

STANDING STRONG, BECAUSE I KNOW HIM



A 5-DAY JOURNEY OF COURAGE, PEACE, AND PURPOSE

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Standing Strong: Courage When Life Presses In

Read: Deuteronomy 31:6, Jeremiah 29:11, and Jeremiah 31:3

Focus: Courage through Christ

You wake up feeling completely calm and confident. Your mind is still, your heart feels incredibly light, and for a brief, beautiful moment, peace doesn't just feel possible... it feels present. You step out of bed thinking, *Alright. I'm ready for whatever today throws at me.*

But then... life happens.

Maybe it's on your morning commute when you glance at the gas prices and feel your stomach tighten as the stress over your budget rushes in. Or maybe you turn on the radio and immediately get hit with headlines about political tension, global unrest, and financial instability. By the time you finally arrive, your phone is already buzzing nonstop. Emails, texts, and notifications are all pulling at you. Everyone wants something right now.

And just like that, the peace you woke up with starts slipping away. Fear sneaks in—fear about how every little problem might mess up your day or your plans. What started as a calm, confident morning suddenly feels like a tug-of-war between the faith you're trying hard to hold onto and the heavy pressure of fear pushing against your heart.

When you find yourself in that space, here is the truth your soul needs to anchor into: **God never promised us a life without pressure—He promised His presence in the middle of it.**

I have a shirt that says, "Faith does not make it easy; it makes it possible." There's a lot of truth packed into those few words. Real faith isn't some magic button that makes stress, problems, or tough days disappear. It doesn't erase the hard stuff or instantly fix everything going wrong. But what faith *does* do is change where the weight of those burdens sits. Instead of carrying everything on your own, faith helps you hand that weight over to God.

God's strength meets us exactly where we are weakest (2 Corinthians 12:9). The very things that feel completely impossible in our own strength suddenly become possible through His power. He is faithful before the struggle ever hits, He is right beside you in the absolute thick of it, and He is still there long after it ends.

God's Unchanging Promises

When life gets challenging and fear starts to creep in, we must ground ourselves by remembering what God has already promised us. These promises hold us steady when everything else feels shaky. Let's look at a few of them:

- **Deuteronomy 31:6:** God goes before you with unshakeable courage, promising that you will never have to face your battles alone.
- **Jeremiah 29:11:** God has designed a hopeful, purposeful future for you, meaning your current difficult season is not your destination.
- **Jeremiah 31:3:** God surrounds you with His everlasting, unconditional love and unfailing kindness, which can never be lost and will strengthen you each day.

Even this short list of verses shows us that when we have a real, genuine relationship with God, we already have everything we need to face whatever life throws at us. His promises aren't just nice sayings—they're solid anchors that keep our hearts steady even when the world around us feels unpredictable.

Blueprints for Courage

The Bible is a living, breathing guide for how to navigate real-world pressure, broken systems, uncertainty, and deep hardship. The people we read about in Scripture weren't fictional superheroes; they dealt with fear, grief, crushing disappointment, and seemingly impossible situations just like we do. Many of them stood strong because, at the end of the day, they trusted God way more than they trusted their fears.

Their lives left behind blueprints for God-centered courage.

Over the next few days of this series, we're going to dive into the stories of five exceptional women who showed us exactly what this looks like:

- **Shiphrah and Puah:** Two everyday Hebrew midwives who feared God way more than they feared Pharaoh, courageously risking their own lives to protect innocent babies.
- **Deborah:** A prophetess and judge who led an entire nation with unshakeable wisdom and confidence at a time when everyone else was paralyzed by fear and oppression.
- **Jochebed:** A mother whose deep, profound trust in God led her to release her tiny infant son into the Nile River, completely surrendering his future into the hands of the Almighty.
- **Esther:** A young queen who had to step entirely out of her palace comfort zone and risk execution to fulfill God's purpose and rescue her people from destruction.

These were everyday women living through scary, unpredictable times. Some were moms, caregivers, leaders, and helpers, and they carried the same heavy feelings we deal with today—trying to protect the people they loved while still handling their own struggles.

But the real “secret ingredient” in their stories wasn’t that they dug deep and found some kind of superpower inside themselves. Their secret was trusting an extraordinary God. They believed His promise to walk with them through every challenge, and that trust made all the difference.

The exact same God who stood beside them is standing right beside you. He isn’t far away or hard to reach. His presence is steady, His grace is more than enough, and His power is already at work in your life. He can carry anything that feels too heavy for you and walk with you through every season and every chapter still ahead.



