

## PRAYERS FOR GOD'S PROTECTION

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As a young girl, one of my favorite songs was from the children's opera, Hansel and Gretel composed by Engelbert Humperdinck in 1890. Written originally for his sister who asked Engelbert to compose music for a play for her children, this opera became a renowned work in music literature. The lyrics depict God's protection over a sleeping child;

*When at night I go to sleep  
Fourteen angels watch do keep  
Two my head are guarding  
Two my feet are guiding  
Two are on my right hand  
Two are on my left hand  
Two who warmly cover  
Two who o'er me hover  
Two to whom 'tis given to  
Guide my steps to heaven.*

The security of God's heavenly hosts is around us. As these lyrics suggest, a sleeping child is in a vulnerable state of mind and being. However, the security of God's heavenly hosts surrounds her. Psalm 121 further emphasizes a similar form of God's protection; Though we slumber, He does not (vs. 4); though evil is around us, He preserves us (vs. 7). Though we venture in and out, He shields us and keeps our feet from stumbling (vs. 3 & 8). Another scripture that shows God's watchfulness when we are alone, afraid or vulnerable is Psalm 91; "Surely He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler...He will cover you with His feathers...You will not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day ... For He will give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways." (vs. 3, 4, 5 & 11).

Combining the truths found in scriptures and the context of these song lyrics, consider using the following prayer when you are afraid or feel vulnerable.  
(format inspired by Praying God's Word by Beth Moore)

*Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! (Ps. 148, vs. 1&2):* The Lord is great and mighty in power. Even the angels bow down and praise Him.

*Two my head are guarding:* Lord, guard my thoughts. Bring them into the obedience of Christ. Cast down any thought that would come against you (2 Cor. 10:5).

*Two my feet are guiding:* Lord, direct my paths. Help me to walk in your ways and in your will. Fill me with the knowledge of your will (Col. 1:9). Renew my mind so that I may know *your* perfect will (Rom. 12:2).

*Two are on my right hand; two are on my left hand:* Lord, help me to remember that even when Balaam tried to advance contrary to your will, one of your angels stood in a narrow place to block him from turning “either to the right hand or to the left” so that evil could not prevail (Num. 22:26). Thank you Lord that my right hand is in yours (Ps. 73:23) and *your* right hand holds me up (Ps. 73:23).

*Two who warmly cover; two who o’er me hover:* Thank you Lord, that you cover me with your feathers and that nothing can strike me down (Ps. 91:5). A bruised reed you will not break (Isaiah 42:3) and “you have covered my head in the day of battle” (Ps. 140:7).

*Two to whom ‘tis given, to guide my steps to Heaven:* If I have “confessed with my mouth the Lord Jesus” and have believed in my heart that God has raised Him from the dead, (Rom. 10:9) one day I will be in heaven with Him. “O Death, where is your sting?” (I Cor. 16:55-57).

In the Hansel and Gretel storyline, an evil woman intends to kill these children. She deceptively decorates her house with gingerbread and inside she prepares a feast. She cages Hansel and makes Gretel her servant. But in the end, the children escape and reunite under the protection of their father.

Each day, we too can reunite under the protection of our heavenly Father, especially in times of emotional or physical distress. Instead of “caged”, we are free in Christ. Instead of being an earthly slave to anxiety-producing events or thoughts, we can count on Christ guarding us from head- to-toe! Instead of a feast intending to kill us as in Hansel and Gretel, we can look forward to our heavenly homecoming feast;

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies ...and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever (Ps. 23:5&6).*

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