

# **life group study guide**

## **IT'S TIME TO FIGHT BACK**

**January 20, 2013**



Stand and Fight

It's time to fight back – Ephesians 6:10-17

*Strange to say, the luminous world is the invisible world; the luminous world is that which we do not see.*

*Our eyes of flesh see only night.* (Victor Hugo)

*When you see the invisible, you can do the impossible.* (Oral Roberts)

### **Introduction**

2 Cor 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

- What does it mean to fix our eyes on what is unseen?
- How do we fix our eyes on what is unseen?
- Does keeping an eternal perspective:
  - Make your current struggles seem “light and momentary”?
  - Help you not to lose heart?
  - Provide daily renewal?

### **Bible Study**

We are in a battle. One of my favorite stories in the Bible provides encouragement and instruction.

Read 2 Kings 6:8-23

This amazing story shows the faith of Elisha and a glimpse into the unseen forces of God at work.

- What is the first reaction of Elisha's servant? (vs 15)
  - Is this often your first reaction to problems and challenges?
- What is Elisha's statement to his servant? (vs 16)
  - A quick word search of the New American Standard version of the Bible resulted in the phrase “do not be afraid” appearing 56 times and the phrase “do not fear” 57 times.
  - Why do you think we need to be told this so often?
- What does Elisha do first in response to the seemingly desperate situation? (vs 17)
  - Is this your first response to a troubling situation?
- This story contains several references (vs 17, 18, 20) to opening and closing the eyes of individuals (or groups).
  - How can recognizing the seen and the unseen change our reactions to troubling situations?

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### Mark 11:11-14, 20-24

This chapter of the Bible shows us the power of prayer, faith and the Word of God (each of which is an important weapon mentioned in Ephesians 6).

In this account, we see Jesus curse a fig tree (vs 11-14) and the disciples react in amazement as Jesus' words are fulfilled (vs 19-21). Jesus then begins to teach the disciples.

Verse 23 - Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him.

- What does Jesus use as an example of what is possible through prayer?
- What condition(s) does He give for the request to be granted?

This verse can be misused as stating that whatever we request of God without doubting that God is duty-bound to provide for us.

- Jesus has taught that we are to call God, "Father". As a good parent, is it wise to provide your children with anything they ask for?
  - Matt 7:7-11 supports the image of God as an all-wise parent answering the requests of his children.
- Don't overlook the previous verse (Mark 11:22) which begins Jesus' teaching on this subject:
  - Where are we to place our faith?
  - Do you have faith in both God's ability to answer your prayer and His wisdom in dealing with your request?
- The disciples were amazed that Jesus' words came true.
  - Do we express surprise at God's Word being fulfilled?
  - Is this a form of doubt?

Verse 24 - Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.

We can see the power of God, the importance of prayer and the role of faith in this verse.

Interestingly, this verse contains three verb tenses:

- You pray and ask (present tense)
- Believe that you have received them (past tense)
- And they will be granted you (future tense)

We know God is not limited to time and space. Let us look at an Old Testament "peek behind the curtain" at some of the unseen forces at work in an application of this verse.

### Read Daniel 10:10-14

In the previous chapters, Daniel has prayed for an interpretation and understanding of a vision.

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Now, Daniel is visited by an angel (vs 10-11). Note that Daniel's first reaction is fear (vs 12). After telling Daniel not to fear, the angel explains what has been happening "in the unseen."

- When was Daniel's prayer heard and answered? (vs 12)
- When did the angel begin his journey to Daniel with the answer? (vs 12)
- How long does it take the angel to arrive with the answer to Daniel's prayer? (vs 13)
- What kept the angel from arriving immediately? (vs 13) [Note: the prince of the kingdom of Persia is described in Ephesians 6:12 as "the rulers", "the powers", "the world forces of this darkness", and "the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."]
- How does the angel break free from the spiritual battle to meet with Daniel? (vs 13)

In verse 14, the angel begins to deliver the message to Daniel in response to Daniel's prayer.

Looking at this account in light of Mark 11:24, we see that:

- 20 days after Daniel had begun to pray (present tense) and make his request to God, he could
- believe that he had received it (past tense) because God had granted his request 20 days earlier by sending his angel, and
- know that it will be granted to him (future tense) when the angel would arrive after a spiritual battle—one that even involved the archangel Michael!

In light of all this, we need to keep Jesus' words of Mark 11:22 in mind--our faith is to be in God rather than any goodness or power of our own.

In Acts 19:11-17 we see some Jewish exorcists wanting to take on a spiritual battle after observing the miraculous acts of God working through Paul.

- What were the miraculous acts they observed? (vs 12)
- What did these Jewish exorcists attempt to do? (vs 13-14)
- What were the results? (vs 15-16)
- In your opinion, what was the motivation of the sons of Sceva?
- What can we learn about spiritual warfare from this account?

### **Conclusion**

"Courage is not the absence of fear; it is the ability to act in the presence of fear." (I found this quote was attributed to Bruce Lee.)

Ephesians 6 tells us :

- We are in a battle
- We need not fear
- The weapons we are to use in the battle.

Pray, that (as we fast), in the midst of the spiritual battles:

1. God would be glorified (just as in Acts 19:17-20)

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2. God's Kingdom would advance to the ends of the earth
3. For your personal sphere of influence—including the battle for your heart and mind (Rom 12:2).