



“Stand Firm Against the World”

We in the section of Paul’s letter to the Philippians where he instructs them in some specific actions or behaviors that facilitate joy no matter what.

1. ADOPT THE RIGHT AXIS – A Passion to praise Christ

Exalting Christ in everything is a foundation for joy.

2. MAINTAIN THE RIGHT ATTITUDE – A Passion to please Christ

Pleasing Christ through sacrificial service to others is a foundation for joy.

3. PURSUE THE RIGHT AIM – A Passion to pursue Christ

Pursuing deeper relationship with Christ above all other things brings joy.

4. PRACTICE THE RIGHT ACTIONS – A Passion to practice Christ

Practicing Christ-like living results in joy.

He specified several actions throughout chapter four. The first admonition was to “stand firm in the Lord.”

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.

Over the past weeks, we have explored numerous Bible passages calling us to stand firm in the Lord. These passages apply to various life situations.

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.

Even though we face a life-long war against fleshly passions imbedded in our physiology there in victory through Christ.

Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin. Romans 7:23-25

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. Romans 8:1-2

We discussed the means to significant victory in this war last week.

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 not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:9-13

**REALIZE WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST
BE WILLING TO SUFFER
WALK (LIVE) BY THE DIRECTION AND ENABLING OF THE SPIRIT**

RUTHLESSLY DEAL WITH THE FLESH

- Abstain from the passions of the flesh**
- Consider yourselves dead to sin.**
- Stop letting sin reign**
- Stop presenting your members to sin.**
- Put to death the deeds of the body (flesh)**
- Put off the works of darkness and deny any gratification to the flesh**
- Discipline the physical body**

RENEW and GUARD YOUR THINKING

I would add one more important element in this battle.

ASK FOR HELP

Too often we try to battle this war on our own. The Bible stresses accountability and mutual encouragement.

Encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Heb 3:13

Numerous other passages call for us to come along side one another that include encouragement, confrontation, prayer, exhortation, teaching, accountability to elders, stimulation to love and good deeds.

I might add one other element to victory in this fight with the flesh that actually is a different but related battle.

Satan designed and directs this world system to reinforce those fleshly passions.

Stand Firm Against the devil-directed World system.

First, we need to identify what is meant by “the world”. It seems confusing since the same term is used to refer to different aspects. The Greek term translated “world” is the Greek term “kosmos”. (Our word cosmetics comes from this 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 manifested at all levels of creation 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.

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

Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. James 3:16

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. 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 intended to operate without acknowledging or relating to the original Designer. At its core, it adamantly repudiates 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 (energizing) 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. Satan’s values and ideas permeate cultures all around the known world. He promotes his anti-Christ lies through every aspect of the media, philosophy, higher education, social systems, psychology, politics, government, religion. Satan offers an answer to the deepest questions of life. Where did I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here? His answers seek to avoid any reference to accountability to the true God. 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

Ultimately Satan will foster a one-world government organized under the Satan-possessed Anti-Christ and false prophet demanding full allegiance and worship. This will lead up to the ultimate end time showdown.

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

There are several points to be pondered here.

- 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 and was never of it. He stated this fact twice.
- God has a purpose for our time in this world.
- The word (truth) of God enables us to separate ourselves from world’s lies.

We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. 1 Corinthians 2:12

The Bible 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 word defines how God designed His kingdom to operate; His “kosmos”. The term “sanctify” focuses on separation from what is contrary to God’s order. Several English words are all translations from this Greek root word i.e. holy, holiness, sanctification, sanctify, saint.

They all refer to a life lived contrary to Satan’s design. As God conforms us more and more into Christ’s image, the more unlike the world we become. Unfortunately, sometimes it is difficult to tell Christians and a non-Christians apart by their behavior. I don’t mean we should be weird; only different. Jesus never appeared weird but definitely lived a life that was different. Some Christians today urge engagement in certain questionable behaviors or activities so that they can relate to non-Christians.

The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit centers not on extracting us out of the world but diminishing the world’s influence on 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 effectively function in this world when the world doesn’t

get in us. Satan skillfully orchestrates this godless world order to energize the evil passions of the flesh clamoring for satisfaction. Here is how the whole system works.

God commissions the Holy Spirit to enable the Church designed to energize the spirit and deny the flesh. Satan employs evil spirits to direct a world system designed to energize the flesh and deaden the soul.

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 specific 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 living.

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.

James connects the war with the flesh with the war with the world.

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures (fleshly passions) that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. James 4:1-3

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

Decide whose team you will play for. Cultivate relationship with God. Deal with sinful behavior whether it be actions or attitudes or words.

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 (live) 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." Ephesians 5:1-14

Paul then further urged them to give carefully attention to their lifestyle.

Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise— making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. And don't get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions, but be filled by the Spirit: Ephesians 5:15-18

Beside these passages, Scripture contains a multitude of passages urging purity, holiness, sanctification, living worthy of our calling, living contrary to the ways of the world. Christians should live different because we ARE fundamentally different at our core. There is a new sheriff in town. We need to live counterculturally.

Christianity thrived because it was so radically different from the current culture and the current culture of the time was thoroughly godless. Because Satan designed and directs an anti-Christ world system, we should hold everything the world espouses suspect. There is a current thought affecting even the church that morality is determined by the community. If the community accepts or normalizes the behavior, it is ok. God clearly recorded how He designed His "kosmos" to function. It is not up for discussion or judgment. Through entertainment and social media, we 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 given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. By these He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires. 2 Peter 1:3-4

Test every aspect of this world by truth

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 or actually devolves over time by the interaction of the people in the culture. When culture contradicts the clear norms of the Bible, we must take a stand. Unfortunately, it is the Bible that suddenly is considered dated or outdated; not in keeping with current culture. Satan orchestrates changes in culture to his ends. We wage a three-front war. We will never find true victory and live according God's order until we learn to stand firm personally and together against **Satan** and the **world** system he designed to enflame the **flesh** that wages war against our inner being.