

YOU'RE SURROUNDED!



*“As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds His people both now and forevermore.” Psa.125:2*

We bought our van brand new in 1995 and it has served us well. It has driven children to school, gone on road trips, gone to church numerous times, hauled bark-o-mulch, bricks, sand, furniture, and carried more feet of lumber than we can count. It has been showing its age for a few years but is still plugging along. We’ve replaced the transmission twice, water pumps, brakes, alternators and belts, timing chains, fuel pumps and whatever other moving parts there can be on a car. Every time we have to spend money on it, I grind my teeth and remind myself it’s better than making a car payment every month. When we first bought the van, that’s what we did---\$300.00 a month for 5 years! I can’t imagine doing that now and neither of us anticipates ever buying a new car again.

Dennis has creatively “fixed” a couple of things on the car; ones a real mechanic would shudder at but they work and aren’t illegal. For instance, the driver’s side door latch is broken so he has used a wad of black duct tape to hold the latch in a position so the “door open” bell won’t constantly chime and the interior lights won’t flash off and on. We continue to pray the door won’t fly open when the van is in motion. The driver’s side seat back is broken so it won’t stay in an upright position. He has rigged up an assembly including a 5-gallon bucket and a 2X4 piece of lumber. I won’t even try to explain how that works. You would have to see it for yourself! Suffice to say that he is the only one who can now drive the van because the seat can’t be moved forward and my legs just aren’t as long as his are. The paint is nearly all peeled off the hood but so far he’s not decided to approach it with a can of spray paint. I’m afraid I would have to throw myself on it to prevent that!

The one thing that (until a week ago) hadn’t happened was something actually falling off of the van while we were driving along. We left the house last Monday morning at 8:00 a.m. for a doctor appointment, had gotten approximately 2 blocks from our house and heard a loud “clunk” from under the car. Almost immediately the power steering was gone and Dennis had to wrestle the car back home. The straight stretches were okay but the corners were murder. When we drove into our driveway, we heard more “clunks” and things literally fell out onto the driveway. We got into the garage, looked back and there was a string of miscellaneous pieces of car lying behind us. My first thought was, “Oh boy! This is the one where we just drive the thing off a cliff!” All I could see were dollars flying away that we don’t want to spend on a van that is past its prime.

Dennis was much calmer about it and one of the first things he said was about how God has always provided for us and had again. He reminded me that God is “**never too early, never too late, always on time**” with His provision for His children. This didn’t really stop the grinding of my teeth; that took another couple of days. Dennis’ logic had to do with a check we had received THE DAY BEFORE the “falling parts” incident. We had spoken at a conference and were

given an honorarium totaling just a little bit over what the car repair was going to cost. God had provided before we even knew we had a need and at just the right time to prevent us from spending it on something else. *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”* Prov.3:5

I’ve thought many times about how we pray for God’s protection, provision, and direction and then, when we get it, we don’t recognize it because it isn’t the way we would have done it had we been answering our own prayers. We don’t understand how God operates so we think He isn’t. We can’t control Him or anticipate what He’s going to do in our lives so we think He’s not paying attention or not caring. Relationships fall apart, jobs are lost, homes are forfeited and we wonder if He really does care. All the while, our prayers are being answered but God works in ways that are foreign to us.

God provides for us all the time, in every way, but a lot of times it’s not immediate so we tap our watches and think He’s late. *“When I am afraid, I will trust in you.”* Psa.56:3 When we think we may have been left on our own or feel helpless, anxiety and fear start to creep in. There are 2 verses in Psalms that refer to God *“surrounding”* His children. If you picture something *“surrounding”* you, it’s going all the way around, no gaps, no place where something can get to you. You are protected. We can deduce then that nothing gets to us before it comes through God hands; God who is *“surrounding”* us. Whether it is financial difficulties, relational problems, or any other kind of stuff that comes into our lives uninvited, it has to go through Him first.

Did God know beforehand that things would fall out from underneath our van? Of course He did. Does He care about mundane, unimportant, silly things that like; things are certainly aren’t life changing? Yes, He does and He provided for that unexpected, unwelcome event just to show us once again that He cares and He’s got our best interest at heart. *“The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him.”* Nahum 1:7

When you are having difficulties of any kind, going through a desert place, doing your best to just get through another day, know God cares for you. He has already provided for you and answered your prayers but you may just not recognize those answers yet. *“Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.”* Psa. 27:14 It must be important for us to wait for the Lord to show us His way; it’s repeated more than once in scripture.

There has probably never been a “cowboy” movie made where at some point during the show someone doesn’t yell out “Hands up! You’re surrounded!” God doesn’t yell. Most of the time, He whispers but the message is still clear. While we’re waiting, we can keep reminding ourselves that He doesn’t leave us on our own with no resources. While we’re waiting, we can listen to His voice saying, “Eyes up! Hands up! You’re surrounded”.

*“Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord’s unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in Him.”* Psa.32:10

*Georgia*