



SESSION 5

BATTLE ARMOR

The Point

God equips us for the spiritual battles we face.

The Passage

Ephesians 6:10-20

The Bible Meets Life

Satan does not like it when we choose to follow and obey Christ. The great enemy of God will seek to defeat us, pull us from full devotion to Christ, and make us ineffective. Thankfully, we are not left alone to face this great enemy. As His children, God gives us His Holy Spirit to be with us, and He equips us with everything we need to stand against Satan.

The Setting

Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, most likely written around A.D. 60-61 during an imprisonment in Rome, is one of four letters called Prison or Captivity letters (including Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon). Paul briefly noted his imprisonment in this letter (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). A key topic in this letter is the spiritual armor we need to fight our spiritual battles.

What does the Bible say?

Ephesians 6:10-20 (CSB)

¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength.

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil.

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.

¹³ For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand.

¹⁴ Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest,

¹⁵ and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace.

¹⁶ In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God.

¹⁸ Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.

¹⁹ Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.

²⁰ For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should.

GET INTO THE STUDY



10 minutes

Notes



DISCUSS: Invite your group members to discuss **Question #1** on page 45 of the PSG (Personal Study Guide): “What are some ‘tools of the trade’ you rely on most days?” Allow time for each person to answer.

SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGE 46):

The TV character MacGyver is known for his uncanny ability to get out of harrowing circumstances with mundane and everyday objects. Whether he’s

defusing a bomb, rescuing people, or escaping from a deadly situation, MacGyver often uses nothing more than paper clips, chewing gum, and other ordinary items to save the day.

Of course the show is pure fiction, but sometimes it would be nice if we could save ourselves from life’s problems and attacks by quickly grabbing whatever’s at hand and creatively crafting tools to free ourselves.

SAY: “Better than any tool we can create on our own, God has given us spiritual armor and weapons. Life is often a battle with Satan coming against us, but we are guaranteed victory when we trust in Christ and in the armor He has provided.”

GUIDE: Call attention to **The Point** on page 46 of the PSG: “God equips us for the spiritual battles we face.”

LEADER PACK: Bring your group’s attention to **Pack Item #5**, “Armor of God” poster. Explain that you’ll be discussing each of the items God has provided His people with in today’s session.

PRAY: Transition into the discussion with prayer. Thank God for providing all the protection we need each day and for His constant presence in our daily lives.

TIP: To avoid feeling rushed, prepare early so that you’ve spent some time reading and praying through what you’ll teach. It’s hard to feel satisfied with your preparation if you’re reading the material for the first time the night before.

ARMOR OF GOD**PACK POSTER:**

Pack Item #5

“Armor of God” poster

PLAYLIST PICK:

“In God We Trust”

By Hillsong Worship



STUDY THE BIBLE

Notes

Ephesians 6:10-13

¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil.

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. ¹³ For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand.

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud Ephesians 6:10-13.

SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGE 47): Jesus never promised the Christian life would be easy. Life by itself can be full of difficulties, but that difficulty is compounded by an enemy who is “prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

- » Therefore, Paul called us to “be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength” (v. 10). Our own strength is insufficient!
- » The victory over Satan was won on the cross. Even though Christ has defeated our enemy (Revelation 12:10-11), defeated enemies do not always give up easily. We must be vigilant and ready, then, knowing an attack is on its way.
- » We face a powerful adversary who attacks very strategically. Paul referred to the “schemes” (v. 11) of the Devil because Satan is tactical and methodical.

ALTERNATE QUESTION:

What does this passage teach us about the nature of the battle in which we are engaged?

DISCUSS: Question #2 on page 47 of the PSG: “**What have you been taught about spiritual warfare?**”

SAY: “Paul has told us ‘take your stand’ (v. 13); we do that when we take up the full armor of God. We then become active participants, not passive observers, in dealing with spiritual attack.”

DO: Instruct group members to complete the activity on page 48 on their own. If time allows, invite volunteers to share their responses aloud.



READY FOR BATTLE: When you think about Ephesians 6:10-13, what captures your attention? Describe, list, or sketch your response.

Ephesians 6:10-13 Commentary

We are in a spiritual battle. Verse 10: In the last major section of his letter to the Ephesians, Paul focused on the Christian life as a spiritual battle. He began by emphasizing our need to “be strengthened by the Lord.” Believers need to rely on God’s vast strength, literally “the power of His might.” Paul had previously described this power in Ephesians 1:19-20 as “the immeasurable greatness of his power” by which God raised Christ from the dead. He also had prayed that the Ephesian believers would be strengthened with this power in their inner being through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:16).

