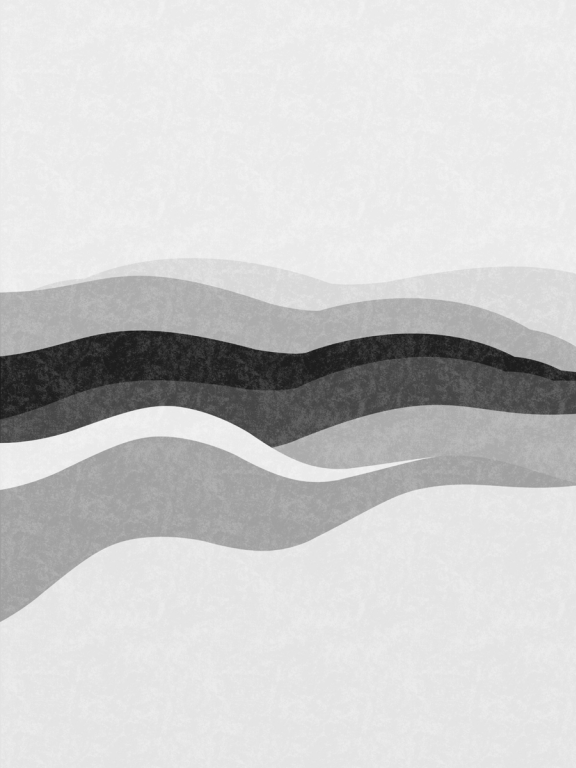


HOW TO STAY STANDING

ALLI PATTERSON

— STUDY GUIDE —



WELCOME: A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Welcome to the *How to Stay Standing* book study! I am excited to provide a way for you to experience this book with a group. Whether you're in the middle of a storm in your life or looking to proactively strengthen your connection with Jesus, the practices in this book are what you need to trust God in a new way and build—or rebuild—a life you love! My most significant growth has always started with deep honesty or a significant risk to trust a living God. That's my desire for you in the next five weeks: be brave. Start wherever you are, but don't stay there. Grab some friends and get ready for five meetings that will take you to the next place in your faith.

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each week you will:

1. **Read pages in *How to Stay Standing* assigned for each week.**
2. **Finish some “homework” for deeper reflection.** This is individual work in the appendix of the book.
3. **Show up to your group meeting and follow this guide.** A note on group time: this guide is designed so anyone can facilitate group time. ANYONE, including you! We encourage everyone to participate. Life is better together, so challenge yourself to engage with your small group each week. Let's do this!

WEEK 1

LOOK DOWN. SHOW UP. TELL THE TRUTH.

BEFORE THE GROUP

→ **Read** pages 13–64.

→ **Complete** the appendix section on pages 183–197. These questions correspond to what you just read. Journal them or just write in the book! Just a heads up, some of the questions prompt you to discuss with a group, no need for that just yet!

→ **Contemplate** what you just wrote and read. Take at least five minutes to let it soak in. Is there anything else you want to say? Anywhere else to get even more honest? Consider praying using prompt on page 197 to end your time.

WEEK 1 GROUP TIME

Woo Hoo! You made it to the first group time. As you know, this experience is designed so anyone can facilitate.

WARM UP

The person with the most interesting middle name (facilitator is the judge!) gets to pick an icebreaker from the list in the back of this guide. Choose one that suits your group. They are all equally designed to help you get to know one another. No wrong answers.

GROUP DISCUSSION

→ Discuss this question from page 184. It asks, **“Which one of these best describes where you are right now?”** Which answer is closest to where you are from the answers listed. Consider sharing why you chose that answer.

→ Read this quote aloud: “In Israel, to ignore the reality of the Jordan floods was crazy: the floods happened every year. Every year. The rains were going to come. Predictably, the water was going to rise” (page 26). Share your answer to the question from page 187: **What kind of storm(s) do you face on a regular basis in your life?** Name a storm you KNOW is coming whether you’re in it right now or not.

→ Read aloud the parable of the wise and foolish builders (found on page 186 in the book, and Luke 6:47–49 and Matthew

7:24–27 in the Bible). Discuss: **What are three similarities between the wise and foolish builders? What are three differences between the wise and foolish builders?**

→ Discuss: **What does it mean to truly come to Jesus? What is it? What isn't it?**

→ Discuss: the question from page 52, "10 Questions for Showing Up." Everyone share the one thing you find hardest to do from that list. **What makes it most difficult to show up physically to spend time with Jesus?**

→ Discuss: the questions from pages 195–196. Everyone share one question (or more if you are feeling fancy!) you need to tell the truth to Jesus about.

