



Stand Your Ground

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: 13, 14a NIV

Is There a Battle You Face?

How do you respond when you are up against it? What do you do when you face a problem or hardship that is too big to bear? Maybe an impending divorce, a looming surgery, a son, or a daughter who is battling depression, your own financial crisis, an addiction, a loss of purpose or direction. We must consider that not everything that hits us is natural, is part of the normal ups and downs of life. Some of it may have a supernatural source, an "unnatural" origin. Perhaps some of your troubles are more complicated than you know, have bigger consequences than you have considered. The Bible tells us that spiritual forces are at work, supernatural enemies are against us and we must do something about it. We do not have to sit by idly and either ignore their activity or hope they just do not exist. The Bible insists that you have real enemies at work who want to tear you down, are trying their best to discourage you, take you apart, crush your dreams, wreck your life with God. Remember what the Bible tells us. **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of the dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.** (Ephesians 6:12 NIV) Not only are we up against these non-physical evil forces, but of course Satan is wrecking lives too. We are warned to take our stand against the devil's schemes. How do we do that?

Here is what the Bible says to do. **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: 13, 14a NIV) Three times stand or a form of the verb stand is used in this answer to the struggle we face. Each time stand is used in the passage, "stand your ground", "to stand" and "Stand", it is to be done at once. Stand now. Stand here. The first time stand is used, it has a slightly different meaning than the other two times and means to "stand against" or "to oppose". When a day of evil comes, stand up to it, do not just give in to it, be firm and stay put. When all else seems to be failing and you still find yourself oppressed by the evil, keep standing firm. Do not relent. Then, if two times was not enough for God to make it clear that we are to hold our ground when evil arises, the Bible commands you a third time. Stand! When you see evil coming against you, hardship, and trouble, when you remember that Satan is against you and so are the spiritual forces of power coming out of the darkness, take your stand and do not give in to them.

When the ancient friend of God, Daniel, faced a host of enemies who wanted him publicly disgraced and removed from power because they were jealous of the high rank he had achieved in the Persian government, he could have just relented and let them have their way. He could have given up and quit. He

did not need the job. He probably had plenty of money to retire comfortably but he understood this principle God has established in Scripture. Stand your ground when evil comes against you. The politicians and government officials who wanted Daniel removed from office convinced the king that he needed to enact a law that no one would be allowed to pray to any god other than the king for thirty days or face execution. Of course, the king knew he was not a god, but the law was a great way of establishing who was in charge of the empire. His vanity blinded him to the danger his good friend Daniel faced due to the law.

It was clear, the law. Pray to someone other than the king and you would be thrown into a pit full of hungry lions. When Daniel found out about the law, he stood his ground. When evil came calling, he did not move. Daniel went upstairs, threw open the windows, got down on his knees and in full view of the world, prayed to the Lord God Almighty three times a day. He did not whimper and whine about the trouble he faced. He did not shake in fear with death at his doorstep. Daniel did not back down or run away when evil approached him. He prayed. He prayed again. He prayed a third time. God tells you to refuse to let evil just push you out of the way. Do not let Satan and the spirits of darkness bully you. Stand firm. Be strong. Do not back away.

Even earlier in history, there was a family that faced terrible evil. In fact, the whole world was corrupt, murderous, full of drunkenness and perversion. It was so bad that God was ready to wipe out everyone. It would have been easy for Noah and his wife and kids to be just as bad as everyone else, to not stand out from the crowd, to avoid having to look different. They could have slept around, developed violent tempers, lied, and cheated and been self-centered. Noah and his family could have acted like there was no God so they could fit in, be invited to parties, have fun just like everyone else. They though knew to stand their ground. Not let evil just march all over them. For one hundred years Noah and his wife and his kids built an ark because the Lord told them to do it. When their neighbors laughed at them, criticized them for their hard work, told them they were wasting their time, Noah refused to give an inch. He stood there. Noah would not budge. Evil must not be feared or given authority. When Satan comes against you and the enemies of God threaten you, it is no time to back away, to turn back as if you have no God who is with you. Stand.

There is a great account in the New Testament of a father whose son was desperately ill. Jesus was back in the same town where the first of His recorded miracles occurred when He turned the water into wine. We do not know why Jesus returned, but it soon became clear the good it did. This man was doing well. He was successful, had servants, was blessed with a family. Most likely he was respected in his community and had little to fear in life. It is wonderful when everything is going your way and you have no complaints. It all changed quickly though when the royal official's son became deathly sick. He lived about sixteen miles from Cana where Jesus was, but he did not care how far he had to go to reach Jesus before his son died. Maybe he ran there, perhaps he rode a horse; in any case he rushed to Cana and fell at Jesus' feet, continually begging the Lord to heal his son. Have you ever been that desperate for God to help you? Have ever felt unable to cope as a giant wave of hardship and sorrow washed over you? Have you been in trouble and needed someone to rescue you? Has evil approached you...have you felt the threat of it? Stand your ground. Do not lose faith in God to help you! Hold the line and trust the Lord even if you do not feel like He can help you.

I have a friend who is a missionary in a poor, rural part of the world where he is working with the indigenous people. He has been serving as the pastor of the church he started there more than a decade ago. One of the men living in the area, Carlos, became jealous of my friend and wanted to take the land where the church met. He had originally donated the land himself to the church, but he fell away from the Lord and turned on my friend and his church. He let some people in the village know that he was going to try to have my friend murdered. Carlos had the resources to have it done and the menace was quite real. My friend asked me to pray for Carlos and I promised I would pray six days a week that Carlos would be broken by God. That was a year and a half ago. Recently I got in touch with my friend and I asked about the situation. It turns out that just a while back the two reconciled and God is working in Carlos and has softened his heart.

The Bible tells us to put on the armor of God when we face adversity, when trouble comes. The armor of God is not visible. It is not a glow you get when you are wearing it. When David was about to go up against Goliath, his king thought he needed special armor to survive so he offered his own to wear. It was lovely, just exactly what it seemed he needed but it did not fit David. It was not right for the enemy he faced. He needed something better, something sturdier, more reliable. David put on an armor that was not visible, that could not be felt, only worn...the armor of God. When he fought the giant, David found, just like you will that the armor of God was sufficient, was trustworthy. When you put on the armor of God, you will not even know you have it but by faith you must believe it is on you. The enemy will come against you and the spiritual forces of evil will mock you, remind you of your past failures, point out all your flaws and the lack of help you have, the shortage of resources, but you just smile and stand your ground. You have the armor of God on you. What weapon can defeat that?