Let's Reflect

Take a few quiet minutes right now to just pause, breathe, and write down your honest thoughts:

- What specific pressures, anxieties, or daily responsibilities have been weighing most heavily on your heart and mind this week?
- What are you hoping to find, learn, or explore as you dive into this 5-day study?

Let's Pray

Heavenly Father, I praise You for being my constant, unshakeable strength. Please forgive me for the moments when I get so overwhelmed by my circumstances that I let worry take over instead of trusting Your power. Help me remember that because You are my Father, every single need I have is already met through You. Quiet my fears, steady my faith, and remind me to lean into You when life gets completely overwhelming. Teach me to stand strong—not in my own ability, but in Your limitless, divine strength. Shape me through Your Word, and remind my soul today that I am never, ever standing alone.

In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.



Standing Strong Despite the Cost

Read: Exodus 1:15-21 (NIV)

Focus: Integrity in Every Situation

Shiphrah and Puah probably started their morning expecting a completely normal day. As Hebrew midwives, their daily routine was helping mothers bring new life into the world, celebrating newborn

babies, and caring for tiny infants. But everything changed in an instant when Pharaoh, the king of Egypt himself, summoned them to his court and handed down a horrific command. He ordered them to kill every single newborn Hebrew boy. In a single moment, their faith, integrity, and courage faced the ultimate test.

Now, remember, Pharaoh wasn't just a regular boss or a typical political leader. He held absolute, unchecked power. Disobeying him didn't just mean getting fired; it meant risking torture or execution, and the most powerful people in Egypt backed his decree. Yet, even with all that intense pressure bearing down on them, Shiphrah and Puah refused to comply.

The Bible tells us exactly why: *"The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live"* (Exodus 1:17, NIV).

These women respected God way more than they feared the most powerful king on earth. Instead of hurting innocent babies just to save themselves, they chose to do the right thing, no matter how dangerous it was.

When Pharaoh called them in to demand answers, they didn't panic. They stayed totally calm, cool, and collected. Because they chose to honor God instead of following a bad rule, God blessed them big time and gave them families of their own.

What I love about their story is the incredible ripple effect their brave obedience created. They had no way of knowing it at the time, but their courage opened the door for another woman we'll look at, Jochebed, to safely hide her own baby boy, Moses. Then Moses grew up to be the very leader God used to break the chains of slavery and free the entire nation of Israel. Shiphrah and Puah thought they were just quietly saving a few babies, but they were setting the stage for a massive rescue mission!

Their lives teach us:

- **Our small choices matter way more than we realize.**
- **Culture does not get to define truth.** Just because something is popular, legal, or expected by the world around us doesn't mean it honors God. Living a life of true integrity means choosing what God says is right, even when it's incredibly hard or completely unpopular.

Examples of Courageous Obedience Today

So, what does the spirit of Shiphrah and Puah look like for us? It shows up every time we choose:

- **Biblical dignity:** Treating people with genuine grace, even when everyone else is choosing anger and division.
- **Ethical standards:** Staying true to God's standards, even when cutting corners is way easier.
- **Radical forgiveness:** Actively choosing grace instead of holding onto a grudge, in a world that tells us to nurse our bitterness and seek revenge.
- **Biblical truth:** Boldly standing up for God's truth, but doing it with kindness, love, and humility.

God sees every single quiet, hidden moment where you choose integrity over comfort. Just like it did for those two midwives, your obedience can impact someone else's life tomorrow in ways you might never fully see.

Scripture to Help Us Stand Strong

- **Psalm 112:1 (NIV):** *"Praise the Lord. Blessed are those who fear the Lord, who find great delight in his commands."*
- **Proverbs 10:9 (NIV):** *"Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out."*



Let's Reflect

Take a few minutes to think through these questions and jot down your thoughts:

- Where are you currently feeling the most pressure to fit in, stay silent, or compromise your core values?
- Who is someone in your life that models quiet, steady integrity, and how does their example inspire you?

Let's Pray

Heavenly Father, give me the bold courage to honor You above everything else in every single situation I face today. Help me choose integrity even when it is difficult, costly, or completely unpopular. Strengthen my heart to follow Your Word without hesitation, and give me a holy reverence for You that drives out all fear of what people think of me. I trust that You see every single hidden act of faithfulness. Use my daily obedience as a vessel to bring Your light, hope, and truth to a world that is desperately caught in darkness.

Amen.



