

## 1 Peter 5:7-11 “The best home defense system”

Accompanying scriptures:

Genesis 12:1-9; Psalm 33:1-12; Romans 4:13-22

### 1 Peter 5:7-11 NIV

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. (8) Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

“(9) Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers *and sisters* throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. (10) And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (11) To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

This text requires us to speak concerning:

- A short mystery about the word sober;
- A tiny bit of history;
- Finally, a call for courage in Christ.

#### 1. Here’s some mystery regarding sobriety:

Most Iowans hope they can watch their favorite football teams live this fall.



Heaps of hope surround whether Iowa and Iowa State will both enjoy winning seasons.



Unknowns include:

“What personnel and strategies will their opponents bring to the games?”

Will trick plays catch Iowa’s teams off guard?

Fans can imagine the coaches telling players:

“Look for this type of offensive set!”

“Be alert to # so and so; he’s deceptive.”

“Stay away from the nose guard.”

These different warnings mean, of course:

“Stay ready.” “Watch out.”

On any play, team members can’t be distracted.

Life also requires vigilance, as you well know.

So we get message: if the devil prowls like a lion, we must stay alert.

Three times in Iowa, I’ve seen mountain lions.

Two of the times, others saw them so I wasn’t dreaming.

Now I walk warily around our acreage, glad that Josie the dog runs ahead sniffing things.



**We don't want critters catching us unawares so we keep watchful eyes.**

Norma and I know what it means to stay alert.

**But why did Peter caution us to be self-controlled?**

**How does self-control help us watch out for lions or the devil?**

The word in the original underwent a change in meaning.

**Not all English words mean the same as they once did.**

For example, suffer me to use the word “suffer”.

Guys, picture yourself of dating age and saying to a girl: **“Suffer me to walk with you.”**

If I said that to a girl, she'd say, **“Bob, I've suffered enough just looking at you; let alone walk with you.”**

**Ladies, how would you respond to a guy saying: “Suffer me to walk with you”?**

In Shakespeare's time, and also when King James I of England ordered a new translation of the Bible, “suffer” meant *permit*.

**In other words, “Suffer me to walk with you” means: “Permit me to walk with you?”**

Suffer clearly underwent a change.

**So also did the word translated self-controlled.**

**At one time it meant “sober,” i.e., the opposite of intoxicated.**

**But a funny thing happened to *sober* on its way to form.**

**This change occurred because some Greek religions considered intoxication a good thing.**

Worshippers of the Greek god Dionysus, later known as Bacchus, often got drunk or high on drugs, and participated in X-rated activities.

Imagine approaching the building this A.M. and hearing raucous music, and seeing people dancing wildly, drinking, doing drugs, and reveling.

**Some Greeks did these sorts of thing in order to please their gods, hoping to receive revelations from them.**

**Suppose you wanted serious answers from God.**

**You try to get them through drinking huge amounts of wine, frenetic dancing, wild, indiscriminate sex, and total lack of soberness and self-control in God's presence.**

**Seems weird, doesn't it?**

At one period in Greece’s history, certain religions practiced sober intoxication—a true oxymoron.

**The New Testament never used the word *sober* in that way.**

**On the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2) when the Holy Spirit fell on the believers, they spoke in tongues or other languages.**

They actually preached in their native Aramaic with their Galilean (northern) accent.

**The southerners considered Galileans hillbillies.**

**Though the disciples spoke in their dialect, people from other nations heard them in their own languages.**

**That is, the Holy Spirit translated the disciples’ Aramaic so that each person present heard in his/her own native language.**

The effect resembled what happens at the United Nations; except no one needed earphones.

**This effect apparently set everyone talking and led some folks to ask:**

**“What’s happening? Are these guys drunk?”**

**Peter said, “Of course not. It’s only 9 AM. Nobody gets drunk this early in the morning.”**

**The apostle explained that Christians don’t participate in wild, drunken, frenetic activity.**

We’re close to what the word sober, or self-control means in the NT, but we’re not quite there.

**Are you thinking, “Bob, how long will this definition take?”**

**When our kids were young, we set out for Oregon in our 1960 Ford Falcon.**

We planned this 1000 mile trip from Hollywood to Oregon so the kids could visit their grandparents.



**We were barely to Bakersfield, CA, (100 miles from LA) when the kids began asking, “Are we to Oregon yet?”**



**You may be asking by now, “Bob are we close to a definition of “sober” yet?”  
We’re getting there.**

**Paul, the Apostle helped us define sober-self-controlled:**

**“So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.”<sup>1</sup>**

**Note how Paul also linked the two words “alert” and “self-control.”**

**Remember: at first, sober meant not intoxicated; then in certain religions, sober meant the opposite—intoxicated.**

Hang that understanding on the nearest skyhook; we’ll return later and fetch it.

**2. Let’s look at a little bit of history.**

- **Jesus preached from about 27-30 AD.**
- **The NT church began about 30 AD**
- **The NT writers began writing in the 50s.**

**From the thirties through the fifties, the Church suffered severe persecution in Israel.**

**Yet the Roman government allowed the Church to operate.**

In certain big cities like Ephesus, Christianity met opposition but encountered nothing widespread.

