

Studying the Letter to the Ephesians

Ephesians is about learning to let who we are in Christ, shape how we perform in life.

Ephesians Study 12



Warm Up

1. Greeting / Welcome
2. Prayer Requests
3. Testimony Sharing



Overview of Today's Study

Text: Turn to Eph. 6:10 – 6:17

Lesson Title: *The Continuing Spiritual Warfare*

Lesson Theme: It is true that ultimately the spiritual war has been won and Christ is victorious over the eternal effect of sin which is spiritual death (1 Pet. 3:18-22; 1 Cor. 15:54-55). But the mission Christians are called into while here on earth is a search and rescue operation in occupied, enemy territory. *We have been equipped for this task, but we must rely on the only Source of strength available for achieving victory in combat.*

🔑 Today's Key Question 🔑

How can Christians become more effective in the spiritual war they are a part of?

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Connecting the Studies

In chapters 4, 5 and the beginning of 6, we studied the transformation of the behavior of the growing Christian. We have looked at how believers can become freed from their individual flesh habits and model a godly lifestyle. We've studied how Christians are to relate to one another and how families can stay close within the household and family life. We studied how godly employee / employer relationships can be maintained.

In our next portion of Ephesians, we will study WHY it is so important to let our identity in Christ control our behavior – simply put, we're at war. And the enemy of the Christian doesn't take prisoners.



Bible Passage Study

Read Eph. 6:10-17



Study Topic 1 – The Nature of the Warfare

1. The Warfare Involves Angels and Demons and Our Thoughts

Eph 6:11-12 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.

2 Cor 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth

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itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

1 Tim 1:18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

2. Christians Are Considered Soldiers in the War

2 Tim 2:3-4 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

3. The Unsaved Are Not the Enemy, the Devil Is Our Enemy

2 Cor 5:18-19 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Rev 12:17 And the dragon (Satan) was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

A. What do these verses tell us?

The warfare is real and although we can't see it with our eyes we can see the effects of the enemy's tactics all around us and even in our own lives.

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B. What do these verses mean?

Whether we are aware of it or not, we are immersed in spiritual warfare. Christians are the enemy of Satan because of our relationship with Christ, and because our life's mission is to bring others into relationship with Christ. **The primary battleground in spiritual warfare is our thought life.**

1

While many unbelievers may act like the devil, they are not the enemy, they are our mission. Unbelievers are who we are trying to rescue from the clutches of our true enemy, the devil. Unfortunately, they do not understand these things and are deceived into thinking they are doing just fine without Christ.

2

C. How should these verses impact my life?

We have a responsibility to not only be aware of the spiritual warfare but to stay on mission as battles erupt. Each Christian has the responsibility to be reconciling others to God amid the opposition that our enemy hurls at us.

- ✓ How easy do I get distracted and come off mission?
- ✓ Am I aware of the enemy's tactics against me when I am trying to bring others to Christ?



Study Topic 2 – We Are Equipped for Combat

God Has Provided the Tools We Need for the Warfare Against Our Enemy, the Devil. Eph. 6:13-17

A. What do these verses tell us?

God has provided the necessary resources for our success in spiritual battle. Not only will He supply the strength but also the offensive and defensive armament needed to not fall in the war against the enemy.

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B. What do these verses mean?

1. whole armour of God – To be effective the way God wants us to be, we have to **use all of the armor** He has supplied.

2. loins girt about with truth – Roman soldiers used a large leather belt to fasten their armor to. What lies beneath the exterior armor of the soldier of Christ is **integrity and sincerity** as the truth is what his image or reputation is fastened to.

3. the breastplate of righteousness – The breastplate serves as protection to vital organs as do modern day Kevlar vests. The outer image of the soldier of Christ is one of **morality and justice**.

4. feet shod with the preparation of the gospel – Feet “shod” refers to a believer’s **stability and surefootedness** because of the truth of the gospel. “Preparation” refers to the **readiness to share** the good news of peace with God through Christ.

5. the shield of faith – A more accurate translation of “above all” is “in addition to all of this”. The Christian’s faith **stops the inbound shots** of the enemy. Faith puts God between the believer and the devil. It is the Christian soldier’s reliance on the truth that overpowers the lies of Satan.

6. the helmet of salvation – Having one’s head guarded by a helmet gives a sense of safety. The helmet of salvation refers to both **present safety** from the devil’s attacks and to **future deliverance**, “the hope of salvation as a helmet” (1 Thes. 5:8).

7. the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God – “Of the Spirit” refers to the origin of the sword – it is “the sword given by the Spirit.” The “sword of the Spirit” is specified as the Word of God. Believers need **the Spirit’s sword of truth** to combat the lies that the devil’s world system is based on. Whether battling evolution, or secular humanism or temptation, the Spirit’s truth can cut through to bring victory.

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C. How should these verses impact my life?

One question to ask ourselves would be: Am I using the whole armor of God? If not why not? If all of it doesn't seem needed in my life, where am I vulnerable during battle?

