WATCH AND PRAY

by William Dyer

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation." [Mark 14:38](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark%2014.38)

As Christ is the church's friend—so Satan is the church's enemy:

her greatest enemy,

her cruelest enemy,

her worst enemy,

her continual enemy.

He makes war against all who keep the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, [Revelation 12:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2012.17).

The devil envies our happiness, and seeks our ruin:

1. By tempting of us, [1 Corinthians 7:5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%207.5).

2. By persecuting of us, [Revelation 2:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%202.10).

3. By accusing of us, [Revelation 12:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%2012.10).

4. By hindering of us, [1 Thess. 2:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.%202.18).

5. By deceiving of us, [2 Corinthians 11:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%2011.3).

"Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour!" 1 Peter 5:8.

Oh, beloved! the devil is:

the great troubler of saints,

the great deceiver of nations,

the great devourer of souls,

the great enemy of mankind!

But now, here is the church's happiness—that Christ is her friend, ([Song of Songs 5:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Song%205.16).)

her greatest friend,

her dearest friend,

her most loving friend,

her best friend,

her constant friend,

her sympathizing friend,

her mighty friend.

By his blood—she overcomes the devil;

by his grace—she resists the devil;

by his might—she treads him under her feet;

by faith in his Word—she quenches all the fiery darts of the evil one.

Oh! though Satan hates us—Christ loves us;

though Satan condemns us—Christ justifies us;

though Satan accuses us—Christ clears us;

though Satan tempts us—Christ strengthens us;

though Satan seeks to destroy us—Christ preserves us;

though Satan buffets us—Christ assists us:

1. By his Spirit.

2. By his promises.

3. By his graces.

4. By his presence.

5. By his Word.

6. By his intercession.

7. By his power.

8. By his ministers.

9. By his example.

10. By his prayers.

Oh! the Lord Jesus has a great love for us, and care of us; and therefore he counsels us in the words of my text to, "watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation." These are the words of our Lord Jesus unto his disciples; they having been slumbering and sleeping when Christ had commanded them to watch.

They contain, 1. A supposition of their entering into temptation, upon which Christ grounds a mandatory exhortation, showing them the way how to avoid it, in these words, "Watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation."

Hence we may raise these two points of doctrine:

Doctrine 1. That a child of God is attended with temptations.

Doctrine 2. That the only way to avoid the evil of temptation, is to watch and pray.

Doctrine 1. That a child of God is attended with temptations. Here, we may observe the method:

1. Of the tempter.

2. Of the temptation.

3. Of the manner of their working, with reasons why they have so much power.

1. We have four different TEMPTERS in Scripture:

1. GOD tempting man, that is, trying and proving man, as in [Deuteronomy 8:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%208.2). Thus God tempted Abraham, [Genesis 22:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%2022.1) which is interpreted, [Hebrews 11:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2011.17), "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac." This tempting is not evil, nor for our hurt—but God tries us upon these accounts:

1st, For the trial of his people's fear of God, as with Abraham, [Genesis 22:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%2022.12). "For now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your only son from me."

2nd, God tempts for the trial of their faith; he proves them in something that is near and dear to them, perhaps deprives them of some special necessary mercy to see whether they can trust him, and continue to believe, in the lack of it, whether they can live by faith upon the God of mercies—when the mercies are gone, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." [Hebrews 10:38](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2010.38), [Romans 1:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.17). And it is said of Abraham, "When he was tried, he offered up Isaac," [Hebrews 11:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2011.17).

Again, 3rd, the Lord tempts for the proof of their obedience; and thus the Lord speaks to Abraham after that trial, "And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Why? "Because you have obeyed my voice." In all this, the Lord sees what is in our hearts, as he said to Israel of old, [Deuteronomy 8:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%208.2).

2. We also find MAN tempting God. That is, provoking God to jealousy, [Deuteronomy 6:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%206.10), "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." [Exod. 17:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.%2017.2), "Why do you tempt the Lord?"

First of all, we tempt God—when we doubt of his power; as when we are in any strait or difficulty, we mistrust the power of God to deliver us, or bestow any mercy upon us which we stand in need of. As he did, who said, "That couldn’t happen even if the Lord opened the windows of heaven!" When God had promised in time of a famine, that tomorrow there would be plenty, [2 Kings 7:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Kings%207.2).

