

Following Jesus

Firm Stands

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then . . ."

Ephesians 6:10-14a

"So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."

2 Thessalonians 2:15-17

"By standing firm you will gain life."

Luke 21:19

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

1 Corinthians 15:58

Following Jesus is not an evening stroll, it is not a downhill jog; responding to His goodness, power and love is a journey of intimacy and transformation that includes times of real challenge that require us to plant our feet and stand firm:

1. against threats

2. under temptation

3. for truth

4. with togetherness

5. toward "telos"



# CONNECTION QUESTIONS

for personal study & individual reflection,  
and small group discussion & comment

“Firm Stands” - Ephesians 6:10-20; 2 Thessalonians 2:15-17;  
Luke 21:5-19; 1 Corinthians 10:12-13; 15:58;  
Ps 40:1-2; 1 Peter 5:7-10; Colossians 4:12-13

1. Ephesians 6:1-20 teaches that following Jesus requires us to wear “armor” and to stand in the face of a “struggle”. Is this the way you have been taught to think about responding to the truth, love and power of Christ? That it involves a struggle and the necessity of standing against “powers” and “forces” that oppose following Him? How have you experienced the reality of this struggle in your own life?  

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2. Standing for anything important inevitably means standing against something else. If you want to stand for justice you will find yourself standing against injustice. If you want to stand for what is true you must resist what is false. In following Jesus where should our emphasis lie? On what we are for, or what we are against? Do you think Christians today are more know for what they support, or what they oppose? What is the right way to take a stand “for” something?  

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3. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 that we should learn from the mistakes and failures of the past, and we should recognize our common temptations and stand up under them believing that God will make a way for us not to fall. Standing firm “under” temptation is both a great trial for our flesh and a great opportunity for our spirit to find God in the midst of weakness. When you feel pressed down by temptation to fail or fall, do you understand that you are not alone in your experience, and do you look for the “way out” God provides? What helps us to own this perspective that we have a choice in the face of temptation, and that God is there to help us make the right one?  

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4. Jesus made the simple but profound statement that through all of faith’s difficulties, hardships, oppositions and trials it is “by standing firm you will gain life” (Luke 21:19). The life He wants us to “gain” is not found in conforming or quitting, in surrender or submerging, in falling back or turning away. We have to learn to stand firm for what we don’t want to lose. What have you already gained in Christ that you don’t want to give up or have taken away? Do you think that Jesus has more for you to gain that you will need to stand firm to find?  

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5. Psalm 40:2 rejoices that the Lord has given us “a firm place to stand”. How has He done that in your life? How is He trying to help you occupy that firm place today?  

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