

1

Session One: Vigilance

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14, NIV

Consider This ...

“En garde!” We all know that those two words signify that a battle is about to take place. As two fencers stand facing each other, this phrase means *get ready*. But get ready for what? To defend yourself, yes. But you don't win

a fencing match by defending well. You win by scoring points *offensively*. A fencer uses the opportunities presented to him to touch the tip of his foil or epee in a place that scores points. With real swords, you would actually be stabbing someone!



The Christian is a spiritual fencer, focusing on defense *and* offense. He must be on guard—both to defend himself against an enemy that “prowls around” looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8), and to watch for the ways God is at work so that he can join Him and serve Him more fully.

As you are being vigilant, remember that you do not stand guard alone! The Holy Spirit is with us as we live our lives. “You are my strength, I watch for you; you, God, are my fortress...” (Psalm 59:9, NIV)



KEY PASSAGE

“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

—Luke 12:35-40, ESV

MEMORIZE THIS



Rock Solid Tool: PRAYER

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

—Ephesians 6:18, NIV

Prayer is an essential tool for becoming vigilant—to guard against sin and evil, as well as to listen for God's voice and prompting. **To be alert takes being in consistent communication with God.**

Talk About It

1. How many movies can you think of that include swordplay? Take five minutes and see who has seen the most. Who's the "movie buff" in your group?
2. What does the passage from Luke teach us about vigilance?
3. What things in your life are distracting you from remaining "awake"—i.e. what things are putting you "to sleep?"
4. Is there an area in your life now that you need to be more vigilant *defensively*, to protect yourself from Satan? What are some boundaries you might need to put in place? How can your Christian friends support you in this area?
5. What kinds of opportunities might God present to a man who is being vigilant *offensively*, to build His Kingdom or bring Him glory? Is anyone in the group facing an opportunity like that now?

Activity Idea

Pick the favorite from the list of movies you came up with and plan a movie night. Short on ideas? Here are some suggestions: *The Princess Bride*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Gladiator*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

ROCK

SOLID CHALLENGE:

Start a Prayer Journal.

This week, commit to engaging in an intentional, *daily* time of prayer. Whether you start with five minutes, 10 minutes, or longer, the goal isn't duration but consistent, honest communication.

Patrick Morley writes, "I see prayer as the conversation that turns salvation into a close personal relationship with God. So when I say "a little" and "a lot," I'm not necessarily

referring to a quantity of time spent in praying. [...] Praying "a little" or "a lot" has more to do with the level of intimacy or communion attained through prayer" (*A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines*, 50).

On the first day of this challenge, start a prayer journal, where you **write down things God is speaking to you and situations you are praying about**. It's amazing to return to earlier entries later on and see how He is working!

In each session of this guide, a place is included for you to write down the prayer requests of those in your group. Lift these up throughout the next week.

Prayers for my brothers...

