



LEADER'S GUIDE 12

EPHESIANS 6:10-24

Be Strong, Stand Firm, Pray

As you start this study, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what God has said through Paul.

DAY 1

Read Ephesians 6:10-24 three times.

1. What is the main idea?

The main idea is to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power so you can stand in the face of spiritual warfare.

The believer is influenced by Satan's realm, evil principalities and powers. Paul instructs Christians how to resist these dark powers. (Coleman and Peace)

The Christian life is a continual conflict – a daily battle against the most relentless foes. The demand is for courage, determination, ceaseless vigilance, undaunted hope. (from C. Erdman)

In Ephesians 1 Paul tells the believers they are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms. This passage tells them (and us) that the conflict is in the heavenly realms and we are involved whether or not we are aware of it.

2. There are 4 commands Paul gives in these final verses.

In verse 10: be strong

In verses 11 and 13: put on the full armor of God

In verse 14: stand firm

In verse 18: and pray in the Spirit

This is what we are supposed to be doing.

3. Verse 10 tells us to be strong in who? In the Lord

And in His what? Mighty power

Read Ephesians 1:19-20 and Philippians 3:10.

In Study Guide 2, Day 3, question 2 we saw that the extraordinary divine force by which Jesus Christ was raised from the dead is the same power at work in and through believers.

This verse reminds us that human effort is inadequate but God's power is invincible. (NIV footnote).

We need to remind ourselves daily, "He is strong and He is in me".

This section starts with "Finally" or "Henceforth" – not just indicating the conclusion to the Epistle, but also what we are to do "for the remaining time" until Christ comes again. (from Coleman and Peace)

"Christ is the one inexhaustible Source from which strength can be drawn by obedient trust." C. Erdman

The word "power" = kratei – power that overcomes resistance (used by Christ

in miracles). It comes from the root word "kratous" – the power of His inherent strength – see Ephesians 1:19. Believers can be strengthened by the person of Christ and also by His resources – Philippians 4:13. (from Walvoord & Zuck)

DAY 2

1. Verses 11 and 12 give two reasons we need to be strong in the Lord. What are they?

To stand against the devil's schemes and our struggle against evil spiritual forces.

What is our struggle not against? Flesh and blood – humans

"stand" – "God's armor enables the Christian actually to stand against Satan." (Coleman and Peace) "Christians are not to attack Satan or advance against him; they are only to 'stand' or hold the territory Christ and his body, the church, have conquered." Walvoord and Zuck In the face of evil the Christian's stance is resistance – a firm foot which will hold itself against the strongest assault.

"schemes" or "wiles" = methodia – methods of the devil. The devil knows our weaknesses and our ways. "Satan studies us all the time to find the best method to cause you to fall." Frank Sells The devil's schemes or strategems – evil operates in the shadows and strikes unexpectedly with cleverness and subtlety.

2. Note in verse 11 – who do we stand against? The devil.

Paul defines the Christian's opponent – the devil – who is crafty (schemes), powerful and wicked (evil). "The devil is a real opponent and his legions are not to be taken lightly." Coleman and Peace

In verse 12 write the four words used after "against". Note they are plural.

Against: the rulers, the powers or authorities, the world forces or powers and the spiritual Forces

What are they of? This dark world

What are they in? The heavenly realms

The Christian that wants to live in the fullness of the Holy Spirit can expect all hell to break loose!

The devil is pictured as in command of spirit forces which are characterized by evil and which rule in the sphere of the world's moral darkness. Paul uses the plural to describe Satan and his hosts. These are intangible spiritual entities whose rule is often worked out via concrete historical, economic, political, social and institutional structures. From Coleman and Peace.

"Christians are never beyond the assaults of the most seductive and satanic influences." C. Erdman Certainly we all have heard of prominent Christians who have fallen to these schemes. And, we all know when we ourselves do. The difference between demons (mentioned in the Gospels) and the powers identified here – "the demons affect the individual . . . whereas the powers threaten all men at all times." Marcus Barth Demons can be dispatched by exorcism. To cope with the powers requires the full armor of God.

"the powers of this dark world" – literally is "the world rulers of darkness".

"world rulers" is a term from astrology referring to a planet wide reign of these beings. They have real power. Even though Christ has defeated them, they refuse to concede their defeat – but will be forced to do so when Christ returns. Since Christ's ascension, Satan no longer has access to him so he has turned his focus on the church, Christians.

