

DUTCH SHEETS

WATCHMAN
PRAYER

PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY, HOME AND COMMUNITY
FROM THE ENEMY'S SCHEMES



OVER 100,000 IN PRINT

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1

Looking for a Few Good Watchmen

Be Careful What You Watch For

The only thing worse than shopping is watching someone shop. Except for my wife, of course. I don't mind at all following her around a mall for two or three hours. I show my interest periodically with pleasant little grunts—"Umph"; "Uh-huh"; "Ah-hum." Sometimes I get downright wordy—"Yes"; "No"; "Sure"; "*How much?*" I have gotten pretty quick at correcting that one: "Wow, what a deal!" I hastily add. About the closest thing I can compare "shopper watching" to would be watching a sewing match.

This is why I am sitting in the food court writing while my wife and youngest daughter, Hannah, shop. It is one of those outlet malls where they sell you the flawed stuff on sale. My oldest daughter, Sarah, who is ten years old, is with me, reading. She does not like shopping, either—yet. I informed her on the

way to our food court refuge of the gene in her—which God gave all women—that simply has not kicked in yet. I told her not to worry; it will happen. (I first shared this story several years ago in my book *Intercessory Prayer* [Bethany House, 1996, 2016]. Sarah’s shopping gene has since fully kicked in. She has matured nicely in this essential aspect of womanhood. I am still eating in food courts—by myself now—and “umph”ing once in a while.)

In my studies of this genetic plague—most of them done through conversing with other men in food courts—I have discovered that no one knows for sure when the gene kicks in or what triggers it. It can hit anytime between the ages of six and thirteen. Sometimes it happens in the middle of the night; they just wake up with the shakes—flu-like symptoms. When it happened with Hannah, I was ready to anoint her with oil until my wife, Ceci, informed me it would not help.

“What do you mean it won’t help?” I asked in surprise. “Of course it will.”

“No,” she said, “it’s her shopping gene kicking in. We’ve got to get her to a mall—fast.”

Mom was right, of course. She usually is. Hannah came home proudly holding her shopping bag, looking like she had just caught her first fish. Women! Who can figure?

To prove my point, I just counted the men and women in the food court and surrounding stores—26 females and 9 males. Half the males were kids who had been dragged there against their will. Another was writing—yours truly—and the rest were grunting, “Uh-huh.” I felt sorry for one guy; he actually looked like a zombie. I think he finally cracked under the stress. Either that or he was suffering from food-court food poisoning.

Ceci and Hannah are back now, getting something to drink and showing us their deals. I am grunting. Ceci is merely drop-

ping Hannah off so she can run back for one more thing. Seven-year-olds—apprentice shoppers—cannot always keep up with the pros. They have not had enough aerobics classes, for which the real motivation is shopping conditioning. (Hannah’s stamina has increased remarkably since then. Ceci assured me regularly during my daughters’ growing-up years that they were both right on schedule in this all-important phase of development. She urged me not to worry. The thought never crossed my mind!)

Why couldn’t God have made women to like normal things, such as sitting in the woods for days in sub-zero weather waiting for a deer or elk to walk by? Now that is my idea of exciting watching. Or watching a football game! I am not into TV too much—unless it is a good sporting event. Ceci does not always understand me in this area, but she is kind about it. “Who are you rooting for?” she sometimes asks.

“I don’t care who wins,” I often reply.

“Are these any of your favorite teams?”

“No, not really.”

“A favorite player or two, perhaps?”

“Naw, I don’t know much about these guys at all.”

“Then why are you watching the game?” she asks with a quizzical expression.

“Because it’s football,” I reply as patiently as I possibly can. Sometimes people cannot figure out the obvious.

I will tell you what puzzles me: why she and my two daughters like to watch stuff that makes them cry. Go figure!

Many kinds of watching take place: TV watching, parade watching, watching the clock, stock market watching, bird watching (ranks right up there with sewing matches to me) and a thousand other things. I like to watch kids laugh. I hate to watch people cry. I have watched individuals be born; I have watched others die.

