

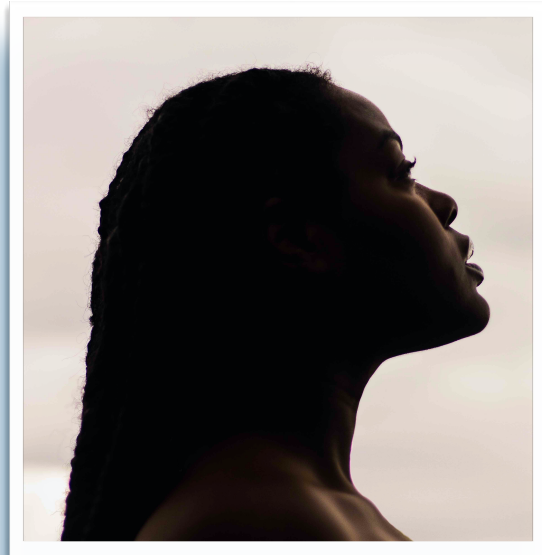
The Encouragement Newsletter

Lift Up Your Eyes

For me, the year 2021 was filled with so many ups and downs. God knows, I was sincerely doing all I could to keep up with all of my commitments, but I was becoming increasingly weighed down. My energy was depleting. It felt as if I had a slow leak in my physical and mental tires. In June 2021, the Lord spoke to me and said to begin walking. I walked in the morning and evening. This was and still is very refreshing. I not only get exercise, but I take the time to pray. The Lord later gave me a specific bed time. Because I try to fit so much in a day, I found this bed time discipline challenging. However, the physical exercise and rest began to restore me physically and mentally.

By July, I had already seen my youngest sister in the hospital about 5-6 times, my father had a stroke, he also had a fall, my job was chaotic, and the world was in an uproar. Normal daily life as we all knew it had been totally disrupted and although our governmental officials promised normalcy "if you comply to this and that." It still has yet to return to the normalcy we once knew. We are simply living in uncertain and unnerving times. Things are not going back to the way we once knew. We all have a new normal for real.

Going back to the month of July... My husband and I contracted the virus. He was actually hospitalized and I was really spent. My mind, soul, and emotions were all over the place. I felt the assurance and peace of God that everything was going to work out and we were going to get through this, but there was also this sense of fear, heaviness, and darkness that came over my soul. I was in a battle and had to draw on the word of God dwelling within me (Colossians 3:16). In this dark time, I meditated upon Psalm 121 and I want to break



down this Psalm in a way that will serve as an encouragement when you are hit with life's challenges.

To begin, Psalm 120 - 134 are called the Psalm of Ascents or Psalm of Degrees. These Psalms were composed as the Israelites journeyed up through the hills or mountains to Jerusalem for their annual feasts. Reading these Psalms, we see how they looked to God for their protection as they journeyed (Psalm 121); asked God for mercy (Psalm 123); experienced joy, expressed their dependency and trust in God (Psalm 125); and expressed the blessedness of unity (Psalm 133). (*C.H. Spurgeon on Psalm 121, BLB.org*)

Verse 1 of Psalm 121 begins with a statement and question...

**1 I will lift up my eyes to the hills—
From whence comes my help?**

According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, "Lift" means To raise from a lower to a higher position and to elevate. The word's origin is to

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elevate in rank or dignity, to raise from the ground or other surface, pick up, erect, and set in place.

From a Biblical perspective, when we see the word “Lift” in Psalm 121, it means to “Lift Up eyes, on high” and implies worship or Lift Up eyes in worship. (*BLB.org*)

We know that the eyes are the organ of the body that sees. Figuratively speaking, in the Bible, it refers to the mental and spiritual faculties or ability, power, and capability. (*BLB.org*) We use our eyes to look, observe, watch something or someone. As we think of hills or mountains, we think of something stable, rock solid, and immovable. The hills were actually the hills of Zion and Jerusalem. Remember this Psalm is part of the Psalms of Ascent and as the Israelites journeyed to Jerusalem for the annual feast, they could lift up their eyes to see the place of worship. Lastly, the hills of Jerusalem and Zion symbolized the dwelling place of God, Who chose Zion and Jerusalem as the central place of worship.

To summarize verse 1, we can say -

“I will elevate my eyes to a place of worship, the place where God dwells, the place of strength, and the place of stability. I will look to the One who is greater and stronger than I am.” To this we can add Psalm 61:2, “When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

You and I have a responsibility to control where we focus our attention. “I WILL LIFT UP” is an act of the will to seek “Someone” stronger and mightier in power.

Next, we have a question, “From whence comes my help” or “Where will my help come from?” In other words, the psalmist is asking, “What is the source of my assistance, relief, and aid?” Verse 2 -8 just provides the answer. You know we look to many people and things for help. Rightly so... we should expect help from people who are in position to help. Over the last three years, our country has been in

such turmoil. The government provided aid and assistance, but we are experiencing one crisis after the other and there appears to be no end in sight. We must acknowledge that these systems have and will fail, but we must proclaim verses 2-8.

2 My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

Our aid comes from the Lord, who created both heaven and earth. He is our supreme Guardian and Caretaker. I know world leaders and some wealthy think they have the power to enact many things, but really, the buck stops with the One who made heaven and earth where all mankind dwells under His rule. They cannot do no more than what He allows. The earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof. (Psalm 24:1) If He made heaven and earth, surely He will be our help in every season of life.

3 He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber.

4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord will not allow your foot to be moved. You will not slip. He is our stability and our confidence. Proverbs 3:25-26 tells us -

25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror,
Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;

26 For the Lord will be your confidence
(hope), And will keep your foot from being caught.

Just take a Selah moment and think on this... This is a powerful scripture that gives us great confidence.

The other important part is, “He who keeps.” The word “keep” in the Hebrew is šāmar or Shamar, which means to preserve. Preserve means to keep from harm, injury, loss or ruin, protect, and guard. Imagine this, you and I have a security force around us that is keeping us from harm. You may say, well I have been harmed and I was not protected because this

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bad thing happened to me. Just know, you and I are protected at all times and whatever “bad” thing that may happen, He will cause it to work together for good. You see, the adversary is on a leash and cannot do no more than the Lord will allow when we are living a life dedicated to Him. Whatever happens, the Lord is working it together for His greater purpose. It is all about perspective. Night and day are the same to Him. (Psalm 139:12) There is “good” somewhere and we will see it. We will see a mighty divine purpose fulfilled if we do not lose heart.

The Lord who keeps us will not slumber neither sleep (go into *the natural state of rest during which your eyes are closed and you become unconscious*). In other words, He will not take a nap or doze off or sleep. We can depend on the Lord to be alert and awake at all times. He is alert guarding and watching over us and caring for us. You ever went into a place where there was a security guard and instead of guarding he is napping. That is not our Lord.... He is not sleeping on the job, taking a cat nap or going into a state of unconsciousness. He is always alert. From sunrise to sunset, we have God’s protection 24/7, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, every minute and every hour.

5 The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is your shade at your right hand.

We again are reassured of the Lord’s preservation and protection. He is your Keeper! He is your shade on our right hand. He covers you. This is another element of protection. He is your right hand man. The right hand symbolizes the hand of strength, power, authority, and action. Another powerful scripture to look at is Psalm 16:8.

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

The sun represents heated moments of life. We all face “life under the sun” and this will automatically bring heated seasons. I was in the heat and darkness, but the blow was not fatal. It did not slay me. I am still standing

We face challenges on every side, but whether it is day or night, those things will not smite us.

Let us move to the last two verses.

7 The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul.

8 The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in From this time forth, and even forevermore.

God will Shamar over us, He will preserve us from all evil. He will preserve our soul, which is the seat of our emotions and passions. No matter what’s going on, we can be assured that He will preserve us at all times.