Standing Strong: Finding Peace Despite the Challenge

Read: Judges 4:1-9, Judges 5

Focus: Faith Over Fear

Picture this: the enemy's army is charging straight toward Israel with nine hundred iron chariots. The ground is literally shaking under the heavy iron wheels, dust is filling the air, and absolute panic is sweeping through the Israelite soldiers like wildfire. They knew they were completely outmatched, completely overwhelmed, and it looked like they were certain to be destroyed.

Yet, right in the absolute center of all that terrifying chaos, one woman stayed completely calm. Deborah didn't panic, she didn't scream, and she didn't run. She anchored herself so deeply in God's presence that she found a peace that made absolutely no sense to anyone watching.

To put this in perspective, those nine hundred iron chariots were the absolute ultimate military weapons of the ancient world—think of them as the ancient version of modern tanks. When the Israelite foot soldiers looked out over the battlefield, all they could see was an unstoppable wall of moving metal, speed, and power rushing right at them. From a purely human standpoint, winning was impossible.

And honestly, I get their fear. I have reacted the exact same way so many times in my own life, and maybe you have too.

When a crisis hits out of nowhere, the sheer size of the problem can take over our minds until we completely lose sight of how much bigger our God is. It's so easy to forget that the God who created the entire universe is still in complete control of our story.

Philippians 4:19 reminds us that *"God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."* But when fear starts rising, our natural human instinct is to scramble, stress out, and try to fix every single detail ourselves. True spiritual strength works the exact opposite way. Deep peace enters our hearts the moment we refuse to let fear call the shots and instead bring every single detail to God in honest, bold prayer.

Deborah deeply understood this type of strength. While everyone around her was trembling, she sat calmly under her palm tree, listening intently for God's voice. Her confidence didn't come

from a fancy title, her own intelligence, or her personal abilities. It came straight from her deep relationship with God—a relationship that reminded her she already possessed everything she needed for the battle ahead.

Shifting Your Focus

*“Fear magnifies your problems.
Faith magnifies God's power.”*

Whatever your specific "iron chariot" looks like today, God is calling you to shift your focus. Stop dwelling on what your problem can do to you, and start focusing on what God can do for you. Like the song says, *"If He did it before, He can do it again."* The exact same God who gave Deborah her unshakeable confidence is the same God you and I serve today. So, hold onto that confidence and face whatever challenge feels impossible to conquer.

My Family's Iron Chariot

Last year, my family faced our own terrifying iron chariot. My husband and I were sitting in a completely silent doctor's office, waiting to discuss some test results. The look on the physician's face told us absolutely everything before he even opened his mouth. He looked at us and shared that my husband's numbers indicated a very aggressive form of cancer. To give you an idea, his numbers were just over 200—and anything between 4 and 10 is usually enough to cause concern.

As our conversation drew to a close, the physician looked directly at my husband and uttered the words that shook me: *"If you don't take this seriously and start aggressive treatment right away, you will die."*

Hearing that was absolutely terrifying. The weight of those words hit me like a physical blow, and I can only imagine how incredibly heavy they felt for my husband, who was the one experiencing this health issue.

I managed to stay strong and put on a brave face in front of him, but the second he wasn't around, the tears just flooded out. I wasn't as brave as Deborah at first. But God, in His incredible grace, quietly stepped into my panic, calmed my deepest fears, and carried us through every single chemotherapy appointment. He gave us a divine peace to trust His will over the medical charts—and ultimately healed my husband in ways that completely defied the odds, turning a scary trial into a living testimony of His miraculous power.

He Goes Before You

God can reverse absolutely any situation. He shattered the iron chariots for Deborah, He did it for my family, and He is fully able to move in your life, too. Trust Him to fight for you.

Scripture to Help Us Stand Strong

- **Isaiah 41:10 (NIV):** *"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."*
 - **Psalms 56:3 (NIV):** *"When I am afraid, I put my trust in you."*
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Let's Reflect

Take a few quiet minutes to write down your thoughts:

- How would your mindset shift today if you focused entirely on God's power instead of the size of that problem?
- Recall a moment that felt like an **iron chariot**—an overwhelming situation that seemed like it would get the best of you. Looking back now, where do you see God's power and love at work for you in that moment?

Let's Pray

Lord, thank You for being my peace in the middle of every single battle. When fear starts to rise and the world gets incredibly loud, help me turn my eyes right back to You. Grant me the courage to trust in Your strength and the wisdom to follow Your guidance. Remind my heart today that no challenge, no diagnosis, and no problem is greater than Your power. I lay all my worries right at Your feet, knowing that You always go before me.