I once watched a lady in San Pedro, Guatemala, look for a watch. It was her husband's—he died in the earthquake of 1976. So did three of her kids. All she and her surviving infant had left were the clothes on their backs. Their small adobe home was a mound of dirt.

When our interpreter asked her what she was digging for, she replied, “A bag of beans we had and my husband's watch. He was sleeping about here when he was killed,” she said, pointing at an area of approximately ten square feet. “It would mean so much to me if I could find his watch.”

We started digging.

Although it was like looking for a needle in a haystack, we asked God to help us and waded into the three-foot-deep dirt. Right then I would have charged hell for that watch. We found it an hour or so later.

“*Muchas gracias*,” she repeated through tears as she clutched the inexpensive watch to her breast.

Treasure *is such a relative term*, I thought as I wiped my eyes. *I wish the world could see this. Maybe some priorities would change.*

I watched another quake victim, holding her three-year-old daughter, walk away from a food line in which I was serving. She was the last in line for the soup. As she held out the jar she had found, we looked at her and said, “*No más*” (which means “No more”). Then I watched her walk away, holding her hungry child.

Things got all messed up at that point in my life. Neat little lists of needs disappeared. Certain important goals became strangely irrelevant. Things that mattered suddenly did not. Bank accounts were looked at differently; success was redefined. Funny how one glance into four eyes can bring such chaos. In many ways, order has never been restored.

Be careful what you watch.¹

Watchmen Need God's 20/20 Vision

This introduction was taken from the final chapter of my first book, *Intercessory Prayer*. The chapter dealt with what I called the “watchman anointing.” I want to pick up where I ended that book and develop fully the concept of the watchman. It is a facet of prayer being greatly emphasized by the Holy Spirit in this hour, and it must be understood.

God is certainly not finished with the prayer movement around the world. In fact, He wants to transform it from a movement to a lifestyle. Movements come and movements go; sometimes that is good and sometimes that is bad. Wouldn't it be sad if twenty years from now the prayer movement of the 1990s was only a “was,” spoken of as the good old days!

Will our chapter of history be titled:

- Opportunities Left Unseized
- They Began Well, but . . .
- What Could Have Been?

I trust not. I hope our legacy is similar to King David's: He served God's purpose for his generation (see Acts 13:36). Or maybe like that of the early Church: They turned their world “upside down” (see Acts 17:6 AMPC).

If you are like me, I know you want to finish well. My hope is that prayer becomes the *lifestyle* of the Church and that the movement keeps moving until it takes root. By the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, we can make it so!

Yes, our history is yet to be written. Much is waiting for us: Testimonies are waiting to be created; a generation of youth is waiting to be born again; dry bones are waiting for breath (see Ezekiel 37); homes are waiting to be healed; addictions are waiting to be broken; untold millions are waiting

to hear the Gospel for the first time. Note some alarming statistics:

- In 2002, 2.3 million juveniles were arrested in the United States. Forty-three percent of those arrests were for violent crimes.²
- Five thousand young Americans kill themselves each year, making suicide the third highest cause of death among 10- to 24-year-olds.³
- Two-thirds of students in grades 6 to 12 say they could obtain a firearm in 24 hours. Six percent of high school students have carried a gun in the last 30 days.⁴
- In 2005, there were nearly 900,000 reports of child abuse and neglect in the United States. Between 1997 and 2003, more than 4,000 children died as a result of abuse or neglect.⁵
- Forty-seven percent of U.S. teens in grades 9 to 12 had sexual intercourse in 2003. Sixty-two percent of students in grade 12 report having had sex.⁶
- The ratio of abortions per live births remains at roughly 25 percent.⁷
- The number of born-again Christians in America has not significantly changed in the last 10 years.⁸
- Between 1991 and 2004, U.S. church attendance declined more than 6 percent.⁹ (This means that we have lost ground.)
- The majority of Americans believe “that the Holy Spirit is a symbol of God’s power and presence but not a living entity, that Satan does not exist, and that there are many paths by which we may experience eternal salvation.”¹⁰

- In 2007, 46 percent of Christians who call themselves born again denied the existence of Satan.¹¹

We need a wake-up call. There simply is no hope for America apart from revival.

