

The Word

These articles aim to study the various meanings and applications of one word in a specific Bible verse. It is the hope of the author that all who read will be equipped with a fuller understanding of the Word of GOD, then with this knowledge, claim the promise and the power that are available to the Christian living in these final hours of earth's history. Hebrews 4:12 KJV "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart".

1 Peter 5:8 KJV

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Vigilant

The word vigilant as used in 1 Peter 5:8 is the Greek verb γρηγορεύω transliterated as grēgoreúō (gray-gor-yoo'-o). It appears twenty-three times in the New Testament and is translated into three specific words. The first is "watch" which appears twenty-one times. The second meaning is "wake" which appears once. The final meaning is "vigilant" which only appears in 1 Peter 5:8. Thus the command to be vigilant is unique to 1 Peter 5:8 within the context mentioned in Article 1- Be Sober. Just a quick recap. In Article 1- Be Sober, it was established that our situation is one in which we are being hunted by a vicious adversary.

The three meanings for grēgoreúō (gray-gor-yoo'-o) mentioned in paragraph one can be taken literally or figuratively but what we must understand, considering these times in which we are living, our situation is a literal one not a figurative one. We have to be literally (meaning factually, plainly or exactly) vigilant. But in what must we be vigilant? Thayer's Greek Lexicon states that we have to be vigilant "lest one be led to forsake Christ or lest one fall into sin or be corrupted by errors". Simply put, we have to be vigilant in our relationship with God, how we receive His instruction or correction and in what we believe or are being taught by our church leaders.

Let's explore the meaning of vigilant in our English understanding. The definition of vigilant according to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary supports our

situation accurately. Vigilant means “alertly watchful especially to avoid danger”. Let’s apply this meaning to our situation. We are to be so alert that we avoid the danger of being prey to the devil. Plainly put, we are to avoid being killed. This doesn’t simply mean avoiding physical death but spiritual death and our adversary uses different tactics to accomplish this end which we will discuss in a later article.

The meaning expressed in the Merriam- Webster dictionary is expanded in Larry Pierce’s Outline of Biblical Usage where vigilant means “to take heed lest through remission and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one” and metaphorically “to give strict attention to, be cautious, active”. Pierce’s explanation introduces two specific causes that lead to our demise. These are “indolence” and “remission”. Indolence is a state of being slack, lazy or careless which leads to remission. When we are in a state of remission, it means that we have gone back to the ways that we resolved to give up because we haven’t chosen to submit to God. This submission is not a one-time event but a daily, hourly, moment by moment decision to allow God to save us from sin.

While our adversary walks around hunting us, God is speaking to us. Drawing us to Himself because when we get slack, He is “not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that anyone should perish, but that all should come to repentance” 2 Peter 3: 9 KJV. So, you see, our God is neither slack nor lazy, so why should we be? These dangerous times that we live in require us to be active. Actively studying, actively telling others about the nearness of Christ’s return and actively submitting to God. Failure to do this will result in our destruction. We must be vigilant because our God is vigilant.

References

1 Peter 5. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1pe/5/1/s_1156001

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-J.Lewis