

## life group study guide

### THE ARMOR OF GOD: KNOWING YOUR ENEMY

December 30, 2012



Ephesians 6:10-13

*"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them." C.S. Lewis, The Screwtape Letters.*

*"You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you (NIV says **"Sin is crouching at your door; It desires to have you."**). But you must subdue it and be its master." Genesis 4:7.*

*"Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.  
<sup>9</sup> Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith." 1 Peter 5:7-9.*

Consider the quote from C.S. Lewis and the two Scripture passages above.

- Do you agree with what Lewis says? What error, if any, does the Church in America tend to fall into? Why do you think this is the case?
- What is your reaction to the Scriptural picture of sin in Gen. 4:7? Is it accurate or is the writer exaggerating? What does the NIV translation say to you about the nature of sin? What are some of the ramifications of sin "having" or "controlling" a person?
- How about what Peter says about the devil? Do you think he is overstating the case – perhaps trying to frighten his readers or is this divinely inspired and accurate information about "our great enemy?"

#### Study

Read Ephesians 6:10-13.

1. The Only Way to be Strong – 6:10. We are not told to "buck up," "man up," "suck it up," or "toughen up." This is no pep talk from a gung ho football coach telling his players that "when the going gets tough, the tough get going." To have any success against Satan and his lies and temptations, **we can only be strong in the Lord!** He offers us not just power but "mighty power" – certainly enough for the battles.

Read John 15:5 and Philippians 4:13. Do the New Testament writers really mean what they say in these verses? How do they confirm what Ephesians 6:10 says?

## **life group study guide**

2. The Armorer – 6:11, 13. Twice we are told that it is “God’s armor.” One commentator reminds us that “it is *God* who has forged them. It is *God* who gives them.” The One who created every star in the universe also makes and gives us the armor we need to fight temptation and sin. The armor is well made!

**What comfort does this give you? Do you trust in God’s armor – enough to obey and carefully put on each piece?**

3. The Soldiers – 6:11-13. Whether we like it or not, we are soldiers in a battle that is already being waged all around us, and we leave our armor home at our great risk. One devotional writer says this about these verses: “It is very important to understand that Paul is telling us to put on the full armor. We are not told to make the armor. We are not told to pick the pieces that are comfortable or fashionable. . . The text appears to indicate that we will be rejoining a battle already in progress. It also appears that rejoining the battle is not an option. **We may choose to not engage the enemy . . . but be assured that he will engage us at every opportunity.**”

**Do you ever think you can avoid or escape spiritual battle? Or do agree with the quote above that “he will engage us” whether we like it or not?**

**Do you treat the armor of God like your American Express card (“Don’t leave home without it!”) or do you not give it any thought as you prepare for your day? Many of us (me especially) begin our days with little thought of God or of our enemy. Why do you think that might be? In your experience, what often happens as a result? What are some steps you might take (or share some you have taken) to “arm yourself” as you start your day?**

4. The Enemy – 6:11-13. In these verses, we find out a little about the enemy. **Our enemy is not people – not “flesh-and-blood.”** The text is quite clear that these enemies are “the devil” and other “evil spirits.” The devil is Satan and the evil spirits are the demons of whom he is the prince (Matt. 12:24). Satan is pictured in the Bible in the following ways: adversary, slanderer, accuser, enemy, destroyer, tempter, deceiver, ruler of the demons, ruler of this world, god of this world/age, and liar (in fact “the father of lies,” Jn. 8:44). The essence of his completely fallen nature is his description as “the evil one” (Matt. 13:19,38).

**What do these descriptions of the devil say about his work against us? In what ways (accuser, tempter, deceiver, liar, etc.) does he seem most active today? In what ways do you think he most often works against you?**

Scott Kenworthy will give us true biblical doctrine about the devil and his demons in today’s sermon, but for now, we need to know that:

- Satan and other evil spirits are most likely fallen angels – “angels who sinned” (2 Peter 2:4). This fall probably occurred before the physical universe was created (Jn. 8:44; 1 Jn. 3:8). Other verses: Rev. 12:7-9; Jude 9.
- Being angels that have fallen, they have basically the same nature as angels, meaning that they are **created, finite (only in one place at a time), spiritual (not physical), powerful but not omnipotent, intelligent but not all-knowing, immortal, and (unlike the angels) destined for eternal punishment (Matt. 25:41-42).**

## **life group study guide**

- They have tried to stop God's plan (King Herod killing the baby boys in Bethlehem, the temptation of Christ, etc.) but cannot. Their 3 principle strategies today are 1. Attacking the mind through false teaching, deception, and lies. 2. Attacking the will through temptation. 3. Attacking the body through demonic presence and control.
5. Our Victory – 6:11,13. *“Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil . . . Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. **Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.**”*

There is an “if . . . then” promise here. God, unlike Satan, is infinite, almighty, all knowing, and present everywhere. He is the maker of the armor that He wants us to wear. He is quite capable of making high-quality armor that will succeed against any scheme of Satan. **If** we put on this armor, **then** “after the battle [we] will still be standing firm” (6:13). The victory has been won; the armor is made for us and is impervious to attack. We just have to put it on – to wear it *daily*. **If we do this, then we will stand firm.**

### **Conclusion**

Dr. Jack Cottrell, theology professor at Cincinnati Bible Seminary, says this about our enemy: “In short, Satan and his demons are real, active, powerful, and dangerous, *but they are no match for our divine and almighty Redeemer, Jesus Christ.*”

**What has God taught you today from the Scott’s sermon and from this text? What most alarms you? What most comforts and assures you?**