If watchmen had been on duty, these and other shocking events could have been averted. Satan takes advantage of us when the watchman concept of prayer is not operating, as is made clear in the following verse: “So that no advantage be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes” (2 Corinthians 2:11). The context is forgiveness, but a general principle is also revealed, which is very applicable to our subject. Let’s analyze the verse more closely.

The word *ignorant* is from the Greek verb *agnoeo*, which means to be “without knowledge or understanding of.”¹² Our English word *agnostic* is derived from it. Technically, an agnostic is not a person who is unsure if he or she believes in God, although we now use the word this way. In actuality, however, an agnostic is a person who does not know or understand, regardless of the subject. We also get the word *ignore* from the same root. In this verse we are urged not to ignore or be an agnostic—without understanding—where the devil is concerned.

Schemes is from the word *noema*, which literally means “thought.” The verse is essentially saying, “Don’t be without understanding of the way Satan thinks.” *Noema* came to also mean “plans, schemes, plots, devices,”¹³ because these things are born in the thoughts of the mind. For greater insight, let’s insert all these concepts into the verse: “Don’t be without understanding of the way your enemy thinks and operates—of his plans, plots, schemes and devices.” Is there not also a subtle promise here? If God suggests we are not to be ignorant of Satan’s schemes, He must be willing to reveal them to us.

What if we are unaware of his schemes? He will take advantage of us. The word *advantage* is derived from *pleonekteo*, which is a compound word meaning literally “to have or hold the greater portion” (*pleon*—“the greater part”; *echo*—“to have or hold”).¹⁴ It is easy to see why this is a word for “covet.” It also means “overreach.”¹⁵

In boxing, the person who has the longer reach has the advantage and usually gets in more blows. The word *pleonekteo* is also translated “make a gain”; Satan makes a lot of gains on those who are unaware of his ways. Bullinger says *pleonekteo* means “to make a prey of, to defraud.”¹⁶ Let’s put all of these definitions together: “To the degree we are ignorant of the way our adversary thinks and operates—of his plans, plots, schemes and devices—to that degree he will gain on us, prey on us, defraud us of what is ours and have or hold the greater portion.”

The greater portion of what? Whatever! Our homes, marriages, families, communities, money, government, nation and more. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Church in America was without understanding of what Satan was planning, and he got the greater portion of our schools. The same could be said of our government and many of our churches!

Have you ever been taken advantage of? Have you ever received the smaller portion? In my Bible college days we had a way of enlightening the superspiritual who thought it necessary to intercede for the world while giving thanks for a meal. They were *ignorant* of our *scheme* when we asked them to pray over the food. While they traversed the globe, we enjoyed *the greater portion* of their meals! It was a real test of their true spirituality. (I am deeply embarrassed by this abominable practice in my past and would never do it today. But for those of you who feel you must intercede over your food, save it for your prayer closet!)

Paul was taken advantage of in 1 Thessalonians 2:18. Satan gained on him (*pleonekteo*) in the ongoing war over spreading the Gospel: “For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet Satan hindered us.” We know Paul won more battles than he lost. But he was human, and at times Satan succeeded in thwarting his plans. Please notice it does not say God changed His mind about where Paul was to go. It clearly says that Satan hindered him. Those people who would have us think that Satan can do nothing except what God allows and that we are to ignore him should reread these two verses. God does not ignore the devil, and neither should we. And he certainly does a lot of things God does not *allow* him to do.

The only sense in which it can be said that God allows everything that happens on earth is that He created the laws and principles—sowing and reaping, cause and effect and the free will of humans—that govern the earth. We, however, implement these principles and determine much of what we reap and experience. It is truly God and humans working together. Satan, too, understands these laws and uses them to his advantage whenever possible.¹⁷

Consider the following comments from Philip Yancey that reflect how easy it is for humans to blame God for failures, mishaps and consequences that are the result of human effort and Satan’s role in human affairs:

When Princess Diana died, I got a phone call from a television producer. “Can you appear on our show?” he asked. “We want you to explain how God could possibly allow such a terrible accident.” . . .