Secondly, We tempt God, when we doubt of his mercy, for God is the essence of mercy, and it is a part of his glorious name; therefore he cannot endure to lose so great a part of his honor—but is provoked by it.

Thirdly, When we call his faithfulness in question. What greater disparagement, or more disgraceful thing can there be to man, than to be wrongly accused for lying and breaking his word? Then how much greater provocation is it to the great God to be impeached for the breach of promise, and counted unfaithful, who cannot lie! [Hebrews 6:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%206.18).

Lastly, When we murmur at the hand of God, at any of his judgments; this Israel did at Meribah, "And he called the place Meribah because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying—Is the Lord among us or not?" [Exodus 17:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod%2017.7). And this does exceedingly inflame and excite the wrath of God! We cannot control ours own lives—and yet we are angry at the providence of an all-wise God; we sin, and are not troubled that God corrects us for sin.

3. In the next place, our LUSTS are tempters. [James 1:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.14). "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own heart's lust, and enticed." Our lusts strive against us to be sinfully satisfied; and the flesh wars with the spirit; and the heart sometimes is alluring; and this comes to pass:

1. By presenting some **sinful**object. It is good not to nourish such conceptions—but strangle them in their first appearance, else sinful thoughts will grow upon us.

2. By presenting some **desirableness**in the object. Be quick sighted! Sin, however it seems desirable upon some pretext—but is indeed, upon good deliberation, not at all to be desired. Sometimes it comes clothed in such a glorious garb, as if it meant no harm—but you must be quick to flee to God by prayer against this temptation.

3. There is a persuasion to **consent**to the sin. But be not easily persuaded to offend your loving Father.

Oh! how will our lusts gain upon us if we do not resist! Strive with all your might; the greater your allurement to sin is—the greater the sin is! I appeal to saints' experience.

4. In the fourth and last place, we have the DEVIL tempting man. He is called the tempter, [Matthew 4:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%204.1), [3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matthew%204.3), [Mark 1:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark%201.13). And indeed this is the grand tempter who makes use of our lusts, as a subservient organ, or instrument, for his temptations against the soul. And indeed, were it not for our lusts, it would be in vain for Satan to tempt! As we see in Christ, there was nothing for Satan to take hold of, Christ being without sinful lusts—but Satan must come by word of mouth to tempt him, [Matthew 4:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%204.13).

But here it may be inquired, How shall I know when **Satan**raises the temptation?

1. When it comes strongly and forcibly upon the soul, as it were with a double power, even overpowering the soul almost at the first encounter. There is double strength in the stroke.

2. When it is of long continuance, as that was which Paul besought the Lord thrice for, [2 Corinthians 12:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%2012.8). Satan stirs up the heart afresh, and the lust of the heart. When the fire is ready to die and go out, he blows it up again, adds life and strength to the temptation, which else could not last long. The lusts are the combustible matter, and Satan inflames and sets them on fire.

3. The temptation, when though it may be weak at the first—yet at length, by degrees, it grows stronger and stronger. Satan begins to reason with and persuade the soul by plausible arguments.

4. We may perceive the working of the serpent, the devil, when the temptation is full of wiles and subtle delusions. [Eph. 6:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%206.11), 2 Timothy 1:17, [Revelation 2:24](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev%202.24). The more intricate and full of subtlety the temptation is, the more cause there is to suspect the workings of Satan. He is very busy for ensnaring the soul.

5. Lastly, the more it is direct opposition to God in his commands, we may be the more sure that it is of Satan's framing. For the heart and its lusts seek for satisfaction, and then are still, (if Satan joins not,) though God be not so directly opposite; but the devil strikes always at God in his temptations; or if not always—yet most frequently.

2. Thus much for the tempter; now for the TEMPTATION itself. There are different sorts of temptations; but we may reduce them all to three heads, which they do concern and strike at:

First of all, GOD. This being Satan's great aim, to oppose God, as two enemies always in direct opposition one to another; and thus he tempts either first as to the being of God, calling in question the very truth of the essence of the great God, causing the soul to doubt whether there is a God or not; like Pharaoh, "Who is the Lord?" etc. Exodus 5.

