



## Keep Your Eyes on the Lord



### *Something to Plant*

I keep my eyes always on the Lord.  
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.  
—Psalm 16:8

**Read: Nehemiah 6:1-9**

### **Persistence from the Enemy**

Have you ever sat down to read your Bible or pray, only to be pulled away by a text message, a random thought, or the sudden urge to check what's happening on social media? Happens to me all the time.

These days, I read the Bible online because, well—small print and aging eyes don't go well together. The digital format helps, but it also means that every cute gif, every clickbait headline, and every curious question about what's new on Facebook or Instagram is just one swipe away. Distractions always seem to show up right when you're trying to focus on what matters most, don't they?

Now picture this: Nehemiah has just finished rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. Not one gap remains. The only thing left is to hang the doors. And that—right there—is where the enemy steps in. He sees a small opening and moves fast to take advantage of it.

Isn't that exactly what happens in our lives? We start getting serious about walking with God. We stop watching things that don't align with our faith. We distance ourselves from old places, old habits, and old influences. We pick up our Bibles, get back into church, and make time for prayer. We build those walls of self-control. But sometimes... we forget to close a door or two.

Maybe it's that lingering temptation we haven't fully surrendered. Maybe it's a thought pattern we still entertain, a voice we shouldn't be listening to, or a habit we haven't dealt with. And guess what? The enemy takes note. He doesn't need to bulldoze the whole wall. He just needs a door left cracked open. When he finds one, he slips in quietly, taking advantage of that weakness to distract you, discourage you, and pull you off course.

When Nehemiah's enemies realized they couldn't stop the building project with threats or intimidation, they changed tactics. They tried to distract him instead. Over and over again, they sent him messages, hoping he'd come down from the wall. He didn't.



But pay attention to what verse 4 says:

---

*“Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer.”*

---

They didn't let up. And when the distraction didn't work, they tried something new—accusation and fear. Sanballat sent an open letter filled with lies, trying to stir up doubt and discourage the people.

That's not a new tactic. Back in Ezra 4, when the temple was being rebuilt, Israel's enemies sent a letter to the king of Persia with similar accusations. They claimed the Jews were rebuilding a rebellious city and restoring the walls. That accusation may have been exaggerated—or maybe it was even pointing ahead to Nehemiah's time. Either way, the pattern is clear: the enemy uses repetition and pressure, hoping to wear God's people down.

And isn't that how temptation works with us too? It starts small—a little compromise, a seemingly harmless distraction, an excuse to put off what matters. And when we resist, it doesn't always disappear. Sometimes it comes back stronger. The pressure builds. The lies get louder. We start wondering if we're really strong enough to keep saying no.



Have you ever been sidetracked by criticism, accusations, or false assumptions from others? How did you respond? Did your actions or attitude lead to regret?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Resist the Devil and Resist Him Again

Temptation wears us down when it keeps knocking. Just look at Samson and Delilah. She asked him over and over again to tell her the secret of his strength. Eventually, he gave in—and it cost him dearly. That’s what spiritual compromise can do.



Read Judges 16:6–16. How many times did Delilah press Samson to reveal the secret of his strength?

.....

Likewise, Potiphar’s wife relentlessly pursued Joseph, trying day after day to wear down his resolve and lure him into sin.



Read Genesis 39:7–12. How often did Potiphar’s wife try to persuade Joseph to sin with her before he fled?

.....

Like Joseph and Samson, Hannah also faced ongoing pressure.



Read 1 Samuel 1:6–7. How often did Peninnah provoke Hannah, and what effect did it have on her?

.....

.....

.....

So, when Scripture tells us to “resist the devil,” it’s not talking about a one-time decision. It’s a daily choice to stand firm, again and again. It’s recognizing the pattern and relying on God’s strength when we feel weak.

James 4:7 reminds us:

---

*“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

---

That word resist? It means more than just pushing back once. It means digging in, holding your ground, and not giving the enemy even an inch.

Even Jesus, when tempted in the wilderness, faced repeated attacks. Satan tried one thing, then another, then another—until finally, he gave up. Why? Because Jesus didn’t budge. He stood firm in truth and trusted His Father.



