

Rock Solid Men

Strength: Who Is In Your Foxhole?

Edited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. Please turn in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter six verse 10. We're in the series Rock Solid Men. We're going to kick it off this morning with a shout out to the area director training class is actually in the room. This is one of our bigger classes. As I call your name, if you would, just stand up. Hold your applause. We'll give them a shout out, hoorah, at the end here. We have Ivan Garcia from Illinois, Kevin Sowards from Topeka, Mike Blair from Texas, Marco Alfonzo from California, Greg Wafford from Kentucky, Chad Talley from Alabama, Jack Ortego from Missouri, Lewis Thompson from San Diego, Nate Flynn from Indiana, Rob Block from San Antonio, Stan Risinger from Illinois, and instructor Peter Hone from Naples, also a regional director. Braden Randall, our director of development, is also one of the two trainers, Braden. Tyler Sutton is a regional director and is in our startup coach. He's going back through the training to see what updates we've made and so forth.

Then, Man in the Mirror chaplain Ron Read. Would you believe that Man in the Mirror has a chaplain? We have a full-time chaplain. How cool is that? Would you join me in giving all of these men a rousing Man in the Mirror welcome? One, two, three, hoorah. Awesome, guys. It is great to have you with us this morning. We're in this series. We're in session four. The title of the message today: Strength, Who is in Your Foxhole? We're going to dedicate this message this morning to Jeff Kisiah, 1957 to 2019, who two weeks ago went home to be with the Lord. Jeff was our national field director for four years, from 2012 to 2016. I'm going to be going up to Charlotte today to be involved in giving a eulogy. Just Man in the Mirror would literally not be here today were it not for the leadership and contributions and encouragements of Jeff Kisiah.

Strength, Who's in Your Foxhole? The verse for this series, "Be on your guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be men of courage. Be strong and do everything in love." We're going to be looking at being strong today. If you would turn, as I say, to Ephesians chapter six verse 10, if you're not already there. These messages have five parts. The first part is to look at the text, the scriptures, and then to give you a tool, and then to give you a challenge. Then, you'll talk about it in your table group discussions. Then, there's an activity idea suggested.

What is the problem that God is trying to solve when he says, "Become strong"? Ephesians chapter six verse 10, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and mighty in his power. Put on the full armor of God." What is the problem God is trying to solve? "So that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

You know what I think? There's a tendency to sometimes sanitize our faith. It's kind of like we don't want to see the blood of the slaughterhouse where the meat is chopped up that we eat. Some of our kids probably think, probably some of us, think that our meat comes out of freezer at the grocery store with no thought to just how messy it was. We are in a battle, men, and you are in a battle. We are in a battle against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. This is a battle that is raging in

neighborhoods across our cities, here and those online, your neighborhood. There is a terrorist on the loose, and his name is Satan. We don't negotiate with terrorists. Sometimes we need to talk about our lives, not about self-actualization, how we can become the best me that I can possibly be to serve the Lord Jesus. Sometimes we need to just get down and talk about what's happening in the slaughterhouse, so that's what we're going to do.

God has provided everything you need to win the battle for your soul. We are in a battle for men's souls. God has provided everything we need to win the battle for our souls. Not only that, but to help other men win the battle for their souls as well. How does God provide to solve this problem? Let's say that you are a true believer, that you really do believe that there is a spiritual battle, that you have not been lulled into complacency or maybe, who knows, maybe what we just said is enough to wake you up. Let's just say that you have not been lulled into complacency, and you believe that everything is beautiful and lovely. Oh, look at the majesty of creation and everything. You see all that, but you actually also see the work of the enemy in your neighborhood. You see the collateral damage that's being caused.

God gives us a starting point, and it's in your manual in the lower left hand corner. How many of you don't have your manual with you this morning? There are color-coded pages for you, for all of you little princesses who didn't remember to bring your book. There are special color-coded pages for you today, courtesy, out of our own pocket. Anyway, for you, it's still page 10. The key passage for today, "Do you not know that in a race all of the runners run but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training." The starting point to win the battle for our souls is strict training. "They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly. I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified."

Training is powerful in the Secret Service. We have a friend in the Secret Service. I think he might have even guarded the president at one time, one of the presidents. Anyway, he told us that in the Secret Service, they spend 25% of their time in repetitive training, 25% of their time in training because, you know, in the Secret Service, the ultimate is that you take a bullet for somebody else. You give your life for somebody else. Then, he said, "The reason we do 25% of our time in repetitive training is because repetitive training overcomes the negatives of self-sacrifice." Jesus said, "The greatest among you is the one who serves." Jesus calls us to lives of sacrifice, of investing in others. The way we get there is training, repetitive training, or strict training as it said in this text.

We know that we can get training in different ways. In the passage that we read in Ephesians chapter six verse 10, it goes on to talk about putting on the full armor of God. 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 says, "All scripture is inspired by God, invaluable for teaching, for reprove, for correction, and for training in righteousness, or for training so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." We have this armor of God. How you train is also important. How do you train? How do you train to win this battle? God has so ordered his creation. God has made his creation in such a way that you are not able to win the battle by trying to stand alone. There are no lone ranger Christians.

