

# Healthy Churches Stand

Philippians 1:27, "...stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together..."

**Introduction:** One indication of an unhealthy body is quite simple—they cannot stand. When the “lame man” was healed Peter demonstrated his health by saying, “... this man stands here before you whole” (Acts 4:10). A generally healthy person is able to stand on their own two feet! Likewise, one indication of a healthy church is their willingness and ability to stand!

## I. God’s Word Calls Us To “Stand”

- A. Notice the various charges given to brethren to “stand” in the Scriptures.
  - 1. Acts 5:20, “Go, **stand**...”
  - 2. Acts 26:22, “I **stand**, witnessing both to small and great...”
  - 3. 1 Corinthians 15:1, “... the gospel... in which you **stand**.”
  - 4. 1 Corinthians 16:13, “Watch, **stand** fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.”
  - 5. Galatians 5:1, “**Stand** fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free...”
  - 6. Ephesians 6:11, “... **stand** against the wiles of the devil.”
  - 7. Philippians 1:27, “... **stand** fast in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel...”
  - 8. Philippians 4:1, “... **stand** fast in the Lord, beloved.”
  - 9. Colossians 4:13, “... **stand** perfect and complete in all the will of God.”
  - 10. 1 Thessalonians 3:8, “... **stand** fast in the Lord.”
  - 11. 2 Thessalonians 2:15, “Therefore, brethren, **stand** fast and hold the traditions which you were taught...”
- B. The opposite of standing up is falling down. We must stand and hold our stance.

## II. When We Need to Stand

- A. When the lost need to hear about Jesus (Acts 2:14-41).
  - 1. On Pentecost, Peter preaches to a skeptical, unbelieving crowd.
  - 2. The text says, “*But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them...*” (Acts 2:14).
  - 3. The text shows us how he preached to them about the risen Jesus—their Lord and Christ (Acts 2:22-36,41).
- B. When false doctrine is dividing the church (Acts 15:1-22).
  - 1. In the early church, one of the major issues dividing the church was whether or not a person could be saved without physical circumcision (Acts 15:1ff).
  - 2. It is the role of both preachers and elders and Christians to teach “sound doctrine” so “false doctrine” might be exposed (2 Timothy 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9; cp. Acts 18:26).
- C. When false religion must be exposed (Acts 17:22-32).
  - 1. As Paul arrives in Athens he comes across “*Epicurean and Stoic philosophers*” as well as “*Athenians*” who were “*given over to idols*” (17:16, 18, 21).

2. Paul does not look at the religious confusion and just turn a blind eye but “*his spirit was provoked within him*” and he “*stood in the midst of the Areopagus*” to expose the false worship which was so commonly accepted in Athens (17:16,22).
3. He contrasted the “*Unknown God*” they worshipped to the living God who proved Himself through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (17:24-32).

D. When we must stand alone (Acts 21:40-22:1).

1. Because Paul was a high-profile Jewish convert to Christianity he was hated by the devout Jews in Jerusalem (cp. Acts 21:11).
2. So, when he shows up to Jerusalem, it is not long before he is attacked and arrested leading to a series of opportunities to defend his faith (Acts 21ff).
3. In Paul’s last letter he says to Timothy about his first Roman examination, “*At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me*” (2 Timothy 4:16).
4. We may feel alone, but the Lord is always standing with us if we are standing for Him—“*but the Lord stood with me and strengthened me...*” (see 2 Timothy 4:17).

### III. What Happens When We Fail To Stand?

A. Division happens.

1. The goal of Satan is to separate those standing so we are more likely to fall—if we do not hold the gap together we divide from one another.
2. Jesus says, “*Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand*” (Matthew 12:25).

B. False doctrine happens.

1. If we do not stand up for Jesus and truth, then there is only one other option—Satan and falsehood.
2. Paul wrote to Ephesus, “*... we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ...*” (Ephesians 4:14-15).
3. Weak Christians crumple in trials and need to grow up “*to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” so they might stand (Ephesians 4:13)!

C. Self-deception happens.

1. When we think we can stand spiritually without being reliant upon God, we are headed for a fall!
2. Paul wrote, “*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

**Conclusion:** One day, when our earthly sojourn is over, “*we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ*” (Romans 14:10). Christ has the right to judge us because He stood over the tomb in victory giving proof of His Lordship (Romans 1:3-4). If we will stand for the Lord now, we will stand with the Lord when at judgment. Do not sell yourself out eternally by standing with the world for just a short time. Jesus, now, stands at the door and knocks bidding you to open your heart and let Him enter (Revelation 3:20). Will you open your heart and let Jesus rule your life?