

the CHALLENGE

the ADVERSARY

the ANSWER



be on your guard, stand firm in the faith
 be courageous, be strong. 1 Cor 16:13

STAND FIRM 

Friday

6:30 dinner

8:00 devotional

9:00 free time

Saturday

8:30 breakfast

10:00 devotional

12:00 lunch

1:00 free time

4:00 devotional (tentative)

6:00 dinner

7:30 devotional

9:00 free time and movie

Sunday

8:00 breakfast

9:00 worship

10:00 clean up and depart

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The Leadership Genius of Abraham Lincoln

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**The greatness
of Napoleon,
Caesar or
Washington is
only moonlight
to the sun of
Lincoln.**

- His example is universal and will last a thousand years....
He was bigger than his country—bigger than all the Presidents together... and as a great character, he will live as long as the world lives.—
Leo Tolstoy, 1909⁵
- Lincoln led brilliantly, not just from his mind, but also his heart. General William Tecumseh Sherman called it his "greatness and goodness."

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His deeply humanitarian instincts very well may be the reason he'll be revered by all future generations.

- Born in a log cabin in rural Kentucky, Lincoln grew up in abject poverty. His father never learned to read or write, working as a hired hand with little ambition. While his bright, caring mother taught him to read and spell, she contracted "milk sickness" and died when he was just nine. Routinely lent out to farmers needing workers, Lincoln had virtually no formal schooling. While still a boy, he witnessed the death of his infant younger brother and, later, his beloved older sister.

Lincoln neither romanticized nor sentimentalized the difficult circumstances of his childhood.

- Instead, his acutely painful experiences became the source of life-long compassion and concern for others.

Lincoln was an entirely self-taught man. Exercising incomparable drive and determination, he was a voracious reader who used literature to transcend his circumstances.

- Life was a school to him and he was always studying and mastering every subject before him.
- He once told a student seeking advice, "Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any one thing."

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From his hardships, Lincoln developed a deep self-confidence he fully leveraged throughout his entire adult life. But perhaps his greatest inspiration came from an unwavering belief that he had a purpose to fulfill.

- Tied to the conviction that his work was intrinsically important, it was Lincoln who consistently found the courage to invigorate the spirits of his cabinet and troops during the country's most dire and desperate hours.

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**No man clothed
with such vast
power ever
wielded it more
tenderly and
forbearingly.**

- Lincoln's prodigious influence on friends and foes alike was due to his "extraordinary empathy – the ability to put himself in the place of another, to experience what they were feeling and to understand their motives and desires."

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**His speaking
went to the heart
because it came
from the heart.**

**He was not afraid
to display his own
humanness.**

- One soldier wrote in a letter home, "Lincoln's warm smile was a reflection of his honest, kindly heart; but deeper, under the surface of that...were the unmistakable signs of care."

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Lincoln fundamentally cared about people and made every effort to demonstrate that to them.

