



## ***“Stand Firm Against the World”***

Paul addresses the important things around which to align our life that enables us to find joy no matter what in a letter written to followers of Jesus living in the Greek city of Philippi. The letter organizes around four passions.

- 1. ADOPT THE RIGHT AXIS – A Passion to praise Christ**  
*Exalt Christ in everything.*
- 2. MAINTAIN THE RIGHT ATTITUDE – A Passion to please Christ**  
*Please Christ through sacrificial service to others.*
- 3. PURSUE THE RIGHT AIM – A Passion to pursue Christ**  
*Pursue knowing Christ above all other things*
- 4. PRACTICE THE RIGHT ACTIONS – A Passion to practice Christ**  
*Practice Christ-like living*

He specified several actions throughout chapter four.

**A. Stand firm in the Lord 4:1**

*Therefore, my brothers, dearly loved and longed for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, dearly loved.*

### **APPLYING STANDING FIRM IN THE LORD**

**Stand firm against persecution and false teaching**

**Stand firm in the storms of life.**

**Stand firm against the schemes of the Devil**

**Stand firm in The Faith.**

**Stand firm Against the Flesh.**

The writers of the Bible used the word “flesh” in several ways. Context determines meaning.

It refers to the physical body. “flesh and blood”

It refers generally to mankind as in “all flesh (people) will see the glory of God.

It refers to a relative i.e. “my own flesh and blood”.

These all reference morally neutral uses of the term.

They bear no indication of good or evil.

Paul often used the term in a morally negative sense.

He identifies an inbred and imbedded bent toward rejection of God and exaltation of self.

*We all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. Ephesians 2:1-3*

This flesh identified by Paul exhibits passions, desires, longings programed in the body and mind. Until God implants new longings and desires at new birth there is no real conflict. Those who do not have Christ only find life by means of self-actualization. The Christian finds life and purpose in God glorification. We already observed the passion of Paul to exalt Christ in everything; to please Christ though serving others; to consider everything in this world as garbage compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ and to practice the life of Christ. After declaring that someone living in the flesh, Paul affirms the difference between living in the flesh and living in the Spirit.

*You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. Rom 8:9-12*

The difference come from the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life. Even though there is extreme conflict between the desires of the flesh imbedded in our body and brain and nervous system and the new desires flowing out of a newly created core, we are promised victory.

### **REALIZE WHO YOU ARE**

*We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10*

### **BE WILLING TO SUFFER**

#### **WALK BY THE SPIRIT**

*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. Galatians 5:16*

It doesn't say, "don't gratify the desires of the flesh to walk in the Spirit."

It tells us to live our life by the direction and enabling grace of the Holy Spirit.

*present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. Rom 6:11-13*

#### **RUTHLESSLY DEAL WITH THE FLESH**

Just like denying a sugar addiction, we are to deny sinful passions any fulfilment.

Deny any request of the flesh cries for fulfilment and constant feeding.

#### **Abstain from the passions of the flesh**

*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 1 Peter 2:11*

#### **Consider yourselves dead to sin.**

*Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. Colossians 3:5*

*You also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

#### **Stop letting sin reign**

*Stop letting sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Rom 6:11*

#### **Stop presenting your members to sin.**

*Stop presenting your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness Rom 6:11*

#### **Put to death the deeds of the body (flesh)**

*For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Romans 8:13-14*

#### **Put off the works of darkness and deny any gratification to the flesh**

*The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us live properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on (point time action) the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not give forethought (present) for the flesh, to gratify its desires. Romans 13:12-14*

#### **Discipline the physical body**

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not*

*run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I **discipline my body** and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27*

The term translated “discipline” is a term which meant to “hit under the eye”. Paul said, “I constantly punch myself in the face to keep the body under

## **RENEW YOUR THINKING**

***Do not be conformed** (present passive) to this world, but **be transformed** (present passive) by the renewal of your mind, to prove (demonstrate) what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2*

We need to constantly examine our thought life. Over the years, we develop certain thought patterns and ideas about life; many of which are not biblical. These ideas imbed in our members and dictate our behavior.

These thoughts need to be constantly challenged against truth.

*For though we live in the flesh (body), we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and **take every thought captive** to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6*

*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things**. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. Philippians 4:8-9*

We can only win the battle against the sinful flesh by reprogramming of our faulty thinking. Our lives are transformed by the renewing of our thinking. Our thinking is renewed through continual exposure to and interaction with truth.

## **PERSONAL EVALUATION**

What or who controls your life?

*“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. Isaiah 55:1-3*

Satisfying life is found in Jesus yet we look for it so many other places. The flesh promises a false sense of satisfaction.

*My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jeremiah 2:13*

The Israelites craved meat and God gave them meat for their stomachs but they experienced leanness in their soul.

*Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man. Proverbs 27:20*

*All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. Ecclesiastes 1:8*

The flesh promises satisfaction from food, pleasure, entertainment, sensations, achievement, notoriety, stuff, media, games, smart phones yet cannot truly satisfy.

