

In Christ: A War You Didn't Know You Were Fighting

Eph. 6:10-24

Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Question (get everyone involved in discussion):

- Have you ever been robbed, have something stolen, or known someone who has? Describe.
- As a review, from Ephesians 1, name as many spiritual blessings as you can that we have IN CHRIST (there are at least 7). How does knowing that you've "hit the jackpot in Christ" make you feel?

Read Ephesians 6:10-13 and then discuss the following.

- Pastor Josh stated, "Satan does not want you to enjoy your status and your treasure in Christ, and he will do anything possible to keep you from that. We're in the midst of a war that many of us don't realize is happening."
 - As a preliminary matter, ask your group to share: how do you feel about this topic? Are you open? Skeptical? Other?
- The first aspect of this warning is *the way you live in peacetime is different from the way you live when under attack*.
 - How would you live the Christian life differently if you knew that Satan and his fallen angels or demons are attacking you spiritually?
 - What do you think a balance looks like between taking Satan seriously and attributing too much to Satan (such as sin, normal disappointments and circumstances that don't go our way, etc.)?
- The second aspect of this warning is *because the enemy is spiritual in nature, the weapons to combat him are spiritual weapons*.
 - How do you react knowing that you're up against an enemy (Satan) that is stronger than you are? Does it bring fear? Dependence? Prayer? More striving?
 - What would it look like practically in our daily lives to live the truth that Jesus has defeated and will continue to defeat Satan? Discuss.
- The third aspect of this warning is *we need to be familiar with the variety of forms in which the enemy will attack us*.
 - In C.S. Lewis' fictional book *The Screwtape Letters*, a junior demon, Wormwood, devises schemes to make his human targets fall. If you were Wormwood, what types of temptations or schemes would you use to make you or your Christian friends sin or move away from God?
 - Pastor Josh says, "Did you notice the command that showed up 4 times here [in vv. 10-13]? "Take your stand! Stand your ground! Stand firm! After you have done everything, stand!" You don't have to back down!" What in these verses encourages you to stand strong against Satan?

Read Eph. 6:14-18, then discuss the following, "full armor of God."

- **The belt of truth** (the truth of the gospel that Jesus died for our sins):
 - How does a simple belt function to help a warrior in battle?
 - What are some of Satan's appealing lies, which must be combatted with the truth of the gospel?
 - What would it look like to get the truth of the gospel in our hearts and lives? What spiritual disciplines might help us in this regard?
 - How does applying the truth of the gospel to our lives help us battle Satan's lies?

- **The breastplate of righteousness.**
 - In a suit of armor, what does the breastplate guard? Why is this important?
 - Why is it a breastplate of *righteousness* that will guard your heart rather than another type of breastplate? (Hint: where does our righteousness come from?)
 - How might Satan attack and find a weak spot in your “breastplate?”
- **Battle Shoes** – “your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.”
 - How would you define “peace” and with whom do we have this peace? (See Eph. 2:13-14)
 - The word “readiness” in v. 15 is a Greek noun which can mean a “stand” or “base.” If you’re about to have to fight off an enemy, how does the gospel of peace make you “ready” for Satan’s attacks? What would be the opposite of this kind of stand or base?
- **The Shield of Faith** (“with which you extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one”)
 - Picture flaming arrows in the spiritual world. What is your emotional reaction to see arrows like these coming from Satan and his demons?
 - In ancient warfare, flaming arrows were designed to fly in quickly, without warning, and set fire to their target. Pastor Josh says flaming arrows indicate a sudden, blind-side spiritual attack. Some examples, cited by author James Philip, are sudden, powerful temptations; sudden doubts about God and his goodness; even sudden promptings that sound like the voice of God in your head, but that when tested are from the evil one. Have you ever experienced any of these?
 - How would you define “faith”? What is it behaviorally? How does it serve as a shield against these arrows?
- **The Helmet of Salvation**
 - What does a helmet guard and why is this important?
 - When our thoughts go into a downward spiral, what does Scripture tell us to focus on (can you think of any specific Scripture in this regard?)?
 - Have you ever experienced this “helmet” to be of practical help?
- **The Sword of the Spirit** (“which is the Word of God”)
 - Note that the Word of God is the only obvious offensive weapon in our armor. Why do you think that is the case?
 - How have you used this “sword” in the past?
 - If you know the common ways Satan tempts you, then can you choose to read and memorize Scripture most likely to counter act that? What are some of the passages?
- **Pray in the Spirit**
 - What would it look like to pray with the help of the Spirit?
 - How much is prayer (with respect to spiritual battle) a part of your life?
- **Application:** What piece of armor are you most likely missing?

Read Eph. 6:19-24 and then discuss the following.

- How do you see Paul applying this principle of putting on God’s armor in his own life?
- How does grace play a part in our spiritual battles?
- Lastly, knowing that this section follows Paul’s advice to husbands and wives, parents and children, as well as bosses and workers, how does this connect with spiritual warfare and the armor of God?

Closing thoughts/prayer. Among our usual prayer requests...

- Let’s pray for a godly perspective and balance between a readiness for spiritual warfare and discerning when problems are just our sinfulness or normal life circumstances.
- Let’s pray that we put on the armor that we’ve been missing.