

Chapter 38: "TaterPop, Can I Stand In Your Shadow?"

Life Application Verses:

Psalm 57: 1: Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge until destruction passes by.

A kite. Formula: wind, string, kite, tail, more wind, absence of storms, more wind, and...did I mention more wind? A strange beginning to Psalm 57: 1, in which the writer sought refuge in the Shadow of God. I've talked about my granddaughter a fair bit in this book, and I have something even more profound that happened today (at this writing). My little buddy, KotaBear, and I went kite flying today. We had two kites: a Princess Kite and a plain purple kite. We had trouble flying both at the same time, so she suggested that we fly only the purple one. We both had hats, but her long hair kept getting in her face, so she took her hat off. Our adventure began as a somewhat cloudy event, quickly becoming a sunny outcome. Since she now had no hat, the sun was in her eyes and it was very hard for her to see the kite and enjoy the outing. Then, just as surely as Jesus was innocent on the Cross, she so innocently said to me, as she came to my side, "TaterPop, can I stand in your shadow?" At the precise moment of her question, I saw the Truth in the Life Application Verse in Psalm 57: 1: "Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge until destruction passes by."



KotaBear's 'destruction' at 5 years of age was the sun glaring into her eyes, and making it impossible to enjoy the kite up in the sky. She needed TaterPop's shadow to see the kite soaring and darting to-and-fro in the wind high above our heads. Even with intermittent wind, it was still a fun time for us. And in our Earthly Good lives as Christians, we will have days of destruction or heartache, and we seek The Shadow of God for refuge. Just as KotaBear sought refuge from that brilliant sun in her eyes, so too do we who have been Born Again seek the refuge of God in our times of destruction. I will never look at a kite the same way again as I will always remember those moments KotaBear and I shared flying that kite. It was just wind, string,

purple kite, grass, and each other, but when she asked me if she could stand in my shadow, at her young years of life, I was touched to my Soul. I understand the need to seek the Refuge of God's Shadow now more clearly than ever in all of my 63 years of life. What a lesson KotaBear! And Honor and Praise to You, Heavenly Father, for teaching me this lesson from an Angel that taught me what it truly means to Stand in the Shadow of the Most High God.

When my granddaughter came to me and asked to stand in my shadow, it gave me a humbleness of the power of that hope, trust, and dependence she had in me. I could have said, 'C'mon, kid, be tough and get out there and fly that kite!' I could also have just moved aside and let the sun continue to be a problem for her visual acuity of the kite. I could have done any number of things in response, but I held her close and said, "KotaBear, you stand right here in my shadow and I'll keep the sun off of you." That's what God is to us; He keeps the sun (destruction) from beating us down beyond what we can handle. We will go through times of struggle in so many different areas of our lives, but He will never leave us in the sun to wither and die. His Shadow is Mighty and Holy and Forceful and a Refuge! We just have to ask, "God, Can I Stand in Your Shadow?" You know what He will say? "My Child, you stand right here in My Shadow and I'll keep the sun off of you." As if that lesson were not enough for a lifetime, I was given another dose of Mercy, Grace, and Love from My Heavenly Father.

After the kite flying ended, we played for a long time, and finally she fell asleep early that evening. She was so very tired from so many things and a busy week in kindergarten. And on occasion, we blow up the blue mattress (one you use to camp out with), and TaterPop and KotaBear "camp out" in the living room. She loves to have this time to stay up, talk, and just have some Little Person time. We tuck Nana in for the night and then she and I 'camp out.' As I often do, I checked on her to make sure she was not too cool or hot, as she sleeps with her 'blankie.' On this night, however, when I woke up and saw how her blankie had tucked itself to her sides, with the edges forming what immediately appeared to me as 'Angel Wings', I was Blessed once again! It was as if this Little Angel had delivered the message from God earlier in the day, and now I was being reminded of His Love,



Mercy, Grace, and Protection from destruction. It helped me to remember that Life is not always going to be easy on us, but if we remember Him in these times, before we despair, He can work miracles in our lives. Our Salvation in Christ Jesus is guaranteed, but life goes on here while we are waiting for that Glorious Day of Appearing that has been promised us who have given our Heart, Mind, Body, and Soul to Christ. Until then, God is our refuge. We should seek His Shadow because it extends over all the Earth, Heavens, Galaxies, and Life. This is the Heavenly Minded mindset we should always have, and in turn, we should live Earthly Good as we walk in the Shadow of the Almighty!

