

**Series: A More Excellent Way****Today's Message: A Time to Stand and A Time to Flee; 2 Timothy 2:14-26**

In Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 gives us insight into God's plan for living. He teaches us that there a fitting time for everything in life. This is profound wisdom in these simple observations. And to be sure God orders the times (v1) but every person is responsible to discern the right times for the right action. When the right action is taken at the right time, we see a beautiful and pleasing result (3:11). It is easy to see from those verses that there are choices to be made. For instance, speaking at the right time (3:7b), having an appropriate and timely word is beneficial to the relationship. But speaking when you should be silent often results in disaster.

Those verses provide a fine backdrop for the sermon today, which I have entitled "A Time to Stand and a time to flee." Indeed, the Bible teaches that there is a time to stand, stay put, hold your ground, and a time to flee, run and move away. As Christians you should not be surprised that we have choices to make all through our lives. There are times when we have to make decisions in an instant to **stay put** or **to flee**. You are not left alone to decide in those moments. God has given us His Word and Spirit to teach the right way to choose, the wrong way to choose, how to correct bad choices and how to improve decision making over the course of your life (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

I want to look at a case study today from the New Testament. In 2 Timothy 2:14-26 Paul's instruction to Timothy serves to instruct us exactly on this subject matter of when to "stand" and when to "flee." This is only a glance at this passage. But before that lets take a look at what the Bible teaches about "standing" and how that relates positively to "perseverance," and then we will look at some verses on "Fleeing/Running."

I want us to think about our choices; choices made in the last week. Most of us have experienced the remorse that follows those times when you realize you "stood firm" when you should have "run," and "run" when you should have "stood firm." Basically, think about the times you *remained under a temptation* when you clearly should have *ran fleeing from it*, and, conversely those times when should have *remained under a trial* but *ran away from it*.

As we begin, I want you hear James as he writes to fellow suffering Christians in James 1:12. He says, "Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive a crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him." Your decision in times of trial and times of testing matters! There is a time to stand and a time to flee!

**I) A Time to stand (persevering, enduring, perseverance, endurance)****A) Standing****1) A Positional Standing.**

(a) **Romans 5:2:** standing in the grace of God.

(i) As Christians, God has positioned us in His grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

(b) **Galatians 5:1:** standing in the freedom won for us through our redemption in Christ.

**2) A Doctrinal Standing**

(a) We are to stand firm in our Christian doctrine. **1 Corinthians 16:13**

**3) A Designated Standing** (God's design for His redeemed people.)

(a) **2 Corinthians 1:21:** God has *made us, designed us* to stand firm in Christ.

**4) A Commanded Standing**

(a) **Ephesians 6:11:** Commanded to "armor up" in order to stand against the devil's schemes.

(b) **Ephesians 6:13:** Commanded to "armor up" in order to withstand the "evil day" (trials and tribulations) so that you will stand with endurance without shrinking back.

5) **A Defensible Standing**

(a) **Ephesians 6:1:** Being grounded in *the Lord* and *His mighty strength*.

(i) Proverbs 18:10: “The Name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous (justified) run to it and are safe.”

(b) **Ephesians 6:14-18:** A description of the multifaceted power of the Gospel of salvation!

(i) We put ourselves in peril when we diminish any aspect of the Gospel of grace. Hold fast to the whole gospel of salvation, which is the very ground upon which we stand!

B) Perseverance (persevere, endurance, enduring, standing, standing firm, staying put)

1) A Call to persevere.

(a) **James 1:12:** *perseverance (hupomeno)*: To stand under, remain under, stay put.

(i) When? When under trial, tests, tribulations.

2) A theology of perseverance.

(a) God **ordains** and **oversees** our trials, tribulations and tests.

(i) **James 1:2:** book ends with **James 1:5** urging us to seek God’s wisdom in trials.

(ii) **Genesis 22:1:** “Some time later God tested Abraham.”

(iii) **1 Corinthians 10:13:** “No temptation has seized you except that which is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be *tested* beyond what you can bear. But when you are *tested*, He will also provide a way out so that you can **stand up under it.**”

(a) **God expects us to hupomeno!**

II) **A time to flee/run**

A) When tempted with sinful temptation. (We are tempted to remain in the temptation...)

1) **1 Corinthians 6:18:** from sexual sins; 2) **1 Corinthians 10:14:** from idolatry; 3) **1 Timothy 6:9-11:** from the love of money; 4) **2 Timothy 2:22:** from the sinful desires of youth.

B) Instead, flee toward, or run toward, or pursue...

1) Righteousness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness and peace and to those who are running after these same things! (See **1 Timothy 6:11b**; **2 Timothy 2:22b**)

C) So, when should you stand firm? When should you flee?

III) **A Case study in Paul’s discipleship of Timothy concerning a time to stand and a time to flee.**

A) 2 Timothy 2:14-26

1) Observation 1: (2:14-15) Timothy, **persevere** in reminding the people for whom you are responsible:

(a) Without shrinking back, warn them of these things. This is hard. But do it! Don’t tire of it.

2) Observation 2: (2:16) Timothy, **flee/ run** from godless chatter. If you indulge yourself in it you will fall to it!

3) Observation 3: (2:19) Timothy, **flee/ run** from wickedness. Flee from ungodly thoughts and desires.

4) Observation 4: (2:22) Timothy, **flee/ run** from the evil desires of youth. That is, run from the things that turn you away from the life which pleases God.

(a) (2:23) Turn away from **foolish and stupid (unnecessary) arguments**, and those conversations that lead to **unnecessary quarreling**.

5) Observation 5: (2:24-25) Timothy, **stand firm** through the trial of pastoring by being kind instead of harsh, by being gentle in instruction rather than abrasive.

(a) Stand firm in this with the hope of winning the resistant person to a knowledge of the truth!

(b) Standing firm in this way will go further in leading the resistant person from the trap of the devil.

B) Application:

1) What is one area of temptation in your life that you know that you consistently fail to flee? What will you do now to prepare yourself for the next time you are tempted to stay put when tempted?

2) What Scripture verses studied today will you put to memory and then draw upon when tempted?

**3)** How has your view of trials and tribulations changed as you have considered the message today?