

Unshaken: Stand Firm

2 Thessalonians 2:13-17

Getting to know you: Do you have an encourager in your life? Describe how they inspire confidence in you.

Reaching Out: Did anyone seize an opportunity to love someone who is not a Christian through works or words in the past week?

Share what happened?

Reaching Up: As you prepare your hearts and minds to interact with the Bible, take a moment to pray that God would:

- open your eyes and ears to God speaking to you through His Word
- make you teachable, that you might be a doer of the Word
- increase your love for God and others

Discouragement is undoubtedly a powerful tool of the adversary. It feeds us lies about our identity and purpose. It robs us of the God-given power of the Spirit. It distracts us from the truth of the gospel. Paul's second letter to the Thessalonian church was meant to be a source of encouragement, truth, and power to combat the discouragement that comes from trials and challenging circumstances.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17 together and discuss the questions that follow:

1. Embrace your calling (13-14)

What do these verses say about God? What do they say about us?

Read Ephesians 1:4-5 and 1 John 3:1 together. What does it mean to be children of God? How does it inform our identity? How does being God's children shape our purpose?

How does being a child of God bring you comfort?

What does it mean that we "share in the glory of Christ" (14)?

2. Hold tightly to the truth (15)

When going through challenging circumstances we can often be tempted to trust things other than God to bring us peace, rest, and satisfaction. It's critical that we don't make temptation an inner dialogue with your reason; make it an opportunity to commune with the Spirit.

Look at the list on the following page and take time to identify what you have a tendency to trust in place of God.

What temptation resonates with you?

How does the gospel bring you comfort?

What can you do this week to help you hold tightly to the truth?

3. Live beyond yourself (16-17)

What practical ways can you encourage one another in the faith this week?

Jesus stood firm to the point of death. When we trust in him we can walk in stride with the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that led him into a life of obedience in all circumstances, and we can glorify our Father in heaven. Pray that God would lead you to stand firm in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:29-31

Temptation	The lie...	What the gospel says...	Scripture reference:
Lust: The Fight for True Intimacy	"Long for what you cannot have and you will be happy."	"Rejoice in what you do have, in Jesus, and you will be happy."	Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)
Vanity: The Fight for True Worth	"Perform beautifully and you will have worth."	"Jesus performed beautifully for you; therefore, you have never-ending worth."	What we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we will be like him as he is. (1 John 3:2)
Pride: The Fight for True Confidence	"Find and cherish compliments and then you will be confident."	"Your confidence comes, not from your sufficiency, but from God who has made you sufficient in Jesus."	Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:4-6)
Anger: The Fight for God's Way	If I control my circumstances (and I have a right to) then I can get the best outcome. If I can't control my circumstances, then I have the right to get mad."	"Because Jesus is Lord, he has the right to control my circumstances. Therefore, I will get the best outcome by trusting him. Put your trust in the Lord, not in controlling your circumstances."	Tremble and do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the Lord. (Psalm 4:4-5)

**From Gospel-Centered Discipleship, by Jonathan Dodson*

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