But, secondly, some temptations touch upon the NATURE of God, as to the nature of his being, the mystery of the three distinct persons, as to their offices and operations in the individual Godhead, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; and yet all but one God, blessed forever. Again, as to those inseparable divine attributes of God, his independency, purity, immutability, greatness, and eternity, his goodness, grace, mercy, love, patience, and justice. I say, sometimes in doubting of these things is our temptation; yes, and could Satan prevail, we would flatly deny his being, nature, attributes, and all. Look sternly on, and resist strongly such temptations as these, which immediately and presumptuously entrench upon God's sovereign and just prerogative.

And, if I mistake not, a great device of Satan's in stratagem is, to persuade the creature from all dependence upon a Creator, that so, being left to itself, and standing upon its own strength, he may more easily destroy it. For what is the creature, without the Creator's power?

Again, some temptations touch our spiritual being; such as an evil heart of unbelief, mistrusting the grace of God, despairing of the goodness of our condition. Satan would destroy the very foundation of spiritual existence, adoption, justification, and hopes of salvation; it is his great design to shake the very groundwork of this building, and to persuade that all is false. But this temptation is fruitless, when we build aright upon a right foundation, by faith, accompanied with repentance from dead works, upon Jesus Christ, as the sole author and meritorious cause of our justification, and eternal glorification.

Lastly, Satan by his fiery darts strikes at our well being, to disturb our peace, by the omission of some duty, or commission of some sin; when he finds he cannot prevail to destroy our well-being, our joy and comfort. But know, though these temptations may trouble us—yet they shall never destroy us.

3. Now, for the MANNER of these temptations, how they work:

1. When we fall under needs, straits, changes of providence, or the like, then is a time for temptation to work; as when Christ had fasted, and was hungry—then comes the tempter, "If you be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," [Matthew 4:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%204.3).

2. When we are first turning from sin to God, then we are sure to meet with a tempter; Satan will be busy.

3. When we are troubled, dejected, disconsolated, either as to the outward or inward estate, then beware of Satan's temptations; he will be furthering our disquietments.

4. When we are arrived to some good hopes through grace, to some confidence in the mercy of God the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ, then also shall we find the battering assaults of Satan, to shake our confidence. But be sure always that the ground of your confidence is good, established upon the everlasting rock, Jesus Christ; for there are two great rocks which Satan strives to split a soul upon:

PRESUMPTION. Sometimes endeavoring to cause souls to flatter up themselves, and think grace is theirs, Christ is theirs, and all is theirs, when it is nothing so; but by this he might carry them blind to hell, hood-winking their souls so, that they never come to see thoroughly that they are in a bad condition—but think always their condition is good.

The other rock is DESPAIR. Satan striving, if he cannot blind them as he does the other presumptuous souls—yet to make them go sorrowing all their days, thinking they shall never obtain saving mercy.

5. Satan suits his temptations to our dispositions; he has various objects for divers spirits: for the proud haughty soul, for the lustful heart, for the covetous worldling, for the prodigal son, for the rash giddy brain, for the sluggish drone. He has particular temptations for the melancholy person, and for the light jovial spirit; especially these two, either sinking the one in the terrible ways of black and dreadful thoughts, or tossing and lifting up the other with the wind of foolish fancy. Oh! what black apprehensions shall the one have of itself and God, and what light and slight thoughts the other of their present state and of eternity!

6. Lastly, Satan aims to lull the soul asleep in carnal security; and to this end presents great sins—as small sins; and little sins—as none at all. But sometimes he will add by temptations, as it were a magnifying glass to the soul, so that then every sin that looks with a ghastly countenance, is thought to be the sin against the Holy Spirit, an unpardonable sin.

Having thus shown how, and upon what occasion Satan works; I shall take occasion to inquire why they have so much power, as many times to prevail.

1. Because of the tempter's power, he is too strong for the soul.

2. Because of the tempter's policy, if he cannot prevail by open force, the soul being well and strongly grounded, then he invades with subtle devices and secret stratagems, so that the soul cannot escape by strength only; and therefore, lacking wisdom to discover his cunningly framed arguments, is baffled by him and overthrown.

