

STAND FIRM

WITHSTANDING THE ASSAULT ON THE TRUTH



Part 1

“The Exhortations to Stand Firm”

January 22, 2023

Introduction: Living in an Evil Age

Gal. 1:3-5—³ Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

In 2022, State of Theology surveyed roughly 3000 people from around the nation from various backgrounds about their views of Christian belief and practice. In 2021, George Barna in conjunction with AZ Christian University did a survey of the sexual identities of Millennials and Gen Zers. These results show how effectively truth about God, Scripture, and humanity has been undermined both within the wider culture and the church.

Main Point: In the face of opposition, we must continue holding to the truth of Scripture and _____ together in the faith.

Why Must We Stand Firm?

Exhorted to Stand Firm

Eph. 6:13—Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

1 Pet. 5:12b—...I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.

1 Cor. 16:13—Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

Observations from the wider contexts of these verses:

1. The exhortations are given in light of our _____ to the Lord.

Eph. 6:10-11a—¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God...

“Be strong”

“Put on”

⇒ The strength that is exhorted here is _____ in God Himself. He has made _____ all that is necessary for us live out these exhortations.

1 Pet. 5:6-7—⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

⇒ To be rightly related to God is to be humbled before Him and to recognize His _____ and _____ of us as we live in the world.

2. The exhortations are given because we have a very real and active _____ in the world.

Eph. 6:11b-12—...that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

“schemes”

“wrestle”

“Probably the four terms used of our spiritual enemies in this verse...point out four characteristics of all of them. “Rulers” stresses their authority and “powers” or “authorities” their strength. “World forces of this darkness” or “powers of this dark world” point to their wide influence in the world, and forces “of wickedness” or “spiritual forces of evil” relate to their evil character.”

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⇒ The influence of our enemy is seen most clearly in the confusion of _____ and _____ (Isa. 5:20) and in the redefining of truth, goodness, and beauty that are evident in the surrounding culture.

1 Pet. 5:8—Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

“sober-minded”

“watchful”

⇒ The wider influence of our enemy is intended to _____ us from the truth and from one another so that we might be overwhelmed and absorbed into his lies.

3. The exhortations are given to us with the assumption that we are _____ in the faith.

1 Cor. 14:20— *Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.*

⇒ The implication is that we can actually _____ between good and evil and that we thinking rightly in order that we might live well in the world as God's people.

Key Point: **Mature thinking recognizes both the very real _____ that our enemy poses as well as the very real _____ that God has made for us in Christ.**

Equipped to Stand Firm

Eph. 6:14-18—¹⁴ *Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.*

1. The Belt of _____

“Since Satan is a liar, we must oppose him with God's truth. In [the ancient world], people wore girdles to bind up their flowing garments and hold everything together. It is God's truth that must hold everything together in our lives. As Christians, we must love the truth and live the truth.” —Warren Wiersbe, *The Strategy of Satan*

We are called to _____ the truth of God in a world where it is perverted and ignored.

2. The Shield of _____

“The Roman shield was two feet by four feet, made of wood covered with leather and metal. It served as a moveable wall behind which the soldiers could hide and protect themselves from the burning arrows shot by the enemy. It is your faith in Christ that quenches these fiery darts. Just as much as you trust him, you will share his victory.” —Warren Wiersbe

We are called to _____ the truth in a world where it is attacked and undermined.

3. The Sword of the Spirit (The _____ of God)

“The spiritual sword of the Word of God is different from any [other]. A material sword gets dull with the using, but the Word of God remains sharp. A material sword must be handled by physical power, but the spiritual sword already has life and power in it. The Spirit of God enables us to use the Word of God effectively!” —Warren Wiersbe

We are called to bring the truth to _____ in all circumstances as we live in world.

Key Point: **We are equipped by God so that we might stand firm _____!**

Concluding Thoughts

- **In our consideration of these things, we do well to reflect upon the true _____ of evil.**

“It looked at Ransom in silence and at last began to smile. We have all often spoken...of a devilish smile. Now he realized that he had never taken the words seriously. The smile was not bitter, nor raging, nor, in an ordinary sense, sinister; it was not even mocking. It seemed to summon Ransom, with horrible naïveté of welcome, into the world of its own pleasures, as if all men were at one in those pleasures, as if they were the most natural thing in the world and no dispute could ever have occurred about them. It was not furtive or ashamed, it had nothing of the conspirator in it. It did not defy goodness, it ignored it to the point of annihilation. Ransom perceived that he had never before seen anything but half-hearted and uneasy attempts at evil. This creature was wholehearted. The extremity of its evil had passed beyond all struggle into some state which bore a horrible similarity to innocence. It was beyond vice...” —C.S. Lewis, *Perelandra*

(1) Evil is alluring (2) Evil couches itself in self-righteousness (3) Evil often seems nice

- **In our consideration of these things, we do well to remain humble and joyful.**

“It should be the Christian's natural state to feel that the times are out of joint and that we do not truly belong here. Yet, lamentation can too often become just another form of worldliness, and polemic simply a means of making ourselves feel righteous. There is an odd masochistic pleasure in always decrying the times and the customs of the day, and in that sense, lamentation and polemic always run the risk of being less prophetic and more therapeutic in their motivation and effect.”

—Carl Trueman, *The Rise & Triumph of the Modern Self*

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