3. We have seen reference to those in the heavenly realms before in Ephesians. See Ephesians 2:2; 3:10; and 1:21. Also Romans 8:38-39; John 12:31 and 16:11. What do these passages say about these beings?
- Ephesians 2:2 – they are rulers of the kingdom of the air
 Ephesians 3:10 – Now God’s wisdom will be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms through the church.
 Ephesians 1:21 – Jesus (vs. 20) is above all rule, authority and power in the heavenly realms
 Romans 8:38-39 – These beings cannot separate us from the love of Christ
 Johns 12:31 – The prince of this world will be driven out – the cross was not Satan’s victory, it was his defeat.
 John 16:11 – Satan stands condemned.

DAY 3

1. Verses 11 and 13 tell us how we will be able to stand firm in our struggles against the devil and his forces. Put on the - whole armor of God.

Or, the armor God supplies. The emphasis is on the necessary completeness of one’s equipment. (from C. Erdman)

It is not enough to rely passively on God’s power.

The Greek word is in the imperative – “Put on”. It’s form indicates that believers are responsible for putting on God’s full armor – not their own.

(from Walvoord and Zuck) The word is “panoplia” which can be understood as the complete catalogue of equipment needed by a soldier. Remember, Paul is in a Roman prison/house arrest with a Roman soldier guard.

The emphasis here is on the “whole armor”. Having made all the necessary preparations one is then able to stand in defense. The word “stand” is artistenal = to withstand or stand against.

For another visual of spiritual warfare, see Isaiah 59:1-17. Note the description of the moral state in verses 2-8, the cry of spiritual consternation in verses 9-14, and the attitude and conduct of the Lord in verses 16-17. Paul borrows some phrases from this passage. (from W. Wright)

“Wherever God expresses a choice there Satan commences a conflict.” This is seen in individual humans and collectively as in nations or locales (i.e. Palestine or Jerusalem etc.), it was unleashed on Christ, now on the church.

“The human race has been brought into the conflict to magnify the grace of God, and to create a superlative spiritual fellowship.” W. Wright

Victory depends on the strength the Lord gives and upon the faithfulness of the Christian in accepting every instrument and implement which God offers to aid in this combat with the enemy – “the great adversary, the slanderous accuser the malignant foe of the followers of Christ.” C. Erdman

2. From verses 14-17, list each piece of armor and beside it what it is defined as. (There are 7). Also note, what part of the body is covered by each piece. Which pieces are used to defend? Which are used to assault (or as offensive pieces)?

Belt or girdle of truth	worn around the waist	to defend
Breastplate of righteousness	worn over the chest	to defend
Foot gear – the Gospel of peace	worn on the feet	to defend and assault
The shield of faith	held in front of the body	to defend
The helmet of salvation	worn on the head	to defend
The sword of the Spirit	held in the hand	to defend or assault

The fully equipped soldier was virtually impervious to enemy onslaught. The armor enabled him to stand firm when the enemy attacked and prevail. Paul uses each piece as a metaphor for what the Christian needs in order to stand against the dark forces. (from Coleman and Peace)

The belt of truth – probably referred to the leather belt on which the Roman soldier hung his sword and by which he secured his tunic and armor so he would have ease of movement in battle. The truth referred to here is the inner integrity and faithfulness by which the Christian fights evil. Lying and deceit are tactics of the enemy. Truth gives us freedom with self, others and God. (from Coleman and Peace and Walvoord and Zuck) It is the symbolic clothing of the Messiah in Isaiah 11:5. AS the belt holds all the rest of the armor together, truth holds all the rest together in life. F. Sells.

The breastplate of righteousness- the breastplate was the major piece of armor for the Roman soldier. It was made of metal and leather, it protected his vital organs. Righteousness refers to the right standing before God that is the status of the Christian out of which moral conduct and character emerges. This guards the believer's heart against the assaults of the devil (Isaiah 59:17 and James 4:7). The warrior's character is his defense – the devil often attacks our heart – the seat of our emotions, self-worth and trust.

Feet fitted or shod with the Gospel of peace - these were leather half-boots with heavy studded soles. They protected the feet and enabled the warrior to stand in slippery places and to move with quick and certain steps. The word "readiness" can be translated firmness or steadfastness in which case the gospel of peace is understood to provide the solid foundation on which the Christian stands in the fight against evil. It gives the Christian stability and surefootedness in the battle.

The shield of faith – a large oblong shield constructed of layers of wood on an iron frame which was then covered with linen and leather. It could be soaked in water and thus put out the fiery arrows of the enemy. It was 4 feet high. The arrows were tipped with tow, dipped in pitch and set on fire. The intent was to set the soldier on fire and cause him to break rank and create panic. The shield was the main defense – it protected all the other armor. For the Christian, faith forms such a shield. The devil attacks in the form of insults, setbacks and temptations, persecutions and suffering. With God's perspective we can see beyond our circumstances. With a firm and unwavering confidence in God, a continual reliance upon him, we are safe against those arrows of the devil.

