

GOD

Stand for the Truth

God, our all-powerful heavenly Father, wants us to trust in Him in every aspect of our lives. This includes our trusting in Him as we stand, refusing to budge, when it comes to living and proclaiming the truth of His Word. As we make up our minds to stand, we can trust that God will back us up, and we can expect to be victorious in every situation.

If we're going to stand for the truth, we should first consider what "the truth" is that we want to stand for. "What is truth?" is a question that has been asked for thousands of years. Consider the record in the Gospel of John, Chapter 18, the record of Jesus Christ being questioned by Pilate. We'll begin in verse 37:

John

18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

18:38a Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?

Pilate obviously wasn't present earlier when Jesus, after leaving the site of the "Last Supper" with his disciples, prayed the prayer recorded in John Chapter 17. In verse 17 we find the answer to Pilate's question:

17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

So, we see that the Word of God is truth.

It's interesting to note that in the four Gospels, the Greek word *alētheia*, the word most commonly translated "truth", is used by far the most times in the Gospel of John, where it is used 22 times compared to only once in Matthew, three times in Mark, and twice in Luke. The Gospel of John emphasizes Jesus Christ as the Son of God, representing his Father by speaking and living the truth, His Father's Word.

God wants us in this Administration of Grace to hear the truth, to know the truth, and to share the truth with others. Look at Ephesians Chapter 1, verse 13:

Ephesians

1:13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise,

When we heard the truth, God's Word, we believed and became born again, with God's gift of holy spirit within. We then need to study God's Word and make it our own:

II Timothy

2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

As we rightly divide God's Word, we keep the truth in our hearts and minds. II Peter Chapter 1, verse 12 tells us that we are to be "established in the present truth", the truth of God's Word to us in this Grace Administration. This truth is referred to in John 16:13, which says "...when it, the spirit of truth (the gift of holy spirit) is come (on the Day of Pentecost), it will guide you into all truth..."

When we know the truth, God's Word, we keep it in our hearts and minds:

Ephesians

6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

But God also wants us to share His Word with others so they too can be born again and learn the truth:

I Timothy

2:4 Who (*God*) will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

As born-again believers standing together in the household, we are also to speak the truth to each other:

Ephesians

4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:

In this verse, "speaking the truth" is from the one Greek word *alētheuō*, from the same root as our word *alētheia*. It more literally means not just speaking the truth, but living it.

As we saw in Ephesians 6:14, for us to keep the truth of God's Word in our hearts and minds, and for us to effectively share the truth with others, we need to stand.

So, let's now consider this word "stand". What does it mean to stand? The word "stand" we saw in Ephesians 6:14 ("Stand therefore...") is from the Greek word *histēmi*, the word most commonly translated "stand". In most places, this word simply means to stand on one's feet, but in several verses, especially in the Church Epistles, this word takes on the figurative meaning of "to take a stand". For example, Romans 5:2 mentions "this grace wherein we stand".

In I Corinthians 15:1 we read: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand." Here Paul is referring to their stand on the truth of God's Word in our administration, the truth of the Great Mystery.

Let's return to Ephesians Chapter 6 to see more about the word "stand", translated from the Greek word *histēmi*. This time we'll begin in verse 10:

Ephesians

6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

By our freedom of will, we are to "put on", to utilize, all that God has made available to us. We believe God's Word, operate the nine manifestations of holy spirit, and trust in God. As we do this, we are able to stand against the adversary.

6:12 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 (*from on high*).

6:13 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.

Verse 13 reiterates, establishes, that we are to make use of everything God made available to us, so we can "withstand in the evil day" (in the Aramaic text it reads "withstand the evil one"), and having done all, stand.

Then we come to verse 14 which we read before:

6:14a Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...

We take a stand for the truth, God's Word.

But we can do more than simply "take a stand": we can "stand fast" for the truth, with "fast" meaning secure, fixed, immobile. As we stand fast for the truth, we don't let anybody or anything shake us or move us from that truth. There is one Greek word that is usually translated "stand fast", and that is the word *stēko*. It is translated "stand fast" six times in the Church Epistles, and we can gain a greater understanding of what it is to "stand fast" for the truth by looking at these usages. We'll start in I Corinthians 16:13:

I Corinthians

16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

In this verse the believers are exhorted to "watch", or more accurately be vigilant, from the same Greek word used in I Peter 5:8 where we are told: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Remember from Ephesians 6:11 we are to "stand against the wiles of the devil." In James 4:7 we are told: "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." The way to resist the devil is to stand fast on God's Word.

