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“Stand Your Ground against the Enemy”

Ephesians 6

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The Bible tells us that we are in a spiritual battle—an unseen war in the heavenly realm that rages over us. Satan will try to tempt, discourage, deceive, confuse, and harm us. He and his demonic principalities want to destroy our marriages, our families, our churches, and our very lives. But in Ephesians 6, Paul explains how we can take a stand against the Enemy and trust the Lord to fight for us. In this study, we will unpack the passage.

1. **Ephesians 6:10–24** – “[10] Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. [14] Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; [16] above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. [17] And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; [18] praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— [19] and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, [20] for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. [21] But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; [22] whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts. [23] Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [24] Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.”

## 2. Context

### a. Outline of Ephesians

- i. In chapters 1–3, we learn how to sit in our identity in Christ.

1. **Ephesians 1:20** – “He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.”

2. **Ephesians 2:6** – God *“raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”*
3. Our citizenship is in heaven; we are just passing through.
4. God has given us a new identity and standing in Christ.
- ii. In chapters 4–5, we learn how to walk worthy of Christ.
  1. **Ephesians 4:1** – *“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”*
  2. We must walk differently than the world (**Ephesians 4:17**).
  3. We must walk in love (**Ephesians 5:2**).
  4. We must walk in the light (**Ephesians 5:8**).
  5. We must walk in wisdom (**Ephesians 5:15**).
- iii. In chapter 6, we learn how to stand in the power of Christ.
  1. **Ephesians 6:10–11** – *“[10] Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”*
  2. Verses 13 and 14 repeat the need for us as Believers to stand.
- iv. **DISCUSS:** Of the three physical postures Paul uses to explain the Christian life, which one is God teaching you?

### 3. Understanding spiritual warfare

#### a. The American understanding of Satan

- i. The Cultural Research Center and Dr. George Barna conducted a study to see how many Americans believe Satan is a real entity.
- ii. This 2020 culture study found that 56 percent of Americans believe that “Satan is not merely a symbol of evil but is a real spiritual being and influences human lives.”
- iii. Those who do not believe Satan is real and active in people’s lives are left unprepared to fight his attacks.
  1. We cannot fight an Enemy we do not believe exists.
- iv. However, even the slim majority who know Satan to be real might not know how to fight against the spiritual forces of evil.

#### b. The definition of spiritual warfare

- i. Spiritual warfare involves the unseen spiritual forces of evil, led by Satan (the Devil), working in the world today to:
  1. Tempt us
  2. Lie to us
  3. Deceive us
  4. Discourage us
  5. Confuse us
  6. And harm us (among other things)

- ii. Satan's many names reflect his malicious intent and influence in human lives.
  - 1. Peter calls Satan a "roaring lion" in **1 Peter 5:8**.
    - a. **1 Peter 5:8** – *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."*
  - 2. Paul calls Satan "the tempter" in **1 Thessalonians 3:5**.
  - 3. John calls Satan a "dragon," a "serpent," and the one "who deceives the whole world" in **Revelation 12:9**.
  - 4. Jesus calls Satan "a murderer," "a liar" and "the father of it" in **John 8:44**.
- c. The targets of spiritual warfare
  - i. Those living for the world may be left alone by Satan because they are on the same team.
  - ii. However, those living for the Lord face spiritual attacks for two reasons:
    - 1. Christians make an impact for the kingdom of light, rescuing souls from the kingdom of darkness.
    - 2. Christians resemble their Father, God, whom Satan hates.
- d. The origin of spiritual warfare
  - i. **Ezekiel 28** speaks of Satan's fall.
    - 1. Satan was created as an elite angel and was likely the archangel of heaven, but he allowed pride to fill his heart.
    - 2. In his pride, Satan tried to elevate himself to the level of God.
    - 3. Pride was the first sin ever committed.
  - ii. **Revelation 12:4** speaks of Satan's rebellion.
    - 1. Spiritual forces of evil originated when Satan led a rebellion in heaven against God and a third of the angels joined in the attempted coup.
  - iii. Various places in Scripture speak of God's judgment on Satan.
    - 1. God cast out the rebels from heaven to earth.
    - 2. **Revelation 12:7-9** – *"[7] And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, [8] but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. [9] So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."*
    - 3. **Luke 10:18** – Jesus said, *"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."*

