

MEET THE ENEMY • SPIRITUAL BATTLE



WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

READ EPHESIANS 6:10-20

Introduction

In many ways, this passage is a summary, reviewing the many things Paul has already taught and modeled throughout the letter. But here, he is looking at the importance of these topics through the lens of the great spiritual war in which the Christian is engaged: letting his readers know that any moral weakness will be exploited fully by the enemy.

Ephesians 6:10-14

There are three important ideas communicated in this section. First, Paul wants his readers to be aware that they are engaged in spiritual war between the powers of darkness, and the power of God. It is easy to look at sin, divisions in the church, even problems in the world, from a strictly human perspective. But, this would be an incomplete picture of the true nature of our opposition.

Second, Paul defines victory as “standing your ground” against Satan’s attack. While that might not sound hugely offensive, it should be observed that any time you stand your ground against Satan and sin, you actually make progress. A temptation that is yielded to causes a loss of ground, but a temptation not yielded to causes strengthening of our character. Thus, we are victorious when we refuse to give ground to Satan’s attacks.

Another lesson is found in the phrase “so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” Evil is not a lifeless state of affairs. There is careful thought and strategy that is being mounted against the believer from the spiritual forces of darkness; and those strategies, as we might well imagine, are aimed at our weak and vital areas for maximum effect.

Ephesians 6:14-20

So how do we stand firm against Satan? Paul tells us it is through the “armor of God.” It is very important to note, that while Paul uses the metaphor of putting on the armor, he is not trying to communicate that it is something you ever take off. He is communicating that you must daily “walk in these things” in order to enjoy complete protection.

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

This passage examines the hidden battle that is going on all around us between the spiritual forces of good and evil. The war is real, and as Christians, we are in the center of the battlefield. Therefore, we need to be spiritually prepared in order to stand firm against Satan’s attacks.

We want to hear from you! Please send your feedback on this study to Materials@ImpactMovement.com

Belt of Truth

What you will notice, as Paul surveys the various pieces of armor, is that he is really reviewing the various things he has already instructed the Ephesians about in the letter. In 4:25, he told the Ephesians that they must “put off falsehood and speak truthfully.” In 5:9, he says that the fruit of godliness “consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth.” So this is not a new teaching. What is new for them, is to realize that when they speak untruthfully, they give Satan an open door into their lives to create pain and turmoil. It is looking at the same admonitions through the lens of the spiritual battle.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

Paul, here, is alluding to the behavior found in 4:25-5:7, where the Ephesians were told to put off: malice, slander, bitterness, rage, impurity, sexual immorality, anger, and several other sinful practices. They were also told to be kind, compassionate, and thankful, etc. By using the metaphor of a breastplate, we see more clearly that it is our hearts that Satan targets through these sins. The result is that our obedience and passion for the Lord fade as our hearts are captivated by greed, lust, hatred, etc.

Feet Fitted with Readiness from the Gospel

The background for the armor imagery that Paul makes use of here is found in Isaiah. For instance, in Isaiah 59:17 in referring to God going to battle, it says, “He put on righteousness as a breastplate and the helmet of salvation on his head.” Isaiah 52:7 gives us a helpful commentary on what “feet shod with the readiness that comes from the gospel” means. Isaiah 52:7 says, “How beautiful ... are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace ... who proclaim salvation.” Pictured here, then, is a willingness to proclaim the gospel. Paul’s own willingness is modeled throughout the letter—even a few verses later in 6: 19-20 where he asks for prayer that he might “fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.”

The Shield of Faith, Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Scriptures

In the first two chapters, Paul went to great length to describe all of the things that are true of us in Christ. These truths, and our trust in them, seem to represent the shield, helmet, and sword. Satan’s fiery arrows are often aimed to cause us to disbelieve these central truths about God’s character and His love, care, and benevolence toward us. It would be wise to commit to memory some of the great promises and blessings found in these two chapters.

Prayer

Finally, Paul urges continuous praying of all kinds of prayers. Paul has already modeled this kind of prayer throughout the letter. In Ephesians 1:15-22 and 3:14-21, we get large samples of that which Paul prayed. Among other things, he prays for wisdom, strength, unity, and maturity for the Ephesians.

Summary

When seen as a summary, Paul’s teaching on spiritual battle is quite simple. He is saying, in effect, remember to do all of the things I told you to do, realizing Satan will try to exploit your weaknesses. To give in, is to give ground to Satan in your life, which can multiply sin’s affect on you and others exponentially.

This study is accompanied by an article. Take the time to read it.

WHAT IF THERE'S A
PROBLEM?

None apparent.

