

CLOSE THE WINDOW | ROMANS 13:14

INTRO:

Monkey Story—recent trip to India

- Had been warned to close our windows when we leave the hotel because of the monkeys
- Was told that monkeys were mischievous and mean (aggressive—don't look them in the eyes)
- Particularly, if the room windows were left open, they could theoretically get in and steal your stuff, cause havoc.
- My problem, was that my room didn't have a functioning fan, so it got stuffy and hot.
 - You see, I had a practical reason for opening my windows and leaving them open.
 - I even had a friend stop by and tell me, I don't think a monkey could get in here... I don't see a way that one could get in.
- I did close and lock the windows when I was gone, but again, each night we got back to the hotel, my room was hot and stuffy. So I would open the windows.
 - Most of the nights I even slept with the windows cracked open to let cool air in.
- Then one morning, around 4:30 am, I woke up to the sound.
 - I had learned the sound from watching out my window during previous mornings.
 - It's a distinct sound... the sound of monkeys climbing and banging on a building
 - But it was close, it was on our building. Monkeys were climbing on our building.
 - So I popped out of bed, ran to my windows, closed and locked them.
 - Fell back asleep, everything was good.
- That morning, after getting ready I had a few minutes before I was supposed to meet up with the group.
 - My hot water heater had stopped working the day before and I was trying to see if a different electrical switch controlled the power to it (I already knew which one controlled it, but was desperate for a hot shower—turns out it was broke and my last shower was quite brisk).
 - So I'm flipping switches and walking back and forth to my bathroom to see if the water heater turns on, meanwhile... I've reopened my windows to let fresh air in until I leave.
- Then it happened.
 - I had flipped a switch, turned my back to the window, headed to the bathroom when I heard the noise.
 - I turned around to the sight of a monkey in my room. A MONKEY IN MY ROOM.
 - It jumped through the window, onto my table and grabbed something out of my open backpack.
- I headed towards it, yelling at it to get out of my room.
 - Which it did and I closed the window behind it.
 - It then proceeded towards my other open window.
 - I raced toward that window, closing and locking it.
 - However, I had been robbed of a rain poncho (it could have been so much worse).

Fun story, but what's the point?

- I believe there are lessons here if we were to pause and consider it through another lens.
- What if I wasn't talking about a stuffy hotel room, a missing rain poncho, and a mischievous monkey?
- What if the story was a way of illustrating how people often and knowingly keep doors/windows open to our fleshly desires despite being warned of the potential consequences.
- What if the story illustrates that we often think we have valid, practical reasons for disobeying the clear warnings from trusted authorities (like the Scripture). We'll often even find friends to agree with us and downplay the warnings.
- What if the story also illustrates that we can get lulled to sleep or lazy in our watchfulness? The monkey didn't jump through the window the first time I opened it, rather when I was feeling most assured it wouldn't happen AND that my window was inaccessible... it happened! I had let down my guard, wasn't being watchful.
- What if the story illustrates not a mischievous, thieving monkey, but rather the enemy of our souls, said to be like a prowling lion, looking for someone to devour? One who comes not simply to steal, but also to kill and destroy?
- Ahh, now that would make quite an illustration wouldn't it?

Here's the part of the story that connects to something bigger than a stolen poncho.

- You see, it wasn't the first night I opened that window that the monkey jumped in. It was days later — I'd opened it numerous times by then. And the one morning monkeys actually climbed onto our building, I did the right thing. Shot out of bed, closed it, locked it. Crisis averted.
- But then I opened the windows again hours later — same reason as always, I needed the fresh cool air. But my mind was somewhere else entirely, back and forth to the bathroom, flipping switches, trying to coax some hot water out of a broken heater. The window was open and I wasn't thinking about it at all, I wasn't concerned about the threat of monkeys.
 - The very proof that the danger was real didn't make me more careful once the moment passed. Rather, I again assured myself it was all good and I let my guard down.
- What strikes me now, thinking about it, is NOT how clever the monkey was.
- It was how ordinary my decisions had been.
 - Nothing I did felt reckless. The room was hot. I wanted fresh air. Other people thought the risk was probably exaggerated. Besides, I'd opened those windows several times already and nothing had happened.
 - Until it did.
- And isn't that how temptation usually works?
 - Very few people set out intending to wreck their lives. They simply leave something open. A compromise. A habit. A relationship. A thought pattern. A website. An attitude. We convince ourselves we have a good reason. We tell ourselves we'll deal with it before it becomes a problem. We assume that because nothing has happened yet, nothing will.
- But Scripture repeatedly tells us to think differently.
 - We're called to stay awake. To stay alert. (BE WATCHFUL). To recognize that our enemy looks for opportunities, and that we are to definitely not go handing him one.

