

Head on a Swivel

Be Ready to Stand Firm

Weather permitting, I love riding my electric bike to work. The commute is usually uneventful, but sometimes — out of nowhere — things can get interesting. There's always the possibility of cars veering into the bike lane, dogs lunging at the ends of their leashes, or smartphone-transfixed pedestrians wandering in front of me. At any moment a quiet morning ride can turn into an adrenaline-fueled fight for my life! So I keep my head on a swivel, watchful of my surroundings, and ready for whatever today's ride has in store.

We're modeling our watchfulness after Jesus' watchfulness as we continue our [Cross Training](#) journey. Watchfulness comes when we're spiritually aware, living with readiness, resisting the devil, and full of wisdom. So how do we keep our spiritual head on a swivel, ready for whatever life throws at us?

What You Need to Know

Watchfulness is an essential part of wisdom. We can't live skillfully if we don't keep our eyes open, paying attention to what's happening in our lives. When we wake up to see what's happening (Eph. 5:13-14), it changes our choices, how we spend our time and use our resources. "*Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil*" (Eph. 5:15-16).

Peter's first letter encourages readiness for service, persecution, defending the faith, meeting temptation, and meeting Christ at his return (1 Peter 1:13-14; 3:14-16; 4:1-7,12-14; 5:8-9). "*Do not be surprised*" when fiery trials test you, Peter said (1 Peter 4:12). Rather, with clear-eyed, alert, readiness, "*preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you*" (1 Peter 1:13; 5:8). And be ready for unbelievers' questions, with a heart honoring "*Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you*" (1 Peter 3:15).

And when we take each day with the awareness that the master might come at any time, it adds another layer of readiness. "*Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect*" (Matt. 24:42-44).

What You Need to Do

"*Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life*" (Prov. 4:23). When we weaken spiritually, it's because we have let ourselves get lulled to sleep, not giving our full attention to the things that matter most. We need to "*wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die*" (Rev. 3:2).

Combine watchfulness with prayer (Eph. 5:18) to avoid falling to temptation (Matt. 26:41). Pride is the antithesis of readiness, so don't get cocky "*lest you fall*" (1 Cor. 10:12-13). Stay "*watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love*" (1 Cor. 16:13-14). Watch out for dangers, like false teachers (Matt. 7:15), forgetfulness (Deut. 4:9), and loose speaking (Ps. 141:3).

But also, watch for the Lord! Watch for his guiding, delivering hand (Ps. 59:9). Our watchfulness pairs — not only with our prayer — but also with our thankfulness (Col. 4:2). If we don't pay attention, we'll miss all that the Lord has done and is doing, and forget to live in gratitude toward him.

Through the Week

- **Read** — Luke 12:35-48; Mark 13:32-37; Matt. 24:36-25:13; Eph. 5:7-21; 1 Peter 4:1-14
- **Reflect** — Ask yourself, "*When do I tend to let my guard down?*"
- **Request** — Pray, "*Lord, help me stay dressed for action*" (cf. Luke 12:35).
- **Respond** — Write down three things you want to be on the lookout for today.
- **Reach Out** — Ask someone, "*What sources of spiritual distraction have you regulated or eliminated from your life?*"