

Lesson 13 | November 28, 2021

Instructions for Spiritual Warfare

Study Text: Ephesians 6:10–24

Central Truth: God provides the resources we need for spiritual victories.

Key Verse: Ephesians 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (KJV).

Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil (NLT).

Learning Objectives

- The student will examine what it means to fight spiritual battles.
- The student will be assured that they can have spiritual victory.
- The student will be exhorted to pray for fellow believers experiencing spiritual battle.

Introducing the Lesson

Say: Every Christian is involved in spiritual warfare, whether we recognize it or not. Each day, we contend for our faith in both public and private arenas. It may be in the home, where family members face temptation from Satan. It may be in the workplace or the political arena. Regardless of the nature of the battle, God provides the defensive and offensive resources needed to find victory. **(Play the video available at [RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult](https://www.RadiantLifeCurriculum.com/Adult).)**

Opening Activity—Enemies of the Church

Ask: ***In today's world, who are the enemies of the Church?*** Examples may include hostile governments at various levels, those who promote sinful behaviors, those who hold animosity toward the Church, those who persecute Christians for their faith in Christ or their perceived intolerance, etc.

What we call, “The Left”, government (education, politics, executive branch.), friends and neighbors, media, foreign governments and religious activists, those within the church that are false teachers.

Say: While there are many who oppose the Church and even persecute believers—some to the point of death—the true enemy of the Church is the one who is motivating these behaviors. In this lesson, we examine Ephesians 6, where Paul talked about the tools we need to fight this real enemy. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Living the Christian life is not always easy. Powerful people in society do not like to be reminded of the standards of Scripture or their ultimate accountability to God. While it is easy to look at those who oppose the Church as the enemy, Paul explained that **the true enemy is not people.** God loves those who oppose the Church, and He calls us to love

them too. The true enemy of the Church is Satan. Thankfully, there is a means by which we emerge victorious over Satan.

Part 1—Prepare for Spiritual Warfare

Stand Firm

Ephesians 6:10–11

[Eph 6:10-11 KJV] 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Say: In Ephesians 6:10, Paul began to teach the Ephesians about the nature of the spiritual world, and how unseen spiritual forces can impact believers. Paul’s words can help us understand the true nature of the battles we face today as well. It is important to recognize that these battles are spiritual in nature, and therefore we must not view them as battles against people who oppose us. **Peter rebuked Jesus when he was telling them of the suffering he was about to take on. Jesus said, “Get behind me Satan” when Peter in response to Peter.** Paul desired that his original readers, and all Christians, would prepare for victory over their spiritual enemies. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Paul began this section of his Epistle by telling his readers to “be strong in the Lord” (Ephesians 6:10), with emphasis on the phrase “in the Lord.” This command might be translated, **“Participate in the strength that is inherent in the Lord.”** **The point is that the command, “Be strong in the Lord,” is passive and continuous, meaning that the strength comes from outside the believer.** In a spiritual battle, the focus is not on the Christian, but upon the Lord, who brings victory—a victory the Christian can then experience as a result of Him.

It was imperative for the Ephesian Christians to realize that **they could not win the battle against evil in their own strength. Indeed, they faced powerful opposition that, in part, took the physical form of persecution from the Roman government. But the underlying battle would be a battle of faith and confidence in the Lord, and in opposition to spiritual enemies. Paul had previously explained the transformational power of Jesus which is living in them. He challenged his readers to use that power to withstand and overcome evil forces.**

Beginning in verse 11, Paul used military imagery to help the Ephesian Christians understand that they were in a battle that must not be taken lightly. **Thus, Paul instructed them to put on the entire armor of God. It is not good enough to put on a few pieces of this armor, which Paul would explain in the following verses, because the enemy can take advantage of areas of our lives if they are not fortified by God.** Paul was clear concerning the purpose of the armor. He desired that the Ephesian believers would be able to stand firm in the faith when Satan attempted to trick, deceive, and defeat them.

Paul was certainly aware of the appearance of a Roman soldier as he wrote this letter. The Roman soldier was outfitted to prepare him for the fiercest battles. Paul knew that the battle Christians face will be even more taxing than that experienced on human battlefields. **He wanted the Ephesians to understand that the battle would take more strength than they themselves could muster.**

Resource Packet Item 1: Satan's Attacks

Distribute the work sheet and give students a few minutes to work on it in small groups. You can save time by assigning one of the five questions to each group. Then suggest that each student work on the final "strategy" question at home during the week.

