

# THEME: Stand Firm

## LOOKING BACK

- What was the most important thing you did or heard from the last session?

## CONNECT

### Doing the Word of God

#### Resources

Bibles, popsicle sticks (from a craft store), play dough, sand, two shallow boxes with open lids

#### Icebreaker Activity - Build a House!

**Things to Prepare:** Fill one shallow box with some sand. Put a thick layer of play dough down in the bottom of the other box.

**Activity:** You will be placed on a team: either the playdough team or the sand team. Work with your team members to build a house in the shallow box out of the popsicle sticks provided. You will be given two minutes to build your house. Then, you will need to stop because a storm is coming. It will cause a lot of shaking. (Adults, please shake the two boxes and see that the one built on sand falls much more readily.)

#### Discuss

- What happened to the houses when the storm shook them? *The houses built on sand collapsed.*
- The houses represent the lives we are each building. *If we don't build our lives on firm ground, we can find our lives falling apart, like the popsicle stick houses.*
- Standing on firm ground is important. Standing firm is going to be essential in the days before Jesus returns.
- Let's look into the Bible to see what God says about how we can make sure our lives stand firm when the world around us is shaking.

# TRUTH TO KNOW

## Faith Focus: We Must Know How to Stand Firm on God's Word

### Introduction

We want to help you know the Truth and will do our best to tell you what is true, but you don't just need to take our word. You need to read it in the Bible for yourself. So we will open the Bible and read the Truth each time we meet. This week's "Truth to Know" is found in **Matthew 7**.

### Background to This Bible Passage

Jesus was with his hearers in the Galilee region, where He had been teaching a large group of people on a hillside. Jesus had been giving the people many new teachings. At the end of His sermon, Jesus told everyone that they must be people who not only hear His teachings but also DO them. He used a parable to teach them what to do and what not to do when they hear His teachings.

### The Unfolding Story - Your Interactive Teaching

Read **Matthew 7:24-27**.

- Who was this parable given to? Jesus' hearers ... who would have been Jews, who knew God's Word and heard Jesus' teachings.
- Jesus used a parable about building a house. There were two types of builders. Who were they? A wise man and a foolish man.
- What is it that helped the wise man's house to stand firm on the rock? The man had not only heard the teachings of Jesus, he had actually lived them out. You can relate this back to the activity at the start.
- The foolish man heard the teachings of Jesus but didn't practice them. Why do you think he chose not to do them? He probably didn't have his thinking renewed by the teachings but rather just listened to them and continued living in his old ways.
- When God's Word renews our thinking, we act differently. We are able to discern God's will, recognize right from wrong, and then make good and God-pleasing choices. Our lives are built so that we can stand firm on the rock, on solid ground. What did Jesus say about building on sand? The ones who build their houses on sand only listen to the teachings but don't choose to practice or live them out. Jesus said that when storms come, our houses that we built will collapse.
- How do we stand firm on God's word? We need to listen to it and do it.
- Why is it important to take this teaching seriously? Jesus is coming back to earth, and He told us that there would be increasing storms in the season of His return. We must be ready for these times. Then, we can stand firm. Then, our lives will not collapse in the coming storms.

### Activity Suggestion - Matching Activity

**Aim:** To practice finding Words from the Bible to suit specific circumstances we may be going through. To practice standing on specific Words and be trained in using the Word of God in a powerful way.

**Things to Prepare:** Make two columns and four rows on letter-size (A4) paper. In one column, type or write four circumstances where a specific Word would be helpful. In the other column, type or write four Scriptures that might suit those particular situations. Write out the Bible verses in full.

Suggestions for topics/verses:

- Not allowed to speak out about Jesus (verse: **Acts 18:9-10**);
- Conflicts in your family (verse: **Colossians 3:13**);
- Being laughed at by peers (verse: **Isaiah 51:7**);
- Betrayed by a friend (verse: **Psalms 36:7**).

Print (or write) as many sheets as there are pairs in your group. Then, cut up the rows and columns (there should be four situations and four verses). Using a different paper color for each pair of children may be helpful.