Amen.



Standing Strong: Letting Go and Trusting God

Read: Exodus 1:22-2:10

Focus: Trust and Surrender

Jochebed was living through what probably felt like a relentless, horrifying nightmare. Pharaoh had made a law that every newborn Hebrew boy had to be thrown into the Nile River. Imagine the fear of trying to take care of a tiny baby while knowing soldiers could show up at any moment. Every cry, every whimper, every restless sound from her little boy could have brought danger straight to her door.

For a few intense, agonizing months, Jochebed managed to hide him away. But when he got to a point where she could no longer conceal his growth, she did something completely radical. She carefully wove a

basket out of papyrus reeds, meticulously coated it with tar and pitch to make sure it was completely waterproof, tenderly laid her precious baby boy inside, and set him afloat among the tall reeds along the edge of the dangerous Nile River.

She had absolutely zero power to change the king's law, and she couldn't control the currents of the river. But she *could* control her trust in God. She chose to physically release her grip on that basket and fully entrust her child's life into the protective hands of the Almighty.

As a mom myself, I can vividly see this heartbreaking scene playing out. Her hands were undoubtedly shaking, her chest felt incredibly tight, and her tears were flowing as she pushed that tiny basket away from the safety of the shore. Yet, she found the strength to let go because she knew, intimately, a God who was infinitely larger than her terrifying circumstances.

The Weight Caregivers and Parents Carry Today

Parenting, caregiving, and mentoring today might not look like weaving a basket to hide a baby from soldiers, but it still comes with real fear. Kids and teens are growing up in a world filled with pressures no other generation has faced. Many struggle with mental health. Social media pushes constant comparison. Culture moves fast and demands more than young hearts are ready for. And there's the ongoing worry about violence in public places. These realities weigh heavily on parents, grandparents, and mentors.

Each day, we drop our kids off at school or watch them step out into the world, hoping they will learn, thrive, and grow. At the same time, a quiet prayer rises in our hearts: “Lord, please keep them safe. Protect their minds. Guard their hearts.” We want to shield them from every source of pain, yet we know we cannot control everything around them.

This generation is growing up in a loud, chaotic world—loud with confusing opinions, loud with moral uncertainty, and loud with digital voices designed to pull them away from their identity in Christ. And even though there is no Pharaoh giving orders, the enemy still works hard to steal their identity, distract their purpose, and dim their hope.

We do our best. We teach biblical truth, pray over them, guide them with wisdom, and build the strongest emotional and spiritual “baskets” we can with what God has given us. Then comes the moment when we realize we cannot carry the weight of protecting them on our own. We have to realize that letting go of fear and trusting God is an essential part of faithful parenting and mentoring. It is not an act of abandonment; it is a deep, radical act of faith.

The Basket Moment

We all need to reach our “basket moment”—that moment when we lift our eyes to heaven and say, “Lord, I have faithfully carried out my responsibilities. I wove the basket, coating it in prayer. Now I am releasing control and trusting You to do what only You can do.”

We cannot follow our children or loved ones into every classroom, every private text thread, every friend group, or every moment of quiet temptation. But the Holy Spirit can.

Remember, God didn’t allow Jochebed’s basket to drift aimlessly down the river. He guided it with precision—straight to the Egyptian princess at the exact right time and place. That divine moment led to Moses being returned to his mother, who was even paid by the royal treasury to raise him. Won’t He do it! He fixes what we cannot fix and cares for His children in ways we could never imagine.

God is always actively involved in our story, and He is deeply protective of the next generation. His faithfulness does not waver, even when our strength does. We can release our fear, stand strong by placing our children in His hands, and trust that the same God who guided Moses will guide them too.

Scripture to Help Us Stand Strong

- **Psalms 55:22 (NIV):** *“Cast your cares on the Lord, and he will sustain you.....”*
- **Psalms 121:8 (NIV):** *“The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”*



Let's Reflect

Take a few minutes to sit quietly, reflect, and write down your thoughts:

- What does "building a basket" of faith, prayer, and biblical values look like inside your home or community?
- Where do you need to stop micromanaging and start trusting God more deeply with the next generation?