Today I want us to see from the Scriptures that we are to live awake/alert/sober lives, recognize the enemy's schemes, and stop leaving open doors that give sin an opportunity to gain a foothold in our lives.

- Be alert. Be watchful.
- Don't be dumb.
- Love Jesus.
- Amen.

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 13:11–14 ESV

¹¹ Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Ephesians 4:27 NIV

²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold.

2 Corinthians 2:11 NIV

¹¹ in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Peter puts it together this way:

1 Peter 5:8 NIV

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

1: BE ALERT & WATCHFUL

A: STAY ALERT BECAUSE JESUS IS COMING BACK

- **INTERESTINGLY: This is where Paul starts his argument:**
 - You know the time, it is the hour to wake up, our salvation is nearer than when we first believed, the Day (of the Lord) is nearly here.
 - Because of that, cast off the works of darkness, live godly (in Christ), and make no provision for the flesh.
- **The NT is replete with admonitions to live godly because Jesus is coming back at an hour we don't know.**
 - In my notes, I've included an appendix that is filled with scriptural references to this very idea

- Noteworthy now: roughly speaking, just about 1 out of every 25 verses in the NT carries this theme.
- **So church, live righteous and godly lives because our Lord is soon returning.**
 - One day we will soon meet him (we're going to him OR he's coming for us)
 - We are to live with judgment day — day when we give account to him for how we lived our lives as believers — in mind.
 - This is intended and used in scripture as a motivator, both as a warning and encouragement.
 - *Live Alert & Soberly — Giving God our best daily.*
 - *Don't take days off and plays off.*
 - *It's prophetically the 4th quarter.*

B: STAY ALERT BECAUSE THE ENEMY IS HUNTING

- **[Eph 4:27](#) & [2 Cor 2:11](#) make a call to not give the enemy a foothold and to be aware of the devil's schemes.**
 - Both of these are set in different letters and contexts
 - One dealing with how we act relationally in anger
 - The other in reconciling the sinner
 - But in both Paul writes a warning about the devil
 - Don't give him a foothold, a stronghold—an opening in your lives and relationships
 - Further, we're not unaware of his schemes... don't get outwitted by him
 - By implication:
 - Be alert!
 - Be watchful!
 - Be aware of the enemy's strategy!
 - Don't give the enemy an opportunity to wreak havoc in your lives, your families, your relationships... the church!
- **Regarding [1 Peter 5:8](#), Who do lions and other predators look for to attack?**
 - Is it typically the vigilant, the strong, or the wise?
 - Or is it the young, the reckless, the sick, the loner/isolated, the weary and exhausted?
 - Predators are notorious for going after easy prey (most of the time).
- **Years ago (beginning of 2020) I did a whole series on the 'evicting the liar' which addressed the strategies and lies of the enemy.**
 - I don't have time today to go through every strategy that the enemy has in his playbook, but here's a few principles to note, with more included in my notes:
- **STRATEGIES OF THE ENEMY:**
 - He is a liar and a deceiver (plainly contradict scripture)
 - He is a master manipulator and twister of scripture (changes the clear meaning, often misquoting it or excluding extremely relevant portions)
 - He often appears as an angel of light (he convinces many that he is for their good, but really out to destroy—his intentions aren't always what they seem)

- He is patient and gradual in his attacks (he knows how to wear you down over time)

-----extra examples-----

- *He seeks to isolate, divide and conquer (he knows we're stronger together, weaker when isolated)*
- *He tries to disarm the church (through drowsiness, doubt, or fear)*
- *He's a punk (he targets the weak, weary, and the welcoming—usually curious or ignorant)*

- **Knowing these strategies is important, but we also have to have our own strategies and playbooks to counter his schemes. (Think FOOTBALL)**

- If he's a liar, deceiver, and master manipulator — we have to be grounded in the word for ourselves
- If he often appears as an angel of light — we have to be wise and discerning
- If he is patient with his attacks — we have to have perseverance and continually be strengthened in the Lord (fill up so we don't run out)

-----extra examples-----

- *If he likes to divide and conquer — we have to walk in humility, forgiveness, and preserve unity*
- *If he likes to disarm the church — we have to stay armed and alert, prayed up and walking in faith*
- *If he likes to target the weak, weary, and welcoming — we have to be reach them first, protecting the flock amongst us.*

In summary here, don't be ignorant of how the devil works and how we're often tempted to cooperate with him. Which leads me to point number 2.

