



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**

## 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.



## **SERMON SUMMARY:** WEEK 7: I WILL STAND COURAGEOUSLY

**Series Purpose:** 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.

**This Week's Summary:** In today's sermon, Michael began by focusing on the one thing that God has been revealing to him over the course of this series, which is that our character matters to God. For instance, character was something that shaped Daniel in the darkest circumstances to live as God's light to those who were around him. This was not something he had to build on his own, but something God was growing inside of him as he continued to walk with God. And, after following God for seventy years, it was apparent that God had produced a lot of character within Daniel.

Why does this matter? Because it is clear that the character God gave Daniel produced a great courage within him, even in the face of some very difficult circumstances. How? Because as Daniel grew to see how powerful God really was, he saw how small his circumstances really were. This gave him courage no matter what he faced!

For instance, when the officials came trying to find falsities in Daniel's character, Daniel remained loving, forgiving, gracious and trustworthy because He had the character of God. Even when his enemies got the upper hand (setting an unavoidable trap - making prayer illegal), Daniel did not stop doing things to build his character and walk with God. So, even when Praying was functionally outlawed, Daniel continued praying even though it would get him arrested and thrown into a den of ravenous starving lions.

It is here that we learn a very powerful truth. God does not spare us from the lions because we have had courageous character, he allows us to go through it so that other people will get to see His deliverance. Why? Because, God shows himself to those who have courageous character. He reveals that He alone can save us from the impossible situations! He shows us that He vindicates those who have had courageous character so that those who do not yet know God will see Him. He shows us to never stop praying! He shows us to have courage even in the midst of lions.

## QUOTES TO CONSIDER:

"Character is what a man is in the dark."

– D.L. MOODY

"He had a deep-seated confidence in God's character and sovereignty. It was the lens through which he evaluated circumstances, made decisions, and determined his actions."

– LARRY OSBORNE

"It's something we grow into the longer we walk with God. It doesn't come from studying the Bible, knowing theology, or having mental activity to block-out negative thoughts. It comes from obediently walking with God & experiencing firsthand His character."

– LARRY OSBORNE

"The transcript of your prayers becomes the script of your life."

– MARK BATTERSON

## VERSES FOR REFLECTION:

**Daniel 6:1-7, 9-22, 26:** Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire. Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion." So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, "Long live King Darius! We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions... So King Darius signed the law.

But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking for God's help. So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. "Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?"

"Yes," the king replied, "that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked." Then they told the king, "That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day."

Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.

In the evening the men went together to the king and said, "Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed." So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you." A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night.

Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den. When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel answered, "Long live the king! My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty"... "I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God, and he will endure forever. His kingdom will never be destroyed, and his rule will never end.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do you think we are often more concerned with our reputation than our character?
2. What did you think about the definition from D.L. Moody "Character is what a man (or woman) is in the dark". How have you found that you are different when no one is looking or when no one will know the things you are doing?
3. In what ways is God currently forging His character into you?
4. How do you think character relates to courage?
5. What areas of your life are the hardest for you to have courage? (i.e. Forgiving others, trusting God's plan, persecution, etc.)
6. Does your environment or God have the most profound effect upon your character and courage?
7. What are some ways that God is using courage and character in your life to inspire others? Or, has God used the courage of someone else to inspire or challenge you?
8. Daniel did not let his circumstances define how he prayed. Why do you think we often pray differently depending on our circumstances?
9. What are some of the "Lion's Dens" that you have been facing and how have you seen God redeeming these to show you more of Him? How have others begun seeing more of Him through you?

## **POSSIBLE PRAYER TOPICS:**

- Prayers for God to bring greater character and courage into our life,
- Prayers for that people would be able to see God in our lives.
- Prayers for opportunities to be courageous and for the strength to remain focused on God.

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