

The Book of First Peter  
"Spiritual Vigilance"  
1 Peter 5:7-9

Introduction

1. We live in the days of dullness of hearing amongst the unsaved and lack of sharpness among those who profess the Name of our Lord.
2. As in any sphere of human endeavor, spiritual alertness does not come about by a mere declaration of readiness. Self-styled critics of the faith and faithful are often the tools of the Enemy of our souls. BUT few are who recognize this!
3. In order to get Peter's picture of the vigilance needed in our days, study carefully the two arguments he advances in our text.

1. IMPERATIVES for vigilance.

Three definite and specific imperatival verbs are employed in the present context. Urging spiritual vigilance upon all true believers. Here they are:

a. Be sober. v. 8

Peter uses this verb 3 times in this epistle: 1:13; 4:7; here. It signifies a state of mind and heart which is not clouded by sensual influences. It is opposed to excess in drink. Clear-headed would be a helpful rendering. Aorist tense suggests a firm resolve once and for all!

b. Be vigilant. v. 8

The verb comes as a reminder of the experience of Peter in Matt. 26:40,41 where the same one is used. It connotes a "waking state." Here is real alertness and watchfulness!

c. Be resistant. v. 9

James uses this same form (4:7). Like the other imperative, this is also aorist. "Withstand" is a better rendering. Has idea of being firm against onset, rather than striving. Cowardice never wins against the devil! The need is for courage. "Steadfast" conveys idea of "compactness" and "solidity." Be like a rock--solid and firm!

2. INCENTIVES for vigilance.

The injunctions given are appeals to take one's

stand with the Lord. What encouragement is there or what reasons might be suggested to indicate this is the proper thing to do? Here are some helps:

a. The supervision of God. v. 7.

The humble situation of the previous verses leads to an utter discarding of trust in self. It directs one to cast (hence effort and not mere passive action) all anxiety on the Lord. The blessed thot rising from this is: "It is a care to Him." The humbleness urged upon the saints does not suggest slackness of concern. Satan would provoke us to depression; God would provoke us to concession (His infinite concerns for us!).

b. The operation of the devil. v. 8

He is described as a fierce lion who seeks the hurt of believers. He stands as one who is against us in a lawsuit. He is constantly at it like the perepatetic philosophers of Greece. His goal is the ruin of the people of God, for he would like to drink them down (devour). This operation of Satan is certainly enough to make us earer to follow God's injuctions for earnest vigilance.

c. The tribulation of the brotherhood. v. 9.

The sufferings of Peter's readers are identical with those of the brotherhood (brethren). Hence, the tax of suffering they are paying is the same as that other believers are paying. Every word supports the need to be vigilant.

Conclusion:

Christians pray for revival, but are in fact praying for someone else to be revived. Christian speak about the sleepiness of the churches, but are in fact asleep themselves. Who is wide awake to the issues of the day? Who knows his Bible so as to be ready for the Enemy? Who is really vitally concerned for maintaining the truth of God with full knowledge? Awake and be aroused ye children of God!

NOTES