2: DON'T BE DUMB

1 Corinthians 10:12–14 NIV

¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. ¹⁴ Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

A: KNOW YOUR WEAKNESSES

- **Listen, you have to be honest with yourself.**
 - What are your struggles?
 - In what ways are you tempted to sin?
 - Don't try and lie to yourself — you and Jesus know.
 - If you've never stopped to reflect, [Psalm 139:23-24](#) is a great prayer for that.
- **Recognize that your weaknesses are common to others, but possibly different.**
 - You're not alone in your struggles
 - But don't compare yourself... we hardly win when we do that.

B: GUARD THEM (BUILD DEFENSES), DON'T EXPOSE THEM

- **What I'm not saying here is to just try really hard to not sin again.**
 - Or that you just need to fight and resist harder
 - Although that might be part of the problem if you have zero resistance to sin and temptation
- **But recognize the patterns and strategies that contribute to your failings.**
 - Is it when you're alone?
 - Is it late at night or when you're exhausted?
 - Is it when you're around that certain group of friends or coworkers?
- **Create defenses/systems that help guard those situations**
 - Accountability and prayer partners are significant helps here
 - Confession is a powerful tool in finding freedom from sins and addictions
 - Avoid/Run from the known opportunities for temptations
 - Don't be Samson always hanging out in Philistine territory OR Lot setting up his camp right near Sodom.
 - These are setups for heartbreak and failure
 - Consider rather, how Joseph simply ran away when Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him.
 - In fact he ran in such a determined way that all his garments didn't make it with him (for she had had caught him by his garment)
 - There's a time to resist temptation and there are cases to flee it. Know the difference.

C: DON'T SET YOURSELF UP FOR FAILURE — YOU'RE NOT AS STRONG AS YOU THINK

- **This is the proverbial 'shut the darn window' scenario.**
 - The monkeys are out there
 - You've been warned
 - Ask the front desk for a new fan (dummy) — don't leave the windows opened and unattended
 - You're 'friend' isn't the authority here — the scriptures are
- **Don't entertain opportunities for temptation**
 - 1 cor 10:14 says to flee idolatry.
 - In context... the temptation to sin
 - [Romans 13:14](#) says to make no provision for the flesh
 - Some translations say, 'don't think about how you can gratify the sinful desires'
 - Rather we are to take 'every thought captive and make it obedient to christ.' ([2 Cor 10:5](#))

In challenging us all to 'not be dumb' I'm calling you to know your own weaknesses, know how the enemy wants to leverage them, and then to build up proper defenses including a good 40 speed when running from temptation!

Lastly, we need to preoccupy our hearts, minds, and lives with something good to do. Because guarding against temptation will only get you so far. You need something to run *to*, not just something to run *from*. Point number 3... is "Love Jesus"

3: LOVE JESUS

A: OCCUPY YOUR HEART AND MIND WITH LOVING JESUS

- Everything so far has been a warning — guard the window, know your weaknesses, don't give the enemy an opening. All true. All necessary.
 - But by way of example, a marriage doesn't survive on "no" alone.
 - When we say our vows, we say no to every other love. But we don't stay married by only policing that no — we stay married by pursuing our spouse. By asking, *how do I love her well today?* And then doing that!
- It's the same with Jesus.
 - Avoiding sin isn't the same as loving Christ. One is a fence. (super important)
 - The other is a relationship. Don't just build a good defense — occupy your heart with knowing and loving Him. (more important)
- So spend time with him
 - In the word
 - In prayer
 - In worship
 - In worshipful obedience — the good works to which he has called you to do

B: “PUT ON CHRIST JESUS” — YOU CAN’T DO IT ALL IN YOUR OWN STRENGTH

- Here's the truth under both previous points: you're not strong enough on your own.
 - If willpower alone could keep you alert and be enough to conquer sin, the law would've been enough.
 - But it wasn't. That's why Jesus came.
- So put on Christ — not as another rule to follow, but as your righteousness, your identity, and your strength.
 - The same call that told you to close the window now tells you what to wear instead.

RESPONSE:

Lord...

- Show me the open windows.
- Show me where I've become sleepy.
- Show me where I've justified compromise.
- Give me courage to shut what needs to be shut.
- Help me put on Christ.

APPENDIX:

NT passages that encourage/command righteous living, being awake, living in the light, living ready because the day of the Lord, Christ's return is near or at hand.

