**Shielded**  
As we got closer to the house I saw smoke. My mind raced at what it could possibly be until I landed on the fact that I had left a pot of tea on the stove. I held my children back and ran for the door and out poured more smoke.  
  
Until that moment, I somehow had gotten to the point of thinking I had nothing. I thought everything had been taken away. Yet the realization of that moment was just how much I had taken for granted. Night after night I had a safe place to shelter my family. Day after day we were all healthy.   
  
In those days as a single mom, I learned many valuable lessons of reliance on the Lord as my protector, shield and provider. He was constantly reminding me to open my eyes to see that:

* When the kitchen filled with smoke, He removed us from the home before smoke filled our lungs.
* When I would look at my rent house and wonder why my landlord raised the rent; month after month He somehow provided enough to get us through.
* When the seasons changed and I needed clothes for my children; He would move in the hearts of others that would bring bags full of hand-me-downs.

When I couldn't find the Lord, questions would permeate in my mind like, "How am I supposed to make ends meet again this month?", "Will You provide again?" and, "Have I already received my fair share?" But there were so many places that the Lord showed up day after day as Shield, Protector and Provider. And best of all, when I needed to know that I was loved; His Word jumped off the pages and I know they were meant for me in that moment.

If we have not met, I want you to know that I walked into this church 24 years ago with a 5 year old daughter and a 2 month old son in tow. This church embraced me but bigger than that the gospel and what God did in my life changed this ordinary girl forever! And I know He will do the same for you! He will! Enjoy church, the SPF ministry and this SPF newsletter. Allow yourself to get excited about what God has in store for you and your children.

**Holly Crain**  
**Single Parent Family Ministry Associate**  
Single Parent Family Ministry  
Houston’s First Baptist Church — The Loop  
[Holly.Crain@HoustonsFirst.org](mailto:Holly.Crain@HoustonsFirst.org)  
O: [713.957.7674](tel:(713)%20957-7674)  
C: [832-247-4787](tel:(832)%20247-4787)  
[HoustonsFirst.org](http://houstonsfirst.org/) ​