

Standing Strong

Discussion Questions

1. After that night in the canyon, in *Battle for His Soul*, Jarret feels the Lord's presence in a powerful way. As the days go by, this gift fades, but temptation and weakness remain. When a person turns to Christ after living a life of sin, the temptations might seem to go away for a time. But when they come back, what strategies can a person use to remain faithful to God?
2. Ever since Keefe witnesses a Eucharistic miracle, as shown in *Life-Changing Love*, he's felt God calling him in some way. In *Battle for His Soul*, he meets a group of Franciscan Brothers and his heart is stirred. Thinking God might be calling, he wants to go on a discernment retreat, but he's afraid to tell his father. How important is courage in pursuing a vocation?
3. Jarret and Keefe both feel unworthy at times, when remembering their past mistakes. Jarret convinces himself that he can take charge of his life and stay on the right track, whereas, Keefe immerses himself in prayer for discernment. We can't only pray. We must take action. What is the right balance for remaining faithful and knowing God's will? What other virtues are needed?
4. Following the advice of his priest, Jarret began keeping a journal with his own personal spiritual reflections and he committed himself to regular spiritual direction. If we truly want to grow in holiness, how important is self-evaluation and seeking the wisdom of a good spiritual director?
5. Jarret goes out with a girl he meets at the bookstore and finds she doesn't share the values he's trying hard to embrace. How important is discernment when deciding whom to date?
6. The Franciscan Brothers in *Standing Strong* are based on the Franciscan Brothers of Peace in Minnesota. Brothers are a lot different from Priests, just as Nuns are different from Sisters. How much do you know about different Orders and types of vocations?
7. One of the Brothers sent Keefe a list of discernment steps. Such lists are often recommended in the spiritual life. Some include such things as: stay close to the Sacraments, get a spiritual director, pray every day, good reading, devotion to the Blessed Mother, and serve your parish. Other lists have things like: know that God created you for a specific mission, say "yes" to His will for you, pray often, be holy, and clear away obstacles. What steps do you think are important in vocational discernment? Do you think today's trends create challenges for discerning the call of God?
8. St. Alphonsus tell us: "*Modern heretics make a mockery of wearing the Scapular, they decry it as so much trifling nonsense.*" How does the Brown Scapular teach us to be humble and teachable like "little children" and to not merely rely on our own understanding or abilities?