Jesus (Gospels)

- [Matt 24:42](#) — "Keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come"
- [Matt 24:44](#) — "Be ready, for the Son of Man comes at an hour you do not expect"
- [Matt 24:45-51](#) — faithful vs. wicked servant (be found doing his will when he comes)
- [Matt 25:1-13](#) — ten virgins: "Watch, for you know neither the day nor the hour"
- [Matt 25:14-30](#) — talents: faithful stewardship until the master returns
- [Mark 13:33-37](#) — "Be on guard, keep awake... what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake"
- [Luke 12:35-40](#) — "Stay dressed for action, keep your lamps burning... be ready"
- [Luke 12:42-48](#) — faithful manager parable
- [Luke 21:34-36](#) — "Watch yourselves lest... that day come upon you suddenly like a trap... stay awake at all times"

Jesus (as the risen Christ, Revelation)

- [Rev 3:2-3](#) — "Wake up... If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief"
- [Rev 3:11](#) — "I am coming soon; hold fast what you have"
- [Rev 16:15](#) — "I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments"
- [Rev 22:7, 12, 20](#) — "I am coming soon" (with blessing on those who keep the words)

Paul

- [Rom 13:11-14](#) — "The hour has come to wake from sleep... the day is at hand; cast off works of darkness, put on the armor of light"
- [1 Cor 7:29-31](#) — "The appointed time has grown very short" (live accordingly)
- [1 Cor 1:7-8](#); [Phil 1:10](#); [2:16](#) — be blameless for "the day of Christ"
- [1 Cor 15:58](#); [16:13](#) — steadfast, watchful (capped by "Maranatha," 16:22)
- [Eph 5:8-16](#) — walk as children of light; "Awake, O sleeper... making the best use of the time"
- [Phil 4:5](#) — "Let your reasonableness be known... The Lord is near"
- [Col 3:2-5](#) — when Christ appears you will appear with him; therefore put to death what is earthly
- [1 Thess 5:1-11](#) — the fullest treatment: day of the Lord like a thief; "You are children of light... so let us not sleep, but keep awake and be sober"
- [2 Thess 3:6-13](#) — imminence is no excuse for idleness; keep working
- [1 Tim 6:14](#) — keep the commandment unstained "until the appearing of our Lord"
- [2 Tim 4:1-8](#) — ministry charged "by his appearing"; crown for "all who have loved his appearing"
- [Titus 2:11-13](#) — live self-controlled, upright, godly lives "waiting for the blessed hope"

Peter

- [1 Pet 1:13](#) — "Prepare your minds for action, be sober-minded, set your hope fully on... the revelation of Jesus Christ"
- [1 Pet 4:7](#) — "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded"
- [2 Pet 3:10-14](#) — day of the Lord comes like a thief; "what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening" it; "be diligent to be found by him without spot"

Others

- [Heb 10:24-25](#), [37](#) — encourage one another "all the more as you see the Day drawing near"
- [Jas 5:7-9](#) — "Be patient... the coming of the Lord is at hand... the Judge is standing at the door"
- [1 John 2:18](#), [28](#) — "It is the last hour... abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence"
- [1 John 3:2-3](#) — everyone who hopes in his appearing "purifies himself"
- [Jude 20-21](#) — build yourselves up, "waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ"

Percentage of NT commands

No official count exists, and results depend on whether you count Greek imperatives (~1,050–1,600 depending on method) or discrete "commands." Using the common ~1,050 figure: the passages above contain roughly 40–50 imperatives explicitly motivated by the nearness of the Day/return, so about **4–5% of NT commands**. But the *emphasis* is larger than that number suggests — the second coming is referenced ~300+ times in the NT (roughly 1 in every 25 verses), it appears in nearly every book, and it frames whole ethical sections ([Rom 13](#), [1 Thess 5](#), [Titus 2](#), [1 Pet](#), [2 Pet 3](#)). It functions less as one command among many and more as the standing motivation behind NT ethics generally.

Counts by speaker

- **Jesus:12–13 occasions** about 7 distinct teaching units in the Gospels (with ~11 watch/be-ready imperatives across [Matt 24-25](#), [Mark 13](#), [Luke 12](#) and 21), plus 5–6 more sayings as the risen Christ in Revelation — roughly total.
- **Paul:12 passages** roughly across 9 letters, with [1 Thess 5](#) and [Rom 13](#) the most developed.
- **Peter:3 passages** ([1 Pet 1:13](#); [4:7](#); [2 Pet 3:10-14](#)) — but note that's 3 out of only 8 chapters he wrote, so proportionally Peter emphasizes it as heavily as anyone.