



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V26 N23

June 9, 2024

HIGHER UP

“Dealing with the Devil”

1 Peter 5:8-11

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Self-Control

I have power, through Christ, to control myself.

“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Titus 2:11-13



How can Christians defend against Satan?

If you remember the cop show *Hill Street Blues*, you no doubt remember the prescient advice that Sgt. Esterhaus (played by Michael Conrad, who died three years into the show’s run) would give at the end of every roll call: “Let’s be careful out there.” The apostle Peter gives similar advice to his readers near the end of his first letter: “Be careful – watch out for attacks from Satan, your great enemy. He prowls around like a hungry, roaring lion, looking for some victim to tear apart” (TLB) – words reminiscent of Ps 22:13.

Satan was certainly prowling around on the night Jesus appeared before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, following his arrest, during which time Peter denied Jesus “thrice” (Mk 14:30 KJV) – something he vehemently denied he would ever do (Mt 26:33; Mk 14:29). “This very night you will all fall away on account of me,” Jesus told his disciples (Mt 26:31), but Peter declared, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will . . . Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you” (vv. 33, 35). But on that night, Satan tore Peter apart (see Mt 26:69-75; Mk 14:66-72; Lk 22:54-62; Jn 18:15-18, 25-27). Peter saw no roaring lion that night, only an unassuming servant girl.

On Peter’s famous failure, one author writes: “The denial portrays Peter in a very bad light. He is a coward and a liar. No serious attempt is made to provide an excuse for him. If the Gospel writers had wanted to defend Peter, they could have highlighted the fact that only he and another disciple (Jn 18:15) followed Jesus when he was arrested. Whereas the other disciples simply fled [apparently, Satan devoured them all!], Peter was brave enough to follow Jesus even into the courtyard of the high priest. Emphasis could have been made on the darkness, the confusion, the helplessness and so on. But nothing like this is done in the Gospels. Peter

is simply described as having been intimidated by the situation and denying Jesus. He even began to curse and swear an oath (Mk 14:71).

“The Gospel writers conclude this story by stating that ‘the cock crowed’ and that upon hearing this Peter broke down and wept. Luke adds that at this precise moment Jesus turned and looked at Peter, although he does not tell us how that was possible (Lk 22:61). For Peter, there would be forgiveness and restoration (Mk 16:7). He would go on to lead the church during its infant years, and tradition tells us that when given the opportunity once again, he made the great confession with his own life as a martyr in Rome” (Robert H. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah*, 229-30).

Peter’s experience comes as both *bad* news and *good* news to other disciples of Christ. The bad news is this: we are all liable to fall. We all run the risk of being attacked by Satan like Peter was. After all, if Satan pounced on Peter, as well as the other disciples, he could certainly pounce on any one of us. The good news is this: Peter was forgiven and restored. Peter’s letter comes as even *better* news. Christ’s disciples can avoid spiritual failure by guarding against his attack. Eugene Peterson paraphrases Peter’s advice in 5:8-9 this way: “Keep a cool head. Stay alert. The Devil is poised to pounce, and would like nothing better than to catch you napping. Keep your guard up. You’re not the only ones plunged into these hard times. It’s the same with Christians all over the world. So keep a firm grip on the faith. The suffering won’t last forever. It won’t be long before this generous God who has great plans for us in Christ – eternal and glorious plans they are! – will have you put together and on your feet for good. He gets the last word; yes, he does.” Believers can frustrate the attacks of the devil.