When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he used lies and half-truths. How might these tactics look similar today?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Later, we’ll see how Nehemiah responded to these distractions, but for now, let’s just sit with this truth: Satan doesn’t need to destroy the whole wall of your life—he just needs one open door. That one relationship that keeps pulling you back into old patterns. That one compromise that slowly chips

away at your devotion. That one distraction that keeps you from doing what God has called you to do.

---

*Satan doesn't need to destroy the whole wall of your life—he just needs one open door.*

---

As I got to thinking about this, I was reminded of something my dad used to do. Back in the 70s, we had this little dog that was a master escape artist. Even though we had a fence around the entire back yard, he kept finding a way to get out. So, one night my dad tried something new. He put the dog in the yard, called him, watched where he slipped through, and patched up the spot. Then he did it again. And again. Until, finally, that little dog was safe and secure.

Likewise, we need to secure the wall of our hearts. One area at a time. Ask God to show you where the gaps are—what doors might still be open. Is it pride? Unforgiveness? Complacency? An unhealthy habit? Whatever it is, you won't spot it in your own strength. You need the light of God's Word to expose it. And when He does? Don't delay. Close the door.



### *Something to Ponder*

Every time you choose truth, every time you hold the line,  
you're reminding the enemy that he's already defeated.  
You're standing in the victory Christ secured, refusing to give  
him ground he has no right to claim.



Look up Proverbs 4:23–27 in the Amplified Bible. List five instructions this passage gives for guarding your heart and staying on the right path.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

### Nehemiah’s Response

So how did Nehemiah respond to all of this? With the pressure mounting and the enemy refusing to back off—what did he do?

He stood firm.

Nehemiah didn’t get pulled into pointless conversations or dragged into defending himself. He didn’t negotiate. He didn’t explain. He stood his ground. Four times they came at him with the same message, and four times he gave the same answer:

---

*“I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down.”*  
 —Nehemiah 6:3

---

That one sentence—it says so much. He wasn’t being rude or defensive. He was being clear. He knew what God had called him to do, and he wasn’t about to set it aside to entertain a distraction—no matter how persistent or dramatic it may have appeared.

And honestly? That’s a word for us too.

How many times do we find ourselves tempted to “come down”—to get pulled into unfruitful debates, to defend ourselves when we don’t need to, to engage with criticism, or to fight battles God hasn’t asked us to fight?

Sometimes it looks like scrolling through comments, replaying conversations in our heads, or trying to justify our decisions to people who aren't really listening. Other times, it's emotional—getting pulled into drama, arguments, or feelings that sidetrack us from the peace and purpose God has given us.

When Nehemiah said, “I cannot come down,” he wasn't just talking about leaving the wall—he was refusing to stoop to the level of distraction and division. He was drawing a line. And maybe today, we need to draw a line too.

To tell ourselves that it's...

- **Not worth it to argue online** with someone who's not interested in understanding.
- **Not worth it to replay a conversation** over and over again, letting it steal our peace.
- **Not worth it to entertain a thought** that pulls us into fear, insecurity, or comparison.
- **Not worth it to try and prove ourselves** to people who were never meant to define our worth.
- **Not worth it to keep holding on** to that one habit, relationship, or distraction that's keeping us from fully walking in obedience.

Because the work God is doing in you—and through you—is too important to walk away from.

So, the next time the enemy tries to pull you down with pressure, fear, or distraction, remember Nehemiah's words and make them your own:

---

*“I am doing a great work, and  
I cannot come down.”*

---



What would it look like for you to say, “I cannot come down,” in your current season of life? Is there something you need to step away from or let go of?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Read: Nehemiah 6:10-19

**Discernment Isn't Optional—It's Essential**

I remember something a mentor once said to me growing up: Just because someone uses spiritual language it doesn't mean they're speaking the truth. That stuck with me. Because sometimes, what sounds holy isn't holy at all. People can drop God's name into a sentence or say, “The Lord told me...” and it gives their words weight—even if they're completely off base. And it's happened to me, recently in fact.