What is my:

- 1. Craving**
- 2. Confession**
- 3. Confusion**
- 4. Curiosity**

PRAYER & CLOSE

A Simple Closing Prayer: *God, thank you for this group time and each woman here. Thank you for the opportunity to share, and get stronger together. Help us where we need help. Give us strength to stay standing. Amen.*

End the group by exchanging numbers with someone you'll text to remind them to spend time with Jesus this week. Decide who will facilitate next week, where you will meet, and who will bring the snacks!

WEEK ONE IS DONE, AND YOU ARE STILL STANDING!

WEEK 2

KNEEL DOWN. QUIET DOWN.

BEFORE THE GROUP

→ **Read** pages 65–90.

→ **Complete** the appendix section on pages 197–207. These questions correspond to what you just read.

→ **Contemplate** what you just wrote and read. Take at least five minutes to let it soak in. Are there any more plans you can think of that you need to write down? What would it take to kneel and hear? Consider praying a prayer of thanksgiving to end your time.

WEEK 2 GROUP TIME

Welcome to week two. Warm up your knees, because this week is about kneeling and so much more!

WARM UP

Whoever has the most siblings gets to kick off the ice breaker for this week (located in the back of the guide).

GROUP DISCUSSION

Facilitator, take a poll. There are three types of “kneeling” before Jesus. Which one do you need to do right now? In the space, write the names of the people who say they need to do each one.

→ Give up your plan.

→ Give up your power.

→ Go to the cross for grace.

→ Now, set a timer for five minutes. Everyone who responded with **“give up your plan,”** share why. After five minutes of sharing together, read the prayer on page 198 aloud.

→ Set another timer for five minutes. Everyone who responded with **“give up your power,”** share why. After five minutes of sharing together, read the prayer on page 198 aloud.

→ Finally, set a timer for five minutes. Everyone who responded with **“go to the cross for grace,”** share why. After five minutes of sharing, together, read the prayer on page 201.

→ Discuss your answers to the question on page 202: **Is there an instance that you remember hearing God somehow? What was it like? How did you know?**

→ Discuss: **Do you think hearing God's voice is connected to how much/often/ deeply you read the Bible?** What's your biggest challenge to read more?

→ **How comfortable are you with silence?**
Go around in a circle and share your answers to this question (found on page 204).

- Very. Love it, actually.
- I'm fine either way.
- I guess I can do it, but don't usually.
- I prefer music or something on most of the time.
- Something feels off when it's too quiet.

→ Discuss: **Do you think hearing God's voice is connected to how often you are quiet/silent in your days?** What's your biggest challenge to have more quiet?

PRAYER & CLOSE

Together, brainstorm five things that answer this question from page 204. After, have someone text to the group: What are some possible times during your day or week that you could be in silence?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

To close your time together, have a volunteer read their favorite translation of John 6:63, and pray this simple prayer: *Lord help us to find places of quiet in our life this week so we can hear your words of life. Amen.*

WEEK 3

HAVE A PLAN. KNOW THE STORY.

BEFORE THE GROUP

→ **Read** pages 91–117.

→ **Complete** the appendix section on pages 207–215. These questions correspond to what you just read. Journal them or just write in the book!

→ **Contemplate** what you just wrote and read. Take at least five minutes to let it soak in. Observe how you feel after studying scripture. What parts felt natural? Hard? Anything else you want to document about your story? Consider praying and asking God to continually help you observe and know the Living God.

WEEK 3 GROUP TIME

Good things come in threes they say. Who says? We don't know. What we do know is you made it to week three, and you should be proud! Keep it up!

WARM UP

The person with the best celebration to share from their week gets to pick an icebreaker. It might be helpful to just laugh and get to know each other even better!

GROUP DISCUSSION

The first part of the group time this week is going to practice elements of the “meeting plan” found in chapter six to model possible ways to spend time with Jesus.

→ **Praise God together:** someone read Psalm 86:5–10 aloud, and then each group member take a moment to share, “**What can I praise God for right now?**” → **Read scripture together:** Have someone read Psalm 1. This will be the passage of scripture you work through.

→ **Observe by answering these questions:**

- Who is mentioned in the passage?
- Is there a comparison, contrast, metaphor, etc?
- What verbs are used? Make a list.
- In what tense are the verbs?
- Are there any confusing/interesting/unexpected words?
- What else do you notice?

→ **Read Psalms 1 in different translation aloud** (NASB, NET, KJV, MSG—whatever!).

How does this enrich your understanding

→ **Summarize Psalm 1** by working together. Try to summarize this Psalm in one sentence: Write down what your group comes up with.

→ **Search for any song on Spotify called “Psalm 1” and listen.** (None of these reached #1, but you’ll find a few.) **Does this add to how you hear the Psalm?**

→ Choose one word or phrase from the psalm you personally want to remember. **Everyone text “my phrase is _____” to your group chat so you can each be reminded throughout the week.**

→ Now, turn to pages 106–107 in the book, and discuss: **What parts of God’s story you are familiar with? Where you are lost and have no clue?**

PRAYER & CLOSE

Do two quick things as you end:

1. Everyone tell the group ONE small step you want to take to understand more of the Bible. Set a time and date for it.
2. Someone volunteer to text your one sentence summary of Psalm 1 to the group chat at a random time this week.

To close, use the prayer prompt below (from page 210) to pray out loud together for each item. **Pray for God's will/provision/forgiveness/help for:**

- Yourself
- Your friends, people, and/or leaders
- Your church
- Your community/city
- Your country and the world

WEEK 4

EXPERIMENT. EXPECT RESISTANCE.

BEFORE THE GROUP

→ **Read** pages 119–145.

→ **Complete** the appendix section on pages 215–223. These questions correspond to what you just read. Journal them or just write in the book!

→ **Contemplate** what you just wrote and read. Take at least five minutes to let it soak in. Is there any more you want to note about a test you are facing, or resistance coming your way?

WEEK 4 GROUP TIME

Practice may not always make perfect, but it definitely makes “better.” And this week we will get better together! Hope you brought your pencils, because we are talking about tests, and so much more! Welcome to week 4.

WARM UP

The person who took a picture with their pet in the past week choose an icebreaker. And of course, show the pic!

GROUP DISCUSSION

→ Start this week by re-reading the parable of the wise and foolish builders. It can be found on page 120 of the book or in Luke 6:46–49. Discuss: **What’s the key difference highlighted here between the wise and foolish builder?**

→ Discuss: **When is the last time you remember being obedient to God or to his Word? What did you do?** Pro tip: It's OK to say you can't remember ever doing this—you're about to change that!

→ Finally, a timer for five minutes: **Everyone who responded with "go to the cross for grace" share why.** After five minutes of sharing, together, read the prayer on page 201.

Facilitator, take a poll. **There are three things that tend to trip us up when "experimenting" with following God.** In the space, write the names of the people who respond for each one.

→ I wait to be certain.

→ I wait for the full picture.

→ I wait to feel stronger.

→ Now, set a timer for five minutes: **Everyone who responded with “certain” share where this is stopping you.** After five minutes of sharing, facilitator say to this group: “The Lord says to you Psalm 23:3–4. “He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.”

→ Next, set a timer for five minutes: **Everyone who responded with “full picture” share where this is stopping you.** After five minutes of sharing, facilitator say to this group: “The Lord says to you Proverbs 3:5–6. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.”

→ Lastly, set a timer for five minutes:

Everyone who responded “feel stronger” share where this is stopping you. After five minutes of sharing, facilitator say to this group: “The Lord says to you 2 Corinthians 12:9. But he said to me ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

→ Share your answers from pages 220-221: **Do you have an internal struggle going on right now?** Try to put both sides into your own words.

→ Discuss: **Which tactic of resistance are you facing in this struggle?**

1. Did God really say?
2. You will not die
3. For God knows...

PRAYER & CLOSE

Today, spend a little more time in prayer. Pray this prayer (from page 223). Get very specific in the temptations/struggles/tests people are facing.

Father, help me to see where you are preparing me for more. Help me push through resistance and practice your Word. I'd specifically like help with this temptation or struggle or test or resistance right now in my life. Amen.

WEEK 5

**YOUR SIGNATURE MOVE.
RISK TO ROCK.**

FACILITATOR! IF YOU'RE REALLY ON YOUR GAME FOR THE GROUP TIME THIS WEEK, YOU COULD MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A SMALL ROCK FOR EACH PERSON IN YOUR GROUP AND ONE SHARPIE. LITERALLY A ROCK FROM YOUR STREET OR YARD IS FINE. YOU'RE A ROCK STAR IF YOU DO THIS! (IF YOU FORGET OR CAN'T GET ANY, THERE IS TIME IN GROUP TIME TO GATHER ROCKS).

BEFORE THE GROUP

→ **Read** pages 146–179.

→ **Complete** the appendix section on pages 223–236. These questions correspond to what you just read. Journal them or just write in the book! After complete this quiz by following the QR code. Or go to this website: <https://content.leadquizzes.com/lp/kFZjCvAnOw>



→ **Contemplate** what you just wrote and read. Take at least five minutes to let it soak in. Is there any more you want to note about a test you are facing, or resistance coming your way?

WEEK 5 GROUP TIME

Congratulations! You made it to Week Five. Way to stick with it. This week you make your move. Not on the dance floor; your signature move.

WARM UP

Last warm up of the group. Make it count! Whoever has a great dance move they're willing to demonstrate gets to pick an ice breaker from the list. After the ice breaker, maybe take a group photo. Might sound cheesy, but we forget to document some of the best times in our lives.

GROUP DISCUSSION

This week is purposely light on group questions. **The goal of the final week is for**

each person say out loud the risk that God is asking them to take right now! And leave encouraged and supported to go for it. Take some time to pray that God will help each person do that clearly and bravely today.

→ Go around in a circle, and discuss your quiz results. What is your signature move? Does this accurately describe you? Where have you seen this in your life and in your faith?

- Obey: Abraham
- Receive: Isaac
- Hustle: Jacob

As each person shares, take a moment to affirm or challenge them based on your personal experience with them.

→ Discuss: Do you consider yourself a risk-taker? What's the last risk you took?

→ Discuss: **Do you see a risk you think God may want you to take right now?** What is it? Do you have doubts about it? What outcome do you want?

→ Next is a prayer exercise to mark the final week. Sometimes God gives us strengthening, encouragement, and comfort through pictures instead of words. So get ready to receive from God like that now. Read the following exercise, then sit for one minute and let your

PRAYER & CLOSE

Someone read this imaginative prayer exercise. (Read it slowly. Read it twice!)
Everyone else close eyes.

You are new, whole, strong. Your life is built on rock. Anything broken or crumbled has been healed or rebuilt. Your connection with God is strong. You are able to smile even in struggle.

You are living a life that you love.

Now, start a timer for one minute of silence and let God work in your imagination to show you what this would look like for you.

Next, share what you imagined out loud:

- What was rebuilt in your life?
- What and who is there? / What and who isn't?
- How do you feel? What does it look like? What images?

You'll need a rock for this part. (We're serious.) Chances are you have one somewhere. (Try outside!). And a sharpie would be great.

Discuss: Tell the group a place in your life that hasn't been on solid ground lately.

Name it and write it on the rock. No lengthy explanations.

Where can you put your rock to remind you that God can rebuild you in that very place? Put it in a place that can remind you of the rhythms of Come. Hear. Practice. God can build or rebuild anything! It's your reminder to take a risk on Him.

Even text a picture of where you put your rock to the group chat this week! Who commits to send their pic first to remind everyone?

Closing: Do this "call and response" prayer aloud.

Facilitator: *Lord, we believe.*

Everyone: *Help us overcome our unbelief!*
Amen.

ICE BREAKERS

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE: Participants list three things about themselves, two are true, and one is a lie. Others must guess which is which.

TALL TALES: One person starts with "Once upon a time" and tells a small portion of a story. When the group leader buzzes arbitrarily to decide that time is up, the next person must continue the story.

CONCENTRATION: Arrange participants into two equal lines facing each other. One group turns around while the other gets 30 seconds to change 5 things about themselves (switch jewelry, change hair style, untie shoelaces, switch watch to other arm, trade clothing, etc.). All of these must be things in sight. The first group turns back around and must identify the five changes. After they identify the changes, or time is up, they swap so the other team gets to make changes.

10 THINGS IN COMMON: Divide into partners with instructions to discover 10 things that you have in common.

ICE BREAKERS

I DANCE LIKE THIS: You start by saying “My name is _____, and I dance like this.” At that point, you proceed to do some sort of dance move. You then move around in a circle, each person saying their name and doing their dance move. But it’s trickier than you think... You also have to do the dance moves of everyone else who’s gone before you, and can’t repeat someone else’s move. This could be an embarrassing one, so do your best to make it lighthearted and silly. Maybe play some catchy tunes in the background.

BREAKING THE ICE WITH YOUR KEYS: Ask participants to sit in a circle and bring their keys with them. Explain that they will get to know each other through their keys. Ask them that one by one present all the keys they have on their keychain and tell a few sentences about the area the key represents – the city or neighborhood they live in, the activity it represents (bike or locker key) or the person they received it from.

ICE BREAKERS

ONE WORD AS A TIME: Give a general topic. Could be anything! The first person in the group says one word to a topic. The next person continues with another word. Eventually, the group creates a whole sentence by each member contributing only one word at a time. The outcome is always unexpected & almost always funny. Make sure people don't say two words when using articles or pronouns.

THE HANDSHAKE: Splitting the group into pairs, each pair develops a creative handshake. Once done, the pair splits and each individual partners with another group member. The newly formed pair then teaches each other the original handshakes and together creates a new one. You can break up and pair off people as many times as you want.

ICE BREAKERS

HELLO KITTY: In this fun icebreaker, separate your group into teams of kittens and puppies. Puppies try to make the kittens laugh or crack a smile by simply saying, “Hello Kitty” in an amusing manner. Any kittens who smile or laugh join the puppies until there is only one kitten left standing! Get silly!

MY SUPERPOWER: Each participant will state her name and then share what their “superpower” is. This can be a special skill, a curious fact about their lives, valuable knowledge they can share, etc.

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