3. The enticing nature of the tempter's baits; as, to instance in one case; Oh! how many poor sincere souls—yet guilty of too much curiosity, have been entangled by curious doctrines, which were no better than the devilish temptations of that hellish tempter! How many, (which yet is strange to think though there is reason to fear it,) nay, after their seeming comfortable, really comfortless, wandering, walkings in the ways of truth, have cause to set down their steps, marking for every step a sin, and for every sin letting fall a tear of blood!

4. Temptations often prevail by reason of the strength of corruption, which the tempter works upon. Were there no internal corruptions, there would be few or no external temptations; I am sure they would not prevail.

5. Lastly, the tempter's prevalence proceeds from the weakness and low estate of the inward man; sin is never at a higher flood—than when grace is at a low ebb. It is a hard matter to keep the soul from sinking at such a time. Nothing more easy than to thrust a man under water, when the depth of the water is more than the height of the man.

Objection: But now to make sure the doctrinal part, I shall lay down some reasons, why the people of God are thus attended with temptations, for it is a natural objection against this point, "Why will the Lord, who is so merciful to his people—allow them to be thus abused and buffeted by temptations?"

Answer: I answer in general on God's behalf, that he is never the less tender, as will appear in particular, thus:

1. Because one end seems to be this, that they might know themselves the more accurately, and see what they are naturally; were it not for temptation, we would not come to know our own corruption. We see by this what lust is most prevalent in us, according to [Hebrews 12:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2012.1),

"The sin that does so easily beset us;" and what Satan makes most use of against us. We learn by this, our own weakness to resist, without divine assisting grace.

2. Again, it is for a saint's exercise; this tempted condition of God's artillery, is his school of arms wherein God brings up his children, trains them and instructs them how to clasp on their helmet of salvation, to put on the breast-plate of righteousness, to hold out the shield of faith, to brandish the sword of the Spirit; in a word, how to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, even our whole armor of righteousness.

3. That we might know our enemies, that we may be the more watchful over Satan, sin, and the world.

4. That we might long to be at home with our Father, that we might be weaned from the milk, and drawn away from the breasts of this present world.

5. Lastly, the Lord does it to bear down our pride, and keep us humble; we would else be too much lifted up through our continual spiritual prosperity; and thus it was with Paul, [2 Corinthians 12:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%2012.7), [8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Corinthians%2012.8).

This doctrine may afford us this useful application by way of:

1. Information.

2. Reprehension.

3. Examination.

4. Consolation.

5. Exhortation.

First, INFORMATION. It may inform us:

1. Of the devil's enmity, who is so much the saint's foe, as at he will not let him be quiet. This old serpent that first deceived Adam, and deprived him of paradise; yes, and ever since he has been, and still is, very busy to dispossess the saints, if possible, of their spiritual paradise.

2. We may learn hence the remaining seeds of corruption that are in the best of saints; without which, the devil would always tempt in vain.

3. We may perceive what is the saint's state here below; it has indeed many fair pleasant prospects to the Christian's eye, (I mean the eye of faith) but the way is a tempted, troublesome, dangerous way, [Acts 14:22](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2014.22).

4. It may teach us the wisdom of God, and his great care of the saints, who makes use of Satan's enmity and our corruptions to do us good withal.

Secondly, REPREHENSION.

1. And thus it reproves those who think it an easy matter to be a Christian.

2. It reproves such who censure poor tempted afflicted ones.

1. Under their temptations, though not overcome.

2. When fallen, and oh! how rash, uncharitable, and unchristian-like are they!

3 It is an occasion of rebuke to those who think it strange that either themselves or others should be tempted.

Thirdly, EXAMINATION. This in these particulars:

1. To examine who is the tempter.

2. To examine the temptation.

3. To examine the frame our hearts are under; whether we respond lightly and indifferently, or are grieved and troubled for them.

Fourthly, CONSOLATION. From these arguments:

Argument 1. A tempted condition is frequent among the saints; yes, and so useful, that I may confidently question whether he were ever truly a saint, who is not tempted. And for this assertion there is a cloud of witnesses in Scripture, one in [1 Cor 10:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2010.13).