Discuss

? What has been the most difficult spiritual battle you have experienced?

? How did you fare in that battle?

Resist the Enemy

Ephesians 6:12

[Eph 6:12 KJV] 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places].

Say: In Ephesians 6:12, Paul next turned to a description of the true enemy. The apostle wanted his readers, then and now, to understand that people are not the enemy. Satan is the unseen enemy, whose sole motivation is to encourage people to rebel against God. If we recognize the source of our battles, it helps us focus on the victory God can bring into our lives. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Satan may use people to accomplish his deceptive, evil purposes, but Christians must always remember that the true enemy is the evil spirit behind the evil actions. While many in modern Western culture today reject the idea of a literal Satan, Paul was clear that Satan and his demonic forces do exist, and they seek to destroy Christians.

Paul used a series of terms to describe the Christian's enemy (Ephesians 6:12). Each is designed to make Paul's readers take their spiritual opponent seriously. **He began with the word "rulers," a word used in reference to a ruler over the entire area or world, such as an emperor. Within the context of the passage, Paul was indicating that Satan is currently the ruler of the world, in the sense that he exerts power over this world. Paul further described the scope of the devil's influence by referring to the demonic powers who rule in this present darkness. These evil forces are very much present around us. Note that Paul was in no way saying that demonic forces coexist with God in heaven. He was using the word "heaven" in the sense of the unseen spiritual realm around us.**

Discuss

? How should you view an evil person who attempts to harm you?

? What are some tactics Satan uses to mislead or deceive you?

Resource Packet Item 1: Title

Distribute.

Part 2—Put on Spiritual Armor Clothed for Battle

Ephesians 6:13–15

[Eph 6:13-15 KJV] 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Say: After explaining the battle that Christians face, Paul shared the steps to be taken in order to stand firm in a corrupt and sinful world. **He offered a very practical approach with visual images to help the Ephesians—and us—apply the concepts.**(Share your highlights from the following text.)

Resource Packet Item 2: The Soldier's Armor

Distribute the information sheet showing the parts of the soldier's armor as described in Ephesians 6. Refer to the sheet as you proceed through this portion of the lesson.

Paul's reference in Ephesians 6:13 to an "evil day" (KJV) or "time of evil" (NLT) may refer to the end days that precede the coming Day of the Lord. However, the term can certainly be applied specifically to any time when believers are confronted by evil forces. Also note the use of "wherefore" (KJV) at the beginning of verse 13, which relates what will follow all the way back to verse 10.

Paul instructed the Ephesian believers to put on the whole armor of God. No doubt the apostle understood more than almost anyone that living the Christian life can be difficult. Between the temptations Satan throws at Christians and the deceitful evil philosophy of the world we now live in, it is vital that our feet are firmly planted and that we are able to withstand the blows that come against us.

Beginning in verse 14, **Paul proceeded to go through each part of the armor typically worn by a Roman soldier, then made a spiritual application to each. Also, Paul addressed the pieces of the armor in the order the soldier would put them on.** Furthermore, note as well that **Paul spoke this instruction envisioning that the Christian has already put on these items when the battle arrives, since he used the phrase "having put on" in relation to the items.** Preparedness for spiritual battle is to be something that is ongoing; the qualities, disciplines, and spiritual tools noted are to be a natural part of the Christian's daily life and practice.

Paul first mentioned the belt of truth. The soldier's armor had to be held together, and the belt bound the soldier's armor in place. Similarly, the truth of Jesus Christ forms the foundation of all that we are and believe as Christians. Paul's exhortation literally meant that the believer is to stand within the realm of truth. Those who cling to the truth of Jesus Christ, as proclaimed in Scripture, will not be defeated by the evil work of Satan and his armies. Jesus clung to the truth during is 40 day temptation.

Paul next mentioned the **breastplate of righteousness**. Christians must seek to live the **righteous life that has been made possible through the righteousness of Christ and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. When temptations come, Christians are called to make right choices that will allow them to stand firm. When they pursue God's righteousness, their actions and lifestyle will reflect that pursuit.**

Then, in verse 15, Paul reminded the Ephesians that they have spiritual shoes, which makes them at the ready for any battle. **For the Roman soldier, the military shoe was equipped with straps as well as studded soles to ensure good footing. For the Christian, the shoes are the gospel, which carries its powerful message of peace. Evil may test us, but in the gospel we find a sure foothold for the conflict.**

Discuss

? How have you prepared for spiritual battle today?