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WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

There are two important points to get out of this lesson. The first point is to see and understand the nature of the spiritual battle that is going on around you.

The second point is to review all that Paul has emphasized in his letter to the Ephesians, now through the various pieces of armor. It is also important to see the danger of not applying these truths in light of the dimension of the spiritual battle in which we are engaged. Any area of weakness or sin becomes an opportunity for Satan to get a foothold in our lives.

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 6:12 "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

WHAT ARE THE ANSWERS?

1. Jot down your experience.
2. Stand firm.
3. Take time to record the various elements of the armor mentioned in the passage.
4. To speak and act truthfully.
5. Jot down your thoughts.
6. Malice, slander, bitterness, rage, impurity, sexual immorality, anger, and brawling are some of the things they were to "put off." They were also told to be kind, compassionate, and thankful.
7. Jot down the real areas of temptation for you.
8. The passage says, "How beautiful ... are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace ... who proclaim salvation." Pictured here, then, is a willingness to proclaim the gospel.
9. Paul's own willingness is modeled throughout the letter, particularly in 6:19-20, where he asks for prayer that he might "fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel."
10. Satan's fiery arrows are often aimed to cause us to disbelieve these central truths of God's word. When we trust in these truths remaining unmoved, they become our shield, helmet, and sword.
11. That we are not God's children; that He doesn't care; that he has abandoned us; that He doesn't have our best interests at heart; or He doesn't love us.
12. Look through Paul's prayers in 1:15-22 and 3:14-21. Jot down some of the things Paul prayed as preparation for the study.
13. Jot down your thoughts.

MEET THE ENEMY • EPHESIANS 6:10-20

The Need to Stand

Read Ephesians 6:10-14

1. When was a time recently where you became more aware of the spiritual war that is going on behind the scenes?
2. In this spiritual battle, how is victory defined?

How We Are to Stand

3. We are told in 6:10-14 to stand against Satan's attacks by clothing ourselves in the armor of God. Read 6:14-20 and record the different components of this armor.
4. The first piece of the armor is truth (pictured as a belt). Look up Ephesians 1:13, 4:25-27 and 5:9. What do these verses tell you about what Paul means?
5. Take a moment and consider if there are any areas of your life where you do not speak or act in a truthful way, giving Satan a foothold (4:27). Write down any thoughts.
6. In Ephesians 5:9, Paul tells us that Christians are not only to live lives characterized by truth, but also righteousness (pictured here as a breastplate). Read Ephesians 4:29 - 5:12 and record some of the things Paul has in mind, both positive and negative.

7. The breastplate protected the heart. How has your heart been wounded by any of these things? What tactics has Satan used to try to exploit this weakness and get a foothold in your life?

The background for this imagery is found in Isaiah. For instance, in Isaiah 59:17, in referring to God going to battle, it says “He put on righteousness as a breastplate and the helmet of salvation on his head.”

8. Read Isaiah 52:7. How does this help us to better understand what is meant by “feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace?”
9. How does Paul model this “readiness” in 6:19-20?
10. How is what Paul taught in chapter one related to fulfilling the requirements of the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the sword of the word of God?
11. What might be some of Satan’s flaming arrows that would cause us to doubt what Paul taught in chapters one and two?
12. Paul urges continuous praying of all kinds of prayers. Skim through Ephesians 1:15-22 and 3:14-21 where Paul modeled this kind of praying. Jot down some of the things for which Paul prayed.

As Paul explains the armor, it seems that he is reviewing the many things he has already taught and modeled throughout the letter. But here, he is looking at their importance through the lens of the spiritual war in which we are engaged, and is letting the Ephesians know that their weaknesses will be exploited fully by the enemy.

13. If there were a chink in your armor, where would it be?

Memory verse

Ephesians 6:12 “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

TOOLS FOR WARFARE

A number of years ago, a friend of mine presented me with an unexpected gift which has proven to be one of the most helpful gifts I've ever received. This man brought me a large carpenter's tool box jammed full of wrenches, hammers, saws, screwdrivers, nails, screws, and many other things that go with such a box. One might wonder why a pastor would treasure such a gift. It is a gift that has never ceased to be a treasure to me because I like to do things with my hands. There is nothing more frustrating than wanting to do some project around the home and not having the necessary tools. In my heart, I thank my friend for that gift every time I use it. The tools work for me in enabling me to get the job done.