**After Nero Caesar changed his mind in the 60s, extensive discrimination began.**

**Suddenly the persecution Jesus predicted came upon the Church.**

- **If people openly scoffed at you and ridiculed you for being a Christian, would you regularly attend services?**
- **If they put me in prison and possibly executed me for preaching the Gospel, would you show up for the next service?**
- **Would you continue to pray confidently to God?**
- **What would you say if the sheriff pounded on your door this Wednesday night and wanted to know if you had Bibles in your possession?**



**In the last trimester of the first century, many Christians faced these decisions daily.**

**Folks in various parts of the world now face persecution because they believe in Christ.**

**People in certain countries today face death for converting to Christianity.**

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5: 6 NIV

**Because of recent court decisions in this country, we might face the types of circumstances that Christians encountered in the late first century.**

**As E. M. Blaiklock noted, “We are back for the first time to where the church began, facing an indifferent increasingly bewildered and often hostile society.”<sup>2</sup>**

**These events and the threats of war, viral plagues, and anarchy keep many Christians in a dither.**

**Darkness and gloom prevail in many quarters.**

**Anxiety agitates many believers.**

**Radio ministers and TV evangelists fret that ‘liberal judges are silencing them and taking away their First Amendment rights.’”**

**Other Christians worry about stem cell research, school prayers, and abortion.**

**Some Christians complain about the President.**

**Satan always works to create hate, fear, worry, anxiety, disharmony, and disunity.**

**3. With our language and history lessons complete, let’s apply what we have learned.**

**In the following, Paul helps us understand Christian sobriety:**

**“Since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup>**

**Suppose you watch a game this fall and you can hear conversations in the huddles.**

**After the first play, the offensive right tackle on your team comes to the huddle crying and complaining about how hard a defensive lineman hit him.<sup>4</sup>**



**He sobs to his teammates: “Look at this scratch I got on my finger and this bruise on my hand. They threw dirt in my eye. Those guys don’t play nice. We’re “gonna” lose this game!”**

<sup>3</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:8, 9 NIV

<sup>4</sup> I discussed this comparison with our son Steve who played quarterback three years at Hollywood High School in the early 1970s. He said, “Dad you can’t print what most guys say in football huddles!”

<sup>2</sup> *Compact Handbook of New Testament Life*, p -120.



**Do you have feeling that his teammates will escort him to the sideline pleading:**

**“Coach, please get this sissy tackle out of here and let a tough guy substitute for him”?**

**In the NT, soberness and self-control mean this:**

- **We don't panic under duress.**
- **Under pressure, we don't whine and complain.**
- **We don't quit while facing adversity.**
- **And we don't worry, get upset, and angry about the world not being right.**

**When we do that, the devil wins.**

- **We stay our course.**
- **We equip ourselves by trusting God and loving as Jesus loved.**
- **We wear our “hope in resurrection” helmets and faithfully follow Jesus.**

**We daily remind ourselves what sobriety and self-control mean for us Christians.**

**Peter practiced this soberness and self-control.**

**Acts chapters 4 and 5** tell how authorities ordered Peter and John not to preach any more in Jesus' name.

**They didn't complain to the authorities, hire lawyers, or enlist the help of politicians.**

The disciples asked God for more boldness and continued to preach Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

**Authorities rearrested Peter and John, beat them, and ordered them again: Do not preach anymore about Jesus and his resurrection.**

**Later King Herod beheaded the Apostle James and arrested Peter again intending to execute him the next day.**

**They chained Peter and posted 16 soldiers to guard him.**

**Do you know what Peter did that night?**

**Peter did not fret.**

He did not denounce the government or its leaders.

**In jail, scheduled to die on the morrow, Peter slept like a baby.**

**How could he do that?**

**As Paul suggested by the Holy Spirit, Peter put “on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet,”**

**Peter lived as he advised us in Christ:**

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

**Peter believed that God controlled the world and all history.**

**He knew that Jesus taught us to love everybody—even our enemies.**

**Jesus died to save every person, and he wants us to let every person alive know that.**

Faith that God rules the Universe, Jesus’ love, and the confidence that God will raise us from death just as he raised Jesus constitute bullet-proof-vests.

**Hope of salvation exceeds the best crash helmets available.**

**If we depend on them, we’ll beat the devil. Without them, we’re dead already.**

Remembering that Jesus reserved a suite for us in heaven gives us hope and keeps us from panicking when other people run scared.

**I pray that we can practice real sobriety (self-control).**

**We shall enjoy heaven with Christ and with those who keep their faith in him, who continue to love, regardless of what the world might do to them.**

**Jesus already defeated Satan.**

May God grant us all greater faith, love, and hope.

**Whether we are home or traveling,  
no better defense exists.**

I goofed two weeks ago in the 1 Corinthians 4 sermon entitled “Best Regards.” On page 4, I wrote that the quotation by Louis XIV was a Latin phrase. Our friend Kathy Wankum correctly informed me that it is in French. At the time I used it, I consulted two sources. Knowing little about either French or Latin, I depended on the wrong authority. This mistake reminds me how often human “experts” give us incorrect information. I apologize if this error caused you any inconvenience. I am grateful to Kathy for being watchful and straightforward.

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