1

EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 5:8-11

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11 To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Read in another translation

8 Be sober and alert. Your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, is on the prowl looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, strong in your faith, because you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are enduring the same kinds of suffering. 10 And, after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him belongs the power forever. Amen. (NET)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket "Be alert and of sober mind" in v. 8.
- Circle "enemy" in v. 8.
- Circle "the devil" in v. 8.
- Box "like" indicating *comparison* in v. 8.
- Circle "resist" in v. 9.
- Box "because" indicating *reason* in v. 9.
- Circle "And" in v. 10.
- Circle "grace" in v. 10.
- Bracket "a little while" in v. 10.
- Underline "restore," "make strong," "firm," and "steadfast" in v. 10.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Good advice for those walking down a dark street in a sketchy neighborhood is also good advice for Christians living in Satan's world – "Be alert and sober" (NET). How so?
2. Peter calls the spiritual opponent of believers "your *enemy* the *devil*" (v. 8). What do you infer about him from the terms Peter uses to describe him?
3. The devil is "*like* a roaring lion." Explain the point of the *simile*.
4. Satan doesn't *literally* "devour" his prey. Explain the *figurative* sense of "devour."
5. Is resistance *futile*? Explain your answer.
6. What *form* should resisting him take?
7. What makes resisting him reasonable?
8. Peter calls him "the God of all grace." What do you infer about God from that?
9. Summarize what God is going to do for those who stand firm in the face of suffering?
10. **Discussion:** Perhaps "standing firm in the faith" deserves illustration. Describe what you do to stand firm when Satan tries to get you to doubt, to disbelieve, to dismiss, to deny, to disregard, or to disobey what God has said.

Commentary On The Text

New Testament letters have an opening, a body, and a closing. Peter's first letter is no exception. In 1 Peter 5:8-11, the apostle brings the body of his letter to an end. On these closing verses one commentator writes: "The exhortations to humility in verses 5b-7 are not to be taken as recommending an attitude of passive resignation, or even of stoic indifference, to painful events. Neither does the emphasis on the reality of God's care mean that Christians are to be careless—not least about spiritual perils. While the sufferings that afflict believers in the present life may come to them through the agency of other human beings, whom they can see and hear, God's people must at all times remember that behind the seen is the unseen. As part of Christ's army, they are all the time caught up in a spiritual war" (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC, 147). And at the head of the forces aligned against them is their arch enemy, the devil. Believers must know how to protect themselves from his attacks.

Verses 8-12 are divided into two paragraphs in the NIV, not so in other translations, e.g., the NET, ESV, NKJV, to mention just three well-known ones. In the first paragraph (vv. 8-9), Peter tells his readers *what* they must do and *why* (v. 8), followed by *how* they are to do it (v. 9). In the second (vv. 10-11), he tells them *who* will sustain them. He assures them that their gracious God, who called them with a glorious calling, will be there to provide for and ultimately to vindicate them (v. 10), before breaking into spontaneous praise (v. 11).

First, *what* must believers do and *why*? Peter tells them they must "be alert and of sober mind" (cf. "sober and alert," NET). Like someone walking down a dark street, through a sketchy neighborhood, late at night, they must be self-controlled, that is, they must be intentional with regard to their actions given their circumstances. They must be clear-headed, that is, they must be thinking straight, given their risky situation. What's more, they must be aware of their surroundings, that is, they must be attentive to anything suspicious or threatening. The danger they face is nothing to joke about. Peter then explains *why* they must do what they must do—because the devil is after them. Like a ferocious lion, he desires to devour them. Of course, the devil is no *literal* animal, and he doesn't desire to eat them *literally*. No, he desires to destroy them spiritually. Accord-

ing to one commentator: "Satan's desire is to get the Christian to doubt, to disbelieve, to dismiss, to deny, to disregard, and to disobey what God has said (cf. Gen. 3:1-5; Matt. 4:1-11)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 1 Peter," 2024 ed., 111, plano-biblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf). Put differently, he desires to trip them up and send them spiraling down the wrong path; he wants to stop them from following Jesus.

Next, *how* are they to do *what* they must do? Peter tells them they are to "resist" him rather than give in to him. They are not to attack him; they are to resist his attacks. They do this by "standing firm in the faith." Resistance is not futile! James writes: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jas 4:7). Another author comments: "The command, *Resist him, firm in your faith*, signifies that defeat is not inevitable. Christians must resist, expecting that the enemy will flee, God's kingdom will advance, they will grow in faith and holiness through conflict, and God will take Satan's plans for evil and turn them to their good" (Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, TNTC, 197-98). Remembering that they are not alone—"the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings"—will make things easier.