It's nothing new. The enemy has been disguising lies as truth since the Garden of Eden. And sadly, he's still doing it today. That's why discernment isn't optional—it's essential. We've got to test what we hear and line it up against the Word of God.

Nehemiah faced this exact situation. A man named Shemaiah came to him with a prophecy, implying it was from God. He told Nehemiah to hide in the temple, saying:

---

*“Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple,  
and let us close the temple doors, because  
men are coming to kill you.”*  
—Nehemiah 6:10

---

On the surface, it sounded reasonable. Protect yourself. Play it safe. But something didn't sit right. Nehemiah knew better than to let fear make his decisions for him.

Now, here's why stepping into the temple would've been a sin: First, there were areas within the temple that were off-limits to anyone but the priests. Numbers 18:7 makes that clear. Shemaiah's invitation may have been urging Nehemiah to cross a line he had no business crossing. Obedience meant staying in his lane—and Nehemiah wasn't about to break God's law just to feel safer.

Second, the temple wasn't meant to be a personal hideout. It was holy. It was set apart for worship and sacrifice, not for ducking into when life got scary. Nehemiah understood that going in under those circumstances would be misusing what God declared sacred. It would've sent the wrong message—that fear, not faith, was calling the shots.

And so, he stood firm. “Should a man like me run away? Or should someone like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!” (Nehemiah 6:11)

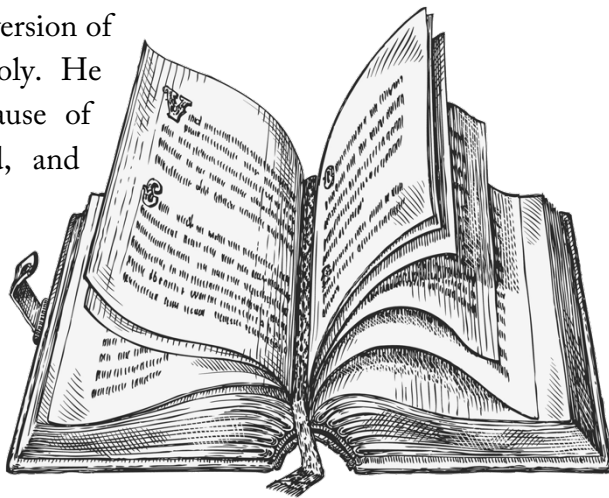
He chose obedience over comfort. Reverence over reaction. Faith over fear.

Stories like this remind us that just because something *feels* spiritual doesn't mean it's right. Nehemiah wasn't swayed by emotional language or dramatic warnings. He held everything up to the truth he already knew—God's Word and God's character. And friend, that's exactly what we need to do too.

There will always be voices—some well-meaning, some not—that try to influence our decisions. Some will even use Scripture, spiritual phrases, or the name of God to sound credible. But if the message pulls us away from obedience, integrity, or our trust in the Lord, it's not from Him. Period.

Nehemiah's discernment didn't just protect him from making a bad decision—it kept him anchored in truth. He didn't let fear call the shots. He didn't let someone else's version of safety redefine what was holy. He stayed the course, and because of that, the wall was finished, and God's name was glorified.

Nehemiah's strength was grounded in his knowledge of God and confidence in His Word. That same foundation helps us today to recognize truth from error,



good from evil, right from wrong. It gives us the insight to make sound judgments, especially when something looks or sounds convincing on the surface. This kind of discernment doesn't just happen—it grows as we spend time in Scripture, learning God's heart and His ways.

Be bold enough to say, "I will not go," when compromise whispers your name. And trust that when you honor God, He will honor your faithfulness. You don't have to panic, prove yourself, or scramble for a hiding place. You just have to keep walking in obedience, one faithful step at a time

---

*This kind of discernment doesn't just happen—it grows as we spend time in Scripture, learning God's heart and His ways.*

---



In the Amplified Bible, Proverbs 2:11 says, “Discretion will watch over you, understanding *and* discernment will guard you.” What’s the difference between understanding and discernment, and why are both important in guarding us?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



According to Hebrews 5:14, how do we grow in discernment?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## When Pain Hits Close to Home

Sometimes the hardest hits don't come from the outside—they come from the people we thought we could trust. Friends. Family. Even fellow believers. Nehemiah knew that pain all too well. In chapter 6, we see that the nobles of Judah were secretly aligned with Tobiah—one of Nehemiah's enemies. Rather than supporting the work of God, they were exchanging letters with a man actively working to tear it down. Instead of standing with Nehemiah, these men stood against him—choosing political ties and personal gain over faithfulness to God.