I Corinthians 16:13 tells us that we are to “stand fast in the faith”. We are vigilant: we stand fast in the family faith, in the household, for the truth of God’s Word. “Quit ye like men” more literally means “act like grown-ups” – we are not “children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14): instead, as mature believers, we stand fast.

And, as it says in I Corinthians 16:13, as we stand fast, we can be strong. The word “strong” in this verse is from the Greek word *krataioō*, a form of the word *kratos*, power with an impact. This same word is seen in Ephesians 3:16: “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened (*krataioō*) with might by his spirit in the inner man.” So, as we remain vigilant, acting as mature believers as we stand fast in the family faith, we can have power with an impact. But in order for us to do this, we need to trust in God.

The next usage of the word *stēko*, translated “stand fast,” is in Galatians 5:1:

Galatians

5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

When we got born again, we were forever freed from the Old Testament Law: we have liberty. We need to stand fast in that liberty, keeping the truth of God’s Word in our hearts and minds and not budging on it, so we don’t get tricked into falling back into “the yoke of bondage” (the law). We need to remember that we were saved by grace, not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). To stand fast, not allowing ourselves to slip back into putting ourselves under the law, we need to trust in God that what He says in His Word is the truth.

The next place where *stēko* is translated “stand fast” is in Philippians, Chapter 1:

Philippians

1:27 Only let your conversation (*conduct*) be as it becometh the gospel of (*pertaining to*) Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (*the family faith*);

Here we see that we are to stand fast together with other believers in the household. The word “mind” in this verse is from the Greek word *psuchē*, meaning soul – God wants our soul lives “knit together” as we stand fast as one spiritually. When we stand fast together in victorious unity, nothing the adversary can throw at us can stop us. Again, we need to trust in God that as we stand fast together, He will protect us and make us victorious.

Philippians 4:1 is the next place we find *stēko* translated “stand fast”:

4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

Here we are exhorted to “stand fast in the Lord”. To be “in the Lord” means that we are standing together in the household. The word “Therefore” in this verse refers back to the truths

of Chapter 3 verses 20 and 21, where we are told that as born-again believers our citizenship is in heaven, and when Christ returns, we will receive new, perfect bodies and enjoy everlasting life. We are to stand fast together with like-minded believers, holding fast to these great truths regarding the hope of the Return, trusting in God that what He has revealed by His Word He will bring to pass.

We find the next time *stēko* is translated “stand fast” in I Thessalonians 3:8:

I Thessalonians

3:8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

Here Paul is expressing the great joy that he and Timothy experienced when they heard that the believers in Thessalonica stood fast in the Lord, standing together with the other believers in the household. The word “live” is the same word that we see in places like Matthew 4:4, where Jesus said “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” and Acts 17:28, which says “For in him (in God) we live, and move, and have our being...” As we stand fast in the Lord, we too will live, not just exist, but experience life in all of its fullness.

We come to the last usage of *stekō*, translated “stand fast,” in II Thessalonians 2:15:

II Thessalonians

2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions (*doctrine*) which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

We are to stand fast, holding onto the doctrine of God’s Word, the truth that we know. Why can we do this? Verse 15 begins with the word “Therefore”, so we should look at the previous verses to see why we are able to stand fast. We’ll begin with verse 13:

2:13 But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth:

2:14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We were with God from the beginning in His foreknowledge: he knew that we would believe, so He was able to choose us, giving us salvation through, or by way of, our being set apart, receiving the gift of holy spirit as we believed the truth of God’s Word. Verse 14 says that God called us: as it says in I Peter 2:9, He “called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” We heard God’s Word, the truth, and heeded the call, “to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 8:30 tells us: “...whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Romans 8:31 then reads: “What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?”

So, from II Thessalonians 2:13 and 14 we see that we were chosen of God, called of God, set apart and given the gift of holy spirit when we believed the truth, His Word, and we have

been glorified, with the promise of a new body and eternal life. Knowing this, we can stand fast, as we are exhorted in verse 15. Once again, to stand fast, remaining firm and unmovable on these great truths, we must trust in God that what He said in His Word is indeed the truth, and that He will keep His promises.

As we stand fast for the truth, we will not waiver; we will not be moved. Psalm 16 shows us some additional benefits of standing fast for the truth, not allowing ourselves to be moved. We'll begin in verse 8:

Psalms

16:8 I have set the Lord always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

16:9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest (*dwell confidently*) in hope.

16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fullness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

As we learn God's Word and trust that He will keep His promises, we can stand fast, not allowing ourselves to be moved. As we stand fast together in the household, we will not only be victorious, but we will experience fullness of joy as we dwell confidently in the hope of Christ's Return.

- Dr. Rick Batt