

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, March 21, 2012 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

STANDING ALONE Introduction

How easy is it to “go against the flow,” to “swim upstream,” to “fight against the current”? How easy is it? It’s not! As a matter of fact it is virtually impossible in our own strength and yet isn’t that exactly what God has called believer to in His Word. Listen as the following Bible verse are read and ask yourself what exactly is being said:

- *John 17:15-19* _____
- *Romans 12:1-2* _____
- *2 Corinthians 10:2-3* _____
- *1 John 2:15-17* _____

Few pressures are most powerful than the pull of the worlds stream to fit in, to be accepted, to be one of the ground, to not stand out to much, to not be too different. From our earliest years we have wrestled with it. It is felt on the school campus just as in the office at work. If we shrug our shoulders and think it will go away, it intensifies – dulling the edge of our commitment to Christ and pleading with us to lower our standards of spirituality, morality, and integrity.

This study offer straight talk from the Scriptures on how to handle this pressure. It doesn’t hide the objectives of the world: fortune, fame, power and pleasure... but it does offer help on how to be a person who is secure enough to resist wrong and to practice what is right even when it isn’t popular.

From young person to those who are retired, “Standing Alone” will get your attention and put some steel back in your bones. But you’d better be ready! This is not easy stuff to apply. I am praying, however, that it will be a powerful tool to help you stand firm, even though there are many who choose not to do so. Thanks for being different!

“Standing Alone When Outnumbered”
Romans 12:1-2, Deuteronomy 6:10-15

The Christian life is a unique and distinctive; it is totally unlike the life-style played out by the majority of people on this planet. As Christians, we have been compared to tiny islands of truth surrounded by an enormous sea of paganism. But still, we must live and operate in a world that is in conflict with spiritual values. God has chosen not to take us out of the world – but He does not want us to live as though we are of it.

“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.” –John 17:15-16

This creates a dilemma... and it is this very dilemma which this series of studies is designed to face.

I. INTRODUCTION TO “STANDING ALONE”

One of our greatest human fears is being ostracized... being cut off from other people because of being different. Being different just for the sake of being different is foolish, and this is not our concern here.

1. **Where are we going?** – In “Standing Alone” we will learn some biblical techniques on how to maintain a distinctive life-style when surrounded by non-Christians. Put another way, we want to learn how to counteract, on a serious level, conformity to the world system.
2. **What are our goals?** – There are three goals we want to keep in mind as we work through this study.

3 Goals to Keep in Mind in Standing Alone:

- (1) **That we seek to be *balanced*...** avoiding fanaticism.
- (2) **That we aim to be *positive*...** avoiding that which is needlessly negative.
- (3) **That we be *victorious*...** avoiding defeat.

II. ANALYSIS OF A BIBLICAL PASSAGE (Romans 12:1)

This is perhaps the most familiar verse in Paul’s Roman letter. When reading the text, six observations can be made.

6 Observations from Romans 12:1

1. **This truth is for the Christian –**
2. **There is an urgency in this message –**
3. **This urgency relates to a personal sacrifice –**
4. **The sacrifice touches two realms: (1) the inner person, (2) and the outer person –**
5. **The sacrifice is essentially spiritual –**
6. **The sacrifice leads to a practical and radical decision –**

Summary Thought: The seasoned apostle/writer saw that at life’s deepest level one was to present himself or herself sacrificially to God at all times. At work or at rest. In bed or on

the street. “Presenting” happens only when an attitude of sacrifice precedes it. This giving to God involves everything related to our senses, as well as our drives, interests, desires, and dreams. The very act of giving the sum total of all these things to God is to be viewed as our highest expression of worship; there is no higher.

III. REMINDER FROM EVERYDAY LIFE

None of us can do business in this world without rubbing shoulders with those driven by the world’s desires. The objectives of the world system can be summarized in four words... words representing challenges with which we must do battle daily.

4 Summary Words of the World’s Desires:

1. **Fortune** – The doctrine that success and prosperity give us our greatest happiness or security.
2. **Fame** – The search for popularity that supposedly leads to acceptance and elevation of worth.
3. **Power** – The exercise of influence and control over others, in order to feel important.
4. **Pleasure** – The pursuit of maximum enjoyment, satisfaction, comfort, and delight, ignoring all limits and restraints – godly or otherwise – to make ourselves feel good.

IV. COMMANDS FROM A BIBLICAL PASSAGE (Romans 12:2)

The meaning of two strong terms used by Paul must be grasped by those seeking to avoid being shaped by the world system.

2 Commands for Avoiding Being Shaped by the World System:

1. **“Do not be conformed”** – One who conforms assumes an outward expression that does not come from within. Conformity here has the idea of wearing a mask... masquerading. Let’s put it this way... when the outside of me does something that is not Christ-like, I am conforming.
2. **“But be transformed”** – The biblical term means an outward expression that comes from within. Perhaps the word we’re most acquainted with to describe biblical transformation is “metamorphosis.” Transformation occurs when we experience a striking alternation in both appearance and character. Think of it like this... when the real Christ, designed to express Himself through my life, comes through... transformation has taken place.

An Essential Word: Paul doesn’t leave us in the dark as to how we are to “be transformed.” Transformation accompanies the renewing of our minds. Here the key to our growth and development in Christ. We are to busy ourselves with the process that leads to complete mental renovation... the reworking of our inner thoughts. Our study – “Standing Alone” – is designed to help and stimulate that renewal process.

V. ILLUSTRATION FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT (Deuteronomy 6:10-15)

The context of this passage includes a leader and his people... Moses and those born in the wilderness (the children of those who had escaped the bondage of Egypt). This new generation was about to cross the Jordan River and enter the long-awaited Promised Land.

In speaking to them, Moses warned them of four potential disasters. Let's summarize his warnings this way.

4 Potential Disasters:

1. **Getting something for nothing breeds irresponsibility –**
2. **Irresponsibility creates an attitude of carelessness –**
3. **Carelessness leads to a loss of standards –**
4. **Loss of standards prompts insecurity -**

VI. APPLICATION FOR US TODAY

The world system is designed to entrench us in insecurity. As those of Moses' day needed a reminder... we today need one as well. If I am to renew my mind, then it must begin with four principle statements around which my life should be lived.

4 Principles Statements for Renewing My Mind for Standing Alone:

1. **"I am responsible"** – We take responsibility for both wrong-doing and right-doing.
2. **"I must not forget"** – We represent Jesus Christ, who brought us out of a life-style that we perverse and wicked. Remembering that which was behind, we keep looking ahead.
3. **"I am accountable to God"** – For none of us is the matter of taking God seriously an option... it is a realistic obligation.
4. **"I get my standards and security from God alone"** – Within us, the ability to stand alone grows out of our own security in our Lord God.

*"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed... STAND ALONE"
–Romans 12:2*