

Stability Under Pressure

#0855

Study given by W.D. Frazee—June 3, 1961

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness” Ephesians 6:10-14

Three times, he tells us that our business is to stand; that’s what God wants us to do. That’s what I’d like to study with you this evening—this thought of standing. What does this mean? Sometimes, the best way to think through what a thing means is to think of some of the things that it *doesn’t* mean. Think of the opposite. And one of the opposites of standing is *running*.

Do you remember that Elijah, after he had that wonderful experience on Mt. Carmel, he met and defeated the priests of Baal and his prophets—slew them—had that wonderful victory, then God heard his prayer and sent rain from Heaven. You remember that he got that threat from Jezebel, and what did he do? He ran. Should he have ran? Oh, no. What should he have done? Stood right there. He should have stayed right there. But he didn’t; he ran. And, as the result, he missed a glorious opportunity. And God wants you and me to learn to stand instead of run.

In Volume 9 of the *Testimonies*, we’re given a little incident that occurred back in history somewhere. Listen as the messenger of the Lord tells the story:

“At a certain battle, when one of the regiments of the attacking force was being beaten back by the hordes of the enemy, the ensign in front stood his ground as the troops retreated. The captain shouted to him to bring back the colors, but the reply of the ensign was: “Bring the men up to the colors!” This is the work that devolves upon every faithful standard-bearer—to bring the men up to the colors. The Lord calls for wholeheartedness. We all know that the sin of many professing Christians is that they lack the courage and energy to bring themselves and those connected with them up to the standard” *Testimonies*, page 46.

I thought that was a wonderful little story and a wonderful application of it.

So, even if those about us are retreating, God wants us to do what? Stand—

hold up the standard, keep the colors flying, and pray that God will help others to catch the spirit and stand instead of retreating. We're told that we mustn't yield one inch to the customs and fashions of this degenerate age, but stand in moral independence, making no compromise with its corrupt and idolatrous practices.

This morning, it was my privilege to hear one of our general conference leaders—a man who has spent many many years in the service of this denomination, in the foreign mission field, in two great world divisions as well as here in North America—and it was very heartening to hear him appeal from the pulpit in plain English to our people to live up to the standards, to hold up the standards and not let them down. I copied down the sentence that he said just as he spoke it, right on this point: “Our standards today are the same standards we have had down through the history of our work.”

What do you say? Thank the Lord.

But somebody says, “But I don't seem to see them lived out the way they were 20 years ago or 40 years ago or 50 years ago.” Never mind, my friends. What did our text say three times? Stand. Stand. Stand.

And if a thing is right, it's still right. Two and two were four a hundred years ago; two and two is still four. And so today, it's our privilege to stand for the things that God has told us in the Bible and in the Spirit of Prophecy.

I heard another one of our men from the general conference say this morning, “There are great evidences of need for reform among Seventh-day Adventists.”

What do you say to that? Thank the Lord for men that have the vision to see, the courage to say it, and I pray that God will help every one of us to appreciate it and respond with Amens from our lips and from our hearts. Amens need to get down into our hands and feet, don't they? Yes, so that every organ of the body, every function of our lives, every activity reflects the Word of God and the instructions in the Spirit of Prophecy.

Another fine statement from this world leader that I first quoted. Just this morning, here are his words, as I wrote them down: “God expects something from the general conference in leadership when it comes to health reform.”

Wasn't that good? Yes. You could see that the audience appreciated it. And then he quoted from *Counsels on Diet and Foods*. He told of his experience when he had been out in the mission field and during his long term of service out there, he said he was gone from home two-thirds of the time, travelling thousands upon thousands of miles, in a dozen different countries among primitive peoples as well as those more civilized, in all kinds of conditions, from below the equator to way up in the north, and yet he said, in all those experiences, he never found it necessary to eat a bit of flesh food or fish of any kind.

He said not only that, he thanked the Lord that they were able to, as fast as they could teach our native people, how to grow foods that would take the place of meat and live on a vegetarian program, that he had the joy of seeing many of them

accept the health reform. And he said that many of those dear native people would come to him and say, "Brother, we do appreciate your teaching us this part of the message along with all the rest." That's way out in the foreign mission field.

And then he told us of the sorrow and disappointment that came to him in coming back to this country and finding some of our dear people eating flesh foods in a land where there are all kinds of good things to eat and no excuse for it at all.

Well, he wasn't talking just on that subject. But he did make a very important point—that question of diet and the question of vegetarianism. He mentioned other reforms and other standards that we need to stand for.

