

Ephesians 6:10-17

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

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- ▶ The faithful Christian life is a battle – warfare on a grand scale – because when God begins to bless, Satan begins to attack. Have you, or someone you know, experienced what you would call “spiritual warfare”?

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Paul's description of the true Christian, described in chapters 1-3, and the faithful Christian life, 4:1 – 6:9, lead him to an exposition on spiritual warfare in 6:10-20. If we are walking worthy of our calling, in humility rather than pride, in unity rather than divisiveness, in the new self rather than the old, in love rather than lust, in light rather than darkness, in wisdom rather than foolishness, in the fullness of the Spirit rather than the drunkenness of wine, and in mutual submission rather than self-serving independence, then we can be absolutely certain that we will have opposition and conflict.

The Good news is that God does not leave His children unprepared or unprotected in this cosmic conflict. This passage is a heartening reminder of all that God has done and all that we must do to win the victory. In Christ, not only can we withstand the devil's assaults, but we can also defeat the diabolical forces that are arrayed against God and His church. The gates of hell cannot stand against us!

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▶ Spiritual Warfare

- ▶ The true believer who lives the Spirit-controlled life can be sure to be in a spiritual war. The fight is a supernatural one against Satan, whose schemes are propagated through the evil world system over which he rules, and are carried out by his demon hosts. The Lord provides His saints with sufficient armor to combat and thwart the adversary. Paul uses common armor worn by Roman soldiers as the analogy for the believers spiritual defense and affirms its necessity if one is to hold his position while under attack. Ultimately, Satan's power over Christians is already broken and the great war is won through Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, which forever conquered the power of sin and death. However, in life on earth, battles of temptation go on regularly. The Lord's power, the strength of His Spirit, and the force of biblical truth are required for victory.

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- ▶ 6:10 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
- ▶ 6:11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.
- ▶ 6:12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.
- ▶ 6:13 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.
- ▶ 6:14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness

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- ▶ 6:15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.
- ▶ 6:16 In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.
- ▶ 6:17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

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- ▶ Ephesians 6:10-20
 - ▶ We are reminded that believers draw their strength from the Lord and His power, the final section warns that our life in the world involves standing strong against evil powers aligned against us.

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▶ 6:10 **A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.**

- ▶ A Final Word – Doesn't imply "in conclusion," but rather "insofar as the rest of life and its challenges are concerned."
- ▶ Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power – Believers must rely completely on God's omnipotence to win the battle.
- ▶ Power – Dominion, strength, manifested power. The word especially signifies exerted strength, power shown effectively in a reigning. Although it is used in Hebrews 2:14 of the Devil's power of death, it primarily refers to God's kingdom authority, dominion, and majesty.

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- ▶ 6:11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will **be able** to **stand** firm against all **strategies** of the devil.
 - ▶ Be Able – To be able, have power. The word combines power and willingness, inherent strength, and action.
 - ▶ Stand – To stand firm, in a military sense; to maintain a critical position while under attack.
 - ▶ Strategies (wiles) – Schemes; the Greek word from which comes the English term “methods.” Carries the idea of craftiness, cunning, deception.

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- ▶ Mirror 6:11 – Fully immerse yourself in the detail and significance of every individual part of the armor of God. Just like every aspect in a soldier's armor significantly completes his battle uniform to best equip him to face every method and strategy that a fallen mind-set could possibly employ against him.
 - ▶ Mirror Note: We theologically created the idea of man being “sinful by nature” as if humans are flawed by design. In fact it is a distorted mind-set that we inherited from Adam from which Jesus had to free us. We were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds sponsored by the law of sin and death that lodges in our bodies hosting a foreign influence, foreign to our design. Just like a virus would attach itself to a person.

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- ▶ 6:12 For we are not **fighting** against flesh-and-**blood** enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.
 - ▶ Fighting – hand-to-hand combat
 - ▶ Blood – The technical term for the blood of animals and of people, but in the New Testament text used particularly for the atoning blood of Christ. His sacrificial blood is the agency for cleansing, forgiveness, and redemption.

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- ▶ 6:12 For we are not fighting **against flesh-and-blood enemies**, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.
 - ▶ Against flesh-and-blood enemies – One of the church’s greatest demands is to discern between the spiritual struggle and other social, personal, and political difficulties. Otherwise, individual believers and groups become too easily detoured, “fighting” with human adversaries instead of prayerfully warring against the invisible works of hell behind the scenes.

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- ▶ 6:12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the **heavenly places**.
- ▶ Heavenly Places recalls earlier references:
 - ▶ 1) Spiritual resources available to the church (Eph. 1:3)
 - ▶ 2) Christ's authority over evil (Eph. 1:21)
 - ▶ 3) The church being seated together with her ascended Lord (Eph. 2:6)
 - ▶ 4) The Father's will to display His wisdom through the church to the confounding of evil powers (Eph. 3:10)
- ▶ On these grounds this passage announces the church's corporate assignment to prayer warfare, in order that evil will be driven back and the will of God advanced.

