

STAND FIRM & ACT LIKE MEN

Week 4: Be Strong

Men's Group Reading Summary | Church For The ONE

"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe." — Luke 11:21

Overview

Week 4 takes on the fourth imperative from 1 Corinthians 16:13 — Be strong. But before the message gets there, it redefines the word entirely. The strength the Bible is calling men to is not the ability to move heavy weights or dominate a room. It is the ability to withstand great force or pressure over time. In one word: resilience.

This week, Jesus gets to redefine strength, power, and greatness in the kingdom of God — and what He offers is the opposite of what culture celebrates. The strong man, according to Scripture, is not the man who flexes. He is the man who serves, endures, humbles himself, and keeps his life rightly ordered under God. The message closes with a vision of what generational impact looks like when a man is willing to be that kind of strong.

Part 1: Redefining Strong

Physical strength fades. That is not a debate — it is biology. The 18-year-old testosterone is real, and it is temporary. What God is calling men to is something that compounds over time rather than deteriorating: strength under pressure, sustained across a lifetime.

The benchmark from Luke 11:21 is a strong man, fully armed, guarding his palace. His goods are safe. That is the picture — not a man who wins arguments or dominates by force, but a man whose household is protected because he has taken his post seriously. And since we are called to fight (as established in Week 3), we had better be strong. The question is what that actually looks like.

The level at which a man is useful to God is directly related to the pain he can endure.

Proximity to Jesus — not what you produce — is what equals strength and success. A man who mistakes busyness for usefulness will eventually find himself running on empty with nothing left to give the people who need him most.

Part 2: Four Marks of a Strong Man

The sermon draws out four defining characteristics of biblical strength, each one a direct challenge to the way culture defines a man:

1. A Strong Man Is a Sabbath Man

The fourth commandment — remember the Sabbath — is what the rabbis called the hinge commandment. The first three commandments are about loving and receiving love from God. Commandments five through ten are about loving one another. The Sabbath is the hinge between them: the practice that keeps everything properly ordered.

To be a strong man is to take one day a week to reconnect and reprioritize — to put God before all things so that you can love Him rightly and love others well. The busy man who skips rest is not demonstrating strength. He is revealing that he has made himself the center of the story. Strength requires refueling. Worship is not optional maintenance — it is the source.

The question every man must answer: Are you busy — or are you making worship, rest, and refueling a genuine priority? Are you giving God your first and best, not just financially, but with your time?

2. A Strong Man Is a Persevering Man

Proverbs 24:17 puts it plainly: the righteous man falls down seven times, but gets up every time. Biblical strength is not the absence of failure. It is the refusal to stay down.

Here is the part culture will not tell you: if you are going to stand up and act like a man, you will willfully endure pain for the sake of others. Being a father means enduring pain. Being a leader means enduring pain. Being a husband means sometimes taking responsibility for things that are not your fault — because men of God do not talk about fault. We talk about responsibility.

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." — Ephesians 5:25

Jesus was right — completely, perfectly right — and He still went to the cross. It was not His fault. He took responsibility anyway, because He loved us. That is the model. When you get sideways with your wife, you have two options: you can be right, or you can be married. Some men chose right. They are not married anymore.

3. A Strong Man Is a Humble Man

Philippians 2 gives us the picture: Jesus, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. He humbled Himself. He came as a servant. He was obedient even to the cross. And therefore God exalted Him.

That sequence — humility, then exaltation — is the kingdom pattern. A strong man knows how to submit to authority. He does not grasp for position or power. He holds his strength under the authority of God and trusts that God is the one who lifts men up. Pride says, "I'll exalt myself." Strength says, "I'll humble myself and let God do what only He can do."

True strength is not found in position, possession, or power.

It is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. When I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:10)

4. A Strong Man Is a Serving Man

John 13 contains one of the most striking moments in all of Scripture. Jesus — knowing that all authority in heaven and earth had been given to Him, knowing His hour had come, knowing exactly what was ahead — did not flex. He picked up a towel and washed His disciples' feet. He showed them the full extent of His love not through a display of power, but through an act of service.

The point is direct: you will probably never get the chance to stand on the homestead and fight off a grizzly bear. You will have an opportunity today to serve. Not out of guilt. Not out of obligation. Not because someone manipulated you into it. But because Jesus said: you will be blessed if you do what I did. To demonstrate love, you serve.

A strong man is not the man at the top of the org chart issuing orders. He is the man on his knees — in prayer, in service, in the ordinary moments of daily life — showing the people around him what love actually looks like with skin on it.

Part 3: The Generational Vision

The message closes with a vision that is both personal and far-reaching. Think about the most influential man in your life — for better or for worse. Now ask yourself: How would your life be different if that man had been a Sabbath man, a persevering man, a humble man, a serving man?

Most men in that room went quiet. Because they felt the weight of what was missing — or the gratitude for what was given. Either way, the point lands: the kind of man you are does not just affect today. It sets the trajectory for the people coming behind you.

That man could be you.

Ten years from now, someone in your life — your kid, a nephew, an employee, a college roommate — could think of you as the most influential man in their life. The question is: what will they be describing when they do?

Jesus never scolded the disciples for wanting to be great. He just turned greatness upside down. Rest in Me. Endure pain, but take heart — I have overcome the world. Be humble. Serve. And you have no idea what Jesus can do with that kind of strong man.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." — Joshua 1:9

Discussion Questions

Opening Up

1. When someone says "be a strong man," what image comes to mind first? How does the Bible's definition — able to withstand great force or pressure over time — challenge or reframe that picture for you?
2. Which of the four marks of a strong man (Sabbath, persevering, humble, serving) do you feel most confident in right now? Which one is the biggest gap?

Going Deeper

3. The Sabbath is called the hinge commandment — the practice that keeps everything properly ordered. Be honest: is rest and worship genuinely a priority in your life, or do you treat it as optional? What does your calendar actually say about what you value most?
4. The message says men of God don't talk about fault — we talk about responsibility. Is there a situation in your life right now where you are waiting to be vindicated or proven right instead of stepping up and taking responsibility? What would it look like to choose the cross over being right?
5. Jesus had all authority and all power — and He picked up a towel. Where in your life is God calling you to pick up a towel right now? What is stopping you from doing it?

Getting Honest

6. Think about the most influential man in your life. What mark did he leave — positive or negative — and how is it still shaping you today? What does that make you want to do differently?

7. Someone in your life — ten years from now — will think of you as an influential man. What do you want them to say about you? And what would they say today if you asked them honestly?

This Week's Challenge

Pick up a towel. Identify one specific act of service this week — at home, at work, or in your community — that costs you something and benefits someone else. Do it without announcing it. Do it not out of obligation but out of love. That is what strong looks like in the kingdom of God.