Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray" ... Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:36, 40–41, NIV).

I wonder when it was that Peter realized that he had given into temptation. Was it when Jesus woke him up the first time in the garden of Gethsemane? Or the second? Was it when Judas arrived and betrayed Jesus with a kiss? Or was it later, when he denied knowing Jesus three times as Jesus had told him he would. At the last supper, Peter did not know the moments that lie ahead...and he was not ready for them. It seems as though Peter was living through his own passions and impulses, rather than centering himself on God's direction and calling.

When I think about myself being in Peter's shoes, I wonder if I would have been ready for those moments. Would I have stayed awake? Or, like Peter, would I have given into temptation and closed my eyes? Though I am not in the garden of Gethsemane with Jesus, I think in a way, we all are. We all find ourselves closing our eyes when we need to stay awake. When we lose our sense of alertness, temptation creeps in. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Often, this loss of alertness is a shift of focus or priorities. Our human tendency is to give into the temporary things that hold empty promises of safety or escape. For Peter, these temptations were to rest, to protect himself, or to withdraw from Jesus in self-preservation, rather than focus on the calling Jesus had for him.

So how do we stay awake? How do we use that alertness to protect from temptation? Like Jesus in the garden, we pray. And when like Peter, we fall asleep, we pray again. Paul understood the importance of staying awake. He writes to the Colossians to "devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it ..." (Col. 4:2, NRS) and to the Ephesians he wrote "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance ..." (Eph. 6:18, AMP). By remaining in prayer, we are able to renew our mind and see the path he has put before us, rather than seeking our own desires.

Like Peter, when we fall asleep we leave ourselves vulnerable to temptation. How can you stay awake in your faith?

- Start a prayer/gratitude journal.
- Set reminders throughout the day to drop the task at hand and pray for a specific person or trial that God has put on your heart.
- Consider fasting: fast for a person or for an intention.
- When you pray, P.R.A.Y. Pause, Rejoice, Ask, Yield.
- Find a prayer pal and accountability partner.
- Join a Bible study.
- Rely on the Holy Spirit: Pray and ask the Spirit to help you through each and every day, to convict and call you to action.
- Recognize the temptations in our lives to give in to distractions, and choose to stay alert.
- Actively lean into the Word by creating a daily routine.
- Ask God for spiritual insight during times of conflict or decision.

**PRAYER:**
Lord Jesus, we approach your throne of grace in need of mercy and strength. Sustain us as we walk the path you have designed for us, and remind us why we choose to guard our minds against the temptations of this world. We choose to stay alert by remaining in communion with you and meditating on your word because you are able to guard us when we cannot muster the strength. Jesus, to know you is better than any distraction. Remind us of this truth when the things of this world pull us away from gazing at your beauty. Jesus, we love you and we strive to be more like you. Aid us in surrendering our selfish ambition and following the path you place in front of us.
Amen.

---

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS:**
Julie Woodman is an assistant professor of biology at Colorado Christian University. Her favorite courses to teach include genetics and microbiology, topics that she explores more thoroughly as she also guides undergraduate students through biomedical research. She serves on the board for the Rocky Mountain ASA Chapter and is the faculty sponsor for the CCU ASA Student Chapter. In her free time, Julie enjoys spending time with her husband and their two daughters, with lots of time on the soccer field as she coaches their soccer teams.

Kacie Burger, Brendon Fuhr, and Makena Martin are the leaders for CCU’s ASA Student Chapter. Brendon and Makena are juniors majoring in pre-medicine with hopes to attend dental school and PA school, respectively. Kacie is a senior studying health science and playing softball, and will be applying for physical therapy school this summer. They have enjoyed hosting several student events this semester, including a three-part discussion series on science and faith, as well as a student viewing of Francis Collins’s plenary ASA lecture from the winter symposium.