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- ▶ Mirror 6:12 – People are not the enemy, (whether they be husbands, wives, children, or parents, slaves, or bosses. They might host hostile, law inspired thought patterns through their unbelief or ignorance but) to target one another is to engage in the wrong combat. We represent the authority of the victory of Christ in the spiritual realm. We are positioned there (in Christ); we target the mind games and structures of darkness, religious thought patterns, governing and conditioning human behavior.

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- ▶ 6:13 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.
 - ▶ Resist the enemy – The verb suggests vigorously opposing, bravely resisting, standing face-to-face against an adversary, standing your ground. Just as an antihistamine puts a block on histamine, anthistemi tells us that with the authority and spiritual weapons granted to us we can withstand evil forces.
- ▶ Mirror 6:13 – It is most important therefore to acquaint yourself with every aspect of God's armor. You are fully fit to powerfully defeat any onslaught or contradictions of any day of confrontation, triumphantly standing your ground. The days where the law of hardships, annoyances and labor dictated your life are over!
 - ▶ Mirror Note: God's armor represents his reputation; his victory defines you.

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- ▶ 6:14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's **righteousness**
 - ▶ Righteousness – Just, the quality of being right. Broadly, the word suggests conformity to the revealed will of God in all respects. It is both judicial and gracious. God declares the believer righteous, in the sense of acquitting him, and imparts righteousness to him.
- ▶ Mirror 6:14 – Take your position: you have the truth (of who you are in Christ) wrapped around your hips like a soldier's belt, holding the complete body armor together. (Now your loins are protected so that the enemy can no longer defeat you with lust and sexual sins.) Righteousness covers your heart like a bulletproof breastplate.

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- ▶ 6:15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be **fully prepared**.
 - ▶ Roman soldiers wore boots with nails (cleats) in them to help brace their feet in all terrains. For the Christian, the gospel of peace with God gives sure footing and a sound foundation.
 - ▶ Fully prepared refers to that which is already accomplished and ready.
- ▶ Mirror 6:15 – You wear your eagerness and passion to communicate the good news like soldier's shoes (practice your footwork). Announce peace; the battle has already been fought and won!

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- ▶ 6:16 In addition to all of these, hold up the **shield of faith** to stop the fiery arrows of **the devil**.
 - ▶ Shield of Faith – The word in the Greek term for the large 2.5 x 4.5 foot shields carried by soldiers to protect their entire bodies. As long as Christians place their trust in God, they will be protected.
 - ▶ The devil is a direct reference to the personal assault of Satan against believers.
- ▶ Mirror 6:16 – It is important to engage your faith as a man-size shield that covers your whole person and empowers you to extinguish the flame in every arrow the enemy shoots at you. The only visible part of you is your faith!

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- ▶ 6:17 Put on **salvation** as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word** of God.
 - ▶ The helmet of salvation protects the head, for Satan attacks a believer's assurance of salvation with his weapons of doubt and discouragement.
 - ▶ Salvation – Rescue, deliverance, safety, liberation, release, preservation, and the general word for Christian salvation. It is an all-inclusive word signifying forgiveness, healing, prosperity, deliverance, safety, rescue, liberation, and restoration. Christ's salvation is total in scope for the total man: spirit, soul, and body.

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- ▶ 6:17 Put on **salvation** as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word** of God.
 - ▶ Word – rhema: That which is said or spoken, an utterance, in contrast to logos, which is the expression of a thought, a message, a discourse. Logos is the message; rhema is the communication of the message. In reference to the Bible, logos is the Bible in its entirety; rhema is a verse from the Bible. The meaning of rhema in distinction of logos is illustrated in Eph 6:17, where the reference is not to the Scriptures as a whole, but to that portion which the believer wields as a sword in the time of need.
- ▶ Mirror 6:17 – Pondering redemption realities is your headgear that protects your mind; then give voice to the Word of God – this is your spiritual sword.

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- ▶ It is easy for believers – especially in the Western world, where the church is generally prosperous and respected – to be complacent and become oblivious to the seriousness of the battle around them. They rejoice in “victories” that involve no battles and in a kind of peace that is merely the absence of conflict. Theirs is the victory and peace of the draft dodger or defector who refuses to fight. They are not interested in armor because they are not engaged in war. God gives no deferments or exemptions. His people are at war and will continue to be at war until He returns and takes charge of the earth. But even the most willing and eager soldier of Christ is helpless without God’s provision. A Christian who has no conflict is a Christian who has retreated from the front lines of service.

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- ▶ In what ways does Satan most often tempt (wage war against) believers?
- ▶ Do you have any suggestions of new ways to put on the armor and resist the attack?
- ▶ Consider the example of Christ in the famous account of His temptation in Luke 4:1-13 as you reflect on this lesson.