

12. Helping Our Children Learn to Stand Fast in the Lord

In our last topic, we discussed the topic of helping our physical and spiritual children learn how to help others prepare for opposition. We saw from 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16 eight reasons why that opposition will certainly come. Today, we want to show our children how to help others learn to stand fast in the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 3:8 says, “For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.” The word that is translated “stand fast” means *to stand firm, to persist or to persevere*. Today, we will be looking at the way to help our physical and spiritual children learn to help others stand fast in the Lord.

First, this verse tells us how it will affect our lives if our children learn to stand fast in the Lord and show others how to stand fast in the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 3:7-9 says, “Therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God.” Paul and the team with him were going through a lot of affliction and distress as they were persecuted for Christ. However, they said that the faith of the Thessalonians was providing them with great comfort. Their lives were also being filled with great joy and rejoicing because the Thessalonians had learned to stand fast in the Lord.

Second, we want to help our children learn that as they mature, they become accountable to the Lord instead of to us as parents. Romans 14:4 says, “Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.” In this verse, we see that we are not to judge others. This is a very important lesson as we help our children learn to work with others. The previous verses point out that some Christians are weak and will avoid certain things. As a result, there may be a temptation for stronger Christians to despise these weaker Christians or for the weaker Christians to judge stronger Christians because of their liberty. In verse four, we are reminded that each Christian has become a servant of Christ and is now accountable to Christ because each Christian is a servant of Christ.

We also see that it is good that other Christians are accountable to Christ rather than to us. Because the weaker Christians are accountable to Christ, the Lord is able to make them stand. Our responsibility as Christians is to strengthen them and help them learn to stand. 1 Thessalonians 5:14 says, “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.” The unruly are the rebellious. However, we see that we are to encourage the fainthearted. We are to hold up the strength-less and we are to be patient with all.

Third, we see that we want to help our children learn how to help others stand fast in the faith. 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 says, “Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love.” “The faith” speaks of the teachings about Christ through whom we have obtained eternal salvation. Jude 1:3 says, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”

Paul used the root word for “contend earnestly” five times. Two of these were to Timothy. 1 Timothy 6:12 says, “Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” The second time was in 2 Timothy 4:7-8 where Paul summarized his ministry by saying, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” From these verses, we see that “contending” speaks of a person that is competing in a race. To win a race a person must keep their eyes focused on the goal. Fighting the good fight of faith means we help our children show others how to keep their eyes focused on Christ until He calls them to heaven.

Fourth, we see that we are to show our children how to help others stand fast in the liberty that we have in Christ. Galatians 5:1 says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Christ set us free from that yoke of bondage to sin at the moment of salvation. We want to help our children learn to explain to others what that liberty means in their lives and how to live in that liberty. Galatians 5:13 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Here, we see that true Christian liberty sets us free to serve one another in love.

Before we came to Christ, we had neither the power nor the desire to serve others with the love of Christ. As Christians learn to walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16), be led by the Spirit (Galatians 5:18), and live in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25), their lives will bear the fruit of the Spirit given in Galatians 5:22-23. Learning to walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit and to live in the Spirit gives us the power to serve one another in love. Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” In these verses, we see that love is part of the fruit we see the Holy Spirit produce in our lives because of the liberty that we have in Christ and is what makes it possible for us to serve one another in love.

Fifth, we see that we are to show our children how to help others learn to work together as they stand fast in the Spirit. Philippians 1:27-28 says, “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.” We see here that showing our children how to help others develop conduct worthy of the gospel of Christ includes showing them that they are now able to stand fast in one spirit and have unity of thought as they work together for the faith of the Gospel.

As Christians learn to work together as a team and as they stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel, this unity prepares them to minister to one another even in times when they experience opposition and persecution. The next verse, Philippians 1:29 says, “For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” Christians will suffer as they are serving the Lord. However, as Christians

serve together in unity as they suffer, they are able to follow the example of the early church. Acts 5:41-42 says, “So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.” Here, we see that as we stand fast in the Spirit, we will even be able to rejoice together for the privilege of suffering for Christ.

Sixth, we want to show our children how to help others develop an eternal focus. Philippians 3:20-4:1 says, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.” Here, we see that an eternal focus helps Christians to stand fast in the Lord because we are looking forward to the transformation that Christ will make in our lives.

Seventh, we want to show our children how to help others stand fast in the Word of God. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15 says, “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” Paul had taught the new Christians in Thessalonica many things while he was in that city. Later, he had added to the teaching that he gave when he was in the city of Thessalonica by the things that he had written in 1 Thessalonians and was now writing in 2 Thessalonians. Now, Paul was encouraging them to stand fast and depend on the things that they had learned from the Word of God for continued growth in their spiritual lives.

The reason why we want to show our children how to help others stand fast in the Word of God is due to the fact that the Word will transform their lives. Romans 12:2 says, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Then, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Our goal is to equip our physical and spiritual children so that they understand the way that the Lord works to transform lives. In these verses, we see that the Lord uses His Word to renew the minds of those who place their trust in Christ. Then, Christ also wants to use His Word to bring each Christian to spiritual maturity and equip each Christian for every good work. What a joy it is to show our children how to develop such a ministry in their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your physical and spiritual children how to equip others to stand fast in the Lord.