

# Not Just Hanging On, Standing Strong

07-19-2020

*Ephesians 6:10-18; Timothy 1:19; 1 John 1:9; Joshua 1:8; Job 17:9; Exodus 14:14;*

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## BIBLE VERSE

### Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV)

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

<sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

<sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

<sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

<sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

<sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

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### **NOTE**

There was a time that when someone would ask me how I was doing, I would often say “Oh, hanging in there!” But as time moved on I began to drop that response without even consciously thinking about it. It was as if the Spirit of God just weaned me away from saying it, and now I can see why. Because nowhere in the Bible do we find victorious saints just “hanging in there.” We never see God advising His children to “hang in there.” Paul does not say in Ephesians, “Having done all, hang in there!”

Because “Hanging in there” sounds like you’re barely holding on and any minute now you could lose your grip and fall into defeat. No, he says “Having done all, STAND in there!”

So I want to talk to you today about, not hanging in there, but standing in there.”

- One Bible translation says “take your stand.”
- Another says, “Stand firm.”
- Another says, “Stand against.”
- Yet another says, “Stand up.”
- The Living Bible says, “Stand safe.”
- The Amplified says, “Successfully stand up against.”

The picture presented is to stand your ground with your feet firmly planted, ready and able to withstand anything the devil throws at you. We’re told 3 times in Ephesians 6 to stand our ground as opposed to running or quitting.

Now notice how Paul points out that, while we are always engaged in spiritual warfare, there

are particular times when Satan turns up the heat. He calls it THE EVIL DAY.—“...that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. The war we’re in is always going down, but our daily battles are sometimes less and sometimes more. The evil day is the day of unexpected conflict, when suddenly the enemy unleashes his fiery arrows against us in a heavy way. Out of nowhere the lion attacks, suddenly the bullets fly, the bombs explode, and we are taken by surprise. One trial stacks on top of another, as Job of old experienced. One conflict is followed by another, and then here comes yet another, and we say with Jacob, “All these things are against me!”

I believe our nation is right now in an evil day—a season of intensified attack. And God’s people are being called to stand strong!

Paul goes on to tell us something about the devil. He informs us that when the evil day comes, the enemy has been strategizing and scheming to take his best shot. Ephesians 6:11 says, “That you may be able to stand against the WILES of the devil.” The word “wiles” is from the Greek word (μεθοδεία methodeia), and it means the devil is methodical and strategic. He knows how to attack you based on your past weaknesses and strongholds. He waits for the opportune moment, the moment of vulnerability. He never plays fair and is sinister in his tactics. His attacks are premeditated and well laid with art, skill, and cunning. He takes his time in laying his traps. He may work years to bring down a man or woman of God, setting up the time and place where he will spring the trap. He carefully schemes to drag the lost soul down to hell.

Satan prefers to work in the dark—subtly not openly, craftily not face to face. He traffics in lies, smoke and mirrors, and sleight of hand, always carefully concealing the hook in the bait he dangles before you.

So the great Apostle Paul warns us that we need every piece of the armor of God to successfully stand against the carefully laid snares of Satan! Paul’s intent with writing Ephesians 6 is that when the dust settles and the battle is over, the Christian is standing victorious!

## NOTE

Now, let me share 3 key ways to maintain your footing and successfully stand in the evil day of attack. They are:

1. Keep a clear conscience

The Bible directly links a clear conscience to spiritual victory. Paul the Apostle writes to Timothy his son in the faith:

## **BIBLE VERSE**

### **1 Timothy 1:19 (NIV)**

<sup>19</sup> holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith.

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## **NOTE**

You see, the devil's number one weapon is condemnation. The very name, "devil," means "accuser." When our conscience isn't clear before God, the devil has an open door to accuse us in our minds and shoot us down with guilt. And because of unconfessed sin, our relationship with God is broken so we don't have access to His peace and power. So Paul says, "Cling tightly to your faith in Christ and always keep your conscience clear."

## **ILLUSTRATION**

You know, in my neighborhood we've had some break-ins where thieves have been found to come into garages and steal stuff. So I've developed a little saying I tell myself when I'm going somewhere for even a real short time—"Never give a thief a chance. Close the garage door."

Every Christian needs to have that attitude about the devil—"Never give the thief a chance. Close the garage door of your conscience by keeping it clear and right with God!"

- Practice quick repentance.
- Never go to bed with unconfessed sin.
- If you mess up, fess up and repent quickly.
- Keep short accounts with God!

## BIBLE VERSE

### 1 John 1:9 (NIV)

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

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## NOTE

So number one, to stand strong in battle keep your conscience clear.

## NOTE

2. Power up daily by time spent in the Word and Prayer

## BIBLE VERSE

### Joshua 1:8 (NIV)

<sup>8</sup> Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

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## NOTE

You can't fight today's battles on yesterday's blessings. You're only as strong as your last time with God.

## ILLUSTRATION

We have some beautiful flowers in our backyard. And we've noted that in Texas summers when it's over 100 degrees outside and you could fry an egg on the driveway, you have to water them every day. They will never make it on yesterday's water. If we miss a day or two, they begin to droop, and wilt, and turn brown. So if we want to enjoy their beauty we must take the time and trouble to water them daily. Your spiritual life and mine are no different.

In the day of evil when the warfare is hot, the number one thing we must do is keep our inner man strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. And we do that by daily watering our soul with the water of God's word and prayer. I know this is elementary, but are you doing it?

This is why so many Christians are wilting, waning, struggling, and dragging. They're trying to fight today's battles with yesterday's anointing!

In order to stand strong in the day of evil, you must: spend daily time with the Captain of your Salvation, drawing from His strength, listening to His counsel, guided by His hand!

So to stand strong in the evil day we must:

- 1.) keep a clear conscience,
- 2.) power up daily by spending time with God, and finally:

## BIBLE VERSE

Job 17:9 (NIV)

<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to their ways, and those with clean hands will grow stronger.

## BIBLE VERSE

### Exodus 14:15 (NIV)

<sup>15</sup> Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.

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## NOTE

Faith's favorite direction is FORWARD!

Think about it, what is the devil after in his attack against you? He can't keep you from salvation, you're already saved. So what is his end game? He wants to take you out of the race, to stop you from fruit bearing, to hinder your ministry to others. He wants to get you out of the game and onto the sidelines.

So by faith you keep moving forward!

- You keep carrying the ball.
- You keep gaining yardage.
- You keep scoring touchdowns.
- You keep putting points on the board!

Go to that Bible study, tell that person about Jesus, go to the prayer closet and intercede, teach that class, preach to that crowd—MOVE FORWARD. The armor of God is designed for someone moving forward, there is no piece of armor for the back, for someone in retreat. The armor protects someone advancing, not retreating!

So let's sum it up: To stand strong in the day of evil we must

1.) keep a clear conscience.

2.) power up daily by time in God's Word and prayer.

3.) keep moving forward