Women have this problem too, but men uniquely have this problem because when women have problems, they tend to move toward relationships. When we as men have problems, we tend to move toward isolation. We need more training. What do we do? We move away from the training team. When you see a man who has regularly been part of your table and suddenly he disappears, go get him because he's not dropping out because he's suddenly arrived and now won the battle for his soul. No,

he's dropped out probably or very likely because he is in the depths of a deep battle, a dark battle sometimes. It could be marriage. It could be a child. It could be success, too much success, not enough, whatever it is. Go get him because this is the way that God has ordered his creation.

Basically, a man is never more weak and vulnerable than when he doesn't have a foxhole friend or two. A man is never more weak than when he doesn't have a couple of foxhole friends. I don't happen to have like a foxhole friend right now. They all died on me. I've always been attracted to older guys, and then I got old. Guess what. They got old and died. I've been telling my wife... The last one was my father-in-law. For the last seven years of his life, we met once a week for lunch. Then, he died on me. I've told my wife I'm really open. I'm open to that. I mean, I'm pretty far along in the journey. I got you guys to keep me straight, and you have me to keep you straight too, but anyway we have each other. That's not the same. Brett Clemmer is increasingly growing in that direction. Anyway, we'll see what happens and all that.

We are needing each other because we're never more weak and vulnerable than when we don't have a foxhole friend or two. This story is told in the brochure, but I'll tell it here too. The redwood trees in California, they grow as high as 350 feet in the air. I'm going to get to see some next week, hopefully. I'm going out there next week. Hopefully, I'll get to see some of these 350 feet tall redwood trees. The interesting thing is that redwood roots typically are no more than about 10 feet or even less in the ground. How does a 350-foot tall tree with a 10-foot root system withstand the strong winds? The secret is that they grow close together, and they intermingle their roots. Redwoods stand strong because they stand together. We will always be stronger together.

You and I, we will always be stronger together in this battle that's raging all around us. I don't even know what's next, so let's see. It's the Big Idea. The Big Idea for the day is in honor of Jeff Kisiah. I was talking to his widow on the phone last week. She's really doing really well in spite, of course, the deep loss of an early demise. She said, "I just know my husband Jeff. I know what he's doing. The first thing he did when he saw Jesus, I'm sure that he went up to Jesus and said, 'Jesus, who's in your foxhole?' because that's his signature." I decided let's honor Jeff this morning with the Big Idea, his idea, his signature statement, **"Who's in your foxhole?"**

The Big Idea for us, if we don't want to be weak and vulnerable, the question is... This is personal. I want you to ask who's in your foxhole. Ask the guys at your table, but ask yourself too. "Do I have somebody in my foxhole? Do I have a foxhole friend or two?" Because if you do not have a foxhole friend or two, you are extremely vulnerable to the terrorism plot that is around you. If you've allowed yourself to become isolated or if you do in the future allow yourself to become isolated, you're extremely vulnerable. I actually think there's some things that we can get from a foxhole friend that you get and no other way. I don't know of any better description of that than the one that's in our brochure, which is Ecclesiastes chapter four.

It's the bottom right of page 10 if you want to read along, "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. If one of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity the man who doesn't have a foxhole friend and falls down and has no one to help him up. Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves." If you've ever seen a foxhole, a two-man foxhole, there are one-man foxholes, and there are three-man foxholes. A two-man foxhole is a pretty standard thing. I remember when I was in the army, they issued me a shovel, a piece of my fighting gear. It's actually an accoutrement. It's not a weapon, but a technical term, accoutrement, for things that aren't weapons or clothing in the military are called accoutrements. A shovel's an accoutrement. I ran across an article

about how to dig a foxhole on the internet. A, you can find anything on the internet. B, you never know if it's true or not.

This looked pretty good. Apparently, it's taken from an engineer soldier's handbook dated June 2, 1943, which is in the middle of World War II. This is a picture out of the book. This is a machine gun emplacement with an open shallow foxhole. Just listen to some of these incredible things. Here's the title: Dig a Foxhole or Die. All right. You have my attention. It's very practical. "Find a good location to dig. Find a good time to dig. Try not to dig under the enemy's watchful eyes unless you want them to. A dummy foxhole might cause the enemy later to waste their efforts targeting an area where dummies or no one is hiding." That's a pretty clever idea. "The easiest and fastest way to dig a foxhole is with a good shovel." What's the easiest and fastest way to get a good foxhole friend? Just a question worth thinking about.

Maybe here at a Bible study you could find somebody like that. "Keep your shovel with you at all times. It could save your life," so forth and so on. Then they go on to talk about the size and the length. I thought the best part was if you decide to put a roof on it, well, if you don't put a roof on it, you're supposed to make a little chamber at the bottom so that it's twice the size of any kind of a grenade that would be thrown into your foxhole so that you can kick the grenade. It would either roll in or you can kick the grenade into this little grenade hole and somewhat dissipate the blast. Then, you can also put a roof on it. It says if you do put a roof on it, make sure it slopes backwards so grenades can roll off. This is really a good thing. "By sloping it backwards, the grenade won't roll down into your face."