We need tools in spiritual warfare as well. It has been the underlying purpose of this book to provide practical, usable information and insight into the waging of a winning warfare. The world, the flesh, and the devil will be continuously defeated if we use the weapons of our warfare. The Lord has provided all the tools we need. The Lord Jesus Christ has provided all of our victory. He used the same tools He has provided us in winning the battle. His victory is our victory. It remains our responsibility to use these weapons so graciously provided in His grace. Every time you use them, you'll thank God for the tools of victory He has provided. Just as I think with fond remembrance of the man who gave me the tool box when I use my carpenter's tools, so your heart will reach out in an ever deepening gratitude to your Lord.

In previous chapters, importance of doctrinal truth and doctrinal praying was intended to be lifted high. Doctrine, God's unchanging truth, is mighty in defeating our enemies. This truth must get deep into our souls. This can only come about as we gain understanding of the Holy Word of God and then use that Word aggressively in our lives. With the permission and approval of Dr. Victor Matthews, professor of theology at the Grand Rapids Baptist Bible College and Seminary, I include here some very fine helps in keeping doctrinal truth in the forefront of your warfare.

"The Daily Affirmation of Faith" was written by Dr. Matthews to provide a concise, clear statement of the truth of the Word of God as it applies to our victory. I commend this affirmation for daily reading aloud on the part of those who are experiencing intense warfare. It will do much to build spiritual foundation into your soul. It will keep the ground of your victory aggressively in action against your enemies. Study the texts of Scripture for your own enlightenment and edification.

The Daily Affirmation Of Faith

Today I deliberately choose to submit myself fully to God as He has made Himself known to me through the Holy Scripture which I honestly accept as the only inspired, infallible, authoritative standard for all life and practice. In this day I will not judge God, His work, myself, or others on the basis of feelings or circumstances.

1. I recognize by faith that the triune God is worthy of all honor, praise, and worship as the Creator, Sustainer, and End of all things. I confess that God, as my Creator, made me for Himself. In this day I therefore choose to live for Him (Rev 5:9,10; Is 43:1,7,21; Rev 4:11).
2. I recognize by faith that God loved me and chose me in Jesus Christ before time began (Eph 1:1-7).
3. I recognize by faith that God has proven His love to me in sending His Son to die in my place, in whom every provision has already been made for my past, present, and future needs through His representative work, and that I have been quickened, raised, seated with Jesus Christ in the heavenlies, and anointed with the Holy Spirit (Ro 5:6-11; 8:28; Phil 1:6; 4:6,7,13,19; Eph 1:3; 2:5,6; Ac 2:1-4,33).

4. I recognize by faith that God has accepted me, since I have received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior (Jn 1:12; Eph 1:6); that He has forgiven me (Eph 1:7); adopted me into His family, assuming every responsibility for me (Jn 17:11,17; Eph 1:5; Phil 1:6); given me eternal life (Jn 3:36; I Jn 5:9-13); applied the perfect righteousness of Christ to me so that I am now justified (Ro 5:1; 8:3,4; 10:4); made me complete in Christ (Col 2:10); and offers Himself to me as my daily sufficiency through prayer and the decisions of faith (I Co 1:30; Col 1:27; Gal 2:20; Jn 14:13,14; Mt 21:22; Ro 6:1-19; Heb 4:1-3,11).
5. I recognize by faith that the Holy Spirit has baptized me into the Body of Christ (I Co 12:13); sealed me (Eph 1:13,14); anointed me for life and service (Ac 1:8; Jn 7:37-39); seeks to lead me into a deeper walk with Jesus Christ (Jn 14:16-18; 15:26,27; 16:13-15; Ro 8:11-16); and to fill my life with Himself (Eph 5:18).
6. I recognize by faith that only God can deal with sin and only God can produce holiness of life. I confess that in my salvation my part was only to receive Him and that He dealt with my sin and saved me. Now I confess that in order to live a holy life, I can only surrender to His will and receive Him as my sanctification; trusting Him to do whatever may be necessary in my life, without and within, so I may be enabled to live today in purity, freedom, rest and power for His glory (Jn 1:12; I Co 1:30; II Co 9:8; Gal 2:20; Heb 4:9; I Jn 5:4; Jude 24).

Having confessed that God is worthy of all praise, that the Scriptures are the only authoritative standard, that only God can deal with sin and produce holiness of life, I again recognize my total dependence upon Him and submission to Him. I accept the truth that praying in faith is absolutely necessary for the realization of the will and grace of God in my daily life (I Jn 5:14,15; Ja 2:6; 4:2,3; 5:16-18; Phil 4:6,7; Heb 4:1-13; 11:6, 24-28).