These things are not in themselves evil but become evil when their pursuit rises above our pursuit of Christ.

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Matthew 5:6*

*Jesus said, “Everyone who drinks of this (physical) water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the (spiritual) water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” John 4:13-14*

## Stand Firm Against the World

First, we need to identify what is meant by “the world”. It can be confusing since the same term is used to refer to different things. The Greek term translated “world” is “kosmos”. (Cosmetics comes from the word.) It refers to something ordered, an ordered system therefore beautiful or attractive. Prior to the rebellion of Adam and Eve, God’s world was perfectly ordered. Order emanated at all levels from the animate to inanimate. Even in its cursed condition, the order of God’s world clearly stands as a compelling argument for an intelligent designer behind what we observe. When functioning per God’s design, our world radiates a Master Designer. Because of the rebellion, a curse descended on the entire world affecting every aspect of its design. This curse brought disorder and chaos to every aspect of our world. Listen to Paul’s description of the resultant chaos imposed on God’s kosmos.

*The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. Romans 8:19-22*

The creation is not the only thing longing for restoration to order.

*And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Romans 8:23-24*

This is the world that God loved enough to send His Son. How is it then that God so loved the world to sacrifice His Only Son but the Apostle John strongly tells US not to love the world.

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 John 2:15*

Scripture employs the same term to refer to the “ordered chaos” that came about after the initial rebellion. It refers to a system or order whose intent is to function apart from acknowledgement of or relationship to the original Designer. At its core, it is a repudiation of God and His Son Jesus. Its very nature is antichrist.

This devil-designed and directed system permeates every aspect of our current world.

*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. Ephesians 2:1-3*

This passage clearly identifies an order or course that functions by the dictates of the Devil who continually energizes those defying God’s order.

Jesus indicated that Satan currently wields great influence over this world system.

*I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, John 14:30  
We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. 1 John 5:19*

Jesus clearly defined the disciple’s relationship with the world-system in His prayer to the Father just before He submitted to the cross.

*But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. John 17:13-17*

We will have an adversarial relationship with the world because of our relationship with Jesus. We live in this world but are no longer of it just as Jesus did not identify with the world. He stated this fact twice. We have a purpose for remaining in this world. The word of God enables us to separate ourselves from the world.

The word spells out the specifics of God’s original design. It details how true relationships were designed to function in the family structure and among neighbors. The term sanctify focuses on separation from what is contrary to God’s order. Several English words come out of this Greek root word i.e. holy, holiness, sanctification, sanctify, saint. As God conforms us more and more into Christ’s image the more unlike the world we become. The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit centers not on extracting us out of the world but extinguishing the world’s influence in us. A ship on the ocean is like a Christian in the world. The ship is safe in the ocean as long as the ocean doesn’t get into the ship. Christians function in this world as long as the world doesn’t get in them. Satan orchestrates this godless world order to energize the imbedded passions of the flesh clamoring for satisfaction.

Here is how the whole system works to Satan’s ends.

Satan employs evil spirits to devise a world system designed to energize the flesh and deaden the soul.

God commissions the Holy Spirit to direct the Church designed to energize the spirit and deny the flesh.



*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4*

*“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. John 15:18-19*

**Here are some Biblical admonitions concerning the world.**

**Don’t love it.**

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:15-17*

**Don’t let it conform you to its way of life.**

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:1-2*

**Don’t allow it to pollute you.**

*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. James 1:27*

### **Don't become friends with its ways.**

*You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. James 4:4-10*

### **Stay clear of its influence.**

*Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:14-18*

*Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. 2 Corinthians 7:1*

### **Don't imitate its evil ways but expose them.**

*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Eph 5:1-14*

Beside these passages, Scripture includes a multitude of passages urging purity, holiness, sanctification, living worthy of our calling contrary to the ways of the world. Christians should live different because we ARE fundamentally different at our core. We need to live counterculturally. Christianity thrived because it was so radically different from the current culture. Because Satan designed and directs what antichrist world system we should hold everything the world espouses suspect.

There is a current thought affecting even the church that morality should be determined by the community. If the community accepts or normalizes the behavior it is ok. God clearly recorded how His cosmos is to function. It is not up for discussion or judgment. Through entertainment and social media, we have become desensitized to the things that grieve the heart of God.

### **Overcome the world**

*I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33*

*Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 1 John 4:4*

*For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 1 John 5:3-5*

*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 2 Peter 1:3-4*

### **Test every aspect of this world.**

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1 John 4:1-6*

Culture evolves over time by the interaction of the people in the culture. When culture begins to contradict the clear norms of the Bible we must take a stand. Unfortunately, it is the Bible that suddenly becomes dated or outdated; not in keeping with culture. Satan orchestrates changes in culture to his ends.

We wage war on three fronts. We will never find true victory and live according God's order until we learn to stand firm against **Satan** and the **world** system he designed to enflame the **flesh** that wages war against our inner being.