Part 3: Living a Stand-up Life in a Bow-down World

Big Idea
This week Pastor Chris used the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace as an example for standing firm in faith during a challenging situation. Though they were faced with certain death, these young men refused to bow down and worship an image of gold. We learn from this story that standing firm takes courage and faith, but when we stand we have the opportunity to inspire others. The enemy is constantly putting pressure on us through a culture that bows to many different idols. The secret to avoid bowing - or giving into - peer pressure is to shift our focus away from what we are against, and toward what we are for. We can do this by standing in prayer, standing for our purpose, and standing for God. Prayer is a weapon against the enemy’s attacks. Walking in our purpose makes us light in dark places. Standing for God gives us solid ground to walk on and an ally to walk with. When we stand firm in our faith, Jesus stands with us. Focusing on who we are for gives us the passion and perspective to stand firm in love.

*Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.— 1 Corinthians 16:13-14*

Discussion
- Depending on where we spend our time - work, school, home, etc., standing firm for our faith can look different for each of us. Describe some areas where you can take a stance for rather than against something.
- Sometimes taking a stand for something can be a small step. What are some ways that you can take one step toward standing for God in your life?
- In Acts Chapter 7, Stephen describes seeing Jesus standing at the right hand of God. How does knowing that Jesus stands with us when we stand for God affect your faith? How does it affect the way you make a stand?

Prayer Focus
Thank God for His faithfulness today. Acknowledge that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Pray for the wisdom and strength to stand firm in your faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you areas in your life where you can stand for God.

Next Steps
Take one practical step this week to stand firm for God. As we head into the holiday season, reflect on your traditions. Do they mirror culture, or your faith in God? Is there a tradition you can add that will shift the focus from celebrating culture to celebrating Christ?

Leader Tip
Talk to the group about the power of prayer this week. Read Ephesians 6:10-17 and discuss how prayer is described here. Talk about the difference in how the world often views prayer (meek and quiet) and how it is described here. Discuss what it means to put on the armor of God. Encourage group members to start each day with this prayer.