**Activity:** Have the students work in pairs for this activity. Each pair will be given eight pieces of paper. Four of them have challenging situations written on them, and four of them have specific Bible verses. Ask them to work together in pairs to match up the most suitable Bible verse for each situation. When done, have them look at what other groups did.

### **Discuss - Standing on the Word of God**

- Standing firm in challenging situations requires us to know the Bible and to go deep into God's Word so that we can use it in powerful ways.
- Why do we need to be able to stand strong? Jesus said that life would become very challenging in the season of His return.

In **Matthew 7**, Jesus told us to build our house on the rock. We do this when we "do" Jesus' teachings. And we can live out His teachings when we have stood on them in faith.

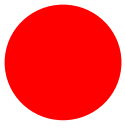
- This activity helped us identify some Scriptures that would be good for trusting in when we are facing tough times. We will refer to this as "standing on" those Words. What do you think this means? To stand on a Word from the Bible is to believe it and trust in it for your particular situation and to do what it tells you to do, trusting that when we do what God says to do, He will do what He promises to do.
- Being able to find Scriptures to stand on is important. How can we grow our skills in this area? Read more of the Bible and read it more deeply, paying attention to verses that might be helpful for standing on. We can also ask others to help us find verses.
- How do we "stand on" a Word? What are some ways of doing this? The key is to believe in the Word and to have faith in it for your life. To help us do this, we can repeat it out loud, pray it to God over ourselves, ask others to pray it over us, write it out, print it out, and post it somewhere, etc.

## **READY TO GO**

*Thinking about how this affects our lives and our response to the signs we see.*

Think about what you can do to stand firm on the Word of God.

## TIME FOR ACTION



1. **“STOP & THINK” Action Point**

Take two minutes to think about your own life. What circumstances are you facing that you could use the Word of God to stand on?



2. **“PAUSE TO PRAY” Action Point**

Have a conversation with God about today’s lesson. Ask Him for a Scripture that you can stand on right now.



3. **“GO & DO” Action Point**

Go to find a Scripture verse. Go to where the Lord leads, or ask someone else to pray for a verse for you. Once you have a verse, decide on one thing you will do to help you stand on it and believe God for it.

## SPRINGBOARD

Discuss what topic you would like to do together next time. After this session, you may wish to follow up next time with one of the following sessions:

- Don’t Conform
- Guard Against Deception

## FOR DEEPER STUDY

*For those who would like to study further the themes raised in this session.*

### For Study

1. **Hebrews 4:12** (ESV): “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” How is God’s Word like a sword when we are “standing on” it during challenging times?
2. **Isaiah 43:2** speaks of walking through fire and not being burned. These words were spoken by the prophet Isaiah just a few years before Daniel was taken to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. Can you think of how and when this verse may have been used as a Word to stand on in faith? Have a look at **Daniel 3:8-28** and find a phrase that suggests people may have been standing on this Word.

### For Memorizing

1. **Ephesians 6:11** (ESV): “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.”
2. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** (ESV): “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

### For Observation

1. Watch how a toddler eats his/her food. What do you notice? It can be messy! Toddlers were used to drinking milk from bottles, but then they started eating solid food. We can sometimes feel like toddlers when we start feasting on meatier and more challenging Scriptures. God wants us to dig deeper and to be able to use His Word in powerful ways so that we can stand firm. This will take practice and may feel messy at first.
2. How is living out God’s Word like building a house? Why do you think Jesus used this parable to make his point about being doers of the Word? For inspiration, you may wish to watch part of [this video](https://youtu.be/fKxvNwITGms) about constructing a concrete mini-house. (<https://youtu.be/fKxvNwITGms>)

### For Action

1. Think about the signs of the times (you may refer to the Signs sheet from Stage 2, Session 16) and choose one issue that you find particularly concerning. Find a Bible verse to stand on so that you will stand firm. What will you do to stand on that Word?

### Before the Next IN:Tribe

1. Bring to the next IN:Tribe one Bible verse you think would be good for standing on. Together, let’s build a bank of verses that we can draw from.