

Close Calls. Closer God.

“Because he loves me, says the LORD, I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him and honor him.” Psalm 91:14-15

It was a dark winter evening in upstate NY when Mom picked me up from my second grade friend’s house. As we headed down the hill of a deserted country road, our car hit a patch of ice, suddenly careening out of control. Round and round and round we’d go, but where would we stop? A wooded ravine threatened from our right and a high hard snow bank on our left. Mom shot her arm across my chest to protect me from what would come next.

Our car spun left and plowed into the snow bank. We were stuck—but unhurt. No phone and no other travelers to help us, we spotted a light shining in the distance. We climbed the mountainous snowbank together, passed over a short barbed wire fence, and trudged toward that light. We had no idea who would open the door of the trailer. Would it be a scraggly old man with no teeth and sporting a shotgun who would turn us back into the cold or kidnap and torture us?

To our relief, a young man, his wife with babe in arms, opened the door, inviting us into their warm cozy space. The man “just happened” to have a tractor which he used to pull out our car and send us safely on our way.

God’s promise to protect and rescue us was kept even before my mom and I began to love Him.

When my second close call happened, I was a believer. Three college friends and I piled in a car and drove out to our professor’s studio.

It was a beautiful spring day, a wide open country road; a great day to be alive. Our car was traveling at a decent clip typical on the straight, flat back roads of Texas when it was hit broadside.

We heard it before we felt it; a high pitched squeal and the deafening sound of metal on metal followed—by an eerie silence. We were in shock, wondering if we had all survived.

I felt the trickle of something wet roll down my forehead. Was it blood?

I whispered to the person next to me, “Are you ok?” One by one everyone answered, “YES!”

I reached up to wipe away the warm, sticky substance—it was my Dr. Pepper.

I began to laugh. I was giddy with gratitude to God that no one had been seriously hurt.

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The third (and hopefully last) close call happened when my sister, Carol, fetched me and my mom from the Atlanta airport. Trying to beat rush hour, crazy drivers wove in and out of 6 lanes at high speed.

Without warning and for no apparent reason, a car in front of us began to spin out of control. It spun backward, forward, side to side.

Carol hit the brakes but the car in front of us continued to spin. We held our breath wondering, would it hit us or someone else? Would there be a major pile up as cars swerved and braked? I'm sure Mom and I were praying hard! Finally the out of control car came to a halt.

Carol said, *"Good thing my BMW has such great brakes!"* But Mom astutely countered, *"Well, what about all those cars behind you who did not have great brakes? No one rear ended you, did they?"*

Yep, Mom, too had finally surrendered her heart to Jesus and now we both knew God's promises were true.

Do the promises in Psalm 91 mean that nothing tragic or catastrophic will ever happen to me because I love Him and acknowledge His name? If I ever suffer injury or death as a result of living in a broken world, should I conclude that He did not keep his promises?

No.

God's **ultimate rescue** took place while I was still an ignorant slave to sin. He sent his one and only Son to set me free.

His **ultimate protection** is my name written in the Book of Life. Christ's blood shed on the cross covers me. When God looks at me, He does not see my sin, He sees Christ's righteousness.

God's **ultimate deliverance** will happen when He brings me out of this temporary body and broken world to a restored body and place where there's no more sorrow or suffering.

And God's **ultimate honor** will be glorious, being able to look into the eyes of the King of Kings, the Creator of all things and feel His warm embrace as He welcomes me home.