

Leader as Sentinel

EZEKIEL 33:1-9

The word of the LORD came to me: **2** O Mortal, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take one of their number as their **sentinel**; **3** and if the **sentinel** sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people; **4** then if any who hear the sound of the trumpet do not take warning, and the sword comes and takes them away, their blood shall be upon their own heads. **5** They heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; their blood shall be upon themselves. But if they had taken warning, they would have saved their lives. **6** But if the **sentinel** sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any of them, they are taken away in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at the **sentinel's** hand. **7** So you, mortal, I have made a **sentinel** for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. **8** If I say to the wicked, "O wicked ones, you shall surely die," and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. **9** But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

HEBREWS 3:12-14

Take care, brothers and sisters, that none of you may have an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. **13** But **exhort one another** every day, as long as it is called "today," so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. **14** For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end.



What does failure look like for a sentinel?

Make a list of people God has used as sentinels in your life.

What is at stake?

How is sin deceitful?

Faith and the Heart of Unbelief

ATTITUDE OF THE HEART	SIN'S DECEPTION: WHAT IS PROMISED?	FAITH'S ANTIDOTE
<p>Bitterness / resentment ■ harboring a grudge or an unforgiving spirit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Power over the person - to forgive would be to be subordinate ▶ Rights to complain, to be the victim, to self-pity ▶ The person might do it again ■ "protect yourself" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To understand how we've been forgiven by God. Matthew 18:21-35
<p>Impatience ■ the feeling that we should be getting on with something more quickly than we are, leading to a lack of peace, bouts of anger, lack of love for others, and trying to get blessing "our way."</p>		
<p>Despondency / despair ■ believing that we are at a dead-end with no way out, a no-win situation. Leads to burnout, lack of interest in prayer, Scripture, ministry.</p>		
<p>Anxiety ■ a lack of peace springing from dwelling on some dark scenario that we think will occur in the future.</p>		
<p>Regret ■ a belief that a mistake made in the past virtually rules out a happy future. A re-evaluation of our life and choices in the face of suffering.</p>		
<p>Jealousy or envy ■ becoming angry or upset when we see a person get something we wish we had.</p>		
<p>Critical Spirit ■ exalting oneself by harshly evaluating others, leading to cruelty and unreasonable demands. Also leads to gossip.</p>		
<p>Driveness ■ rejecting the sabbath.</p>		
<p>Sloth / laziness ■ avoiding hard work and suffering; devaluing the significance of what we are called to be doing. Escapism.</p>		
<p>Self-protection ■ covering up, withdrawing or pulling away from community and ministry in order to avoid the pain of self-revelation or intentional suffering.</p>		
<p>Divisiveness ■ acting to cause disunity in a group by exalting the distinctiveness of oneself or a sub-group to which one belongs.</p>		
<p>Covetousness ■ discontent with what we possess or with our station or situation in life. Negative comparisons with others. Lack of generosity, hospitality. Gluttony, hoarding, consumerism.</p>		
<p>Deceit ■ lying; knowingly falsifying the truth; unwillingness to confess sin.</p>		
<p>Lust / Immorality ■ lack of self-control in the sexual area. Lustful thoughts. Inappropriate sexual activity. Use of pornography, visual stimulation. Creating inappropriate sexual tension. Habitual masturbation.</p>		
<p>Pride / self-adulation ■ savoring something one has done or said (or some distinctive) as particularly good, clever, wise, creative. Positive comparisons to others. Competitiveness, provoking others, and making others look bad.</p>		

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the people choose



God chooses

Acts 20:26-27: Paul's claim that he's been a faithful sentinel

HEBREWS 3:12-14

Take care, brothers and sisters, that none of you may have an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. **13** But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. **14** For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end.

Exhortation is not: refusing to let people get away with good things.
 Exhortation is: helping people to reject the lies they've believed.

FIRST STEP: Debunking the lies of SIN.



What does failure look like for a sentinel?

- to fail to see
- to see but fail to warn
- to see, delay, then warn
- to give false warning
- to see, warn but not clearly

Make a list of people God has used as sentinels in your life.

What is at stake?

- turning away from God
- staying firm to the end
- the state of our hearts
 evil = unbelieving

How is sin deceitful?

- It makes promises it cannot deliver - like commercials : "spot the lie"

Faith and the Heart of Unbelief

Break into pairs or trios: Take some time to identify the lies of sin, the promises it makes?

Identify what is true in response to these lies.

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Debrief: Don't go over the list.
Possible answers found at:
<http://www.intervarsity.org/mx/item/5128>

1. What do you learn by doing this exercise?
 - ▶ it helps to label the promise or lie, though it is hard
 - ▶ easier with other to help
 - ▶ scripture provides the antidotes
2. How does this change our conception of exhortation?
 - ▶ not just wrist-slapping
 - ▶ it is genuine help. "speaking the truth in love"
 - ▶ I can do this
 - ▶ I need this – even daily