

STAND OUT!

INTRODUCTION

There is a saying "When in Rome do as the Romans do." The idea of is that if you are a particular area or with a group of people you act like they do. Sometimes people link this behaviour to Paul's statement to become all things to all people so that by any means he could reach them.

But Paul wasn't saying we must become sinners so that we can reach sinners! Sadly, the day we are living in demands conformance. If you are like everyone else, then you are accepted.

The problem with being like everyone else is the wickedness of the world we live in. I believe we are living in a time worse than the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sexual promiscuity is rife, murder, hatred, greed and lawlessness abound. What is wrong is deemed to be right and what is right is deemed to be wrong. The Bible even speaks of those who do this: **Isaiah 5:20** (NKJV) Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

We are in this world but not of it. Never before has there been a greater need for us to be stand out people, making a difference in the world in which we live.

In the Bible we read about such stand out people. The Holy Spirit inspired the writers to give special attention to them, deeming them worthy of special mention. Today we will look at some of them and explore why they were found worthy of special mention so that we can learn from them and become stand out people in our own right.

MESSAGE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO STAND OUT?

The website, dictionary.com defines a "standout" as "*something or someone remarkably superior to others: Evans was a **standout** in the mixed doubles. It also describes a "standout" as someone who is conspicuous in an area because of his or her refusal to conform with the actions, opinions, desires of the majority.*"

THE FIRST ONE TO STAND OUT

Genesis 5:23-24 (NKJV) So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Here's the first person the Holy Spirit gives special mention to. The writer stops listing the genealogies to speak about special treatment granted him by God.

Genesis 5:22 says, "Enoch walked with God three hundred years".

- This is the first lesson we can learn about standing out in God's sight... walk consistently with God. 300 years is a long time and Enoch didn't drift from God.
- The reward – God took him to be with Him.

During this virus crisis, when we can't attend church together, and when we are required to have our own personal experience with God without someone checking up on us, have we been consistent in our relationship with God? Have we grown spiritually or gone backwards?

When the rapture happens, if it happens in our lifetime, will God take us? If we are walking consistently before Him, He will!

NOAH STOOD OUT IN HIS GENERATIONS

Noah was the next one in the genealogies to get special mention. In fact, God had a very special plan for Noah, because he was a standout believer.

Genesis 6:7-8 (NKJV) So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

- God was going to destroy mankind and all the living creatures.
- But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

What was it that made Noah stand out?

Genesis 6:9 (NKJV) This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.

- Just like Enoch walked with God, Noah walked with God.
- Noah lived in a time where wickedness was abounding on the earth, the earth was corrupt and full of violence, but he stood out by being a just man – he was the only one – I can say that because God would not have destroyed all the people if any of them were Just.
- Noah's wife, sons and daughters-in-law were saved because of Noah's just character, not their own.
- Noah was found perfect, or blameless in his generations (plural) – He was 600 years old at the time of the flood!
- Here's another man that had served God consistently!

Are we just, walking before God and serving Him consistently in our generation?

Say this, "Lord help me to be just and blameless in my generations".

CONSIDER JOB

Job is considered the oldest book in the Bible. Job stood out and had a whole book written about him, not only a few paragraphs or chapters!

Job 1:1 (NKJV) There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.

Job 1:8 (NKJV) Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

Just think of it, God said, "there none like him on the earth", what amazing credentials Job had! What were the characteristics that causes Job to stand out?

- He was a blameless and upright man – He lived correctly before God.
- A man who feared God – we know from the book of Job that he refused to blame God or curse Him. Job had the utmost respect and reverence for God!
- a man who and shunned evil – He didn't want anything to do with that which was evil. **Job 1:22** (NKJV) In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Is a pattern beginning to emerge here? There was no-one else like Job. He honoured, loved, respected and obeyed God.

What about us today? Have we been assimilated into the world as it is or can it be said of us as God's children, "There is none like them"?

ONE WHO REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE STATUS QUO

Here's another person where the list of genealogies is paused to give them special mention – Jabez stood out before God.

1 Chronicles 4:9-10 (NKJV) Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." 10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

Jabez is very interesting, why does it say, "Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers"? We can only deduce it was because of his prayer:

Jabez means, "he will cause pain". Imagine that negative word being spoken over you in your name. But Jabez was honourable in that he was not willing to accept the "status quo" – he didn't say, "it is what it is and there's nothing I can do about it".

- Jabez realised there was more to Him in God than what people said about him or saw in Him and he asked God to bless him indeed!
 - He realised his life and future depended on God and not on people.
 - He didn't hold back, He wanted much more and trusted God for it.
 - He asked God to enlarge his territory.
 - He asked God to keep him from evil – he didn't want to sin!
 - He asked God to break the curse – "That I may not cause pain".

Becoming one of God's standout people means that we don't accept the status quo, it means that we believe in a God who is greater than what people think and we trust our God to do greater things with, and through our lives.

It also means that we desire to be separated from evil – "keep me from evil".

And finally, it means that **we come out from under the curse**. God wants to bless us indeed!

We need to be careful what we accept. Don't accept the status quo. We believe in a great God who has a greater plan for our life.

Say this, "Lord, please bless me and help me not to accept the status quo".

THE UNDEFILED ONE

Daniel 1:8 (NKJV) But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

- Daniel, and his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to compromise and participate in worldly pleasures which were laid at their feet.
- God blessed them because they refused to compromise **Daniel 1:17** (NKJV) As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Daniel stood out more than the rest, he was the adviser to more than one king.

Daniel purposed in his heart, making up his mind that he would not allow himself to be defiled.

Are we willing to remain uncompromising when the world tempts us with its pleasures, even when laws change that can cause us to be harmed if we don't obey them? This is the commitment it takes to become one of God's standout children.

Say this, "Lord, I purpose in my heart to remain undefiled."

THERE ARE MORE

There are more standout people mentioned in the Bible than what I can cover today. There was Abram, renamed to Abraham, our father of faith through whom the whole world was blessed, Moses, the one who spoke to God face-to-face and whom God called His friend, David, the man after God's own heart. In the New Testament, John, the disciple who loved Jesus, Paul who said, "I count everything as rubbish that I may know Him", and of course, **Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, the Sinless One, who paid for the sins of mankind and reconciled us to our loving Heavenly Father.**

Say with me today, "Lord, help me to be a stand out believer".

CONCLUSION

A standout person is one who does not conform. If someone doesn't conform, you could call them a 'non-conformer'. There is a great scripture verse that instructs us to be non-conformers:

Romans 12:2 (NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

We can also be standout believers today. We begin by following in the footsteps of those I mentioned today.

- Walk consistently with God even if our generation is not doing so.
- Live a blameless and upright, life, fearing and respecting God and shunning evil.
- Refuse to accept the status quo – arise and become the person God wants us to be and not who the world says we must be.
- Be undefiled, serving God in our generation.
- Love God, speak to Him, seek His heart and imitate Jesus.

Let's close this message by saying, "Lord, please help me not to be conformed to this world and its ways".