Recognizing that faith is a total response to God by which the daily provisions the Lord has furnished in Himself are appropriated, I therefore make the following decisions of faith:

1. For this day (Heb 3:6,13,15; 4:7) I make the decision of faith to surrender wholly to the authority of God as He has revealed Himself in the Scripture to obey Him. I confess my sin, face the sinful reality of my old nature, and deliberately choose to walk in the light, in step with Christ, throughout the hours of this day (Ro 6:16-20; Phil 2:12,13; I Jn 1:7,9).
2. For this day I make the decision of faith to surrender wholly to the authority of God as revealed in the Scripture—to believe Him. I accept only His Word as final authority. I now believe that since I have confessed my sin He has forgiven and cleansed me (I Jn 1:9). I accept at full value His Word of promise to be my sufficiency and rest, and will conduct myself accordingly (Ex 33:1; I Co 1:30; II Co 9:8; Phil 4:19).
3. For this day I make the decision of faith to recognize that God has made every provision so that I may fulfill His will and calling. Therefore, I will not make any excuse for my sin and failure (I Th 5:24).
4. For this day I make the decision of faith deliberately to receive from God that provision which He has made for me. I renounce all self-effort to live the Christian life and to perform God's service; renounce all sinful praying which asks God to change circumstances and people so that I may be more spiritual; renounce all drawing back from the work of the Holy Spirit within and the call of God without; and renounce all nonbiblical motives, goals, and activities which serve my sinful pride.
 - a. I now sincerely receive Jesus Christ as my sanctification, particularly as my cleansing from the old nature, and ask the Holy Spirit to apply to me the work of Christ accomplished for me in the crucifixion. In cooperation with and dependence upon Him, I obey the command to "put off the old man" (Ro 6:1-14; I Co 1:30; Gal 6:14; Eph 4:22).
 - b. I now sincerely receive Jesus Christ as my sanctification, particularly as my enablement moment by moment to live above sin, and ask the Holy Spirit to apply to me the work of the resurrection so that I may walk in newness of life. I confess that only God can deal with my sin and only God can produce holiness and the fruit of the Spirit in my life. In cooperation with and dependence upon Him, I obey the command to "put on the new man" (Ro 6:1-4; Eph 4:24).
 - c. I now sincerely receive Jesus Christ as my deliverance from Satan and take my position with Him in the heavenlies, asking the Holy Spirit to apply to me the work of the ascension. In His Name I submit myself to God and stand against all of Satan's influence and subtlety. In cooperation with and dependence upon God, I obey the command to "resist the devil" (Eph 1:20-23; 2:5; 4:27; 6:10-18; Col 1:13; Heb 2:14,15; Ja 4:7; I Pe 3:22; 5:89).
 - d. I now sincerely receive the Holy Spirit as my anointing for every aspect of life and service for today. I fully open my

life to Him to fill me afresh in obedience to the command to “be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Eph 5:18; Jn 7:37-39; 14:16,17; 15:26,27; 16:7-15; Ac 1:8).

Having made this confession and these decisions of faith, I now receive God’s promised rest for this day (Heb 4:1-13). Therefore, I relax in the trust of faith, knowing that in the moment of temptation, trial, or need, the Lord Himself will be there as my strength and sufficiency (I Co 10:13).

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Another doctrinal tool that has proved of great benefit to me and to many others is the “Warfare Prayer” composed by Dr. Matthews. As a theologian, his unique and thorough way of including sound doctrine in this prayer is most helpful. I would urge anyone facing obvious spiritual warfare to use this prayer daily. It is good to read it aloud as a prayer unto the Lord. Eventually one will be able to incorporate the doctrinal truths expressed into his own prayer life without reading it.

The devil hates this prayer. Usually before working with anyone who has deep demonic affliction, I will request that we read this prayer in unison. Many times the oppressed one can read only with great difficulty. Sometimes sight problems, voice problems, or mind confusion become so intense that the afflicted person can continue only with great effort. It is the truth of God that Satan cannot resist, and he vigorously fights it being applied against him. Those serious about warfare should daily use a prayer of this type along with other prayer examples shared in this book.

Warfare Prayer

Heavenly Father, I bow in worship and praise before You. I cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection during this time of prayer. I surrender myself completely and unreservedly in every area of my life to Yourself. I do take a stand against all the workings of Satan that would hinder me in this time of prayer, and I address myself only to the true and living God and refuse any involvement of Satan in my prayer.

Satan, I command you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to leave my presence with all your demons, and I bring the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ between us.

Heavenly Father, I worship You, and I give You praise. I recognize that You are worthy to receive all glory and honor and praise. I renew my allegiance to You and pray that the blessed Holy Spirit would enable me in this time of prayer. I am thankful, heavenly Father, that You have loved me from past eternity, that You sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world to die as my substitute that I would be redeemed. I am thankful that the Lord Jesus Christ came as my representative, and that through Him You have completely forgiven me; You have given me eternal life; You have given me the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ so I am now justified. I am thankful that in Him You have made me complete, and that You have offered Yourself to me to be my daily help and strength.