Verse 11: To prepare for our spiritual battles, we need the full armor of God. The armor of God could be armor that God provides to His people for their protection during spiritual warfare. It might also refer to the armor Scripture describes God Himself wearing (Isaiah 59:17). Both meanings could fit here, since the main point is that our protection in battles comes from God.

The purpose of putting on the full armor of God is so that believers may stand, holding one’s ground against an enemy, resisting one’s foe and in so doing prevail over that enemy. For the Christian, the decisive victory has already been won by Christ. It is the believer’s job to stand firm against the attacks of the Devil and his allies so as to defend and hold on to that which has been won.

Our primary foe in our battles is the Devil. The Devil has many schemes or “wiles” (KJV). He has a wide range of tactics to use against us, and we need God’s strength in these battles.

Verse 12: The Devil has a great many allies who are also our enemies and are not human beings of flesh and blood. Our primary opponents are spiritual and supernatural. Paul used several terms to describe these spiritual enemies. Some of our enemies are rulers and authorities. Paul mentioned these same entities in Ephesians 1:21 in describing the supremacy of Christ over all such powers. The “cosmic powers of this darkness” refers to those evil spiritual powers (demonic forces) in rebellion against God who have authority in the world. The “evil, spiritual forces in the heavens” is a broad, general description of all evil spiritual beings and relates to Paul’s comment in Ephesians 2:2 describing the Devil as the “ruler of the power of the air.”

Verse 13: Because of these spiritual enemies, the full armor of God is essential for the spiritual battles Christians must fight. These battles occur in “the evil day,” which might refer to any time in our Christian pilgrimage in “this present evil age” (Galatians 1:4), or it might highlight particular crises when we are most vulnerable to the Devil’s attacks.



STUDY THE BIBLE

Notes

Ephesians 6:14-17

¹⁴ *Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest,* ¹⁵ *and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace.* ¹⁶ *In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.* ¹⁷ *Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God.*

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud Ephesians 6:14-17.

SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGES 49-50): God has equipped us with all we need to stand firmly and confidently against any battle.

- » **Belt of truth.** The belt secured the rest of the soldier's armor and held his weapons. Everything we do is held in place when we accept and trust in God's Word.
- » **Breastplate of righteousness.** A soldier's breastplate covered the chest and protected the vital organs from arrows. Living in righteousness—our daily walk with Christ—protects us against spiritual attack.
- » **Feet sandaled with readiness.** Roman soldiers were issued studded boots that allowed them to travel great distances and yet stand firmly in the heat of battle. We can stand firm or move forward because of His gospel of peace.
- » **Shield of faith.** Each soldier carried a large shield; a company of soldiers could interlock their shields and form a solid wall as they moved forward. Our shield is comprised of our faith—our trust in the promises and power of God.
- » **Helmet of salvation.** A soldier protected his head with a heavy helmet of metal. Our helmet is our hope in Christ.
- » **Sword of the Spirit.** The soldier's sword was short, like a dagger, and it was used for close combat. Our sword is God's Word, and it is our only weapon that is both offensive and defensive.

ALTERNATE QUESTION:

Which piece of armor do you need to better understand how to use?

DISCUSS: Question #3 on page 49 of the PSG: **"Which piece of God's armor most resonates with you? Explain."**

DISCUSS: Question #4 on page 50 of the PSG: **"What are some real-life situations in which this armor is essential for Christ-followers?"**

Ephesians 6:14-17 Commentary

God equips us and protects us completely. Verse 14: Again encouraging believers to stand (vv. 11,13), Paul gave us the details about how we could prepare for battle with our spiritual enemies. He identified the different pieces of armor a Roman soldier wore, using each piece to represent an aspect of the Christian life.

The truth is represented by a belt. Truth could be referring to the truth of the gospel of Christ. Our understanding and proclamation of the Christian message are central to our spiritual warfare. Our thoughts and actions are based on the truth of God's Word. Truth could also be referring to our ethical behavior as believers, how we live out our Christian lives.

On our chests we wear righteousness as armor. Similar imagery appears in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 5:8) and it is found in the Old Testament as well (Isaiah 59:17). The term "righteousness" probably meant living out the righteousness of Christ in one's personal life and in support of the cause of justice in the world.

Verse 15: Our feet are to be sandaled with "readiness for the gospel of peace" (see Isaiah 52:7). A soldier needed to have firm footing in order to fight effectively. The believer stands securely on the gospel of Jesus Christ. The peace Paul referred to is brought about through Christ, encompassing the peace between God and His people based on their salvation from their sins as well as the peace that should mark our relations with others.