Argument 2. God has promised assistance to tempted ones, [2 Corinthians 12:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%2012.9). "My grace is sufficient for you," etc. God is as able to help—as you can be weak, when you are tempted.

Argument 3. Christ was tempted, that he might know how to support those who are tempted, [Hebrews 2:9-18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%202.9-18).

Argument 4. It is a blessing, or a blessed thing to endure temptations, [James 1:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.12) and [5:11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%205.11).

Argument 5. The saints' temptations are needful for them, [1 Peter 1:6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%201.6). You can not be holy without them.

Argument 6. The saints' temptations are but the trial of faith, [1 Peter 1:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%201.7). [James 1:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.3), [4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.4). And should we be grieved that our faith is proved? The goldsmith uses the fire for the trying of his gold; neither is the gold diminished—but rather its worth more fully known when the dross is gone. This is the trial that tries the faith of every child of God.

Argument 7. God has promised that the burden shall not be too great for us to bear, [1 Corinthians 10:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2010.13). This is ground of comfort, to know we shall not be overmatched by the temptation.

Argument 8. A great comfort is, that God thinks upon us at such a time; we are sure of this both because of the temptations, and also the support we have under them.

Argument 9. Many times it goes before some signal providence; and we may take it as a great sign, that God is about to do some great thing for us, or we must be employed in some great work for him. Thus he did with Israel—he proved them forty years, before he allowed them to possess the land.

Argument 10. Be not disconsolate; strong and long enduring temptations, when meeting with resistance, are a strong argument of a strong faith, and especially of the growth and increase of faith. But to be brief:

Argument 11. Consider, the saints' condition here is not their best state; there is heaven to come yet, where there is no tempter.

Argument 12. We have not been so much, nor so often tempted, as we ourselves have tempted God.

Argument 13. The devil's temptations, though they be evils—yet are not the saints' evils, unless they are overcome by them.

Argument 14. It is a great sign of God's love, so of Satan's hatred, and so consequently a token that you are none of his—but God's, else he would never rage thus. The devil makes no such ado with wicked ones.

Argument 15. As our temptations now abound, so shall our joy, in time, much more abound.

Many arguments for consolation I might make use of, and much more enlargement upon these; all which, for brevity's sake, I here omit.

Fifthly, For EXHORTATION.

1. Beware how you tempt the devil to tempt you! Beware how you give occasion to temptation by indulging any sin or lust.

2. When you are tempted, be not cowardly—but courageous, do not flee—but resist, [James 4:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%204.7).

3. Beware of pride, when delivered out of temptation; this may make us fall into a dangerous relapse.

Having finished this point, I proceed to show, in the next observation, how we may AVOID the evil if temptation—that is, to watch and pray.

In the handling of this doctrine, we may consider these four things:

1. What it is to watch.

2. What it is to pray.

3. The proof of the point.

4. How watching and praying may conduce to our escape from the evil of temptation.

Concerning the duty of WATCHING, observe:

1st, What watching implies.

2ndly, How we watch.

First, WATCHING implies:

1. A continual waking, like the spouse, [Song of Songs 5:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Song%205.2).

2. A diligent hearkening; thus the watchman, [Isaiah 21:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2021.7).

3. A constant readiness; Peter exhorts, under a metaphorical expression, [1 Peter 1:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%201.13). "Gird up your loins,' that is, be ready; it is taken from the Jews' long garments which they used to gird about them, that they might run with less interruption.

Secondly, How we watch. I shall but name the particulars:

1. Let the heart be continually fixed upon God. Oh! how will this cool our affections to the world, and kindle the fire of love to God!

2. Let the eye be much upon self; this will keep us poor in spirit, "And blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," [Matthew 5:3](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%205.3).

3. Beware of drowsiness—we should take it off by prayer.

4. Be well resolved in spirit—mind that resolve of the prophet, [1 Kings 18:21](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Kings%2018.21).

5. Be sure all is well within; be sure your foundation is Christ; let there be no sin unrepented of, that will breed sorrow; harbor no enemy, no lust in your soul, [Proverbs 5:20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%205.20):9.