Have I been training as if I am in a war? Am I learning more about God from reading His Word daily and developing the skills to keep myself and my family safe?



Study Topic 3 – Preventing Casualties

War Is Dangerous Business While physical wars involve death in the physical sense, spiritual warfare is equally serious because its effects are eternal. When a Christian falters and winds up backslidden they are then render ineffective for spreading the gospel and maturing others in Christ. The unsaved that die physically and were not reached will be in hell forever. The saved not edified and matured in Christ by another believer will not be bold in their faith to reach the lost – also and eternal effect. Each Christian must take care not to wind up as a casualty of the spiritual war we are all immersed in.

There are a number of things that can be done to wage a careful war.

1. Remember: Any and All Victories Come from God. The Devil wants us to forget the Source of our strength and be deceived into thinking it is our own ability that causes our victories. God wants us to fully participate in spiritual warfare, even though He does not need us to win battles against the enemy. He has designed our effort against evil as if we and God form the two blades of one pair of scissors. Neither can operate without the other. Though we know God *can* operate without us, we need to understand without question that we are absolutely incapable of operating without Him.

Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

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Col 1:27-29 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.



2. Stay Close to Christ to Maintain Safety as His Soldier.

Knowing that God is always with us, sometimes we become deceived believing God will “bail us out” even if the trouble we’re in is due neglecting our relationship with Him. We still have to practice the basic disciplines required for growing closer to Him (daily time in His Word and prayer) if we are going to be consistently victorious in battle. We don’t want to become so proficient in the tasks of soldiering for Christ that we neglect developing our relationship with Him.

1 Tim 1:18-19 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

1 Tim 6:12 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.

3. Don’t “Freeze” in Battle. In the first part of Phil. 3, Paul outlines the grievous nature of his past. He itemizes his pride filled actions and the pain and death he brought to others. Certainly, if someone thought they were unworthy to be used of Christ, Paul could feel this way. But he did not let his past immobilize him. Instead of dwelling on past failures, he looked to and poured energy into what Christ would accomplish through him next.

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Phil 3:13-14 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

4. Watch Who You Are Aiming At: *Avoid Friendly Fire* The number one reason for automobile accidents is *driver distraction*. Surprisingly, war time statistics consistently show large numbers of casualties due to being hit by soldiers that are on the same side. Many times the firing soldier was *distracted* and therefore inaccurate with the weapon's shots.



A. A key tactic of the devil is to **distract soldiers of Christ so that they will either intentionally or unintentionally **attack** each other.** An effective ploy of the devil is to get Christians to focus on the faults and differences of fellow Christians. The moment we begin to dwell on the differences and/or shortcomings of others we are under the influence of the enemy and are about to come off mission if we haven't already done so. Extensive thought time or discussion (gossip) about the failings of others or differences in style or method from our own, indicates we are under the influence of the enemy. God does not want us to destroy one another.

Gal 5:15 But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

B. This is why we are told to focus on Jesus and not each other. We will repeatedly fail to meet each others expectations; Jesus will not fail us. The writer of Hebrews hits the nail on the head:

Heb 12:2-3 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,

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despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

C. Instead of shooting the wounded, God has specific instructions for dealing with fellow soldiers when there is a legitimate problem such as sin.

Gal 6:1-3 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

We definitely don't want to be guilty of injuring a fellow soldier. We need each other. We can avoid being hit by fellow soldiers if we keep active for Christ by keeping our eyes on Him and not critiquing each other.



Group Discussion

(Try to facilitate the group's discussion and not do most of the talking during this time.)

- **What are some key signs that the enemy is at work against a group of Christians?** *Clue: see Eph. 4:3* – Disunity and divisions.
 - ✓ A major indicator of when the devil is at work can be seen when there is an unusual amount of divisiveness within a group and several within that group have **unbending individual opinions** and are **unwilling to see others' perspectives**.
 - ✓ When people are pursuing **individual agendas** and their own interests instead of others' interests, the devil is at work.

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- ✓ When Christians are **not able to overlook personality and style differences**, that group is being blinded and is under attack.
- **What are some key signs that the enemy is at work against an individual Christian?** *Clue: see Eph. 4:1* – Inattentive to God's individual calling on each Christian's life. When a Christian doesn't care about having a lifestyle and reputation that is worthy of being called a child of God, they are under attack.
- **How does the "sword of the Spirit" and "shield of faith" work when engaging the enemy?** God's truth from His written Word directly answers the lies of the enemy and by faith we choose to believe God's truth regardless of how we feel during the battle.

🔑 **Today's Key Question** 🔑

If you forget everything else, remember this!

How can Christians become more effective in the spiritual war they are a part of?

Effectiveness as a soldier of Christ is raised by **studying** what the Bible teaches about spiritual warfare and **valuing** each Christian as an important, fellow soldier of Christ.

5

Next week: Eph. 6:18-24 and Study Summary

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