

The Holy Spirit & the Courage to Stand



As we think about the many reasons we need to rely on the Holy Spirit, we realize that virtually every aspect of the Christian life would be impossible without His presence and power working in and through our lives. He indwells us, enabling our personal fellowship with God and with other Christians; He produces the fruit of Christ-like love and character in us; He empowers us to witness for Christ and anoints us through spiritual gifts for effective ministry to others; He inspires us to worship; He uses us and our unique abilities to build up the church, and enables us to navigate effectively in the spiritual realm through intercessory prayer. He does miracles all around us, every day,

all the time. How we need to honor, welcome, and invite Him into our lives, our ministries, and our churches.

One area of our present need for the Holy Spirit that is often overlooked is this: We need Him, perhaps now more than ever in our lifetimes, for the COURAGE TO STAND. There are so many challenges to faith we are now facing – in our personal lives, in church ministry, in our world. Fortunately there are some issues that draw most people of good will together – namely, sex-trafficking and care of the desperately poor and oppressed. But there are also quite a number of things that challenge us: Biblical truth and morality are being challenged at every level in our society; marriage is being redefined before our eyes, and concerns for sexual purity are generally ridiculed by the media, pop culture, and a growing number of trendy religious and ideological viewpoints. Quite a number of American and other western Christian leaders are feeling the pressure to adapt, conform, compromise. Some leaders are saying they are “wrestling” with what the Scriptures teach on subjects like gay marriage, the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, and the necessity of accepting the Gospel as a requirement of salvation; some are no longer wrestling but have outright abandoned the truth of the Gospel in these areas. (Case in point: one very prominent Christian leader recently told my wife that he believes that the major religions all believe in the same god and that all their followers will go to heaven.) The global persecution and murder of Christians, primarily by fanatical Muslims, seems to be at an all-time high.

And these things are beyond the personal struggles we all face: physical and emotional health issues, economic concerns, kids running amuck, the challenge of growing old, and so much more. Paul exhorts us to “*be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.*” With such an onslaught of challenges, stand we must! **But where do we get the strength and courage to stand?**

The answer is clear in Ephesians 3:16-17: The Holy Spirit is the One who strengthens us with power in our inner being: “*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being...*”. As we trust God our Father, surrendering our lives to Christ’s Lordship, we are taught to rely fully on the resources of the Holy Spirit who lives within us. His presence buoys us, His power overrides our fears and gives us boldness, and we find the strength to say: “***Here I stand!***”

Let us pray with the same heart and in one accord:

“COME, HOLY SPIRIT - GIVE US THE COURAGE AND THE STRENGTH TO STAND!!!”