You expect opposition from outsiders. But betrayal that comes from within? That kind of pain can cut deep. Even so, Nehemiah didn't give up. He didn't fight fire with fire. He didn't lash out. He continued the work God had called him to do. And remember, Jesus Himself experienced this. On the night He was betrayed, He stood alone—abandoned by His friends, denied by Peter, and left to face the cross. Yet even then, He moved forward with unshakable faith, enduring the cross for the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2).

And that's our calling too: to keep building, to keep praying, and to keep our eyes on the Lord.

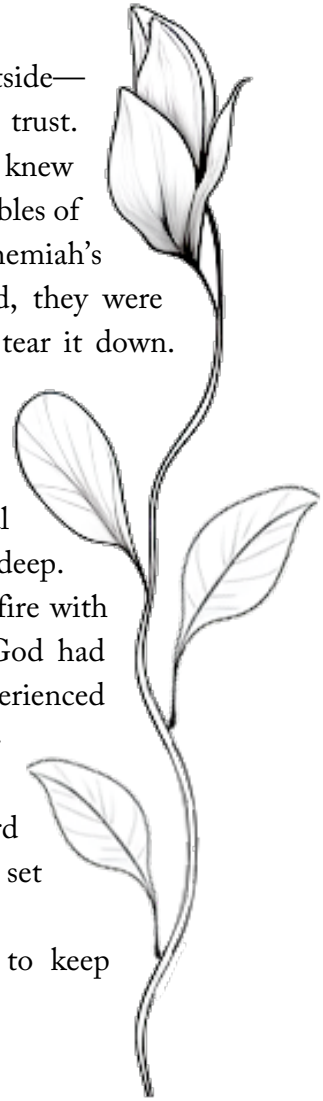
As David wrote in the Psalms,

---

*"I keep my eyes always on the Lord.  
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken."  
—Psalm 16:8*

---

When we stay focused on God, we're not easily shaken by betrayal or discouragement. His presence steadies us. And when we're steady, we can respond from a place of faith.



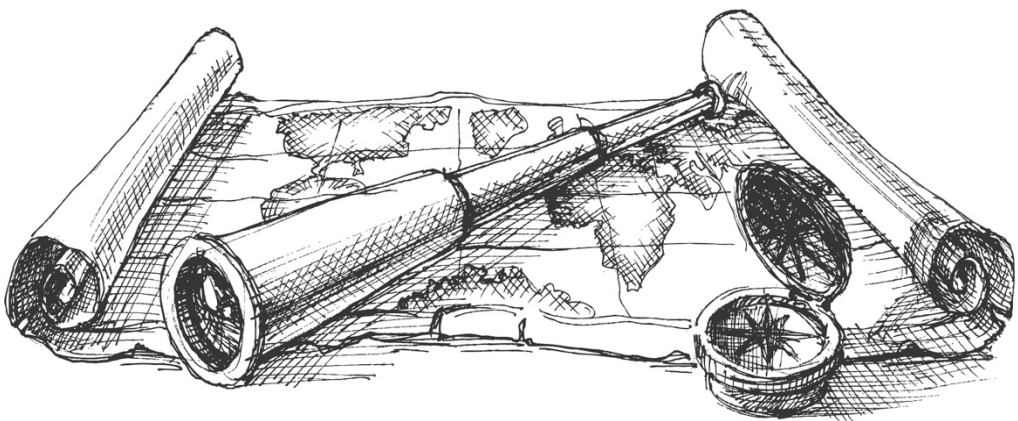
So how do we do that? By making choices that bring honor to God—choosing grace over revenge, prayer over gossip, and obedience over emotional reaction. Romans 12 gives us some practical steps to overcome evil with good. Let's take a look at them:

- Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. (v.14)
- Do not repay anyone evil for evil. (v.17)
- If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (v.18)

What this might look like:

- Refusing to speak poorly about someone who's wronged you.
- Praying for the person who hurt you, even when your heart isn't there yet.
- Setting healthy boundaries without bitterness.
- Continuing to serve God faithfully, instead of letting offenses distract you.