Heavenly Father, come and open my eyes that I might see how great You are and how complete Your provision is for this new day. I do, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, take my place with Christ in the heavenlies with all principalities and powers (powers of darkness and wicked spirits) under my feet. I am thankful that the victory the Lord Jesus Christ won for me on the cross and in His resurrection has been given to me and that I am seated with the Lord Jesus Christ in the heavenlies; therefore, I declare that all principalities and powers and all wicked spirits are subject to me in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I am thankful for the armor You have provided, and I put on the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of peace, the helmet of salvation. I lift up the shield of faith against all the fiery darts of the enemy, and take in my hand the sword of the spirit, the Word of God, and use Your Word against all the forces of evil in my life; and I put on this armor and live and pray in complete dependence upon You, blessed Holy Spirit.

I am grateful, heavenly Father, that the Lord Jesus Christ spoiled all principalities and powers and made a show of them openly and triumphed over them in Himself. I claim all that victory for my life today. I reject out of my life all the insinuations, the accusations, and the temptations of Satan. I affirm that the Word of God is true, and I choose to live today in the light of God’s Word. I choose, heavenly Father, to live in obedience to You and in fellowship with Yourself. Open my eyes and show me the areas of my life that would not please You. Work in my life that there be no ground to give Satan a foothold against me. Show me any area of weakness. Show me any area of my life that I must deal with so that I would please You. I do in every way today stand for You and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in my life.

By faith and in dependence upon You, I put off the old man and stand into all the victory of the crucifixion where the Lord Jesus Christ provided cleansing from the old nature. I put on the new man and stand into all the victory of the resurrection and the provision He has made for me there to live above sin. Therefore, in this day, I put off the old nature with its selfish-

ness, and I put on the new nature with its love. I put off the old nature with its fear and I put on the new nature with its courage. I put off the old nature with its weakness and I put on the new nature with its strength. I put off today the old nature with all its deceitful lusts and I put on the new nature with all its righteousness and purity.

I do in every way stand into the victory of the ascension and the glorification of the Son of God where all principalities and powers were made subject to Him, and I claim my place in Christ victorious with Him over all the enemies of my soul. Blessed Holy Spirit, I pray that You would fill me. Come into my life, break down every idol and cast out every foe.

I am thankful, heavenly Father, for the expression of Your will for my daily life as You have shown me in Your Word. I therefore claim all the will of God for today. I am thankful that You have blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I am thankful that You have begotten me unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I am thankful that You have made a provision so that today I can live filled with the Spirit of God with love and joy and self-control in my life. And I recognize that this is Your will for me, and I therefore reject and resist all the endeavors of Satan and of his demons to rob me of the will of God.

I refuse in this day to believe my feelings, and I hold up the shield of faith against all the accusations and against all the insinuations that Satan would put in my mind. I claim the fullness of the will of God for today.

I do, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, completely surrender myself to You, heavenly Father, as a living sacrifice. I choose not to be conformed to this world. I choose to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, and I pray that You would show me Your will and enable me to walk in all the fullness of the will of God today.

I am thankful, heavenly Father, that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, to the casting down of imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and to bring every thought into obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore in my own life today I tear down the strongholds of Satan, and I smash the plans of Satan that have been formed against me. I tear down the strongholds of Satan against my mind, and I surrender my mind to You, blessed Holy Spirit. I affirm, heavenly Father, that You have not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. I break and smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my emotions today, and I give my emotions to You. I smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my will today, and I give my will to You, and choose to make the right decisions of faith. I smash the strongholds of Satan formed against my body today, and I give my body to You, recognizing that I am Your temple; and I rejoice in Your mercy and Your goodness.

Heavenly Father, I pray that now through this day You would quicken me; show me the way that Satan is hindering and tempting and lying and counterfeiting and distorting the truth in my life. Enable me to be the kind of person that would please You. Enable me to be aggressive in prayer. Enable me to be aggressive mentally and to think Your thoughts after You, and to give You Your rightful place in my life.

Again, I now cover myself with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and pray that You, blessed Holy Spirit, would bring all the work of the crucifixion, all the work of the resurrection, all the work of the glorification, and all the work of Pentecost into my life today. I surrender myself to You. I refuse to be discouraged. You are the God of all hope. You have proven Your power by resurrecting Jesus Christ from the dead, and I claim in every way Your victory over all satanic forces active in my life, and I reject these forces; and I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ with thanksgiving. Amen.