Finally, *who* will sustain them? Peter tells them the God of all grace, that is, God, who is gracious to provide everything they might need in every situation they might face, the purposeful God, who has called them to share in "his eternal glory in Christ" will sooner or later make them whole. As one author writes: "We have on our side One who has overcome our adversary the devil and who can enable us to overcome him. Furthermore, 'the God of all grace' gives sufficient help (2 Cor. 12:9). He has 'called' us to experience eternal glory ultimately (1:1) after we 'have suffered for a little while.' Both our calling and our glory are 'in Christ.' God will 'perfect' us (make us complete, Gr. *katartizo*, to mend [nets], Matt. 4:21). He will also 'confirm' us as His own, 'strengthen' us for service, and 'establish' us in His will" (Constable, 113). "To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen."

Word Studies/Notes

v. 8 **alert, sober** Cf. 1:13; 4:7. “Be self-controlled and alert” (Scot McKnight, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 Peter*, 278). The two terms together are variously translated in English versions: “be sober-minded; be watchful” (ESV); “be alert; be on watch” (GNT); “be clear minded and alert” (ISV); “Have sound judgment. Be alert” (EHV). “As in 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8, where the same Greek terms are used, the notions of wakefulness and sobriety imply the need to avoid the opposite states of sleep and drunkenness. Drunkenness expresses the clouding of the senses, and so a lack of apprehending spiritual realities. Peter’s exhortation to self-control (also in 1:13; 4:7) is always a positive one, with a view to action. Similarly, believers are to be alert, to be on the watch like keen sentinels, aware that the foe may attack at any time and from any quarter” (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC, 147).

v. 8 **enemy** “The word ‘enemy’ (*antidikos*, ‘adversary’) meant an opponent in a lawsuit (BAG, p.73; cf. Job 1:6ff.; Zech 3:1; Rev 12:10)” (Edwin A. Blum, “1 Peter,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 12, 252). “Peter may have chosen the term because of the possibility of Christians facing formal charges in courts of law The setting, however, is not judicial; the word is used here to mean ‘opponent’ or ‘enemy’ in a very general sense” (J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 49, *1 Peter*, 298).

v. 8 **the devil** “Both **enemy** (Matt. 5:25) and **devil** (false accuser, Rev. 12:10) are, strictly speaking, forensic terms meaning adversary (i.e., against God and his people)” (Hillyer, 149). “‘Devil’ (*diabolos*) is the Greek translation of the Hebrew ‘Satan’ (1 Chron 21:1; Job 2:1), which means ‘slanderer’ (cf. TDNT, 2:71-81; 7:151-65). According to Scripture, he has great power on earth, ‘being the prince of this world’ (John 14:30) and ‘the ruler of the kingdom of the air’ (Eph 2:2). But God has limited his activity. Through his captive subjects (Eph 2:2; 2 Tim 2:25-26), the devil attempted to destroy the infant church by persecution” (Blum, 252).

v. 8 **like** I.e., “a simile chosen because of the brute’s nature as a cruel and ferocious beast of prey. Believers facing distress and persecution are not to be frightened into apostasy by the fierce threats of their enemies” (Hillyer, 147). “The metaphor is apt, for a prowling lion attacks suddenly, viciously, and often when its unsuspecting victim is engaged in routine activities” (Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, TNTC, 196).

v. 9 **resist** “The Greek word translated ‘resist’ (*antistēte*) means to ‘defend oneself against,’ as opposed to attacking the enemy” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Peter,” 2024 ed., 111, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf). “Christians resist Satan by refusing to succumb to his temptations to deny the Lord and to be faithless and fearful in the midst of suffering” (McKnight, 278). “The sphere of the devil’s attack is

not ‘out there’ in the threats and slanders of a hostile populace, but within the believer and the believing community. The issue of whether or not Christians will be ‘swallowed’ by the devil is up to the Christians themselves. This means that the phrase, [*stereoi tē pistei*], ‘firm in faith,’ interprets [*antistēte*], ‘resist.’ To resist the devil is not to engage in hostile action against anyone, but to trust God (cf. 4:19; 5:6; James 4:7; also Best, 174)” (Michaels, 300).

