



90 FAITH-BUILDING DEVOTIONS

STAND STRONG

FOR BOYS

Our Daily Bread

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Our Daily Bread
Publishing™

Stand Strong for Boys: 90 Faith-Building Devotions

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INTRODUCTION

Sometimes it is fun to find boyhood pictures of your favorite athletes—to see what they looked like when they were little. For instance, you can go online and find a picture of former Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow as a baby with his left hand touching a football. What a difference from the strong, muscular, football star of his adult years!

But the truth is, we all start that way. Small. Holding on to things that are familiar to us.

With no idea of what the future might bring.

God has created each person unique. And God has an amazing plan for you just as He did for Tebow, who uses his fame in football and baseball (minor league outfielder, New York Mets) to influence people to know Jesus.

Right now, when you don't know what the future holds for you, is the best time to begin to *stand strong*—to build a foundation of faith that will direct you to use your life in a way that honors God and gives you the best opportunity for true happiness in the future.

That's why we've put together this book, *Stand Strong for Boys*. We want to help you on your journey to fulfilling the plans God has for you.

Here's a little peek at what the book offers for each day as you begin to use it to help you stand strong.

- Bible passage. Look it up and read it. It'll give you some background for the lesson each day.
- Memory verse. Think about it for a moment or two before you read—and maybe go back and try to memorize it when you're done.
- The main article. It begins with a story or fact you can relate to. Then there's some biblical teaching and a challenge to grow in your faith and in your walk with Jesus.
- Fun fact. Additional interesting information about something in the article.
- A prayer. This can help you talk to God about the biblical teaching in the article.

That's it.

Five minutes a day to help you grow stronger!

It's not easy to stand strong for God these days. Actually, it's never been easy. But you can do it! And if you do—if you live in a way that glorifies God—you will be so glad you did!

STAND STRONG FOR BOYS

90 FAITH-BUILDING DEVOTIONS

1

HELPING YOU STAND STRONG

2 TIMOTHY 4:1-8

*I have fought the good fight, I have
finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

2 TIMOTHY 4:7

Back when your grandparents were young, if people had to live apart from each other for jobs or school, they had two ways to get in touch with each other: a long-distance phone call or a letter. The letter was cheaper, so that was often the way they communicated. It was exciting for them to go to the mailbox and find a letter from someone they hadn't seen in months! Lots of news and encouragement.

That might give you a little idea about the letters that are now a part of our Bible. Those are books like Colossians and Ephesians and 1 and 2 Timothy. This was how Paul the apostle stayed in touch with Christians in faraway places. Often, Paul was in prison for preaching about Jesus, so the letters were important for the people who loved him.

One of those letters was written to Paul's "son in the faith," Timothy. Paul told him: "The time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:6-7).

When we read the letters in the Bible from heroes of the Christian faith, we can see how courageous they were. Paul was Timothy's example of strength. When you're having a rough day, think of this letter from Paul and remember how faithful and strong he was.

JUST YOU AND GOD

"Dear God, it sounds really cool to be strong like Paul, but I'm not. Please give me courage as a Christian."



FUN FACT

According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), during World War I, up to twelve million letters a week were delivered to the soldiers.

2

SUIT UP

EPHESIANS 6:13-21

Put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

EPHESIANS 6:13

When you start playing football, one thing that takes some getting used to is all that equipment you have to wear. Running around in a helmet, shoulder pads, and other protective items feels awkward and clumsy at first. But soon it all becomes like a familiar friend providing welcome protection. When a football player suits up, he relies on his equipment to protect against a dangerous opponent.

As a follower of Christ, you have a different kind of dangerous foe—a spiritual enemy who seeks your downfall. He is referred to as Satan or the devil. Fortunately, our Lord has provided us with protection from him, and He challenges us to suit up.

Ephesians 6:13 says, "Put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground." Paul then describes our armor—helmet, breastplate, shield, sword, belt, and shoes. They represent relying on the Bible (v. 17), praying (v. 18), and telling others about Jesus (vv. 19-20). These are important pieces of armor. So suit up! The battle is on!

FUN FACT

The average weight of all the football gear you have to put on to keep you protected on the field is about twenty pounds. By contrast, a hockey goalie's stuff weighs about fifty pounds!

