Take Care Lest You Topple!
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A brief study outline based on 1 Peter 5:10

I begin with an excerpt from a recent WOW, Word Of the Week.

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.

Topple. I like that word. Topple: to lose balance, to fall over. The word reminds me of something top-heavy; for example, trees topple in a storm.
I call your attention to 1 Peter 5:10. I mention four words Peter uses. Take care lest you topple! How to avoid toppling spiritually.

Be ready. Be on guard. Pay attention. See it coming. Don't let life knock you down. Some translations say God will restore you. The meaning is that God will prepare you, mend you, fix you, get you ready. One purpose of this readiness and preparation is to sharpen your spiritual vision, your spiritual awareness.

I struggle at times with visual disorientation, vertigo, loss of balance, lightheadedness. The best thing I can do is be prepared. Be aware. Be ready. Be careful when I stand up. I can often feel the lightheadedness coming on. That's when I am ready to demonstrate my best "furniture walk," charting my course through the house where the next piece of furniture or support is never far away.

The promise of God, to keep you from toppling: God will make you ready, equip you. *Katartizo*.

Second, stand firm, keep a solid footing. Stability. God will stabilize you, make you firm. *Sterizo.* This is your spiritual stance. Jan is relearning balance after her fall. Several of her therapy exercises are designed to help her with her stance. There is a reason football players get in their stance, anticipating action. We probably talk too little about our spiritual stance. How does one stand firm?

Strength. *Sthenoo*. God will strengthen you. The word often refers to bodily vigor. Thinking of spiritual applications, how is your spiritual strength, your spiritual vigor? Spiritual vigor may be a phrase you have never heard, never used before.

Finally, Peter's last promise is foundational. Not only, how do you stand? Not only how strongly do you stand? But also, 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 may qualifying as a Bible word. Synonyms include stumble, tumble; trip, slip. Be careful lest you cause another person to stumble, that is, to topple. Some older translations translate the word differently, obscurely: to offend your brother. The point is that there is a stumbling block. Stumbling blocks cause tumbling, toppling. Perhaps that's too far a stretch for you, 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, stabilize your spiritual stance, be strong, stand on God's sure foundation.