
[41] *“Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation;
the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”*

[Matthew 26:41]

You most likely recognize Matthew 26:41 as the *third* instruction Jesus gave to His disciples when He went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before His crucifixion. Jesus first instructed all the disciples to *“Sit here while I go over there and pray”* [Matthew 26:36]. Jesus then *“took with Him Peter and [James and John] the two sons of Zebedee”* [Matthew 26:37]. To these three, Jesus gave the second instruction to *“remain here and KEEP-WATCH¹ with Me”* [Matthew 26:38].

After saying His first prayer to His Father, Jesus came back to Peter, James, and John *“and found them sleeping”* [Matthew 26:40^(a)]. Jesus then *“said to Peter, ‘So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? [Matthew 26:40^(b)]! Jesus then, in [Matthew 26:41] commanded them to,*

[41] *“KEEP-WATCHING¹ and PRAYING, that you MAY NOT ENTER INTO TEMPTATION;
the SPIRIT IS WILLING, but the FLESH IS WEAK.”*

After giving them this command, Jesus went away a second time and prayed [Matthew 26:42^(a)]. Jesus then a second time *“came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy”* [Matthew 26:43]. Then Jesus after praying a third time came again to His disciples and said to them in Matthew 26:45^(b),

[45^(b)] *“Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.”*

This Thought came into my mind as I read through Matthew 26:36-45. Even though my *spirit* within me may be *willing*, because of the *weakness* of my *flesh*; if I do not KEEP-WATCHING and PRAYING, I may BETRAY myself into the TEMPTATION to SIN!

What about you? What do you think?

Then I read Acts 20:28-31, where in speaking to the elders of the congregation in Ephesus, I learned that I need to KEEP-WATCHING and PRAYING for others to not enter into TEMPTATION to SIN! Listen to what the Holy Spirit here moved Paul to say to these elders. Here he is moved to instruct them to,

[28] *“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. [29] I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; [30] and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. [31] Therefore, KEEP-WATCHING, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.*

These words proved to be prophetic. Listen to what Jesus said to the “messenger”² of the Ephesian congregation in Revelation 2:4-5. Here Jesus said,

¹ “Watching” “watchful” is the Greek verb γρηγορεύω (gregoreuō), Strong’s Greek dictionary verb number 1127, with the meaning of to refrain from sleep in order to watch, or to be alert. In some versions it is rendered “stays awake”.

² “Messenger”, usually translated as ‘angel’, a celestial messenger, has the basic meaning of a ‘messenger’, ‘one sent to announce or proclaim’, a ‘preacher’. It is the Greek noun ἄγγελος (angelos), Strong’s Greek dictionary noun number 32.

^[4] *“But I have this against you, that YOU HAVE LEFT YOUR FIRST LOVE [Jesus]. ^[5] Remember therefore from where you have FALLEN, and REPENT and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent.*

This also reminded me of 1 Samuel 12:23 where Samuel said,

“... far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you....”

The need to KEEP-WATCHING and PRAYING is seen again in 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 where the Holy Spirit warns you saying,

^[12] *... let the one who thinks they stand take heed unless they fall. ^[13] No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to mankind; and God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.*

Then in 1 Corinthians 16:13 the Holy Spirit moved Paul to instruct you to,

“Be WATCHFUL,¹ STANDING FIRM IN the FAITH....

In Colossians 4:2 the Holy Spirit instructs you to,

DEVOTE [yourself] TO PRAYER, KEEPING-WATCH in it with an attitude of thanksgiving....

Then in 1 Peter 5:8-10 the Holy Spirit reveals why it is so important to KEEP-WATCHING IN PRAYER when He moved Peter to instruct you to,

^[8] *Be WATCHFUL,³ [and] WATCH. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ^[9] 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.*

^[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 perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*

Did you see why you should be **WATCHFUL**? It is so that the “God of all grace, will Himself **PERFECT, CONFIRM, STRENGTHEN, and ESTABLISH** you.

Will you now please join with me in prayer?

O Father God, today I bring You a sacrifice of thanksgiving that you promise to perfect, confirm, strengthen, and establish us in the Lord Christ Jesus; if we are watchful in prayer! I ask that You teach us and remind us to be ever watchful in each day of our lives. I ask this in the authority which is in the name of my Lord Jesus. Amen!

Please meditate and pray on these things!

Louise and I pray this will help to both enlighten and encourage you to **know in a greater way** the **One** Who promises in His Word to never leave you nor forsake you [Hebrews 13:5; Deuteronomy 31:6,8]!

*BECAUSE HE PROMISES TO PERFECT, CONFIRM, STRENGTHEN, AND ESTABLISH ME
IF I AM ALWAYS WATCHFUL IN PRAYER AGAINST TEMPTATION AND SIN! – tom!*

³ Usually translated as “sober-minded” the Greek verb νήφω (nephō), Strong’s Greek verb number 3525, also has the meaning of “being watchful”.