not only of any perpetrators and self, but also of God for seemingly not living up to the promise of giving "good things to those who ask him." (Matthew 7:11) Yet you can blossom into a new creation able to *live* out your mandates!

We should all be wary of Satan's flanking attacks. "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" (Luke 11:11, 12 ESV) It's critical for our children that they're not only fed, but that they aren't unwittingly given serpents or scorpions.

Parents and caregivers, do you not only provide for your children, but protect them?

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