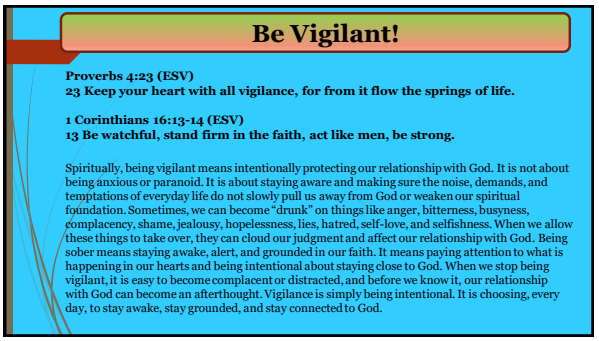
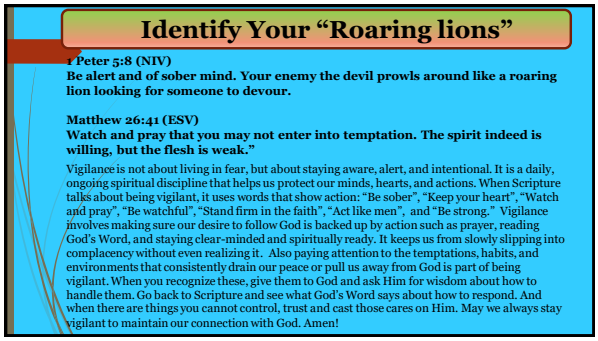

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VIGILANCE: GUARDING OUR CONNECTION WITH GOD
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1


Be Vigilant!
Proverbs 4:23 (ESV)
23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.
1 Corinthians 16:13-14 (ESV)
13 Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.
Spiritually, being vigilant means intentionally protecting our relationship with God. It is not about being anxious or paranoid. It is about staying aware and making sure the noise, demands, and temptations of everyday life do not slowly pull us away from God or weaken our spiritual foundation. Sometimes, we can become "drunk" on things like anger, bitterness, busyness, complacency, shame, jealousy, hopelessness, lies, hatred, self-love, and selfishness. When we allow these things to take over, they can cloud our judgment and affect our relationship with God. Being sober means staying awake, alert, and grounded in our faith. It means paying attention to what is happening in our hearts and being intentional about staying close to God. When we stop being vigilant, it is easy to become complacent or distracted, and before we know it, our relationship with God can become an afterthought. Vigilance is simply being intentional. It is choosing, every day, to stay awake, stay grounded, and stay connected to God.

2


Identify Your "Roaring lions"
1 Peter 5:8 (NIV)
Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
Matthew 26:41 (ESV)
Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
Vigilance is not about living in fear, but about staying aware, alert, and intentional. It is a daily, ongoing spiritual discipline that helps us protect our minds, hearts, and actions. When Scripture talks about being vigilant, it uses words that show action: "Be sober", "Keep your heart", "Watch and pray", "Be watchful", "Stand firm in the faith", "Act like men", and "Be strong." Vigilance involves making sure our desire to follow God is backed up by action such as prayer, reading God's Word, and staying clear-minded and spiritually ready. It keeps us from slowly slipping into complacency without even realizing it. Also paying attention to the temptations, habits, and environments that consistently drain our peace or pull us away from God is part of being vigilant. When you recognize these, give them to God and ask Him for wisdom about how to handle them. Go back to Scripture and see what God's Word says about how to respond. And when there are things you cannot control, trust and cast those cares on Him. May we always stay vigilant to maintain our connection with God. Amen!

3