At the 1994 Winter Olympics, when speed skater Dan Jansen’s hand scraped the ice, causing him to lose the 500-meter race, his wife, Robin, cried out, “Why, God, again? God can’t be that cruel!”

A young woman wrote James Dobson this letter: “Four years ago, I was dating a man and became pregnant. I was so devastated! I asked God, ‘Why have You allowed this to happen to me?’”

In a professional bout, boxer Ray “Boom-Boom” Mancini slammed his Korean opponent with a hard right, causing a massive cerebral hemorrhage. At a press conference after the Korean’s death, Mancini said, “Sometimes I wonder why God does the things he does.”

Susan Smith, who pushed her car with her two sons in it, into a lake to drown and then blamed a black car-jacker for the deed, wrote in her official confession: “I dropped to the lowest point when I allowed my children to go down that ramp into the water without me. I took off running and screaming, ‘Oh God! Oh God, no! What have I done? Why did you let this happen?’” . . .

I once watched a television interview with a famous Hollywood actress whose lover had rolled off a yacht in a drunken stupor and drowned. The actress, who probably had not thought about God in months, looked at the camera, her lovely face contorted by grief, and asked, bizarrely, “How could a loving God let this happen?”¹⁸

Let’s understand the ways of God and not credit Him for the results of our actions and Satan’s. Let the responsibility fall where it should fall.

Two more verses give additional insight. The first is Ephesians 6:18: “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, *be on the alert* with all perseverance and petition for all the saints” (emphasis added). The King James Version uses the word “watching” for the phrase “be on the alert.”

The second verse is 1 Peter 5:8: “Be of sober spirit, *be on the alert*. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (emphasis added). Again,

other translations use the word “watchful.” The context of both verses is spiritual warfare. Each mentions our adversary and challenges us to alertness or watchfulness, both for ourselves and for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

I want to draw four conclusions from these three verses—Ephesians 6:18, 1 Peter 5:8 and 2 Corinthians 2:11—as an introduction for our study of the watchman anointing:

1. *Protection from the attacks of our enemy—even for believers—is not automatic.* There is a part for us to play. Though God is sovereign, this does not mean He is literally in control of everything that happens. He has left much to the decisions and actions of humankind. If God were going to protect or safeguard us from Satan’s attacks regardless of what we did, these verses would be totally irrelevant to Christians. Somewhere in our theology, we must find a place for human responsibility. At some point we must begin to believe that we matter, that we are relevant, for ourselves and for others.
2. *God’s plan is to warn or alert us to Satan’s tactics.* This is deduced from the simple fact that, since God says not to be *unaware* of Satan’s tactics, He must be willing to make us *aware* of them. If He says to be on the alert, this must mean that if we are, He will alert us. God would not ask of us something He was not also going to enable us to accomplish.
3. *We must be alert—remain watchful—or we will not be aware of God’s attempts to warn us of Satan’s attacks and plans.* If these attacks were always going to be obvious, alertness would not be necessary. Isaiah 56:10 speaks of blind watchmen. What a picture! I am afraid it has been a fairly good description of many of us in our watching roles. We are often like the disciples of

old: We have eyes, but we do not see (see Mark 8:18). It is time we do more than gaze; we must alertly watch!

4. *If we are not alert and watchful, and if we are ignorant of Satan's schemes, he will take the bigger portion.* He will gain on us, taking advantage of our ignorance. Contrary to popular belief, we really can be destroyed due to ignorance (see Hosea 4:6). We may not like to admit it, but Satan really has gained a lot of territory in America.

We cannot deny the reality of spiritual conflict. If we do, we act in denial, and the results can be disastrous.

Don't be like the desert nomad who awakened hungrily one night and decided he'd have a midnight snack. Lighting a candle, he grabbed a date and took a bite. Holding the date to the candle, he saw a worm, whereupon he threw the date out of the tent. Biting into the second date, he found another worm and threw it away, also. Deciding he might not get anything to eat if this continued, he blew out the candle and ate the dates.¹⁹

Sometimes we, too, prefer the darkness of denial to the light of truth. Though the truth really does hurt at times, it is still truth. Denial does not change it. Where Satan has made gains, let's admit it and determine to take them back!²⁰

Watchmen Wanted

The first example of a failed watchman is recorded in the Bible and affects each one of us every day. The watchman's name was Adam. God told him in Genesis 2:15 to "keep" the garden. The word "keep" is the Hebrew word *shamar*, which is one of the three Old Testament words used for a watchman. I will define these three words in great depth over the next few chapters, but

for now, suffice it to say one of the main concepts of the word involves protection and preservation.