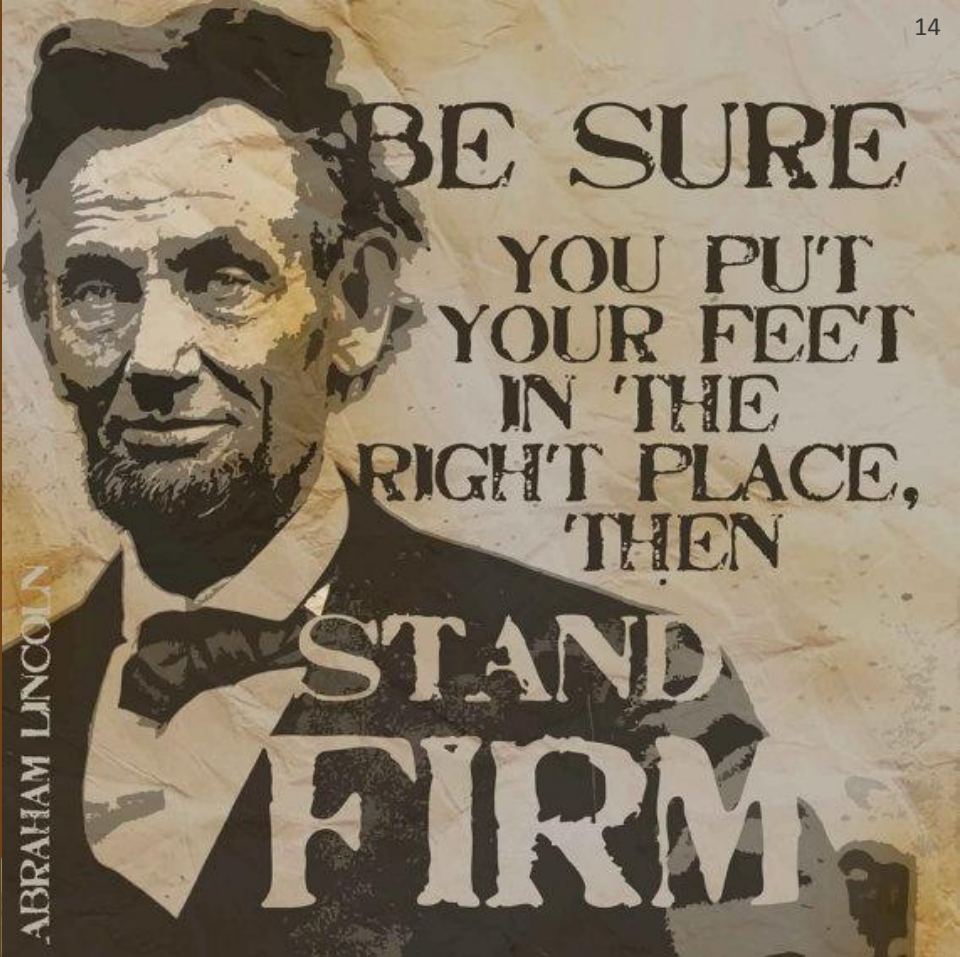
- Through kind and encouraging words, and authentic gestures of exceptional thoughtfulness, he assured people of their individual significance. He was most essentially a human being who identified with the challenges people faced and the sacrifices they made. His tremendous influence was due to this.

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“In order to win a man to your cause, you must first reach his heart, the great high road to his reason.”

Abraham Lincoln

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WE LIVE IN CHALLENGING TIMES!

Ours is a fast-paced, stressful society where many people lack strong, long-term personal relationships.

- Now, more than ever, Christians need to be solidly grounded in their faith so that they can stand firm in the face of difficulties.
- Will we become a totally secular society in which Biblical principles are considered irrelevant?
- Everything seems to be moving faster and more frantically. It feels as if things are falling apart.

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George Washington considered that...

The victory of a ragged, ill-equipped American militia over the most powerful army in the world could be explained only by the intervention of Almighty God.

- Many seek the total rejection of Godly moral principles, and many have succeeded.
- Many assert that there is no God, there is no absolute truth, there are no moral absolutes, and that the greatest virtue is tolerance... including tolerance of evil.
- Is it fair to say that the majority of Christians have sat by passively and allowed all this to happen?

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God Said...

Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?

Psalm 94:16

- God repeatedly warned his people not to be enticed into following the ways of pagans.
Deuteronomy 4:15-19
- He has told us not to conform to this world.
Romans 12:2
- He is calling on Christians to be different, and to stand firmly for God's truth.

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Christianity is not just private faith and personal salvation.

It affects our entire life. It is a framework, a world view, for understanding all of reality.

- There are some Christians whose religious faith is rather like a hood ornament on a car. It looks attractive, it may be interesting, but it has nothing to do with the functioning of the car. This is not Biblical Christianity.
- It is in God that we live and move and have our being. Everything we say or do is rooted in our belief in God and in Jesus Christ.

