



REFLECTIONS

February 24, 2019

**I do not understand what I do. For what I
want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.**

Romans 7:15

Stand for Something

As the saying goes *if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything*. The saying is easy to understand and seemingly not so hard to do. But just take a look at the failures.

Eve fell first to that sneaky snake's persuasive pitch that a bite of the apple would give her the power of God, not the promise of death. Then after 400 years in slavery, the Israelites fell to shortened memories brought by their difficult journey to the land God promised to Abraham. When the going became tough on their journey, the Israelites forgot what slavery was like, and wished to return to it rather than face the struggles to gain a better life.

Elijah once stood strong to protect God's prophets from the swords of King Ahab and his wife Jezebel; then ran cowardly when fear overcame his faith from Jezebel's threat to kill him. And don't forget that Peter once walked out to meet Jesus on the Sea of Galilee until he realized he was walking on water and began to sink. And of course, we remember Peter's promise to stand up for Jesus no matter what only to later deny him three times.

Apostle Paul understood the problem when he expressed, *"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do."* Perhaps, like me, you relate to those failures arising from distracting temptations, fears of loss or pain, and discouragement from hardships. When you stand for something, it can bring about more trouble than yielding to the pressures to abandon the cause. And maybe sometimes it does. But look at some success stories.

Joseph, the son of Jacob, was sold into years of bondage by his jealous brothers but then rose to become a powerful leader in Egypt. Later when his brothers came in need of help from hardships of their own, Joseph helped them and forgave them saying, *"...do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you."* (Genesis 45:5)

As a young man, King David stood on his faith to bring down a menacing giant with only a slingshot and five smooth stones in his pouch. The prophet Daniel risked death by refusing to deny God, but then walked away unharmed from within both a lions' den and a fiery furnace. Then there is the best example of all to follow.

Jesus stood up to Satan's temptations for food after 40 days of fasting, for power after looking down on the world, and to avoid his fate on the cross. He had a stand to take. Even as the cross loomed ahead, Jesus chose to have his flesh torn by scourging lashes, nails driven into his hands and a spear stabbed into his side. He took a stand for something—your salvation and mine.

God has a purpose for you and me to stand for too.

I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. (Exodus 9:16)

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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