

## COVERING

Covering is a term that is used often in the body of Christ, although there is no real reference for such a word in scripture. It is a word used to describe one's submission to authority and the protection that flows out of such a proper biblical relationship. Unfortunately, there have been abuses by those in authority in the body of Christ and, as a result, there has been a lording over (Matthew 20:25-26) of people. It is not surprising, therefore, that the term covering has been viewed more as a "smothering" than a covering.

The true intended sense of covering can be seen in Hebrews 13:

Hebrews 13:17

*"Obey your leaders, and submit {to them} for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."*

Notice that the leader is to watch over, which in the Greek means literally to be attentive, to be sleepless, to be ready. The implication is a guarding or a protecting. This is further supported by the departing words that Paul spoke to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20.

Acts 20:28

*"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."*

The word 'guard' translates to pay attention to, have regard for, to be given to. The word 'oversee' means to be a guardian, to be in charge of, to watch over. The word 'shepherd' means to tend, to feed, to nourish. When you put them together the picture is of one who is watching over and protecting, providing an environment in which one can grow and function. This is what is involved in covering.

Spiritually, there is a protection from the enemy who is committed to resist us in our purpose and kingdom endeavors, as well as totally destroying us. But to experience this, we must be in agreement with and under God's authority, which includes those authorities He has placed over us. Being under the covering of delegated authority (properly submitted to) provides a hedge against demonic attacks.

James 4:7

*"Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."*