Overcoming evil with good is a decision to be led by the Spirit instead of our pain. It doesn't mean we're pretending everything's fine or sweeping sin under the rug. Nor does it mean that injustice has won. What it does mean is that we trust God enough to wisely handle injustice in the way that only He can.



I KEEP  
*my eyes*  
ALWAYS  
*on* the LORD.  
WITH HIM *at*  
MY  
RIGHT HAND,  
I WILL NOT BE  
SHAKEN.

PSALM 16:8



Have you ever been hurt by someone close to you, like a friend or family member? How might this chapter encourage you to stay faithful, steady, and strong in the Lord?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



### *Something to Pray*

*Lord, help me stay steady when distractions, criticism, or discouragement come my way. Give me the strength to stand firm, like Nehemiah, and keep my eyes fixed on You.*

*Teach me to respond with grace instead of reacting in fear or frustration. Guard my heart with Your wisdom, and help me finish the work You've called me to do, no matter what comes against me. Amen.*



What is one truth you want to carry with you this week? As you went through this chapter, did the Holy Spirit impress anything upon your heart?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

 *Something to Practice*

This week, when you feel tempted to defend yourself, get pulled into drama, or react out of emotion, pause instead. Take a deep breath, pray, and remind yourself: "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down." Write this verse somewhere visible as a reminder to stay focused on what God has called you to do.

# Answer Key

## CHAPTER SIX

---

**Have you ever been sidetracked by criticism, accusations, or false assumptions from others? How did you respond? Did your actions or attitude lead to regret?**

This answer will be different for everyone.

**Read Judges 16:6–16. How many times did Delilah press Samson to reveal the secret of his strength?**

Four times—three with false answers, and the fourth time he gave in and told her the truth.

**Read Genesis 39:7–12. How often did Potiphar’s wife try to persuade Joseph to sin with her before he fled?**

She spoke to him day after day, but he refused until she physically grabbed him and he fled.

**Read 1 Samuel 1:6–7. How often did Peninnah provoke Hannah and what effect did it have on her?**

Year after year, Peninnah provoked her. It caused Hannah great distress and led her to weep and stop eating.

**When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he used lies and half-truths. How might these tactics look similar today?**

Today, Satan often twists Scripture or distorts truth to justify sin, promote self-centered thinking, or make disobedience seem harmless or wise. His tactics appeal to our desires while hiding the consequences.

**Look up Proverbs 4:23–27 in the Amplified Bible. List five instructions this passage gives for guarding your heart and staying on the right path:**

1. Guard your heart with all diligence
2. Put away deceitful speech
3. Let your eyes look directly ahead
4. Watch the path of your feet
5. Do not turn to the right or to the left; avoid evil

**What would it look like for you to say, “I cannot come down,” in your current season of life? Is there something you need to step away from or let go of?**

This answer will be different for everyone.

**In the Amplified Bible, Proverbs 2:11 says, “Discretion will watch over you, understanding and discernment will guard you.” What’s the difference between understanding and discernment, and why are both important in guarding us?**

Understanding gives you the knowledge and clarity of God’s Word. Discernment gives you the ability to apply that knowledge wisely in real-life situations, especially when something is tricky or unclear.

Both are necessary for guarding us because:

Understanding keeps us rooted in truth.

Discernment keeps us from falling for lies or half-truths.

**According to Hebrews 5:14, how do we grow in discernment?**

We grow in discernment by constantly using God’s Word—training ourselves through practice to distinguish good from evil.

**Have you ever been hurt by someone close to you, like a friend or family member? How might this chapter encourage you to stay faithful, steady, and strong in the Lord?**

This answer will be different for everyone.