

## I'M STANDING STRONG

**February 15, 2009**

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**1 Peter 5:6-11**

If there was a time the people of God need to stand firm it is now. It seems as if there is a violent shaking going on in our world today. Only those standing firm in their faith will survive. People are going through. They are losing jobs and homes. Some people have just given up and walked away from their homes because they know they can no longer afford them. Sickness and death are ravaging the land. Planes are falling out of the sky. Everyone is worried about what is going to happen next. Some people force themselves to make unholy and unwholesome choices to cope with what's going on. Trouble comes to tempt us to give up on God. This is the time to fight. It is the time to stand firm in your faith.

Life can be tough. Even in good times, something happens to break your stride. There are times you can't even put a finger on what is discouraging or frustrating you. You don't know why you are fed up. Life can be rough even when you are saved and filled with the Holy Ghost. In the text, Peter gives us the ways we should stand strong. This is a word for those who are discouraged about their situation. When you are in Christ, this is not "it" for us. We are just pilgrims passing through. **Romans 8:18**

When you are in Christ, He is the hope of glory. We are to live holy even as our Father called us to live holy. To suffer is to humbly submit to our sovereign God. He is not caught of guard. He wants the best for you. Don't you know He is working something out in your life right now? We always think our ideas of how to live are better than God's. If you are alive you are going to go through something. If you are on the earth you are going to have hard times. Our problem is that we try to get through it with our own volitions. If you learn how to submit to God you will learn that victory happens through the pain. You need to know what God wants to do with you. Ask God, "What is it you want to do with me right now?" Stop trying to fix it yourself. **Romans 5:1-5** Suffering produces perseverance. You just rejoice in your suffering. When you are running a race for God you have to run with perseverance. Perseverance is hanging in there no matter what happens. It is not grumbling and complaining. It is not giving up.

God has already provided your basic needs but you think you need so much more than that. He is trying to teach you perseverance. Perseverance produces character. Character means to be proven reliable. That means He can trust you with what He has for you. You may not receive that promotion right away because God is trying to develop character in you. Coal becomes a diamond through pressure. Gold becomes pure through fire. Your faith shall come forth as pure gold. God is looking for character. Character means that you are the same in public and private. Character produces hope. Hope makes us not ashamed. **James 1:2-5**

What God is up to is to develop our faith. Faith is trust, confidence, and reliance upon him. It is trusting Him and not ourselves. It is trusting Him and not our resources. What God is asking us is, "Am I not enough?" Most of us are concerned about the lack in our lives. However, that lack is material lack. What God wants to do is to make us complete in every way so that we are not lacking anything that's essential. Submission is an act of faith. God gives grace to the humble. He will lift you up in due season meaning in God's time. When

God sees that it is the right time, He will exalt you. The most important years of our lives aren't when we are on center stage; they are when we are anonymous. Your anonymous years are when He is making and molding you into the shape He wants you.

When you are going through you don't have to handle it alone. All you have to do is cast all your cares upon Him because He cares for you. When you are discouraged and frustrated you feel pulled apart. To cast means to throw something. Grab all that negative stuff and throw it. God is a heavy load sharer. The reason why we have cares is because we have an enemy. The enemy blinds the minds of unbelievers so you cannot hear the words of Christ. His primary weapon is discouragement. He wants to discourage us. That's where he has the nation now. You know what happens when you are discouraged. You don't talk, dream, serve, pray, or worship. He is cutting you off from your power source: God. **Jeremiah 29:11** He wants to cut off your future so that you will abort the baby in the womb. Discouragement has shut you down; and you don't believe you can go any further. The enemy uses all of kinds of things to discourage us. Have you noticed that when you achieve success it seems as if the enemy pulls you down? You are scared to climb the mountain because there may be a valley.

A lot of us live with a low-grade anger. We are just angry. When someone says something wrong you shut down or go off. The enemy uses that. It is a crack in your character. You can't allow yourself to get too hungry, angry, or lonely. Lastly, don't get too tired. You are sick and tired of being sick and tired. You think you are too distracted and too busy to pray. The truth of the matter is you are too busy not to pray. You have to learn how to stand firm in your faith. **Ephesians 6:10** The devil has schemes. You have to stay alert and aware. Know how the enemy works with you. After you've done all you can, stand. To stand against means to get in the enemy's face and stand your ground. He has angered, frustrated, and discouraged you. The bible says to resist him and stand firm against him. Putting on the armor of Christ gives you the ability to defeat Satan like a dying cockroach fighting for its life. Why does God allow this? He is using it to strengthen you. He wants you to stand. Do that by fasting, praying, and worshiping. God is trying to take you somewhere and the enemy knows it. The enemy is trying to stop you from getting there. Stand! Pray! and worship!

Peace

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