

Peter referenced several levels of suffering including the suffering related to the painful persecution of people, distress of challenging life circumstances that affect every aspect of life in a broken world and the perpetual demands of our sinful flesh to live for the temporal rather than the eternal. He finishes his letter addressing the stress of unexpected skirmishes with the Devil. After Peter’s exhortation to be properly aligned to God, he urged his readers to be alert to the intent of Satan to derail or devour Christians.

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:5-11

Peter, in this passage, provided three **ANCHORS** and prescribes three **ACTIONS**.

1. The devil prowls around seeking someone to devour.

- **The devil is our adversary.**
- **The Devil continually prowls around like a roaring lion.**
- **The devil is out to incapacitate or destroy.**

This is not some metaphorical battle or do we face unseen but real forces? Paul seems clear. We must be alert and spiritual prepared because...

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. Ephesians 6:12

Paul used a term indicating close encounter, hand to hand combat.

- **The devil has a far reach**

He hunts unsuspecting believers (prey). Peter indicates this is a world-wide hunting expedition.

2. This struggle is common to all Christians world-wide.

knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world. 1 Peter 5:9

3. God will eventually perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

The final anchor provided by Peter in our fight against the enemy has to do with the confidence in God’s ultimate work in our life of growth and protection.

But after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:10-11

ACTIONS

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert.

Peter used a “point-time” action command for both of these commands. The “point-time” action or “aorist” action verb indicates...

The Greek aorist imperative in the original text commands the action to reach completion, focusing on its first needed attainment i.e. "Get it done!" "Just do it!" It often conveys a series of individual (complete) episodes meaning, "Do this as immediately and decisively as called for – and once again each time the need arises (one-at-a-time)!"

1. Be sober

Peter used an uncomplicated term. At face value it instructs believers to “not be drunk” or “be sober”. Decide to keep your faculties sharp. Don’t be dulled by either activities or substances. Be sober, clear headed, self-controlled.

The New Testament urges this action a number of times.

*But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day (of the Lord) would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and **sober**. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of the day, let us be **sober**, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8*

*But you, be **sober** in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 2 Tim 4:5*

*Therefore, having prepared your minds for action, keeping **sober** in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace being brought to you in revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:13*

*The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and **sober** spirit for the purpose of prayer. 1 Pet 4:7*

We can become numbed intellectually. We can also become numbed spiritually through neglect. The writer of Hebrews mentions those who were dull.

Concerning him (Melchizedek) we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing (not sober). For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Hebrews 5:11-14

It is possible to lose spiritual sharpness one once had. Here, some of the readers lost the acuity they once possessed. Rather than teaching others they again needed to be taught what they lost. When we neglect the continual feeding of our soul, we lose spiritual sensitivity. We cannot afford to lose our grip on spiritual matters; especially when we have a ravenous lion on the prowl.

2. Be alert

Not only be sober but alert. We can have mental and spiritual clarity but fail to apply it in regard to Satan’s schemes. Again, this is not a complicated term. It simply means to “be awake.” Don’t be clouded. Don’t be sleepy or groggy. Be sober and alert. Do it now, because danger lurks all around us. Scripture calls followers of Jesus to be alert numerous times.

Be on the alert for the Lord’s return. Matt 13:34

Jesus asked the disciples to be alert while he prayed. Mark 14

He told them to be alert to avoid temptation.

Paul instructed the elders to be on the alert for false teachers. Acts 20

Paul instructed the Corinthians to be on the alert and stand firm. 1 Cor 16

Paul told the Colossians to be alert in prayer with thanksgiving. Col 4:2

Jesus told the church at Sardis to wake up and strengthen their walk. Rev 3

Here, Peter instructs them to be on the alert for the vicious prowling lion. These are both plural commands. Ya’all be sober and alert. Too often we focus on our own thing. We as a family are to be sober and alert to the surrounding danger. Picture a gazelle cautiously grazing in a field maintaining a heightened sense of alertness.

The purpose of sobriety and alertness is because we have an enemy out to get us.

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8

What happens if we are not alert? What do we need to be alert to? For sure, if we deny that the devil or his demons have any influence on us, we will get blind-sided. Jesus faced it. Paul faced it. Peter faced it. Peter indicated that his brethren all around the world faced it. Do we think that somehow we will escape the schemes of the devil? We cannot ignore the number of Scriptural references to the devil's activity. Paul exposed a war raging in the heavenly realms.

For our struggle is NOT against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenlies. Ephesians 6:12

To deny or ignore the war in the "heavenlies" is to ignore the clear teaching of Scripture. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote in his commentary on Ephesians 6...

"Anyone who is not aware of a fight and a conflict in a spiritual sense is in a drugged and hazardous condition."

We must be sober and alert to the war around us. The abundance of evidence concerning the existence and activity Satan and his demons is undeniable. Every writer of the NT, though not necessarily every book, recognized the battle with Satan. Nineteen of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament mention Satan by one of his names. Even of the eight that do not specifically mention him, four imply his existence by the mention of evil angels or demons. Most important, however, is that Jesus Himself recognized Satan and identified the reality of a personal battle. Out of the 29 references to Satan in the gospels, 25 are Christ himself speaking as to the reality and existence of Satan as a person. The Holy Spirit's summary of Jesus ministry included His assault on Satan.

*"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and **healing all who were oppressed by the devil**, for God was with Him. Acts 10:38*

From that abundance of passages, I gleaned just a sampling of the kinds of things the BIBLE attributes to Satan or his demons in relation to people.