Acts 17:28

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God is calling on those who believe in Him to move out of our comfortable church buildings and bring our faith to the world around us.

- This was what Jesus did. Most of his ministry was out on the streets, where the people were.
- We are called upon to be salt and light to the world, and we can do this only when we go out to where the people are.

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When we move out of our comfort zone, two things happen...

- We encounter beliefs which contradict and oppose ours. Hence we need to be quite clear as to what we believe, we need to be able to express it in terms that ordinary people can understand, and we need to be able to stand firm against beliefs which conflict with God's word.
- We should expect opposition, dislike and even hatred. As the world persecuted Jesus, it would persecute his disciples. If we are to stand firm against opposition and hatred, we need to be very solidly grounded in what we believe.

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**Few things that
are worthwhile
are attained
without a good
deal of effort.**

- Jesus told his followers to count ²² the cost of following him. For those early followers, and for the many Christians who today undergo severe persecution for their religion in various parts of the world, the cost was very great, but they were and are willing to pay it.
- Christianity expects that those who accept it will grow and change. It calls for radical change in our character and conduct. Growth and change are seldom easy.

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God does not want lukewarm Christians! Revelation 3:15

- The early Christians, a tiny minority, turned the world around because they were committed.
- If we Christians want to affect the course of events in this world, we need to be deeply committed.
- If we are to stand firm in the faith, we need to be hot and not lukewarm.

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God wants Christians to be strong.

Luke 8:13-15

- Stand firm on the words of the Bible. It is true and reliable and it should be the guide for everything we do.
- If we accept scripture as an authoritative revelation from God, then we have a solid rock to stand on and can apply it by faith to the life situations we face.
- It is in our actions that our faith becomes real.

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Belief is something that we do, not just with our mind, but with all of us.
Mark 12:30

- The belief that Scripture talks about is a belief that shows itself in action. It shows itself in your whole life.
- Our Christian faith is not primarily a belief in doctrines. It is a belief in a person. It is a relationship with a person.
Psalm 46:1-2
- No matter what happens, we can depend on God.
1 John 5:4-5

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**The stakes are high -
for ourselves as
individuals, for our
children, for the
body of Christ, for
our nation, and for
the world. God is
saying to us...**

**Deuteronomy
30:19-20**

**For He is your life
and the length
of your days**

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The devil seeks, in every way that he can, to keep us from growing into spiritual maturity.

He wants to destroy us!

- **John 8:44**
- **Revelation 12:9**
- **Matthew 4:1-11**
- **John 10:10**
- **1 John 3:8**
- **Hebrews 2:14**
- **Ephesians 6:12**
- **Ephesians 6:10-18**

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The devil is a defeated army!

- It is important to understand the existence of this conflict with the devil, but also not to overemphasize it.
- He still has the capacity to cause a lot of damage, but he is defeated and his ultimate destruction is sure.

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There are some who doubt or deny that the devil exists.

- God is the creator of all things and the devil is a created being.
- **Job 1:6-12**
- **Job 2:1-7**
- **Matthew 13:38-39**
- **2 Corinthians 2:11**
- **2 Corinthians 12:7**
- **1 Timothy 4:1**
- **Colossians 1:16**
- **Ephesians 1:21-22**
- **Luke 22:31**

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Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

James 4:7

- 1 Peter 5:8-9
- Ephesians 6:10-18
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- 2 Timothy 2:25-26
- Romans 7:22-23
- Galatians 5:17
- Colossians 2:14-15
- 1 Peter 2:11
- 1 John 4:4

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**Christians are
involved in an
ongoing conflict
with the devil.**

**2 Corinthians
10:3-5**

- If Jesus, who was sinless, was not immune to being attacked by the devil, then neither are we.
- Arguments and bad thoughts are often raised up against God making it difficult for us to comprehend God's nature. This can result in doubt and confusion and undermine our determination to resist temptation.