Adam was told to *protect* the garden, *watching* for attacks from the evil one, the serpent. Why do I assert this? Because first of all, it is much in keeping with the nature of God to have warned him. To have done otherwise would not have been consistent with God's character. Second, neither Adam nor Eve seemed shocked when a snake talked to them. It evidently did not come as a total surprise. Third, what else could there have been before the Fall to guard, keep or protect themselves from in the garden? Only the serpent.²¹ The first responsibility of watchmen is to keep the serpent out of their God-given gardens.

The serpent has been interloping ever since, seeking to grab the greater portion. He has sunk his venomous fangs into many portions of America and the world. The fruit of the poisonous venom is terrifying. Consider these reports concerning a young, identity-less generation of Americans:

- In 2005, more than 721,000 10- to 24-year-olds were treated in emergency rooms for injuries related to violence. In the same year, nearly 8 percent of students in grades 9 to 12 reported being injured by or threatened with a weapon at school, while more than 6 percent reported staying home from school because they felt unsafe.²²
- On April 20, 1999, two young men wearing long, black trench coats opened fire in a suburban high school in Littleton, Colorado, injuring as many as 23 students and killing 12 students and 1 teacher. Then they killed themselves.²³
- On February 9, 2000, a 6-year-old in Mount Morris Township, Michigan, took his uncle's gun to school and fatally shot a 6-year-old classmate.²⁴

- On April 23, 2003, a 14-year-old boy at Red Lion Area Junior High School in Pennsylvania shot the school's principal in the chest and then turned the gun on himself.²⁵
- On March 21, 2005, a 16-year-old student in Red Lake, Minnesota, killed 10 people, including himself and his grandfather, and wounded 15 others.²⁶
- On April 16, 2007, in the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history, a young English major at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia, fatally shot 32 people, then himself, and injured 23 others.²⁷

Our precious gardens are full of demons. We need some watchmen!

Tragedies such as these can and must be eliminated. I challenge you to make a difference. Learn the power of prayer and apply the principles of the watchman. We must take back the portions Satan has seized in our nation and around the world. Let's become spiritually militant and aggressive as we deal with the serpent and his stealing, killing and destroying. Let there be no more agnostics where Satan is concerned. Let's expose and stop him! Let's get him out of our gardens!

All across America thousands of youth are meeting in Torchgrab rallies, where they are encouraged to pick up the torch of Columbine High School martyrs Cassie Bernall and Rachel Scott. Many are responding with total commitment and abandonment to God, picking up the torch and accepting the call to reach their generation for Christ.

The blood of these martyrs cries from the ground, "Revival to this generation!" The same ears that heard the blood-cry of righteous Abel hear those of righteous Cassie and Rachel. The fire of the torches they carried is spreading to other torches across this land. Once again, the blood of the martyrs will be the seeds of revival.

What of us? What of we watchmen who are exhorted by God to guard this generation and birth a revival? Must not our commitment match that of our fallen young comrades and their successors? Is this not a cause worth abandoning ourselves to? My good friend Solveig Henderson states it well for each of us. I pray you will agree.

I'm abandoned to You, Jesus,
I surrender to the call.
I don't want to have my own way,
'Cause I know through that I'll fall.
So I come and fall on You, Lord.
I will answer when You knock.
When I'm weak You are my stronghold,
my security, my Rock.

I'm abandoned to You, Jesus,
You're the treasure that I seek.
Anything that I've held sacred,
By comparison is bleak.
In my travels You're my journey,
You're my road, my map, my guide.
You're my final destination.
I say yes.²⁸

The call goes out for watchmen. Can you hear it? Surrender to the call!