WOW: Word Of the Week

Topple

September 23, 2026

I recall bits and pieces of a sermon I heard online from Alistair Begg. I think his text was 1 Peter 5 – I am not absolutely certain of that. Mostly I remember one word – topple! Shortly after I heard the sermon online, I mentioned it to my sister – now she and I use that word in our weekly Saturday morning phone conversations. She tends to fall quite a bit – sometimes we say that she toppled.

The basic meaning is to lose balance, fall over. The word reminds me of something topheavy, trees topple.

I call your attention to 1 Peter 5:10. I mention four words Peter uses, I reserve the right to use them again as future WOWs. How to avoid toppling spiritually.

See it coming. Don't let life knock you down. How is your spiritual vision? I am reminded of Paul's phrase in one translation, from 2 Cor. 4 – knocked down but not knocked out. Be ready. The promise: God will make you ready, equip you. Katartizo.

Stability. God will stabilize you, make you firm. Sterizo. How is your spiritual stance?

Strength. Sthenoo. God will strengthen you, often referring to bodily vigor. Thinking of spiritual applications, how is your spiritual strength, your spiritual vigor?

Where do you stand? What are you standing on? God will give you a foundation. Themelioo, the noun is themelios. What are you standing on spiritually?

The lesson, application. A great spiritual danger is losing your balance, falling over, falling down, failing to get up. A great spiritual danger is toppling!

Here's something interesting. Topple isn't far from qualifying as a Bible word. Stumble, tumble; trip, slip. Be careful lest you cause another person to stumble, that is, to topple. Some older translations talk about offending your brother, but the point is that there is a stumbling block. Stumbling blocks cause tumbling, toppling. Perhaps that's too far a stretch, but don't miss the lesson.

Toppling is hazardous. God keeps us from toppling. Don't cause others to topple. Do all you can spiritually to avoid toppling. See it coming, stablize your spiritual stance, be strong, stand on God's sure foundation.