

# THE DUTIES OF THE BELIEVER (II): VIGILANCE AND RESISTANCE AGAINST THE DEVIL 1 PETER 05:08–09

## *Introduction*

This is one of the most important duties of the believer. The believer must be vigilant in this duty or his life and testimony for Christ will be devoured and destroyed. What is the duty? Vigilance and resistance against the devil. The believer must constantly watch for and resist the devil.

- I. The way: be self-controlled and alert (v. 8).
- II. The reason: the devil is your adversary, a roaring lion seeking to devour all whom he can (v. 8).
- III. The duty (v. 9).

## **I. 1 Peter 05:08 *Be Self-controlled and Alert***

How can we stand against the attacks and temptations of the devil? There is only one way: we must be self-controlled and alert.

1. First, be self-controlled (nephate). The word means...
  - not to become intoxicated with drugs or alcohol of any kind.
  - to be self-controlled in mind and behaviour; to be controlled in all things; not given over to indulgence, license or extravagance. It is the opposite of indulgence in anything such as eating, drinking and recreation, it means to live a sober, solid, controlled and strong life.

The believer has to be sober as he watches for the attacks of the devil. If he is not sober, he will not be alert enough to conquer the attacks and the temptations of the devil.

The believer will be overcome and led into sin and destruction. And no believer can be alert enough to stand up against the devil if he indulges and gratifies his flesh in...

- sex
- alcohol and drugs
- pornography
- clothing
- relaxation
- power
- food
- recognition
- possessions
- position

The believer is to live a sober and controlled life. He is to stay alert to the devil and his temptations at all times. He must be alert enough to see the temptations and attacks coming and have a mind and spirit strong enough to stand against the temptations and attacks.

*1 Th 5:6-8 So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get*

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*drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.*

**1 Tim 3:11** *In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.*

**Titus 2:11-13** *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. 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 glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.*

**1 Pet 1:13** *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

**1 Pet 4:7** *The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.*

2. How do we stand against the devil? Second, be “alert” (gregoresate). The word means to be watchful and awake. It has the idea of being constantly aroused and on the lookout; to always be aroused, awake and watching for the devil and his attacks. Again, if a person’s mind and body are dull, flabby and weak from drink, drugs, overeating, slothfulness and indulgence in sleep, recreation, pleasure or in anything else — that person cannot be watching and waiting; he cannot be constantly aroused to look for the devil’s temptations and attacks.

The believer must be sober and serious about the devil; he must be alert in looking for the devil’s temptations and attacks. It is the only conceivable way the believer can conquer and overcome in this life; it is the only way he can keep his life and testimony from being destroyed by the devil.

**Mat 26:41** *“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”*

**Luke 12:37** *“It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.”*

**1 Cor 10:12** *So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!*

**1 Cor 16:13** *Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage: be strong.*

**Col 4:2** *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

**1 Th 5:5-6** *You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.*

**1 Pet 5:8** *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*

*Rev 16:15* “Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

## II. *1 Peter 05:08 Reason for Being Alert*

Why should we stand against the attacks and temptations of the devil? There is one strong reason: he is our adversary, a roaring lion who seeks all whom he can devour. Note three points.

1. The devil is our “enemy” (antidikos). The Greek word means a legal opponent such as an opponent in a lawsuit. It also means a common day-to-day opponent like a neighbour who opposes and stands as an enemy against us. The picture is that of the devil opposing us in every conceivable way.
  - => It is the picture of Satan standing in a law court, standing as an adversary in the court of God and accusing us before God.
  - => It is the picture of Satan standing here on earth, standing against us and doing all he can to trip us up and to defeat and destroy us.
2. The word “devil” (diabolos) itself means slanderer or false accuser. The devil is a malicious enemy who accuses us before God and makes false charges against us. Scripture teaches that Satan is constantly bringing up our sins and transgressions before God, that he is constantly reminding God of our disobedience. But note: the accusations against us are false. The charges are not true. How can they not be true when we are sinners, for no true believer denies his sin? By Christ. We believe Christ and we have cast ourselves upon Christ, upon the glorious fact that He died for our sins. We have trusted Christ for forgiveness of sin, and when He forgives us, our sins are removed from us. We are no longer guilty of sin. Therefore, the accusations and charges of Satan against us are false. Why then would he accuse and charge us before God? Why would he remind God time and again of our sins? To hurt God, to cut the heart of God. He is the devil, the one who stands opposed to God and to all that God stands for. Eons ago, sometime before the world was ever created, he was apparently the highest angel in all of creation. God had created him as the highest spiritual being in the universe. At that time his name was Lucifer. But he did what so many men do — rebelled against God — and he led other angelic beings to rebel with him. Therefore, God judged him and cast him from his exalted position in heaven. From what we can glean from Scripture this is what happened to Satan, how he became the devil, the terrible opponent to God. (See Deeper Satan, Rev. 12:9. Cp. Isa. 14:12-17; Ezk. 28:11-19. Also see note, 2 Cor. 4:4.)