v. 10 **And** The Greek particle *de* can be left untranslated or also be translated “but” to introduce a mild *contrast* – here between devilish opposition and divine enablement (see Blum, 252; cf. GNT, NKJV, MEV). “The transition to this verse is better marked by ‘But’ than by the RSV’s *And*, for Peter regularly (twenty-eight times in 1 Peter) uses this conjunction (*de*) to indicate a distinct contrast with a previous statement” (Grudem, 198).

v. 10 **a little while** I.e., “an expression intentionally vague in the amount of time it implies, allowing for restoration either in this present life or later” (Grudem, 198). “Any suffering seems interminable at the time. But it does have an end, in both senses of that word. In terms of time it will not go on forever: suffering will be only for **a little while**. That is not to be taken as an assurance that their suffering will be brief, which would probably be contradicted by the experience of at least some of Peter’s readers, but it is temporary” (Hillyer, 148).

v. 10 **grace** “The God they worship and serve is a God of grace. That is, he is merciful and forgiving. He has brought them into covenantal relationship through no merit of their own; he has chosen (1:1-2) to make them his people (2:9-10) and promises his protection (1:3-8)” (McKnight, 278).

v. 10 **restore** “Is Peter thinking of the old days, remembering how his fishing nets continually needed reinforcement and repair? The Greek he employs is reminiscent of what he used to have to do in his fishing business” (Hillyer, 149)

v. 10 **strong, firm, steadfast** “After the wear and tear of daily living for God in a hostile environment, they need to be renewed, restored, fully re-equipped. Personal divine action will attend to this very need. Believers will be made **strong, firm and steadfast** – the virtual synonyms pile up as Peter strives to make the point for those who are perhaps feeling all too conscious of their present weakness and helplessness” (Hillyer, 149).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Be self-controlled and alert to resist the devil, standing firm in the faith, knowing that your gracious God will sustain and ultimately vindicate you.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

There's a picture in my office from a summer long ago of my three youngest kids at a neighborhood pool. Every time I look at it, I'm transported to a time of sticky fingers and chubby belly rolls and sun-kissed faces. Somehow my toddler daughter is missing one of her pink flip flops and that always makes me laugh. I can smell the tropical sunscreen and hear water splashing and squeals of delight. I'd bet money that Goldfish crackers and fruit snacks were spread over a collection of beach towels and Mom was solving all the problems of the world—naptime and potty training and how much TV is too much. All the while, there is a constant inventory of the neighborhood kids. Our heads are on a swivel and we're vigilantly checking to make sure our littles are accounted for. City pools are fun, but we know in an instant a child can disappear into a dangerous parking lot or unattended bathroom, not to mention the hazards of being around water. We are alert and sober-minded. As my kids have gotten older, I'd like to say the vigilance has relaxed, but in fact, the danger has increased and I'm even more aware. I'm no longer only aware of their location, but I'm noticing who they're with and what they're doing and watching and experiencing. There's a tension my husband like to call "catch and release." As our kids have aged, we've let the line out a bit but remain ever vigilant. We know there's an enemy but firmly trust God and remain steadfast in prayer. Parents, stay alert and firm in the faith!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Peter 5:8-11

1. Who prowls around and what is he doing?
2. How do you resist the devil?
3. What will God do for believers after they suffer?

What Do You Think?

What does it mean to be alert and sober-minded?

What Do You Do?

Think about something you were worried about last year. How did God see you through that situation? How can knowing this help in future struggles? Make a family prayer request journal and watch how God uses your struggles.

CORE COMPETENCY: Self-Control

I take charge of myself with Jesus' help.

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 29:11

"The Lord gives strength to His people; the Lord blesses His people with peace."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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