Now my point, as our text says three times, what? Stand. Don't run. Don't run away from the problem and drift back into the world. Do not allow retreating on the part of others anywhere, anytime, to influence you to give up one of God's standards. Stand. Stand. Stand. Instead of bringing the colors back to where people are, bring the people up to the colors. Of course, we need good sense, tact, and all that; but we need to stand.

Now, there is another thing we need to think about in this matter of standing. Stand, don't *run*; stand, don't *bend*.

Do you remember in the third chapter of Daniel three young men that had to stand in order to obey God when everybody else was bending? What were their names? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Yes, we all know the names of those boys, don't we?

What did the king say everybody had to do? Bow down. What did the law of God say? The Second Commandment: Thou shalt not bow down thy self to them nor serve them. And there was that great golden image, and the king of the world says you must bow down. But the king of the *universe* says you must *not* bow down. Hundreds and thousands of people prostrated themselves before that golden image as the orchestra struck up its music. There were three that stood erect and fearless. What were they doing? Standing. That's all they did. They didn't make any noise; they didn't make any fuss; they didn't start a riot; they just stood there—that's all they *needed* to do. It was the most eloquent testimony.

Oh, my friends, there are times that what God is looking for is not a lot of noise; He just wants people to stand.

When we turn to the book of Revelation, do we find that there's going to be another image formed? Where is that? Revelation the 13th chapter. With what nation is it associated? This nation. This nation is going to lead all the world to establish that image and to worship the image of the beast. And whoever won't do it will be killed; that's what they say.

Of course, God's going to intervene as He did with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But in standing there, on the plains of Dura, as far as human sight was concerned, were those three men giving themselves to be martyrs? Were they? Yes.

So, down here, will the remnant be marked for death by their very act in refusing to bow down to that image of the beast? Will they? Yes, they will.

Ah, friends, isn't it wonderful to have the courage and the faith to stand when all the world bows down?

I think of what that Roman Catholic priest, Father Enright, president of Redemptoral College in Missouri, many years ago said, speaking on this question of the Sabbath and Sunday, and the change of the Sabbath by the Catholic Church. He says, "I've repeatedly offered \$1,000 for anyone who will prove to me by the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy. And nobody has called for the money." And I'm quoting his words, I have his statements in my files. He continues, "The Bible says, 'Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.' The Catholic Church says, 'No, keep the first day of the week.' And lo, the entire civilized world bows down in reverent obedience to the mandates of the holy Catholic Church."

Quite a statement, isn't it? Quite a challenge. Yes.

That's going to be the issue isn't it? But, oh, *Early Writings* tells me that those that would have courage to say no when the mark of the beast and the image is enforced must have courage now to say no. It's by learning to stand on things that may look like little things that we develop our muscles—our backbones, if you please—so that when the final issue comes, we will have formed the habit of standing erect when God says don't bow down to the mandates of men. Oh, I want that experience, don't you friends? Stand, don't run; stand, don't bend.

There's one more point: Stand, don't wobble. Don't wobble.

When I think about wobbling, I think about the experience that I had several years ago. You know, when I was a little fellow, my father thought that he would help me to not grow up being embarrassed, timid, in the matter of speaking to or with people. So, he used to train me to recite Bible verses. When I was a little fellow Johnny's age, I thought nothing of getting up before an audience and reciting Bible verses or chapters of the Bible.

Several years later, about the time I was in the early academic grades, I was at camp meeting one summer. Somebody asked me if I would sing in a quartet. So, four of us boys we got together, and we practiced; we got up at a young people's meeting to sing this male quartet. Well, I declare, something happened to my knees. I began to shake. And I put my foot down to try to make it stay straight. But both of them went right on shaking. Somehow, I got through it.

Well, sometime after that, I was down at Loma Linda taking medical missionary training. Somebody asked me if I would give a talk at a Friday night young people's meeting. I said all right, so I studied and got ready for it. And I got up there in front, and fortunately, there were some pews there in front and nobody sitting on the front seat, and I could stand right in front of that pew. But if anybody had been there on the front seat, they would have seen my knees shaking.

Did any of you ever have an experience so you know what I'm talking about? Now what was the matter with me anyway? Yes, I was scared. I was afraid, wasn't I? Yes. Somebody might say I was nervous. But I think your first word was right—I was a bit afraid, scared.

Well, friends, I tell you this: we're going into experiences where, if we are afraid, we'll wobble. And God wants us to have such an experience that, like John the Baptist, we can stand erect and fearless in the presence of earthly moderns because in the secret place of prayer we have bowed low before the King of Kings.

The wise man says, "The fear of man bringeth a snare." And oh, I pray God tonight, friends, that the fear of man may be taken completely out of my heart. I'm sure other people can't read my mind and heart, but I think many a time if people only knew how much the fear of man besets me, how much it concerns me.