Verse 16: An important part of a soldier's equipment was his shield. The crucial nature of this shield is seen in that it is to be used in every situation. Paul used a Greek word that referred to a large shield that would cover much of the soldier's body and protect him from the "flaming arrows" of the enemy. This shield represents our faith. In this context, faith describes the personal, complete trust we are to have in God. The "evil one" is one of Paul's names for the Devil.

Verse 17: Paul wrapped up his catalogue of the pieces of armor with two final items. The helmet of salvation reminds us that our ultimate protection is God, who has provided our salvation through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:5). The last piece of the believer's battle gear is the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.



STUDY THE BIBLE

Notes

Ephesians 6:18-20

¹⁸ *Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.* ¹⁹ *Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.* ²⁰ *For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should.*

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): Display a baseball glove or bat and then ask, "Would you participate in a baseball game without a glove or bat? Why?" Allow group members to respond. Share with your group that it would be impossible to play without a bat or glove; you'd simply be unprepared. In the same way, we're not prepared to face spiritual battles until we ready ourselves with the equipment God provides. We've discussed God's armor, but that's not all we're given.

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud Ephesians 6:18-20.

SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGE 51): We have one more tool at our disposal as we engage in spiritual battle: prayer. We are to stay in constant communication with the One we serve.

- » We are to pray "at all times" (v. 18). But, we do not just pray for ourselves; we pray "for all the saints" (v. 18). We pray for the strength of our fellow believers in this shared battle against evil.
- » Additionally, we pray "in the Spirit with every prayer and request" (v. 18).

DISCUSS: Question #5 on page 51 of the PSG: **"How does prayer contribute to our efforts in spiritual warfare?"**

SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGE 51): Paul, the great apostle and evangelist, was the embodiment of bold Christian living; yet, here he was, asking the Ephesian church to pray he "might be bold enough to speak" (v. 20) the gospel. Paul knew any boldness he had came from God, and he was well aware of his need to remain dependent on Him.

TRANSITION: God equips us for every spiritual battle we encounter. We can act with boldness and confidence in Him.

ALTERNATE QUESTION:

How can we help one another as we engage in spiritual warfare?

Ephesians 6:18-20 Commentary

Equipped by God, we can act with boldness and confidence. **Verse 18:** Prayer is crucial to victory in the spiritual battles the believer faces and to the Christian life as a whole. Therefore, believers should pray at all times. Additionally, we need to develop an attitude of alertness and perseverance when it comes to our prayer lives (see Colossians 4:2). To remain alert means having an attitude of constant vigilance. Perseverance in prayer requires being consistent and disciplined in one's prayer life. Every prayer and request we make should be consistent with the will of God and His expectations for us. Among our prayer should be intercession, praying for God to address the needs of other Christians.

Verse 19: Paul wanted his readers to pray for him as well. He wanted his readers to pray that he would preach with boldness "the mystery of the gospel." Paul normally used the word "mystery" to refer to a truth that had been hidden until God revealed it to His people. Earlier in this letter the mystery now revealed was the gospel, the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, intended for both Gentiles and Jews (Ephesians 3:3-7).

Verse 20: Paul reminded his readers that he was a prisoner, describing himself as "an ambassador in chains." Paul saw himself as Christ's representative sent around the world to preach the gospel (2 Corinthians 5:20). Now, however, Paul was a prisoner in chains. Even though his travel was restricted, he wanted to continue to be bold in his ministry. The Greek term for "bold" carries the sense of a freedom in speaking, of being blunt and outspoken.

Paul's prayer request to his readers was not self-centered. He had instructed them about how to prepare for spiritual battles, and he was himself in a struggle. Surely he would rather have been liberated from jail so he could preach and plant churches. In another prison letter, however, he acknowledged that the gospel was still being proclaimed by others while he was in jail (Philippians 1:12-20). Also in that same letter, he noted that he was having an impact on the "whole imperial guard" of the Roman emperor (v. 13).

The New Testament depicts the Christian's spiritual life in many ways. The believer is described as a pilgrim, a student or disciple, and as a servant or slave. In this passage, Paul's use of the image of a soldier equipped for battle is an important one for Christians, reminding us that God and His people are opposed by powerful unseen adversaries. Spiritual armor, prayer, and a bold witness are crucial to our success in this spiritual battle. We do not fight on our own. We should not retreat or deny our faith. We must trust God to empower and equip us for the struggles we face.



Notes

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