6. Trust not your own heart—but regulate it by the Word of God; for "the heart is deceitful," [Jeremiah 17:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer%2017.9). And he is a fool hat trusts in his heart, [Proverbs 28:26](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2028.26).

7. Keep therefore a close eye to the heart, [Proverbs 4:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%204.23).

8. Call your heart often to a strict account, [Psalm 4:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%204.4). Examine diligently, What have I done? What do I now? What am I about to do?

9. And if there be anything out of order, tarry not—but repair it immediately. Lay sin upon Christ—and then mourn over it.

10. Let nothing be suggested, and presently entertained—but first brought to trial. See if it is the will of God, and if it is for his glory; if it is not for his glory—it is not his will.

11. Be sure to keep conscience clear; a little filth there, stops up all the channel. It is dangerous to know of one sin, and not to confess it; much more dangerous to know your sin, and wink at it.

12. For this end keep an open ear to conscience, let it speak.

13. Let the mouth be stopped to sin, and the hands tied up from wickedness. David prays that a watch may be set to the door of his lips; Anc certainly it is very needful.

14. Let the whole armor of God be on, [Ephesians 6:10-18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%206.10-18).

Thus much concerning watching.

Now concerning PRAYER. Consider:

1. What prayer is.

2. The several kinds of prayer.

3. The manner how we are to pray.

1. Prayer is the outward enlargement of the soul's inward breathings; it is a work of God's Spirit, and so flows out of the spirit and heart of a man, [Zech. 12:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Zech.%2012.10), [Romans 8:26](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.26), [27](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Romans%208.27), [Jude 20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2020), [1 Corinthians 14:19](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2014.19), [Psalm 62:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2062.8), and [42:4](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2042.4).

Prayer is a talking of the heart and soul with God, and with such a heart as is prepared by God, [Jer. 29:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jer.%2029.13), [Psalm 27:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2027.1), [10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2027.10), [17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%2027.17).

2. And thus it is either mental in the heart only, [Exod. 14:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.%2014.15), [1 Sam. 1:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.%201.13). Or else vocal, uttered by the voice, [Psalm 77:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2077.1).

Again, there is secret prayer, when we pray alone; thus Daniel did when he set open his windows, [Dan. 6:10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.%206.10), [11](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%206.11). Or, more public, when we pray with others in the family, congregation, etc.

And here let some preparatives to prayer be added:

First, Pray that you may pray; lift up your eyes and your heart to God, when about to pray; thus did David, [Psalm 141:1](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20141.1), [2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Psalm%20141.2).

Secondly, Meditate:

1. Meditate on God's sufficiency.

2. Meditate especially God's promises, Psalm 1, [Matthew 7:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%207.7). This will make you confident in prayer.

3. Meditate on your own neediness and vileness, that you may be fervent; so did Ezra, chapter 9:6, 7.

4. Meditate on the great Majesty of God, to beget humility, and lowliness of spirit, [Eccl. 5:2](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eccles.%205.2), [Genesis 32:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%2032.9), [10](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Genesis%2032.10).

5. Meditate on the relation you stand in to God, by Christ, as the Father.

Thirdly, Now, HOW are we to pray?

1. We must pray what we understand, and understand what we pray, [1 Corinthians 14:15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%2014.15).

2. We must pray in the Holy Spirit, be directed by Him, [Jude 20](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude%2020), [Romans 8:28](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.28).

3. We must pray in the name and mediation of Christ; that is, relying upon his merits, not our righteousness, [John 14:13](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.13), [14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.14), and [16:23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2016.23).

4. We must pray with faith, believingly, that God will give us what is good for us, [James 1:6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.6), [7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%201.7).

5. We must pray with humility and acknowledgment of our own unworthiness, [Psalm 10:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2010.17).

6. We must pray with a heart willing to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, from every pollution, [Hebrews 10:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2010.12), [Psalm 66:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2066.18).

7. We must pray with love to the saints, [Matthew 6:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%206.14), [15](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matthew%206.15).

8. We must pray with zeal and fervency, [James 5:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James%205.16).

9. Do not give up praying—but wrestle with God for a blessing, with unwearied constancy, [Luke 18:1-9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2018.1-9), [Matthew 15:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2015.8)

10. Pray for heavenly things first and most; seek earthly things in the second place. Pray for heavenly things absolutely. Pray for earthly things conditionally, [Matthew 6:33](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%206.33).