Let me add a caveat to this discussion: I know that if you are reading this and you have children, and you are a Child of God, your own children or grandchildren are a Blessing from God. I believe that with all that I am. I also know that these little Souls from God are Angels (even though sometimes we beg to differ), in their unique ways. They say things that are profound, even at 3, 4, 5, and on. Listen to the Words of God as these little people bring the message of God as I believe He protects them when they are young. I also grieve so deeply when a child is lost, and I cannot even write the words for my own destruction in this case—God I Pray for Protection for my KotaBear (and now little Santiago) and other loved children the world over. I hold KotaBear and Santiago Up to You before the Throne of Grace, Mercy, Love and Protection—not above You, Father God, but to You as they are Angels of Love, Innocence, Pure Heart, and Joy of Life. Please keep her and him—and our little ones—safe from Harm and Fear. These are the Little Ones Jesus spoke of, Father God, and You Alone have the Power of Protection from all Harm. *I must stop for a bit now and Pray...It's now some 24 hours later.* With a heavy heart for my grandchildren in this evil world, all I can think to do is write these poems:

For Kotabear

Lord, I lay me down to sleep,
I pray her little feet to keep;
Safe from harm, Your mercy binds,
Soul to Thee, Her Spirit Climbs;
Refuge from life's tears that flow,
To You, O God, In Christ, She'll grow;
Let not the world, on her befall,
For in Thy Shadow, Hear her call.

For Santiago

Lord, I lay me down to sleep,
I pray his little feet to keep;
Safe from harm, Your mercy binds,
Soul to Thee, His Spirit Climbs;
Refuge from life's tears that flow,
To You, O God, In Christ, He'll grow;
Let not the world, on him befall,
For in Thy Shadow, Hear his call.

We so often use examples or events or experiences in our lives to bring us to our knees. Our struggles are not as unique as we may think, but in our unique spaces of living, our experiences are our own. IN our minds and hearts, no two of us are precisely alike. We interact with our children in unique ways, with our wives and husbands in unique ways, and with our personal world in unique ways. Yet, even as God is unique to each of us, when we consider the Life Application Verse, how does this impact us in a unique way? Let's reread the Truth God provides: **Psalm 57: 1**: "Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge until destruction passes by." Let's start with something unique to those of us who work in hot summers.

Cutting grass is an arduous experience. I am speaking to those who go out in the hot summers to cut grass or do yard-work. It's not something glorious that results in our pictures on the front page of the newspaper (normally). However, as the temperature rises, at some point a common event will take place: shade, rest and drink. But here's the rub: *the shade, rest, and drink will not come to us, we must go to it*. In Christ Jesus, God gave us His Son, but we must go to that Salvation. It knocks at our doors, but we must open the door. When we are hot, thirsty, and in need of coolness, if we just stop our yard-work and never move, the heat continues to build up, the thirst continues to grow, and rest eludes us because we fail to move to those things that provide for our needs as we work in the heat and sun. God provides shade, rest, and drink. But we must go to them. If we see His Blessings, but we never move to accept them, what will happen? Will He force them upon us? No. He gave us Free Will and in that most profound gift, WE must make those decisions and WE must take action. My granddaughter had a problem; she needed my shadow for shade, rest, and drink. She took action and sought me out to ask me an innocent and most precious question: "TaterPop, can I stand in your shadow?" In that question from this little child, I learned that to be Earthly Good is to strive every day to be extraordinary for God—to be Heavenly Minded to offer shadow to our children, family, friends, coworkers, and the lost, ergo...lead them to Christ Jesus while there is time.

Let's take a look at two other words in the Life Application Verses: refuge and destruction. What is refuge and destruction? I'm thinking that I need to call my friend Webster again: refuge is "shelter or protection from danger or distress"; destruction is "the act or

process of damaging something so badly that it no longer exists or cannot be repaired: the act or process of destroying something." In essence, and in light of Proverbs 57: 1, God's shadow is 'shelter or protection from danger, distress, and destruction to prevent the act or process of damaging something so badly that it no longer exists or cannot be repaired as a result of the act or process of destroying something.' What is the something? I think you know: it is you and it is me and it is our family and it is our children. What is God's shadow? It is His Love, Mercy, and Grace. And what are the dangers, distress, and destruction: those are anything that are harmful to our lives. ***Anything that is harmful!***

If we could sit at a large round table, much like what is referred to as 'Round Table Sessions' at a national conference, we could share our experiences with one another. In my case, I speak from my own personal experiences, yet yours are as unique to you as mine are to me. When my granddaughter asked me the question about standing in my shadow, it's not just that I use this to say, "Hey look at how great I am or she is"; it's to share with you my experiences so that God may use them to reach into your experiences and speak to your life to share what we do as Christians, to bolster one another, and to bring us together in Spirit to serve God in more profound ways. Can you imagine what our children and grandchildren can teach us about God? Is that impossible? I think not. I believe that God uses our little ones to call to us in ways that we cannot imagine. But we have to listen. We have to understand that those little voices are like the shade, rest, and drink on a hot summer day. I heard my KotaBear's voice and my immediate reaction was that this was a lesson from God. It was her voice, it was her tender love, and it was her small hands reaching out to me; but it was God Almighty that was speaking to me in Spirit, to remind me that He still Loves me in spite of so many things that I do or say or how I react to Him and those around me.

