



I WILL
STAND

Daniel was able to stand. Everything about his environment, culture, and circumstances screamed for him to sit down... to conform... to sell-out. But he didn't. Despite insurmountable pressure, he declared with conviction 'I Will Stand.' Now, his story... his example... and his life are both compelling and convicting for us today.

In a world that is in such desperate need to see God... to hear God... to know God, how might we live as tangible expressions of who God is, today? Rather than being known for what we stand against, how might we help others see how amazing God is by our ability to say 'I Will Stand.'

-Michael Davis

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USING THIS GUIDE:

Group Leader Instructions

In preparation for each study, take a few moments to read through the instructions below

Before The Group Meeting:

1. Spend some time in prayer before your group.
2. As you prepare for the study, read over the questions and think through how answering them for yourself could help you better walk with God.
3. Then, try developing two to three practical steps that would help members of your group also walk better with God. Avoid the temptation to simply recount information, but thoughtfully arm your group members with something tangible that they can do throughout the week.
4. In the closing moments of your preparation, ask the Lord to move mightily in your home or group setting. Without the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing, and we are utterly dependent upon Him showing up!

During The Group Meeting:

1. Begin with prayer. Ask for the Spirit to be present during the group.
2. Attempt to summarize this week's message, in a few, succinct, thoughts. (See summary below for an example)
3. Assign readers to read various Scripture texts (When applicable).
4. Walk your group through the discussion questions. (Don't feel like you have to cover every question. Some questions will naturally be more relevant to your group than others, and will naturally produce more fruitful discussion. Be sensitive to the flow of conversation and either redirect or dwell longer upon a topic when it is necessary).
5. In response to questions, share stories and personal examples of how this has played out in your life. What did you learn? How did it help you walk with God? What fresh stories of God's power, love, mercy, or grace do you now have because you trusted Him?
6. Draw others out to share their own personal stories. What did they learn? What would life look like if they were able to live out this week's truth consistently?
7. End in a time of prayer, thanking God for the truths that He has revealed, and for the people that He has brought to your group.

WEEK 1

AN INVITATION TO STAND

Sermon Summary:

Anyone can stand **AGAINST** something. In fact, many people see Christians as people who literally stand against everything! But, our hope in this series is not that people would see what we stand against, but to see whom we are standing **FOR!** Our hope is that God would use us to do immeasurably more in this land that He has called us to stand in. That when we stand up others would see the God that we are standing for.

Yet, the reality is that living in this world is hard. Often, things get so tough that we want to sit down, get out of the fight, and even give up. But when we do the world will not see God. It takes us standing up! So, when our circumstances call for us to throw in the towel, we can say: **"I WILL STAND"**. Or, when our culture and the people around us invite us to conform, we can say: **"I WILL STAND"**. Even when our own flesh begs us to give in and we barely have the strength to carry on we can say with joy in our hearts: **"I WILL STAND"**.

Why? It is certainly not because we always love the places God calls us to. In fact, God often calls us to some of the hardest places so that He can show the hardest people a glimpse of God in us. We can stand because we know the character of God! We can stand because we know He is with us! We can stand because we know that He is going to show up and transform our circumstances, conditions, and situations for His glory. How do we know that? Because Jesus Christ came! He left the riches of heaven to come and stand for us, because we mattered to God. And now, because Jesus Christ has done that for us, **WE CAN STAND** so that those around us will also see the God we are standing for.

Quotes To Consider:

1. *"(Daniel) offers us a model for not only surviving but actually thriving in the midst of a godless environment. He found a way, in a culture far more wicked than anything we face, to glorify and serve God with such integrity and power that kings, peasants, and an entire nation turned to acknowledge the splendor of the living God."* – **Larry Osborne**
2. *"Since God intends to make you like Jesus, he will take you through the same experiences Jesus went through. That includes loneliness, temptation, stress, criticism, rejection, and many other problems."* – **Rick Warren – Purpose Driven Life**
3. *"Life is not a straight line leading from one blessing to the next and then finally to heaven. Life is a winding and troubled road. Switchback after switchback. And the point of biblical stories... is to help us feel in our bones (not just know in our heads) that God is for us in all these strange turns. God is not just showing up after the trouble and cleaning it up. He is plotting the course and managing the troubles with far-reaching purposes for our good and for the glory of Jesus Christ."* **John Piper – A Sweet And Bitter Providence)**

Verses For Reflection:

1. **Daniel 1:1-3** - *During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. So Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of Babylonia and placed them in the treasure house of his god. ³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives.*

Discussion Questions:

1. When have you said "I ain't going down no more" only to fall again in the same area, sin, or struggle?
2. Can you summarize what Michael means when he says we need to stand for God? (A: *Standing confidently in God in the way we live, act, love and serve, so that the world around us can see God in us*)
3. How is this type of "standing" different than what most people would expect from Christians?
4. What are some things that have made you want to sit down instead of standing up? (A: *Trials, culture, friends, family, etc.*)
5. At the end of your life, what things do you want to be known for standing for?
6. What are some times God has asked you to stand in uncomfortable places? How did God use those situations to bring growth in your life?
7. How does knowing that Jesus has already stood perfectly for you help you stand for God today?

Possible Prayer Topics:

- Prayers for those who are not yet (or not currently) standing for God
- Prayers for those who need strength to get back up after falling or need help accepting and thriving in the place God has currently called them.
- Prayers for those who are standing and want to see more of what God has for them.