Let's Pray

Father God, I lift up our youth and the next generation to You. You see the incredibly complex, broken world our children are growing up in, and You understand the heavy, daily burden of trying to guide them. Give me fresh strength every single day to pour into the children in my life, along with endless patience. Give me the exact words to guide them with love, and bold courage to speak Your truth clearly. Ease any anxious worries I have about the harm that might come their way. I place them fully into Your sovereign, capable hands, knowing that You love them infinitely more than I ever could. Protect their hearts and guard their minds as they go out into the world. I rest in the truth that You are always with them, fully able to demolish every single plan of the enemy, and that You are eternally present and faithful.

In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.



DAY 5

Standing Strong: Born for This Moment

Read: Esther 4

Focus: Purpose and Courage

A paralyzing fear completely gripped Queen Esther the moment she learned that Haman, a powerful and corrupt official, had issued a decree to completely wipe out every Jewish person in the empire. Out of nowhere, this young woman was violently thrust into a terrifying, life-or-death crossroads. She had two clear options: she could choose to conceal her Jewish identity, stay completely silent, and enjoy the luxury and safety of her royal palace comfort zone, or she could choose to step forward, risk her life, and speak up for her people.

In ancient Persia, entering the inner court to speak to the king without a direct invitation was a massive offense, punishable by instant

execution. The stakes literally could not have been any higher. It's at this exact moment that her wise cousin, Mordecai, delivers a historic challenge that completely shatters her hesitation:

"For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14, NIV)

Those powerful words stirred her spirit. Esther chose a courage that rose far above her personal comfort. She called her people to fast and pray, and with steady, unshakeable faith, she stepped into the king's presence and declared, *"If I perish, I perish."* Her bravery completely uncovered the enemy's plot, and God used her obedience to save an entire nation.

Esther's legacy reminds us of a fundamental truth we cannot ignore: **God has intentionally placed you exactly where you are, in this specific moment, on purpose.**

Recently, I found myself getting really frustrated, tired, and emotionally drained by everything happening in our world. Watching the news about corruption in our government, seeing how unstable the economy feels, noticing the breakdown of our educational systems, and feeling the strain of rising healthcare costs left me overwhelmed. It honestly felt like every headline was designed to rob me of my peace.

But right in the middle of my negative thoughts, I stopped and felt the Holy Spirit gently check my heart: *What are you actually doing to make a difference? Are you just consuming the chaos, or are you bringing My kingdom into it?*

I suddenly realized I had to move past passive frustration. I started actively looking for ways to serve, support local ministries, and become a tangible beacon of Christlike change right where I live.

True divine purpose is never passive. It is highly active, deeply responsive, immediately obedient, and intensely personal. You were not born in the wrong era. You were intentionally placed on this earth for this moment and for a purpose uniquely designed by God.

You were born for this moment.

A Call to Action: Step into Your Strength

If this 5-day devotional journey has stirred a fire inside your heart, do not allow that flame to die down the second you close this text. Let that conviction move you into real, tangible action.

- **Your prayers matter:** They pull down spiritual strongholds and completely shift the atmosphere of your home and community.
- **Your voice matters:** It can speak life, truth, and hope into spaces that are currently drowning in deception and despair.
- **Your presence matters:** You carry the literal temple of the Holy Spirit inside of you everywhere you step.

Take at least one real step today toward your purpose by praying for God's guidance and walking in immediate obedience. We've seen through the lives of these incredible women that true faith doesn't erase the hard days, but it completely shifts the weight of our burdens. You don't need to wait for perfect conditions or stay stuck in your frustration.

Standing strong, step into your home, your workplace, and your community knowing that your prayers matter, your voice matters, and you are never fighting your battles alone. Keep your eyes fixed on His unshakeable promises, hold onto your integrity, and stand strong in His limitless strength.

You are strong, and you've got this because He's got you!

Scripture to Help Us Stand Strong

- **Ephesians 2:10 (NIV):** *"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*
- **Joshua 1:9 (NIV):** *"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."*



Let's Reflect

Take a few final minutes to sit quietly, reflect, and write down your thoughts:

- Where is the Holy Spirit currently inviting you to stop complaining or feeling overwhelmed, and instead step forward to speak up, serve, or lead?
- What is one practical, tangible step you can take this week to bring the light, truth, and love of Jesus into a heavy, broken, or overlooked place in your community?

Let's Pray

Heavenly Father, give me the bold courage to step into the exact purpose You custom-designed for my life. Open my spiritual eyes to see precisely where my voice, my actions, my resources, and my compassion can make a meaningful kingdom difference. Strengthen my heart today. Strip away all my excuses, silence my deepest insecurities, and empower me by Your Holy Spirit to walk boldly in the assignment You have placed directly before me.

In Jesus' name, Amen.