? Why is it important to always be prepared for spiritual battle?

Equipped for Battle

Ephesians 6:16–17

[Eph 6:16-17 KJV] 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:



Say: In Ephesians 6:16–17, Paul moved from items that a soldier wore as clothing to those items that the soldier utilized for both defensive and offensive actions in battle. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Ephesians 6:16 mentions the Roman soldier's shield. **Soldiers would carry a large, rectangular-shaped shield designed to cover any exposed part of the warrior. Paul likened this item to a "shield of faith." One's trust and confidence in Christ permits the Christian to be victorious in any spiritual battle.**

22 times in the Old Testament God is referred to as our Shield.

Paul equated Satan's attacks to arrows being launched toward the soldier. In New Testament times, arrows were dipped in pitch and then set on fire. The shields offered protection from these weapons. **Faith in Jesus is more powerful than the mightiest attacks by Satan. The shields of the Roman soldiers could be locked together, forming a nearly**

impenetrable barrier if all the soldiers remained unified. This is a good reminder that unity of the faith among believers serves as a barrier against spiritual defeat in the Church.

Lastly, Paul addressed the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, in verse 17. **The soldier's head—in many ways his most vulnerable area—had to be secure in the helmet that he wore, protecting his sight and mind from the enemy. Likewise, the Christian under siege can find security, peace, and protection in the salvation that he or she holds dear.** Paul's words remind us of Psalm 140:7, which states, "O God the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle" (KJV).

Not only are Christians to take the gift of salvation, they are to take the sword of the Spirit, the only non-defensive weapon (although in times of hand-to-hand combat, the shield could also be used as a weapon). **Paul explained that the sword is the Word of God. This should not be thought of as the Bible as we know it, for the New Testament was not part of the canon of Scripture at this time; from Paul's perspective, the Word of God was the Old Testament. Certainly, the New Testament is clearly in view here for us, but we must not discount the teachings of the Old, and therefore we must not neglect to study its words as well. Paul reminds us today that the "sword" we possess is alive and active, as the Holy Spirit prompts us with Scriptures of encouragement, exhortation, and direction at the right time.**

The Roman soldier was only to draw his sword at the direction of his centurion. We must remember we use God's Word at His direction and the way he intends us to use.

Discuss

? Why do you think Paul repeatedly returned to the theme of unity?

? Who is the true warrior when a Christian enters spiritual battle?

Part 3—Pray and Proclaim the Gospel Called to Pray

Ephesians 6:18–20

[Eph 6:18-20 KJV] 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Say: God provides all that is needed for spiritual victory, but the Christian has a part to play as well. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

Prayer is the fundamental way in which believers prepare for battle. In Ephesians 6:18, **Paul separated one's conversation with God into two categories: prayer and supplication.** First, he discussed prayer bathed in the power of the Holy Spirit. As Pentecostal Christians, we understand Paul's command to include prayer in tongues. **In addition, such prayer means to pray in accordance with what the Holy Spirit desires. Christians, then, should take time to listen to the voice of the Spirit as they engage in prayer. The term "supplication" focuses on a specific kind of prayer: that is, prayer regarding the needs and welfare of others. It is appropriate to**

pray for one's own needs, but a prayer that is more reflective of the heart of God includes prayer for the welfare of others.

Paul then made a personal request of the Ephesians. He asked them to pray for him, that God would provide for him the boldness to share the gospel (verse 19). Paul needed the power of the Holy Spirit and the support of his fellow believers, just as any Christian would. The apostle recognized that the Ephesians were ambassadors to those in spiritual darkness in their city. And Paul, too, was an ambassador for Christ in the prison where he was chained—preaching the gospel with a boldness that needed to continue. In this sense, **Paul did not expect the Ephesians to do anything more than he was willing to do himself. He was an ambassador in need of their prayers. They, too, could be ambassadors amid their spiritual battles. And, likewise, we, too, are ambassadors in our world.**

Resource Packet Item 3: Don't Forget to Pray!

Distribute the work sheet and give students a brief time to work on it individually, or encourage them to work through it at home as a way to examine and enhance their prayer times.

Discuss

? Whom are you praying for today?

? What needs do you have that the class can pray for?