4. **Isaiah 14:12** – *“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!”*
  - e. The unseen world
    - i. Satan and his fallen angels now roam the earth, unseen (**Ephesians 6:12**).
    1. We call these fallen angels, demons.
    - ii. Angels are also present around those of us who believe.
      1. **Hebrews 1:14** – *“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”*
  - f. Attacks from within and without
    - i. Spiritual forces of evil work from the outside on Believers but can work from the inside on unbelievers.
      1. Unbelievers can still be possessed today.
      2. Christians cannot be demon possessed.
        - a. The Holy Spirit will not share space with demons.
        - b. Demons flee before the presence of the Lord.
      3. However, Christians can be demon oppressed.
      4. **Luke 13** gives the account of Jesus rebuking a spirit of infirmity, though the woman with that spirit was not possessed.
      5. It is dangerous to attribute everything to demonic principalities. We must take responsibility for our own faults.
      6. However, we must not dismiss the possibility of a demonic attack.
      7. **DISCUSS**: Regardless of whether you are battling your flesh, the world, or spiritual forces, what should you do when you feel tempted or downcast?
    - ii. Satan is not omnipresent, so he uses his demons to attack Believers.
      1. Satan does possess individuals: he entered Judas and will one day enter the Antichrist.
      2. However, because Satan cannot be in all places at all times, he likely sends other demons to target most Believers.
4. How to stand in the power of God
- a. Know who the real Enemy is.
    - i. **Ephesians 6:12** – *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”*
    - ii. Satan and his demonic principalities are the enemy.

1. Though demons can influence people to act wickedly, the real conflict is rooted in the spiritual realm.
- iii. Scholars are divided on why there are various terms used for demons in verse 12.
  1. Some scholars believe that Ephesians indicates that demons arrange themselves in a hierarchy under Satan.
  2. Other scholars believe that the terms listed in Ephesians are simply synonyms rather than ranks.
- b. Stand: Take a posture of no retreat.
  - i. **Ephesians 6:11, 13–14** – “[11] *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. . . . [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. [14] Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness.*”
    1. Do not believe the Enemy’s lie that what he’s attacking is not worth the battle.
    2. **DISCUSS:** What battle is God calling you to? How do you remind yourself that there are things worth fighting for?
  - ii. When we have fought all we could, we take a stand behind the Lord and await His deliverance.
    1. When Israel was between the Dead Sea and Pharaoh’s armies, God spoke through Moses, saying, “*Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD*” (**Exodus 14:13a**).
    2. **James 4:7** – “*Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*”
    3. We must submit to God first; then in Christ we will be able to resist Satan.
- c. We must find our strength in the Lord and in His power.
  - i. **Ephesians 6:10** – “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*”
    1. We cannot be arrogant and go around saying, “I bind this, I bind that.” We fight in God’s might, not our own.
    2. When we fight, we better be standing behind the Lord.
  - ii. **Jude 1:9** – “*Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’*”
    1. Upon Moses’ death, Satan wanted Moses’ body to disgrace it in some way.
    2. In response, the archangel Michael reproved the Devil in God’s name, not relying on his own angelic power.

3. **DISCUSS:** Who are you relying on to fight your battles?
- d. We must guard our hearts, minds, and lives with the full armor of God.
  - i. **Ephesians 6:14–18** – “[14] *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; [16] above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. [17] And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; [18] praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*”
    1. God gave us five defensive and two offensive weapons.
5. The weapons of our warfare
  - a. Five defensive weapons
    - i. Belt of truth (verse 14)
      1. The only way to recognize Satan’s lies is to know God’s truth.
      2. **DISCUSS:** How has knowing the genuine truth found in the Scriptures helped you identify counterfeit gods and promises?
      3. When people say, “my truth” and “your truth,” they put man at the center of their definition of truth instead of God.
    - ii. Breastplate of righteousness (verse 14)
      1. The breastplate covers the heart, just as keeping our hearts right with God protects us.
      2. **Proverbs 4:23** – “*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.*”
      3. **DISCUSS:** How do you “keep” your heart? How has that helped protect you from falling in love with idols?
    - iii. Feet fitted with the Gospel of peace (verse 15)
      1. Share the truth of God and so rescue as many as possible from the kingdom of darkness.
      2. Do not let Satan paralyze you.
      3. Witnessing is the task of every Believer, not just the pastors.
      4. **DISCUSS:** Are you putting feet to the Gospel? If not, what has been stopping you from being a witness for Christ? How can you to spread the good news?
    - iv. Shield of faith (verse 16)
      1. Faith in God protects us against the weapon of fear.
      2. **2 Timothy 1:7** – “*For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*”

3. **DISCUSS:** How does the spirit God bestowed on you keep you from fear, and thus from sins based on fear?
- v. Helmet of salvation (verse 17)
  1. Our head is where many battles are won or lost.
  2. **2 Corinthians 10:5b** – God calls us to take *“every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”*
  3. We must seek to have the mind of Christ, asking God to remove from our minds the thoughts that are not of Him.
  4. **DISCUSS:** How have your thoughts been under attack? How were you able to renew your mind (**Romans 12:2**)?
- b. Two offensive weapons
  - i. Sword of the Spirit (verse 17)
    1. The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (verse 17).
    2. When Satan tempted Jesus in the desert, Jesus responded with Scripture (**Luke 4**). So must we.
    3. **DISCUSS:** What verse have you kept stored in your heart and mind for the day of battle, and what does that verse help you remember or accomplish?
  - ii. Prayer (verse 18)
    1. **Ephesians 6:18a** – Paul urged Believers to be *“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.”*
    2. We must fight our battles on our knees.
    3. **DISCUSS:** What does it mean to pray through our battles? How has praying brought you strength amid spiritual warfare?

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)