One day during this dark time, I was taking my walk, I heard the Lord say, “Lift Up Your eyes.” I realized I was walking with my head down, with my eyes to the ground. I was in prayer, meditating, and deep thinking, but in a downward position because my heart was so heavy. I immediately lifted up my eyes. I looked to the pretty blue sky. Since that day, I do not walk with my head down. If I am unconsciously looking down, I will catch myself and lift up my eyes.

Again, Lifting up our eyes is an act of our will. We choose where we will look and to whom we will look. Our faith is built on whatever and whoever we look to and for help. We must continuously look to the Lord for help, strength, and protection. He is the only One who truly knows how to give us all we need for our life’s journey, which is filled with trouble, adversity, triumphs, and victories.

It takes a humble heart to “Lift Up the Eyes” to the Lord, but when we humble ourselves, we are saying, “I am weak; I need Your strength; You are the God who does not slumber nor sleep; You will keep me from slipping, wavering, tottering, and falling; And, no matter what I may be able to do, You will exceed my ability because You are GOD.

To summarize, Psalm 121 starts with a declaration and a question. The verses provide a description of the most powerful and

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awesome God we serve. We can truly depend on Him to fulfill His job description. Can He depend on us to humbly and confidently declare "I will lift up my eyes to the Lord, who provides help, protection and preservation no matter what is going on in life." If you struggle with trusting the Lord, let this Psalm be your meditation until your trust becomes more confident in the Lord's ability to help. If you are not struggling, let this Psalm be a

meditation that will bring you even more strength as you journey through life under the sun.

As I edited this newsletter, a from the late '90s titled, "Psalm 121", written by Jackie Gouche, came to my mind. I want to share it with you. [Click to listen.](#)

Veronica

FOCUS ON HEALTH - *Water...*

Do you drink plenty of water daily?

"Human beings can survive without food for thirty to forty days - about five weeks - but without water, life would end in three to five days. The average person's body is composed of approximately 70 percent water, although the water content varies considerably from person to person and even from one body part to another. The body's water supply is responsible for and involved in nearly every bodily process, including digestion, absorption, circulation, and excretion.

- Water is also the primary transporter of nutrients throughout the body and is so necessary for all building functions in the body.
- Water helps maintain normal body temperature and is essential for carrying waste material out of the body. Therefore, replacing the water that is continually being lost through sweating and elimination is very important.
- If not enough water is consumed, toxins can build up in the system, causing headaches. Water flushes out these toxins.
- Water is especially important for people who have musculoskeletal problems such as arthritis, or who are athletic, as it lubricates the joints.
- If you do not take in enough water to maintain fluid balance, every bodily function can be impaired.



Inadequate water consumption may contribute to excess body fat; poor muscle tone; digestive problems; poor functioning of many organs, including the brain; joint and muscle soreness; and, paradoxically, water retention. Consuming plenty of quality water can slow the aging process and prevent or improve arthritis, kidney stones, constipation, arteriosclerosis, obesity, glaucoma, cataracts, diabetes, hypoglycemia, and many other diseases."([Prescription for](#)

[Nutritional Healing, Phyllis A. Balch, CNC, pg. 48](#))

"For maximum benefit you must drink 1/2 of your body weight in ounces daily. Example:

200 lbs = 100 ounces - 12 1/2 glasses

150 lbs = 75 ounces = 9 glasses

125 lbs = 58 ounces = 8 1/2 glasses"

([Treasures of Health Nutrition Manual, Annette Reeder & Dr. Richard Couey, pg. 7](#))

Let us strive be healthy in order to carry out the Father's purpose.

Disclaimer, I am **NOT a medical professional and this advice is **NOT** to take the place of consultation with your doctor.*



1 Thessalonians 5:11 - Therefore, ENCOURAGE one another and BUILD one another up, just as you are doing