Called to Peace

Ephesians 6:21–24

[Eph 6:21-24 KJV] 21 But that ye also may know my affairs, [and] how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: 22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and [that] he might comfort your hearts. 23 Peace [be] to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace [be] with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

Say: Throughout Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Paul has called Christians to live in the kind of harmony with others that comes as a result of their relationship with Jesus. It should come as no surprise, then, that the apostle concludes his letter with a call to peace. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

As was Paul's custom, he concluded his letter with a formal greeting to individuals who had been important to the success of his ministry. In this case, he has sent Tychicus to the church to give a first-hand account of Paul's condition and to provide encouragement. **Paul's strong endorsement of Tychicus is especially meaningful as we observe elsewhere what this man has done in ministry. We know from a similar benediction, in Colossians 4:7–9, that Tychicus traveled with Onesimus, a slave who had fled his master. In the Roman world, slaves were killed for far less than this. So, it is possible that by being with Onesimus, Tychicus endangered his own life on the journey from Rome to Asia Minor. This, then, serves as a good reminder of how even the benedictions in Scripture can provide valuable principles and examples of the Christian faith in action.**

[Col 4:7-9 NLT] 7 Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord's work. 8 I have sent him to

you for this very purpose--to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you. 9 I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here.

In verses 23–24, Paul offered a final benediction, summarizing what it means to exist as a corporate body, the Church, following Christ together. Note the emphasis on peace, love, and grace. **Paul desired that God would give the Ephesian Christians peace. Peace is a settled feeling of assurance in one's relationship with God, and it is exhibited in part as peace with one another who dwell together in the kingdom of God. Paul further prayed that they would experience the unconditional love God offers to all believers—love that, in turn, was to be exhibited to one another. Lastly, Paul prayed that the Ephesian Christians would experience God's ongoing grace in their lives. Grace, too, is a quality that Christians can show to one another, and thereby reflect the presence of Jesus Christ in their lives.**

Discuss

? Who has been significant in your spiritual development that you should thank?

? How can you cultivate peace to face the most difficult situations?

What Is God Saying to Us?

Say: God calls us to recognize the true enemy in spiritual battle. We must keep in mind the ongoing threat of deception that Satan presents. He often attempts to make us think that we are too weak to resist the temptations and the darts he throws our way. God desires for us to understand that we have victory in Christ, the Master of our salvation. We can stand in confidence, knowing that He is present in our lives. God desires for His people to live in peace and in harmony with each other as we live out the Great Commandment: Love God and love others.

Living It Out

Ministry in Action

- Examine the areas of your life in which you have felt overwhelmed by the spiritual battle, and ask God to bring victory into your life in the future.
- Examine your relationships with other Christians and act to bring peace and unity to strained relationships based on your shared love for God.
- Pray for fellow believers who are experiencing spiritual battles, asking God to help them stand firm.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday:

The Enemy Is Defeated.

Exodus 14:21–28

[Exo 14:21-28 KJV] 21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go [back] by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry [land], and the waters were divided. 22 And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry [ground]: and the waters [were] a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. 23 And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, [even] all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. 24 And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, 25 And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. 26 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their

chariots, and upon their horsemen. 27 And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, [and] all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.

Tuesday:

The Lord Delivers.

Psalm 34:1–10

[Psa 34:1-10 KJV] 1 [[A Psalm] of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.]] I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise [shall] continually [be] in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear [thereof], and be glad. 3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. 4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. 5 They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed. 6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard [him], and saved him out of all his troubles. 7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. 8 O taste and see that the LORD [is] good: blessed [is] the man [that] trusteth in him. 9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for [there is] no want to them that fear him. 10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good [thing].

Wednesday:

God Answers When We Call.

Psalm 55:16–22

[Psa 55:16-22 KJV] 16 As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me. 17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. 18 He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle [that was] against me: for there were many with me. 19 God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. 20 He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. 21 [The words] of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war [was] in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet [were] they drawn swords. 22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Thursday:

Jesus Resists the Devil's Tactics.

Luke 4:1–13

[Luk 4:1-13 KJV] 1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, 2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. 3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. 4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. 5 And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. 8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. 9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: 10 For it

is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: 11 And in [their] hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 12 And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

Friday:

Fight in Faith.

1 Timothy 6:5–16

[1Ti 6:5-16 KJV] 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into [this] world, [and it is] certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. 9 But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and [into] many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. 13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and [before] Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; 14 That thou keep [this] commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times he shall shew, [who is] the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 16 Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom [be] honour and power everlasting. Amen.

Saturday:

Remain Strong in Holy Faith.

Jude 1:17–25

[Jde 1:17-25 KJV] 17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. 22 And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear, pulling [them] out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. 24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present [you] faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, [be] glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.