

EPHESIANS
GEARING UP FOR BATTLE

Friday, October 2

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-17

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. **11** Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. **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.

We are in a war! Not against human governments or individuals, but against Satan and the forces of darkness. We cannot fight this spiritual battle in our own strength. We must rely on the power of the Spirit for victory. Four times in five verses Paul tells believers to stand their ground against the enemy. As soldiers for Christ, we are to resist the enemy and never surrender. To do this, God has given us the armor listed in verses 14-18.

The belt is what held all the pieces of a soldier's armor together. So, the truth of God and His Word is what holds believer's lives together. The breastplate protected the heart. Christ's righteousness is what protects the believer's heart from the attacks of the enemy. Soldiers wore special shoes with "cleats" so they could dig in for a fight. Believer's feet should be firmly planted in "the gospel of peace." A soldier's shield was made of iron and leather soaked in water to extinguish the fiery arrows shot at them. Believers defeat temptation by holding on to their faith – a complete reliance on God, depending on His strength, and following His direction and will. The helmet protected the head and brain. For believers, it is the assurance of our salvation that protects our thoughts from the onslaught of the devil. Finally, a soldier must have a weapon – a sword. The Christian's weapon is the Word of God. We must know it, study it, memorize it, and apply it in order to stand against Satan and his schemes.

A final piece of "military equipment" is mentioned in verse 18 – prayer. Just as a soldier needs to stay in constant contact with his commanding officer, so believers must stay in contact with their heavenly Commander. Are you standing firm?

LESSON ONE: "The Devil's Schemes." The Greek word translated "schemes" is *methodeia*. We get our word method from this word. In 2 Corinthians 2:11, the Apostle Paul tells us that we should be aware of Satan's schemes. The Bible is full of examples of the methods and temptations of the evil one. 1 John 2:15-17 boils them down to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." To stand is a military term meaning to resist the enemy, hold your ground, and never surrender. How have you seen Satan attack your life? What areas do you need God's help to defeat the schemes of the devil.

LESSON TWO: "Put On the Full Armor of God." The armor Paul lists covers every part of a soldier's body. If they left off one piece of the armor, they would be vulnerable at that point. Likewise, we are commanded to put on the full armor of God. We cannot pick and choose. We cannot put on truth and ignore righteousness. We must be fully committed to God to be protected from Satan's attacks. Look at the traits Paul lists: truth, righteousness, gospel of peace, faith, salvation, Word of God, and prayer. Which one are you strong in? In what area do you need to grow?

¹ John MacArthur. MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians, p 305