



Gratitude and Generosity
Week 3 Study Guide (10/4/2020)

Psalm 121

NRSV

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills—
from where will my help come?
- ² My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
- ³ He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
- ⁴ He who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- ⁵ The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.
- ⁶ The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
- ⁷ The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
- ⁸ The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time on and for evermore.

The Message

- ¹⁻² I look up to the mountains;
does my strength come from mountains?
No, my strength comes from God,
who made heaven, and earth, and mountains.
- ³⁻⁴ He won't let you stumble,
your Guardian God won't fall asleep.
Not on your life! Israel's
Guardian will never doze or sleep.
- ⁵⁻⁶ God's your Guardian,
right at your side to protect you—
Shielding you from sunstroke,
sheltering you from moonstroke.
- ⁷⁻⁸ God guards you from every evil,
he guards your very life.
He guards you when you leave and when you return,
he guards you now, he guards you always.

1. Following some of the guidance of last week's sermon on *How to Read a Psalm*, reflect on the following:
 - a. Read the Psalm aloud. What do your ears hear and eyes see? What is going on in this Psalm?
 - b. What metaphor stands out to you? Why?
 - c. Is there a line from the Psalm to keep with you through this day? A line to be praying for someone you know?
 - d. Compare the two translations. What do you notice?
2. Count the number of times the word *keep* appears in the NRSV version of the Psalm. What does *keep* mean in the Psalm? What is the Psalmist trying to convey with the repeated use of this word? What is the equivalent word in *The Message*? Which of the two words is more meaningful for you?
3. While the word *gratitude* does not appear in the Psalm, what evidence do you see of the Psalmist's gratitude to God?
4. How is it that *gratitude* leads to *generosity*?

Going Deeper

"This Psalm voices a simple, direct confidence in YHWH [sometimes spelled, *Yahweh*, God's name in the Old Testament.] The term 'keep' (along with 'help') governs the poetry and gives content to the name of YHWH. The recurrence of the term 'keep' attests to the abiding, complete trustworthiness of the presence of YHWH in every season of risk."

From *Psalms*, by Walter Brueggemann and William Bellinger, p.527.