If I could but be as my granddaughter in terms of innocence and trust to stand in TaterPop's shadow and translate this into Trust in my God—to stand in His shadow to seek refuge in all things—oh what Glorious living this would be! It doesn't always have to be total collapse of my physical self to be destruction. It can be something as simple as an event at work that feels like destruction. It can be something as crazy as a driver that nearly causes me to drive off the road into the ditch that is destruction to me because sometimes—and I am being

brutally honest before you and God—I let my tongue engage before my Heart has time to sift the outpouring! A profound example of destruction to me is losing my Fellowship with my God. To lose the closeness you have with Almighty God in Christ Jesus IS destruction, for in this loss, life takes on a meaningless existence. Oh, we can show the world how ‘Blessed’ we are, but underneath that façade, we are but a most miserable creature. Please tell me this is not so! Without Salvation, we are hopeless and destruction is Eternal; in Christ, our Salvation is Sealed unto the Day of Redemption; yet, we can slip and fall at a moment’s notice and when this happens, our fellowship with God can be damaged. It then becomes for us a challenge to seek out that shade, rest, and drink in His Shadow. If we are not standing in the Shadow of God every moment in time, we are in the hot and humid sun, where our shade, rest, and drink are just out of reach.

Thank you, O God, for using KotaBear to teach me this lesson. May we as parents learn from our children the Wisdom that their Youth brings to our lives. I hope and Pray that God never stops teaching me, and that He never stops teaching you, as well. (On a personal note: I thank God for Mrs. Grant, KotaBear’s Kindergarten teacher. She has opened that little life to learning and sharing, and God is using KotaBear to teach an old dog [ME!] new tricks of Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good living!

A Question of Curiosity:

Look for the Lessons of Life in places you least expect to find them. If you do, I believe that God will use our friends, family, children, grandchildren, and even those we don’t know, to teach us about Life, Hope, Faith, Love, Grace, and Mercy. God casts a Long and Holy Shadow across every Life He touches in Christ Jesus. It’s our responsibility to seek Him out as we live and to purposefully Stand in His Shadow. And you say...

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Paul Harvey told of a five-year-old who was in the back yard brushing her dog’s teeth. When her father asked her what she was doing, she replied, “Don’t worry, Daddy, I’ll put your tooth brush back--like I always have!” Ah, the joys of being a parent! ~ Bible.org ~

“I will never forget that incredible moment when our daughter Ashley was born. The doctor cleaned her up and handed her to us. I (Dennis) wanted to blurt out, “Thanks for the gift, but where are the instructions?” ~ Dennis and Barbara Rainey ~

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My Prayer For You:

I call out to You, Heavenly Father, that You might guide me to stand in Your Holy Shadow so that I might remember You at all times of the day and night. There is no other God that I seek and no other Savior but Christ Jesus. I give Thanks for my family, and I give thanks for My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, who live day-by-day in Your Shadow. We live in times that seem to be pure chaos, yet we know that You Alone, God, hold this Universe in your Mighty Hands. We believe in You, we are Saved by Grace in Jesus, and we long for the day when You will send the Angels to Sound the Trumpet and call us Home. Bless our little ones, for in them, You give us the second most precious Gift of Life, with Jesus our Most Precious Gift. I know that there are many KotaBear's and Santiago's in the world, and I pray for every one of them and their parents, brothers, sisters, and their lives—that they may walk daily in Your Shadow and find Peace from the things that cause us destruction or anguish or tears. Give those families refuge from Life's Storms. Protect us from what would try to crush our will to live for You. We are but The Servants of Your Will, we need You now more than ever, and You know every heart, need, and Prayer. Teach us lessons that change our lives and bring to our full senses the Truth and Application of Your Words in the Holy Bible, that we might live Heavenly Minded, Earthly Good. Cast Your Shadow over us so that as we live we will know that You are our refuge from the tears of this life. Open our eyes to see Your Glory around us and especially in our Children. Open our ears to hear from them when You are reaching out to us through them. Write the Words of Your Will for us on our Hearts forever. In the Name of the Son of God, I Pray, Amen.

How would you interpret this image?

