

2 Session Two: Firm in the Faith

Be on your guard; **stand firm in the faith**; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love.

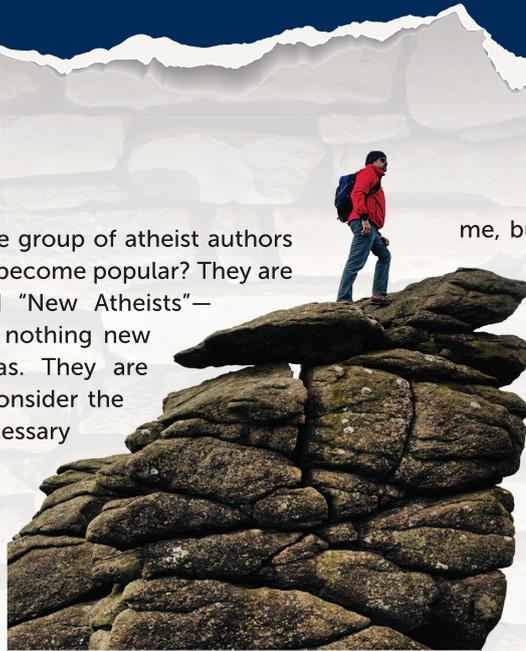
1 Corinthians 16:13-14, NIV

Consider This ...

Have you noticed the group of atheist authors who have recently become popular? They are sometimes called “New Atheists”—although there’s nothing new about their ideas. They are humanists who consider the idea of God unnecessary

at best and harmful at worst.

This challenge to the Christian faith shouldn’t come as a surprise; Jesus gives His disciples sobering words in the book of Matthew: “You will be hated by everyone because of



me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved” (10:22). What makes Jesus so offensive that people would hate someone because of Him? And how should we react?

In 1 Corinthians, Paul tells us that we are to “stand firm” in our faith. But in order to stand firm, we have to know what we believe. All men should take the time to figure out what it is they actually believe. Socrates once said, “The unexamined life is not worth living.” Similarly, a faith undefined is not worth defending.

MEMORIZE THIS



KEY PASSAGE

But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

— 1 Peter 3:14-18, NIV



Rock Solid Tool: DEVOTIONS

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

—Hebrews 4:12, NIV

When a group of Sadducees tried to trick Jesus with their questioning, He responded, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God” (Matt. 22:29). **The regular reading and study of God’s Word is a vital tool for having the power to stand firm in the faith—both for the sake of our own growth and others’.**

Talk About It

1. How did you do on last session's Rock Solid Challenge?
2. Rate your "readiness" to explain your Christian beliefs, using the scale below:

I have no idea		I'm ready now!		
1	2	3	4	5
3. Have you ever been called on to explain or defend your beliefs to someone? Was it a positive or negative experience?
4. Do you find it difficult to respond to someone with opposing beliefs and opinions in gentleness and respect? Why or why not?
5. Share about a time when knowing the Scriptures helped you stand firm against temptation.
6. Just as Jesus was "made alive in the Spirit," how can spending time with Him and learning more about what you believe bring you to life?

Activity Idea

Consider going through a deeper study together after this one ends—perhaps on apologetics or the spiritual disciplines. If there's a theology or apologetics class offered at your church, sign up! Sunday school classes will also teach you more about what you believe and Who you believe in.

ROCK

SOLID CHALLENGE:

Get your D.A.W.G. going.

Now that you're beginning to pray regularly, establish a D.A.W.G.—your **Daily Appointment With God**.^{*} This should be a time to combine prayer with reading and studying the Bible, if you're not already.

"Belief gives birth to life," Patrick Morley teaches. "Theologians say that Scriptures are given for our *justification* and *sanctification*. That basically means the Bible exists to bring us to faith (justification, or salvation), and to help us become more and more like Christ as we grow up in our faith (sanctification, or holiness)" (*A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines*, 39). Make this a priority each day.

If jumping into the Bible seems overwhelming, there are tons of resources to help you.

Consider downloading a devotional through an app on your phone, such as YouVersion, which offers multiple plans to choose from. Subscribe to *Equipping the Man in the Mirror* devotional magazine with application questions. Or go through a study that takes you through a book of the Bible. No matter what you choose to do, make it your goal to dig into what you're reading and pray for wisdom to discern the meaning.

In the area below, write down what your plan will be this week for studying God's Word. The duration of your D.A.W.G. is not important; you could start with as little as five minutes a day. What's important is that you set apart this time to apply God's Word to your life.

^{*}The D.A.W.G. concept is from Pete Alwinson, Vice-President of Leadership and Men's Discipleship at Key Life Network and *Man in the Mirror* Faculty.

Prayers for my brothers...

MY D.A.W.G. WILL
CONSIST OF: