**9**

**Standing Firm**

**2 Thessalonians 2:1-17**

For centuries people have speculated about the identity of

the antichrist. The long list of candidates includes Napoleon Bonaparte, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Khrushchev, Mikhail Gorbachev (the birthmark on his forehead being the mark

of the beast), Pope John Paul II, Anwar Sadat, the Ayatollah Khomeini, Yasser Arafat, Saddam Hussein, Henry Kissinger, and former president Ronald Wilson Reagan (six letters in

each name =666 [see Rev. 13: 18 ]).\*

**GROUP DISCUSSION**. Why do you think Christians are inclined to imagine that someone in their own generation is

the antichrist?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION**. Do you think it is wise to speculate about the possible identity of the antichrist?

Why or why not?

***42 Spiritual Warfare***

In 2 Thessalonians 2 Paul describes a time of demonic deception that is unparalleled in human history.

Although he doesn't reveal the identity of the Antichrist, Paul does tell us how we can stand firm against Satan's schemes. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17.

1. According to this passage, what false information

caused the Thessalonians to be "unsettled or alarmed"?

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2. Even today some groups claim Jesus Christ has already come. How does Paul know for sure that Jesus has not yet come (vv. 3-5)?

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3. Paul says that before the Lord returns the "man of lawlessness" will be revealed (v.3). In what ways will this man be a counterfeit Christ (vv 4-11)?

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4. Paul says, "The secret power of lawlessness is already

at work" (v.7), the kind of power that will reach its climax with the Antichrist. In what ways do you see the power of

lawlessness at work in the world around you?

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***Standing Firm 43***

What world leaders, either in the present or in the past,

seem to have been driven by the secret power of lawlessness?

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5. What outward and inward reasons will cause people to

be deceived by "the lawless one" (vv. 9- 1 2)?

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6. According to verses 10-12, how do our values and

lifestyle influence our ability to perceive spiritual truth?

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7. According to this passage, what is the ultimate fate of

the man of lawlessness and those who follow the power of lawlessness?

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8. What has God already done, and what does Paul ask him to do, to make our lives different both now and in the future (vv. 13-17)?

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**44 *Spiritual Warfare***

How can we cooperate with God in this process?

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9. Think of a spiritual conflict you are facing. How can you

"stand firm" and hold to biblical truth (v.15) in this situation?

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*Take Paul’s prayer and personalize it, saying it either aloud*

*or in your heart: "May my Lord Jesus Christ himself and God my Father, who loved me and by his grace gave me eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage my heart and strengthen me in every good deed and word."*

**Now or Later**

Paul wants us to be strengthened "in every good deed and word" (v. 17). What good deeds could you do this week in your family, with your neighbors, at work or in your church? What helpful

or encouraging words might you speak in these contexts? Ask God to give you strength and wisdom in these tasks