- Cause people to lie
- Communicate by using the voice or thoughts of others.
- Produce any number of physical ailments and infirmities.
- Cause dementia, insanity
- Manifest supernatural strength
- Enable fortune telling abilities
- Produce counterfeit worship experiences
- Cause deafness and dumbness
- Cause uncontrollable anxiety, phobias
- Produce suicidal thoughts and tendencies
- Promote self-mutilation
- Deceive and blind the mind and fight against the truth
- Rob the mind of truth once received
- Incite false prophecies.
- Appear as angels of light
- Tempt to any number of sinful thoughts and behaviors and attitudes
- Implant evil thoughts

- Inflict condemnation
- Incite sexual immorality and uncontrollable sexual urges
- Blind the mind from seeing God's truth.
- Incite to violence
- Scream through the vocal chords of host
- Promote physical abuse
- Invade animals
- Propagate wickedness
- Cause visualizations and visions
- Incite betrayal.
- Produce convulsions
- Cause foaming at the mouth
- Cause one to grind and gnash their teeth.
- Cause one to be paralyzed and stiffen out
- Incite anger and hatred and unforgiveness
- Energize the flesh beyond the natural inclinations.
- Lead the heart astray from the simplicity of devotion to Christ.

Be alert to the Levels of Attack

1 -- Indirect Influence

At this level there is orchestration of situations, people and things to try to distract, dissuade, direct attention, harass.

Satan used Peter to try to influence Jesus.

This level of influence can be resisted by a personal knowledge of the truth and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2 -- Oppression

At this level demonic forces bring direct assault on the mind, the emotions, the body, to cause us to doubt and give in. Peter describes this kind of attack. Jesus suffered this kind of attack in the wilderness. Peter suffered this kind of attack -- Satan desired to "sift him like wheat". This level of influence can be managed and resisted by alertness, personal and family prayer, spiritual armor, direct resistance by faith and perseverance.

3 -- Invasion, Stronghold, demonization, direct influence

At this level, the enemy has gained some sort of stronghold or place of influence in the individual's life due to ignorance or deliberate sin. From this vantage point he seeks to gain other strongholds and bring the individual into bondage to do his will. The level or intensity of the influence can run anywhere from slight to severe.

Ananias and Saphira experienced this level. Satan entered their heart to lie to the Holy Spirit.

Saul in OT times suffered from an evil spirit (demon).

A devout Hebrew woman suffered back problems due to this level of influence.

Many who were brought to Jesus suffered from this level of demonic influence and found freedom when Jesus and the disciples engaged in direct confrontation and specifically addressed the demons responsible.

This level of influence calls for specific recognition and confrontation by the individual and often by others who are knowledgeable and prepared for confrontation at this level.

The word translated “demon-possession” in most Bibles is OK if “possession” is understood as “control” rather than “ownership”. Fred Dickason offer a definition of the biblical term often translated demon-possession.

“The usage in all these contexts indicates that daimonizomenos means “demon-caused passivity,” or control by one or more demons with various results in the life of the person, including the physical, and the psychological.”

The term implies only that a demon has gained some level of control in the life of the person which may or may not be immediately obvious to others. By staying hidden and covert, demons by sleuth not power, are able continue their evil purposes.

Be alert to God ordained protective walls

1. Protection of Biblical Morality
2. Protection of a Strong Family line
3. Protection of the Church
4. Protection of the Government

Be alert to the possible access points.

1. Direct permission from God.
2. Ancestral permission
3. Permission granted by our own willful sin
4. Deception -- access through deceit and passivity
5. Access through some traumatic experience
6. Access through close or intimate association with a demonized individual
7. Permission through participation in witchcraft activity.
8. Practice of untested “spiritual” or religious experiences
9. Participation, baptism or association with a cult group

Be alert to arenas of attack

1. Operate in and through the thoughts
2. Operate in and through the emotions
3. Operate in and through the will
4. Operate in and through the body

Be alert to specific Schemes

1. Empty promises i.e. “Be like God!”
2. Lies about God
3. Subtle lies
4. Distraction from simple devotion to Christ
5. Drive to Extremes
6. Threat and intimidation

Be alert to symptoms of a possible fortress

1. Areas in my life where I have lost the ability to choose.
2. Areas of plaguing compulsion
3. Plaguing thoughts of evil that cause me repulsion
4. Uncontrollable feelings of anger and bitterness

5. Overpowering fear that keeps me from doing what I know I ought.
6. Unexplainable physical symptoms that have no apparent cause.
7. Strange manifestations or feelings of another presence
8. Uncontrollable emotions that have no apparent cause.
9. Continual condemning, evil voices

BE sober and alert because the enemy is on the prowl...

BUT our third action commanded by Peter...

3. Resist him

But **RESIST** him, firm in faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 1 Pet 5:9

This is another “do it now” action.

The term means to “strongly oppose, stand against, holding one’s ground refusing to be moved, establish one’s position, withstand without giving up.

James calls us to do the same thing.

Submit therefore to God. **RESIST** the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7

➤ **We RESIST because God promises to get us through.**

He Himself will through it, perfect, confirm, strength and establish us.

➤ **We can actually RESIST because God has given us His authority.**

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." Luke 10:17-20

➤ **We can RESIST because He empowers us.**

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Ephesians 6:10

➤ **We can RESIST because he provides special armor and weaponry.**

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. Eph 6:11 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, Ephesians 6:13-14

We don’t need to be afraid.

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. 1 John 4:4

You shall not dread them, for the LORD your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God. Deut 7:21

I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. 1 John 2:14

I challenge us as a family to be sober and on the alert for one another. I challenge us to learn how to resist Him. I know there are a ton of questions and even objections but I invite you to take time to participate in the daylong seminar tentatively planned for March 12th 9-12.