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The devil is a ruthless and determined enemy. There can be no compromise with him. A policy of appeasement will not work. He will not go away just because we don't want him there.

- When we are in a state of conflict, we have two choices. We can deal with it, or we can shut our eyes to it and let ourselves be beaten up.
- God's desire is that his will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. The devil's desire is exactly the opposite. He opposes God's will on earth in every way that he can.

Matthew 6:10

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God desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:4

The devil comes to kill, steal and destroy.

John 10:10

- When we come to salvation,³⁴ the devil seeks several things:
- to lead us into error so that we will cause harm to the body of Christ
- to render us ineffective
- to cause them to backslide and abandon their faith
- The devil uses tactics like doubt, fear, temptation, lies, deceit, discouragement, confusion and apathy to try and make us ineffective.

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There are times when we find ourselves hit by a mental stronghold, or mindset, or blind spot, that may have been there a long time.

- Our object is to make every thought obey Christ.
- Mindsets, strongholds, thought patterns and the like have been set up inside us by our own flesh and by the world system.
- Satan will use these to make us ineffective, or to lead us into error, unless we uproot and demolish them.

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**We MUST stand
our ground
against our
adversary**

- What have you found to be effective in helping you stand your ground against our adversary?

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STAND FIRM when the devil attacks

1 Peter 5:9

- Do not compromise with, or negotiate with, or try to appease the devil.

James 4:7

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When dealing with the devil, we STAND in God's power, and not our own.

Ephesians 6:10

In God's power we will prevail.

John 15:5

- Be strong
Ephesians 6:10
- Use the spiritual weapons that God has given us.
Ephesians 6:13
- Fight with those weapons because they have divine power.
2 Corinthians 2:4
- Use the power that God gives us.
Ephesians 1:19

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The devil will try to discourage us and make us feel weak and helpless.

“Whenever we are feeling down, read about the glory of God!”

- Do as David did and fix our minds on God and His mighty power.
- When things looked very bleak, he strengthened himself in the Lord his God.
1 Samuel 30:6
- He cried out “why are you cast down, O my soul?”
Psalm 42:5
Psalm 42:11
Psalm 43:5

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SUBMIT **ourselves to God** **James 4:7**

- It is when we are submitted⁴¹ to God that we can stand against the devil in God's power.
Romans 6:13,16
Ephesians 4:27
John 14:30
- We need to make every effort to avoid giving the devil anything he can grab hold of.
- There was nothing in Jesus to which the devil could attach himself.

Be watchful and alert

1 Peter 5:8

- In a state of conflict, alertness and watchfulness are necessary.

Matthew 24:4

Matthew 26:41

- The devil often works by deception and trickery. He slides in a little insinuation, and then tries to build on it. We need to be alert and watchful to catch this kind of thing quickly.

Genesis 3:1

Guard our minds and hearts

1 John 4:1

Spend time reading and studying scripture

- The devil is a liar and the father of lies. Lying is his natural language.
- He is constantly trying to place false and lying thoughts in our minds, and to take advantage of any false thoughts we may have.

John 8:44

- We need to check our thoughts and words against Scripture, and reject those which are not Scriptural.

2 Corinthians 10:5

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Don't blame God

Genesis 3:12

- One of the devil's goals is to try to put a wedge between us and God; so he will try to tempt us to become offended with, or angry at, God. If he can pry us away from God, then we become weak and vulnerable.

John 15:5-7

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STAY FOCUSED!

- God guides us and blesses us in the real world, not the world of our imagination. He gives us grace in the present moment, not the past or the future.
- One of the devil's tactics is to try to get us to dwell in the past (through regret, or shame, or missing the "good old days"), or in the future (through fear or hope or wishful thinking), or in our imagination (through anxiety or daydreams).

