



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

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 5

I WILL STAND FOR THEM

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! It is our hope that God would use us to do immeasurably more in this land and that when we stand, others would see the God that we are standing for.

Sermon Summary:

In today's sermon, Michael related Jesus' words "Love your enemies!" with how Daniel and his friends interacted with an evil man like Nebuchadnezzar. For instance, even when it seemed like he was going to kill them, they still continued demonstrating God's love to him. Why? They understood that God was using them to show others more of Him. And even though Nebuchadnezzar was a man who rarely deserved to be loved, he ended up responding to God, which should lead us to ask the question: how does a person who is that far from God end up responding to Him? How will people we know who are far from God, respond to him? How will God use us to help people far from God see Him?

To answer those questions, Michael gave us 2 crucial truths to consider. First, God is ALWAYS bigger than even the hardest of hearts. Second, when God is pursuing a person He simply will not quit! And, it is often when a person is at their darkest moments that they are the closest to being brought near to Him.

How does God use us in this work? First, by using us to celebrate His activity in another person's life. Second, by giving us His heart so that people who are far from God would see the heart of God in us. And just like God used Daniel to help change the king's heart, He is ready and willing to use us to help change the hearts of those around us.

How can we begin joining God's work so that others will see God? We can help others begin to interpret the events of their life through the lens of God's grace. We can boldly and lovingly invite people to turn away from what is keeping them from God. And, we can give people space and time for God to accomplish what he is going to do.

Quotes To Consider:

“Jesus is calling us to radically distinct behavior that challenges people at an instinctive level. We are called to do what would be least expected. In this call to love even our enemies, Jesus is calling us to be as He was and to love the life He lived!” – **Steve Timmis**

Verses For Reflection:

Luke 6:27 – But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you!

Daniel 4:34, 37 – After this time had passed, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven. My sanity returned, and I praised and worshiped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever. His rule is everlasting, and his kingdom is eternal. ³⁷ “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble the proud.”

Daniel 4:19 – “Upon hearing this, Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar) was overcome for a time, frightened by the meaning of the dream. Then the king said to him, ‘Belteshazzar, don’t be alarmed by the dream and what it means.’ Belteshazzar replied, ‘I wish the events foreshadowed in this dream would happen to your enemies, my lord, and not to you!’”

Daniel 4:25-27 – “This is what the dream means, Your Majesty, and what the Most High has declared will happen to my lord the king... But the stump and roots of the tree were left in the ground. This means that you will receive your kingdom back again when you have learned that heaven rules. King Nebuchadnezzar, please accept my advice. Stop sinning and do what is right. Break from your wicked past and be merciful to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper. But all these things did happen to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later...”

2 Peter 3:8-9 – “But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think.

No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.”

Romans 5:10-11 – “For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Who are the people in your life who are the least likely to ever respond to God? What hurts, pains, or beliefs have brought this person to where they are? How do you think that this person will experience a heart change?
2. Are there people in your life that you have been tempted to give up on because they are just not getting it?
3. Michael said that God uses those who celebrate His work in others to help others see His work. How have you seen this to be true in your own life?
4. Why do you think it is so important to celebrate what God is doing in a person’s life? What are some ways you could begin encouraging people in your life who need to see God?
5. In what ways do you still struggle with having God’s heart for others?
6. Why do you think God often seeks to change our hearts before He changes the heart of those around us?

Possible Prayer Topics:

- Prayers for God to give us His heart toward others
- Prayers for the people in our lives who still need to hear from God
- Prayers for wisdom in our interactions with people who are far from God.