

# Keeping careful watch over God's gifts

*"The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore."* — PSALM 121:7-8

BY KATHY HOOD CULMER



I was near the point of tears last year when I broke some of my mother's salt and pepper shakers. I had kept them safely in a cabinet in the corner of the dining room for years, taking them out a few times during the year to dust them off and return them to their display case. This time, however, I must have pressed too hard on a shelf or something, setting off a chain reaction and causing a number of those shakers to go crashing to the floor, some of them unrecoverable.

In terms of dollar value, the salt and pepper shakers my mother had collected for who knows how many years may not have been worth very much. Some, however, had come from pretty interesting places. My mother's friends who traveled and knew she was a collector would bring her souvenir shakers from those places, and that gave them their value to her. I had contributed some in that way, as well.

And while my mother has been gone from this earth for more than two decades, it has been important to me to take good care of "her" salt and pepper shakers, which have become mine, because of what they had meant to her. I treasure them and care for them as though she would someday return to see what a great job I've done and be pleased, or to tell me how proud she was of the loving care I have given to the special gift she left me.

What if we held such regard for the gifts that God has given us for our provision and pleasure? What if we kept such careful watch over all that has been entrusted to us for our safekeeping, including our bodies, minds, relationships, and the earth's resources, taking every measure possible to avoid breakage or overconsumption or misuse and abuse? What if we did so, not out of fear or obligation, but because of our great love for the Giver, because we want the Giver to be well pleased with us and maybe even proud of us?

What if we would spend every day we're given expressing our thanksgiving for all that we have received in the way we care for all that has been provided?

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