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Take the initiative

- When we get into a negative or discouraging frame of mind, we need consciously to shift gears so as to focus our thoughts on God.
- We can declare Scriptural truths that are the antidote to those feelings and the thoughts that underlie them.
- Do something! Read scripture, listen to music, pray with a friend,...

**Don't just
sit there
and let
the devil
attack**

- Identify what our weaknesses are, what we have done to make the attack possible, and decide to do something about them.
- This usually calls for a conscious and deliberate change in attitude or activity.
- We can do affirmative things to improve our defenses.

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Use the spiritual weapons God has given us Ephesians 6

- In physical warfare, soldiers have been issued powerful and effective weapons. But those weapons will not do them any good unless they use them. A rifle, or other weapon, that remains in the soldier's backpack will not help him.

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**Put on the
whole armor
of God**

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The Belt of Truth

- Our best weapon (defensive⁵⁰ and offensive) against his lies, deception and confusion is to stand firm on God's truth. To do this we must be well-grounded in God's truth. We must be very sure of it, and alert to detect departures from it. We need to fill ourselves with God's truth—as revealed in his Scripture—and be ready to use it at all times to confront the devil's lies and deception.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

- We stand in Christ's righteousness, not our own. But at the same time we need to do all we can to become holy, as God is holy. This is part of how we get rid of any foothold the devil might seek to claim on our lives.

The Gospel of Peace

- The gospel tells us that we have been saved and are no longer under the power of sin... a message of Peace.
- God is all-powerful.
- The devil cannot stand against God's power.
- God has promised to protect His people.

The Shield of Faith

- Faith is essential to our Christian life.
- All things are possible to him who believes
Mark 9:23
- Without faith in Jesus Christ, we have no salvation and no position in Christ. Without faith in God's Scripture and his promises, we would find it very difficult to stand against our adversary.

The Shield of Faith

The devil attacks our faith

- He seeks to cause fear, which is a lack of faith. If we put our whole trust in a great God, who is far bigger than any problem or difficulty we may face, we have nothing to fear.

Psalm 46:1-2

Mark 5:36

Philippians 4:6

2 Timothy 1:7

- He seeks to cause doubt, which destroys our faith.

James 1:6-8

Mark 9:24

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The Helmet of Salvation

- All of our spiritual weapons depend on our salvation. It is only as we are saved, and accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, that we can claim the other spiritual weapons.
- It is because of our salvation, and our willingness to commit ourselves wholly to Jesus, that we can have God's incomparably great power at work in us, and we can be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.

The Sword of the Spirit

Matthew 28:20

- When attacked with fear and doubt, we can declare that God is faithful, remind ourselves of what God has done for us and for his people, and remember that Jesus promised that he will always be with us.
- The devil cannot stand against the truth of God's word. The more we declare it, proclaim it, teach it, preach it, assert it, pray it, and live it, the more we will have victory over the father of lies.

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PRAY without ceasing and focus on God

- As we focus on Him, worship Him, and honor Him, we draw near to Him... and He draws near to us.

Colossians 3:1-2

Hebrews 12:2

Psalm 103:1

Psalm 22:3

Acts 17:28

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Prayer is our strongest weapon against the devil

- Through prayer we submit ourselves to God and seek that his will be done.
- Through prayer we line ourselves up with God's purposes for our lives.
- By prayer we come near to God and God comes near to us.
- The devil cannot prevail against effective prayer.

James 4:8

Deuteronomy 4:7

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STAND FIRM in challenging times

Matthew 24

- Deception is a major characteristic of the end times. It is increasingly a characteristic of the times we live in. Others seek to deceive us, and we often deceive ourselves.
- The best safeguard against deception is to be very sure of what you believe, and to stand firmly on that belief. A mature Christian is confident in what he believes.

Ephesians 4:14

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“Whatever the circumstances, however difficult and discouraging things may appear, I believe in a God who is greater than the circumstances, and I will stand firm.”

ISAIAH 7:9

REAL MEN STAND FIRM 

