

## Leader Guide / for Sunday, April 8 sermon

Leaders: Has your group discussed serving together for the Day of Service? Projects are listed and sign up is available through our website.

### QUICK REVIEW

If you were in the services Sunday, you experienced the tornado drill and heard a message on being ready. What will you remember from the morning?

### MY STORY

1. Many people report recurring dreams that show a fear of being unprepared: showing up in pajamas; finding out there's a high school class on your schedule that you didn't know about – and it's test day. Do you have such a
2. When was a time you found yourself unprepared for something? How did it go?
3. **Bonus My Story:** When people in Nebraska hear the tornado siren they have one of two reactions. There is seek shelter immediately-guy and go stand on the front porch-guy. Which are you?

### DIGGING DEEPER

1. Ephesians 6:10-18 lists and describes the armor of God. This passage uses words and phrases like:
  - Be strengthened (v. 10)
  - Stand (or stand against) (v. 10 and 14)
  - Resist (v. 13)
  - Stay alert (v. 18)
  - What evidence do you find in this passage that shows where the strength and ability to stand comes from? How does the armor work together? In other words, if you were missing a piece of armor, would that really be such a big deal?

### Leaders

At this point we are shifting our thinking from “be strong” to “stand firm.” According to the Scripture passage from Mark's sermon (Luke 12:35-40) one aspect of being ready involves persistent readiness even into the latest watches of the night (v. 38). We are to stand firm in our readiness despite the culture around us.

2. Before we can stand firm in the power and confidence that God wants to provide, we must first acknowledge our weaknesses. In order to do this, it may be necessary to admit that our society tells us a lie. We can be fooled into thinking we are strong enough, talented enough, smart enough, to stand firm on our own power. But what does Scripture have to say? Read the following:
  - 2 Corinthians 12:9-10
    - How are these verses counter-intuitive?
  - Philippians 4:12-13
    - How have these verses been taken out of context by our society?
    - What is the real context of Philippians 4:13?
  - Proverbs 3:5-6
    - This is another often quoted verse. What is the difference between trusting in the Lord and relying on your own understanding? Is this easy or difficult for you? In what circumstances is this difficult?
  - Philippians 3:4-9
    - When you meet someone new, you might be asked to “tell me about yourself.” How do you usually answer? How do these verses challenge the things we usually take pride in?

## Leaders

There is so much on these topics in Scripture that the hard part was what to leave out, not what to include. If your group needs more discussion, here are a few more verses to explore.

- Isaiah 43:19 – “Be alert” is not always a warning against evil. This verse has been translated with the word “see,” “behold,” “look,” but all contain the idea that we should be watching for God to do something big and great. Many times we talk about this type of thing with children: *Look at that rainbow God gave us! Isn't God creative???* *Look at all the animals he made for us to enjoy.* But we don't always see these things as adults.
  - Ask your group where they have seen God do something new.
  - Where did God work and they almost missed it or didn't realize it until later?
- Read 1 Peter 5:8, but then look at it in the context of verses 7-9. How do these verses work together?
- Read James 4:7. What does submission to God have to do with standing firm against the devil?

## TAKING IT HOME

1. This study focused on being ready, being strong, taking a stand-type themes. Do you feel you are prepared to stand firm in faith? What might you do this week to become more prepared?
2. Leaders: Consider this additional question: Given the command to “be ready”, how can we keep ourselves from and encourage one another from becoming complacent with the mission God has given each of us as His followers? Give some tangible examples.
3. Think through your relationships. Is there someone who is doing all they can do in God's strength to stand up against something, someone, some circumstance? They need your encouragement! Write a note, send a text, have a face-to-face conversation with them that will tell them you've noticed their strength and you are praying for them.