JUST YOU AND GOD

"I know I need you to protect me. Help me learn more about the Bible and how to live for you."

In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

JOB 12:10



3

THE VARIETY OF CREATION

JOB 12:7-13

Think about the amazing features God placed in the animals He created. Job wrote about several of them, including the ostrich. Despite its apparent lack of good sense and its odd parenting skills, its chicks survive (39:13-16). And despite its membership in the bird family, it can't fly—but it can outrun a horse (v. 18).

Another remarkable creature is the bombardier beetle. This African insect shoots two common materials, hydrogen peroxide and hydroquinone, from twin storage tanks in its back, blinding its attackers. A special nozzle inside the beetle mixes the chemicals, enabling it to bombard its foe at amazing speeds! The little guy can rotate his "cannon" to fire in any direction.

How can this be? How is it that a rather dull-witted ostrich survives although it's not very good at caring for its young while the bombardier beetle needs a complicated chemical reaction to make sure it survives? It's because God's creative abilities have no limits. "At his command they were created," the psalmist tells us (148:5). God's creative work is clear for everyone to see.

FUN FACT

Did you know that the wood frog actually freezes solid in the winter? Some important body parts are protected by a natural anti-freeze chemical. The rest? Solid as a rock all winter! Spring comes, it thaws out, and all is well.

JUST YOU AND GOD

"Lord, I keep hearing people tell me that you didn't create these things. They say it all evolved. Help me to keep believing in you."

4

ALL SAFE! ALL WELL!

HEBREWS 11:8-16

*Now faith is confidence
in what we hope for
and assurance about
what we do not see.*

HEBREWS 11:1



On April 24, 1916, twenty-two men watched as Ernest Shackleton and five others set out in a tiny lifeboat for South Georgia, an island eight hundred miles away, to look for help. These twenty-eight men had reached ice-covered, mountainous Elephant Island after their ship *Endurance* was destroyed near Antarctica.

FUN FACT

The ship *Endurance* left South Georgia Island on December 5, 1914, headed for Antarctica. It was not until September 1916 that the twenty-eight men were safe on land again when they arrived in Chile.

The odds of Shackleton's mission succeeding seemed impossible. If those six men could not find South Georgia—their only hope—all twenty-eight would certainly die. Imagine the joy of the twenty-two left behind when more than *four months later* a rescue boat appeared on the horizon with Shackleton on its bow shouting, "Are you all well?" And the call came back, "All safe! All well!"

What kept those men alive? Faith and hope placed in one man. They believed Shackleton would find a way to save them.

This human example of hope sounds like the faith of the heroes listed in Hebrews 11. Their faith in what the writer called "substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" kept people like Noah, Abraham, and Moses going during great difficulties (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV).

No matter what happens, you can have hope through your faith in one Man: Jesus.

JUST YOU AND GOD

"I'm trying to have faith, God. Sometimes it's hard because of what people say or because of bad things. Help me keep having faith in you!"

5

SHAQ AND ME

PSALM 111

*The fear of the LORD is the
beginning of wisdom.*

PSALM 111:10

Imagine having your picture taken with Hall of Fame NBA player Shaquille O'Neal. Even if you are taller than all your friends, you'll be VERY short next to Shaq, who is over seven feet tall. You'll find out you aren't as tall as you thought you were.

Did you ever think of how much greater God is than we are? Sometimes we walk around like we're all that. But then we read that we don't know anything until we fear God first. One of the Psalms writers said, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (111:10), or, "Wisdom begins with respect for the Lord" (1CB).

When we begin to respect God for all the amazing things He has done (maybe start with, say, *creating the universe!*), we start to get a better picture of how big God is.

So here's the deal. If we learn to know God more and love Him more because He is so much greater than we are, we'll begin to see how much we need to trust Him for everything!

It's pretty smart to realize how little we are next to God and how much we need Him and His great wisdom.

FUN FACT

When Shaquille was ten years old, he was already six feet, two inches tall!

JUST YOU AND GOD

*"I know you are great, God, because you created everything.
Thanks for still loving me, even though I'm just a kid."*