Well, there are ideas, men, that are for us just as practical. Be part of a small group. Meet regularly. When a guy doesn't show up for a while, go get him. Figure out what's going on. Be personally vulnerable. Be transparent. Don't come here and fake it. Make sure you have a foxhole friend or two or maybe three or four that you know well enough that they can tell when you're lying to them. You do lie. I lie. I try not to. Little white lies just, "How you doing? How you doing? Oh, I'm just doing..." I already told someone I'm doing great this morning. Actually, I'm exhausted this morning. Where am I? Again, the Big Idea: **Who is in your foxhole?** What can you do to get a foxhole friend or two?

The Rock Solid Challenge today, I'm coming back to this Christian Man Coaching Guide. No, I don't have one printed for you again, but what I do have for you is a website where you can get it and download it. Christianmanbook.com. There's a thing on there. It looks just like that. Free bonus material, The Christian Man Coaching Guide, a resource to decide what kind of man you want to be. This is a resource that you can use with another guy. You can use it as equals or you can use it as a guide to coach a less experienced guy, to mentor a less experienced guy in his faith on how he can become the man he wants to be, or if you're that guy, you can use this and go and say to a more experienced Christian, "Would you help me think through the major decisions about what it means to be a Christian guy in this culture today?" That's the solid rock challenge for the series.

This challenge is part of going into your training. It's part of the strict training. There are all of these men around us. They are there in the battle for men's souls, and they don't know where to... You know where to turn because you're here. They don't know where to turn. They need you. You might think that the harvest is not plentiful, but Jesus says the harvest is plentiful. The problem, he says, is that the workers are few. Pray that God would send out workers into his harvest field. I'm praying this morning that maybe you would catch a little bit more of this vision instead of thinking, "How can I be all that Jesus wants me to be and have all these beautiful friends and have this lovely neighborhood gathering where we invite the neighborhood into our home?" Yeah, go ahead and do that, but meanwhile there's

another guy down the block who's not coming to your little coffee klatch who's dying because nobody is reaching out to him. The harvest is plentiful, men. The harvest is plentiful.

I'm going to tell you, you might think, for example, you may have heard that younger people are not that interested in Christianity. How many of you have come to the conclusion based on the things that you've heard that younger people are not as interested in Christianity as the older generations? How many of you have heard that? Absolutely false. Kevin Slack is a businessman. Jim, is he on the pastoral staff of your church as well? He's also a pastor at Faith Assembly Church here. One month ago, well, actually, at the beginning of the year, Kevin recruited five young men from 22 to 25 years of age. He put them in a foxhole. They went into strict training. He gave them, from the beginning, a vision that they were going go out to the UCF campus and present the gospel to 1,000 students in one week.

They knew what they were getting into. Some old movie with Denzel Washington, I remember he's saying to some, he was playing this drunk ex-military guy who was a bodyguard for a wealthy Latin American family. They had a little daughter. The daughter was swimming. I just remember Denzel Washington said to this little girl, he said, "You're either trained or you're not trained. Now, what are you?" Well, these guys are not trained. These young guys, they're not trained. Kevin took them into strict training, and he disciplined them. He mentored them. Then, they role played sharing faith. They just went into strict training. Then, one month ago, they went out to the University of Central Florida for four days and Valencia East for one day.

They presented a clear presentation of the gospel to 1,103 students. Now, watch this. Are you ready for this? 681 students prayed to receive Christ, 90% of them for the first time, right here in your community, in our neighborhoods, where this battle for man's soul. Don't ever think that people are... There are people all around us who are ready, willing, and able right now to become Christians and to grow in their faith if properly approached. This coaching guide challenge is one way that you can execute on that. How am I doing on time? Yeah, doing pretty good. Do something. Do anything, but do something. I find, even in my own life, that sometimes because I can't solve the whole problem, I don't try to solve any part of it.

Just because you can't do everything doesn't mean you can't do something. Everybody can do something. I want to encourage you with this Rock Solid Challenge to download this mentoring guide and go get with a guy, get him into training. Give him the opportunity to have a foxhole friend. Be a foxhole friend to him. I hope that you are wildly successful financially. I hope you get your dream job. I hope each of you get to be a multimillionaire. I do, but that will not make any difference if you don't have a foxhole friend or two to help you through the hard times. Jesus said to Peter, "Satan has asked to sift all of you like wheat, but, Peter, I have prayed for you." But, Chris, I have prayed for you. But, Brian, I have prayed for you. But, Steve, I have prayed for you. But, Andy, I have prayed for you that when you have turned back, you will what? Strengthen your brothers.

Strength is found in numbers. God is calling us to have a few foxhole friends. Brothers, who's in your foxhole? Let's pray. Heavenly Father, again, we, first of all, just are so grateful for the clarity of your scriptures and how they speak directly into the world in which we are trying to make our way. Lord, I pray that you would take those words and you would show each of us where the battle is raging around us, where the soldiers are needed, where the training is required, what we can do to help other men, who can be a foxhole friend to us, who we can be a foxhole friend for. The harvest is plentiful, Lord, and we want to be the workers. When we have turned back, we pray that you would help us to strengthen our brothers. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.