11. Pray for things agreeable to the will of God, [1 John 5:14](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.14).

12. Take heed you love not long prayers, and think to be heard because they are long, [Matthew 6:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%206.7).

Now I come to the proof of this point—that the only way to avoid the evil of temptation, is to watch and pray. This is clearly stated in the text, so that it scarcely needs more confirmation; only take that of verse Paul when buffeted with temptation, "For this," says he, "I besought the Lord thrice," [2 Corinthians 12:8](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%2012.8). There is great need of watching and prayer:

1. Before we fall into temptation.

2. When we are under temptation; how watching and prayer conduces to the anticipating the assaults of Satan, frustrating temptation.

First of all, For WATCHING.

1. It sets us in a readiness for an assault; when we are expecting, we shall not be assaulted unaware.

2. It adds resolution to stand out against Satan; we know surprise strikes us into a fear, when expectation and deliberation increases courage.

3. It is a countermine to all Satan's stratagems. It will deceive the deceiver, to find us watching with spiritual diligence, when he would have us sleeping in carnal security.

4. Watching secures us from much evil that might be added, in case we were drawn to the temptation.

Secondly, For PRAYER.

Prayer conduces to avoid the evil of temptation; because it fetches help from God, in whom is all our strength, for it is God's promise, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me!" It is a great comfort under temptation to have a God to go to, especially one who is able and willing to help.

This may instruct us, then:

First, there is great need of watching. It is certainly a universal necessary duty for all saints, at whatever time, to watch; so says Christ our Savior, "I say unto you all—Watch!" [Mark 13:37](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark%2013.37). The great end of this duty is the coming of the Lord Jesus, "Watch," says Christ, "for you know not at what hour your Lord does come," [Matthew 24:42](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%2024.42), [44](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matthew%2024.44).

There are three considerations which move us to watch:

1. Let us consider whom we offend and dishonor by our neglect in watching—no less than God. Is God no more worth to us than so? Let us seriously weigh, how great an offence, how great a dishonor to God unwatchfulness is, and this will engage us to watch.

2. Let us consider whom we gratify and advantage by our neglects—no less an enemy than Satan, the enemy of our souls. And shall we pleasure our grand adversary? Oh, no! then let us watch.

3. Whom we displeasure, it is ourselves. And will we that our souls should be losers? If not, let us be much, yes, always upon our watch.

But, Secondly, It may inform us of the necessity of praying at all times. "Pray without ceasing," [1 Thess. 5:17](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.%205.17). So David would pray and cry aloud, "At evening, at morning, and at noon." And Daniel would pray thrice a day, [Daniel 6:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%206.16). Prayer is the duty of all, and every saint, in all conditions.

In spiritual things:

1stly, Pray for grace, that God would give and increase it either in yourself or others.

2ndly, Pray against sin, against the guilt of sin, against the power of sin.

3rdly, Pray against Satan's temptations:

1. Against the occasion of the temptation, that if it is possible, you may shun and escape the very appearance of it.

2. That the strength of corruption within, and the power of temptation without, may not be so prevalent, as to lead you captive to evil.

3. Pray that the entrance into temptation may be no disadvantage to your grace, and that the escape from it may be no impeachment to—but rather for the advancement of God's glory.

1. Pray for nothing, but what you stand in need of. Unnecessary things are not to be the subject of our petitions; and therefore our Savior bids us pray for our daily bread. And so that godly man Agur, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," [Proverbs 30:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov%2030.7) [9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Proverbs%2030.9).

2. Even in these things, pray with submission to the will of God.

3. If watching and prayer are the means to escape the evil of temptation; then the strength of a saint is not sufficient. No, we must go to God for deliverance.

4. If we do not watch and pray, all other means are insufficient at least, if not sin.

Thus much for information. Now for EXHORTATION.

1. Watch and pray continually—but especially at a time of temptation.

2. Be serious in watching and prayer; some do it between hot and cold, or by fits, or in much lightness of spirit. But, said the apostle, "Be sober, and watch unto prayer." Sobriety and seriousness befits those who call upon God.