But I have faith that the God who took Elijah, who was so afraid that he ran from the threat of a woman that he brought him to the place where he could meet anybody and finally be translated to Heaven, I believe He can do something for me.

And the God who took John the Baptist and gave him so much courage that he was willing even to face having his head taken rather than give up his witnessing against sin, I believe He can do something for me.

And the God who took Peter, who was so afraid of people would say and think, and what they *did* think and say, that he denied his Lord with cursing and swearing just because two maids and a servant man pointed their finger of scorn at him. The God who took that man Peter and made him so brave that he could face the whole Sanhedrin and say, "We ought to obey God rather than man," I believe He can do something for me. What do you say?

So, tonight, our text says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand." Ah, that's it. If we have the armor on, we can stand; if we *don't* have the armor on, we *can't* stand (we'll either run, or we'll bend, or we'll wobble). But bless God if we have the armor of righteousness on, if we have an experience with God in heart and mind and soul, we won't run, we'll stand; we won't bend, we'll stand; we won't wobble, we'll stand. And having done all, to stand.

Shall we bow our heads?

Our precious Lord, we thank thee with all our hearts tonight, that thou art developing all over this world a people that will stand for the right though the heavens fall, men in whose foreheads the seal of God is imprinted so deep that nothing can take it out through all eternity. Give us this experience. And looking at Calvary, may we learn to hate sin and love righteousness. May we be heart to heart with Thee in Thy longing to get rid of sin. And thus may we develop that spiritual backbone which will enable us to stand though the heavens fall. We ask it in Christ's name, Amen.

Now, what was the key word? Would anybody like to *stand* right now and say a word for God?

[Following are W.D. Frazee's comments between the testimonies given.]

Never identify failure with your future. Always leave that in the past. Do you see the difference? You may have failed a thousand times, and have to admit that that's a fact. But you're not going to fail tomorrow. Jesus says He is able to keep you from falling.

Ah, the weakest saint with Christ can stand. The strongest without Him will fail. Our hope is in that union with Christ. The man that bows before God can stand before men.

I heard about an experience that took place out in the state of Washington. A Seventh-day Adventist doctor graduated from Loma Linda and went to a town there that was very much wanting a doctor. And the community had offered to set up an office if they could get a doctor to come him. The man that was heading it up was the banker in town.

So, the doctor came and investigated the matter.

Finally, a contract was drawn up and it was all settled; he was to come at a certain time. And the community was going to put up this building and make it possible for the doctor to set up his office.

As the matter was finished up in the banker's office, this doctor, as he walked down the street, he was surprised to hear this banker call him back. The banker said, "I'd like to talk with you further. Come in. Let me have that contract. This contract isn't any good."

The doctor asked, "What's the matter? I thought it was all signed up just right."

The banker said, "No, it isn't worth a thing." He took the contract and tore it up. He said, "I saw you, after you left my office, light a cigarette. I know that good Seventh-day Adventists don't do that kind of thing. So the contract is gone."

Now there was a man of the world, and he was surrounded with people who were smoking all the time. But he knew that that man who claimed to be a Seventh-day Adventist was not standing. It impressed me very much.

There are other things besides using cigarettes that label us as "not standing." By exercise, is that right?

Skill in doing anything is gained only by experience in doing that thing. And *strength and skill* in standing alone is gained by *experience* in standing alone. And so if God is managing your life—if you're *letting* Him manage your life—He will, from time to time, bring you into experience where, if you carry out your conscious convictions, you'll have to stand alone. If the only way God can find to do that is to put you in a dungeon as He did Joseph, be willing.

I'm of the opinion that many of us have opportunities from day to day, whether we notice them or not, in standing. We need to avoid shading our conscientious convictions for the sake of conformity.

If I'm a true Christian, I don't want my brother to shade his conscience in order to go along with me. And if *he's* a true Christian, he doesn't want *me* to shade *my* conscience in order to go along with *him*.

Of course, there are many things that are perfectly proper for us to *yield* on. If somebody wants to paint the barn red, and I want to paint it brown, we can agree on some other color, or it's all right for him to go ahead and paint it red. I can yield on that; it would probably be good for me to yield. And there's a world of things that come up in our daily lives where it's a good thing to yield. But when it comes to a matter of conscientious conviction concerning your personal duty, my brother, God wants you to do what? Stand. And He also wants you to let other people do the same.

Copyright 2012. All rights reserved.

W.D. Frazee Sermons
PO Box 129, Wildwood, GA 30757
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755
www.WDFsermons.org
support@WDFsermons.org