The point is this: the devil does all he can to cut and hurt the heart of God. Therefore, he constantly reminds God of our sins. This, of course, means that he does all he can to tempt and lead us into sin, for the more we sin the more he can hurt God.

**Thought 1.** Think what this means: how deeply God’s heart must be cut and hurt when we sin. We are believers, persons for whom God gave His Son to die. When God paid such a price — actually cast His wrath against His own Son because of sin — think about how much He must hurt when we sin, especially when we profess to love Him. The devil is a slanderer; he will constantly slander us before God. He will use our sin to hurt God as much as possible. This is the reason we must stand against the devil: we must protect the heart of God. We must not bring hurt and pain to our Father’s heart.

**Rev 12:9-10** *The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.”*

**Job 1:6-12** *One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.” Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.*

**Zee 3:1** *Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.*

2. He is like a roaring lion seeking to devour all whom he can. The roaring lion is a picture of anger, strength, fierceness and cruelty. Satan is being pictured as angry (against God and all believers), strong, fierce and cruel. Note: Scripture says he roams about roaring in anger and cruelty and in the roaring ferociousness of his strength, seeking someone to attack and devour. How can Satan devour a person? Jesus tells us in one of the most shocking statements ever made about man. He said that a person who does not trust and follow God as his Father is actually following the devil as his father. In other words, Jesus says that all unbelievers have the devil as their father.

**John 8:44** *“You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”*

Note that Jesus is telling us how the devil devours man. He consumes man by leading him to do four things.

- a. The devil leads us to lust, crave. He tempts us to give in to the lust of the flesh, and the lust of our eyes, and the pride of life (boasting in what we have and do).

*1 John 2:15-16* Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.

- b. The devil leads us to murder. The devil is behind the murder of human life and behind the loss of man experiencing real life here on earth. The devil destroys life and all abundant living when he can: all love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

*Mat 13:19* “When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.”

*1 Pet 5:8* Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

*Job 1:9-11* “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

Jesus was saying that one thing is certain: God is not the father of murder — the devil is. They who commit murder are children of the devil. But note the real meaning of murder revealed by Jesus (see note, Mt. 5:22). Murder is...

- anger
- bitterness
- an uncontrolled spirit
- enmity
- desiring a person’s ruin
- striking out at a person
- slandering, maligning, speaking ill about a person, and destroying a person’s image (who is created in God’s image)
- envying and killing a person’s happiness

- c. The devil leads men to reject the truth.

*John 8:44* You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

*1 John 3:8* He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.

- d. The devil leads men to lie and deceive.

*2 Cor 4:3-4* And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

*2 Cor 11:13-15* For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

### III. 1 Peter 05:09 Duty of the Believer

What is our duty in standing against the attacks and temptations of Satan? Our duty is twofold.

1. We must resist the devil; we must resist him standing firm in the faith. The word “resist” (antistete) means to withstand the devil; to stand firm against him; to strive and struggle against him. Note that we must stand firm in our resistance. We must not...

- let our guard down
- slip one step
- look one time
- touch at all
- taste a single bite
- listen to one word
- think a single thought
- give way to any desire
- loosen the restraint

It might look good, taste good and feel good, but we must resist the desire and lust and be steadfast in our resistance. We must not give in at all. Giving in one step leads to a second step, and before we know it, we have caved in and are engaged in the sin. Satan has devoured us.

Our duty is to resist the devil and to stand firm in our resistance. Note what it is that Satan is after: the believer’s faith. He wants the believer to deny his faith, to turn away from Christ. The devil’s crowd may say...

- “Oh come on! It won’t hurt you.”
- “Do your own thing.”
- “You’re a fool if you don’t get all you can.”
- “Live, drink and be merry.”

A person’s desires and lusts may want more and more of the possessions and pleasures of this world. The temptation will always be there to turn away from Christ and His righteousness, to turn away from one’s faith and to return to the world and its ways. Our duty is to resist the devil by standing firm in the faith, trusting God for the necessary strength to conquer the temptation.

2. The believer is to keep in mind the fact that other believers are suffering the same kind of sufferings and they are conquering them. When a believer refuses to go along

with the world and its ways, he is misunderstood, withdrawn from, ridiculed, mocked, abused and persecuted by unbelievers. In addition he is attacked and tempted by the devil. The believers of Peter's day were suffering terrible attacks from Satan, attacks that had broken out in severe persecution. How do believers stand against so much? By keeping in mind that other believers are also being attacked, and many are faithfully resisting the devil. They are standing firm in their faith. Therefore, their example encourages us. We are not alone in the world. There are others suffering the very same kind of sufferings of the devil as we are, and they are resisting ever so faithfully. They are standing firm for Christ. Therefore, we must let their example stir us to firmly resist the devil. We must use their example to arouse us to stand firm for Christ.

**Rom 6:13** *Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

**1 Cor 10:13** *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

**Eph 4:26-27** *"In your anger do not sin:" Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.*

**Eph 6:13** *Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

**James 4:7** *Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

**1 Pet 5:8-9** *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

**2 Pet 3:7** *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

**Prov 1:10** *My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them.*

**Prov 4:14** *Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men. ■*