The helmet of salvation – the helmet was a heavy, metal head-covering lined with felt or sponge which gave substantial protection to the soldier's head from all but the heaviest axe blow. The word "take" means to "accept", and thus to receive from God's hand something he has prepared for us. Salvation is that gift. Our safety from the devil's attacks is our sure salvation – we are saved and being kept by the power of God.

The Sword of the Spirit – the sword was a short stabbing sword used for personal combat. This sword for the Christian is the word of God. "Of the Spirit" refers to the source or origin of the sword – it is the sword given by the Spirit. The gospel message placed in the hands of the Christian must be firmly grasped and used with skill. All the truth revealed in Christ is needed by the believer to combat the enemy. The Holy Spirit wields the sword – He brings the verse that meets your need to mind.

All of the above comments are from commentaries on Ephesians by Coleman and Peace, C. Erdman, Walvoord and Zuck, class notes from Dr. F. Sells and footnotes from the NIV Study Bible, the NLT Life Application Bible and Inductive Study Bible by Kay Arthur in the NASB version.

3. What does verse 14 say is the foundation garment of the armor? The belt of truth
What does a foundation girdle or belt do for the rest of the armor? Anchors and supports it.
See the notes above on the belt of truth.

TO DIG DEEPER: Paul uses the analogy here of a soldier prepared for battle. He is picturing a Roman soldier, which all people in Asia Minor are familiar with. Using a Bible Dictionary, Bible Encyclopedia or a Bible Commentary, look up Armor – especially of the Roman soldier. Write down what you learn. Explain why you think Paul used this illustration.

See attached pages and refer to notes on question 2.

DAY 4

1. Clearly from the verses we have studied so far our struggle with evil is not just in the physical realm, but also in the spiritual realm. Read verse 18 – who is in the battle with us? The Holy Spirit.

How do we access His help? By Prayer

Paul does not appear to consider prayer a weapon, rather it underlies the whole process of spiritual warfare. (from Coleman and Peace). True prayer is offered under the guidance of the Spirit, in fellowship with the Spirit, in dependence on the Spirit. The Christian wages this conflict in sympathetic, watchful intercession. He/She keeps in constant communication with the divine Commander. (from C. Erdman)

2. From verse 18 when are we to pray? On all occasions
What are we to pray? All kinds of prayers and requests
The attitude we should have - be alert
Who should we always keep on praying for? All the saints

How can anyone pray at all time? The idea of offer quick, brief prayers as you go through the day. "Order your life around God's desires and teachings so your whole life becomes a prayer." (from NLT footnote). And we are to pray for all believer's – the church, the body of Christ – since the assault of the enemy is against every believer in Christ.

3. Who else did Paul ask the Christians in Asia Minor to pray for? Himself
What does he want them to ask for him? (verses 19-20) Words to fearlessly make known the gospel.
Note Paul uses the words "fearlessly" or "boldness" or "boldly". What does Colossians 4:3-4 add to your understanding of these verses? Paul wants the door to be open for him to proclaim the gospel and that he would speak clearly.

Paul is asking for "courage, confidence, boldness, fearlessness, especially in the presence of persons of high rank" (Arndt and Gingrich) He is probably referring to needing to be bold and clear when he would be on trial before Caesar. The Romans looked on the Christians as a sect of the Jews, and the Jews considered them heretics. In his trial he needed to make clear that Christians are neither a Jewish sect nor a heretical group, but a new entity, the church composed of both Jewish and Gentile believers. (from Walvoord and Zuck). Paul also needs to stand in the battle in the power of God's strength with the full armor on.

For further understanding on spiritual warfare two books may help: Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis and Piercing the Darkness by Frank Peretti. This latter book is a fictional representation of what the spiritual warfare may look like in modern times.

DAY 5

1. In verse 21 who is Paul sending to them? Tychicus
Read Acts 20:1-4; Colossians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 3:12. Write down what you learn about this man from all these verses.
He traveled with Paul from Greece to Macedonia. He is a dear brother, faithful minister and fellow servant. He was sent to Ephesus by Paul from Rome. He was sent to Titus too.
While Paul was in prison he sent Tychicus, a trusted colleague, on a mission to Asia Minor. He carried at least four letters with him – the Letter to Colossians, the now lost Letter to the Laodiceans (Colossians 4:15), the Letter to Philemon, and the Letter to the Ephesians.
2. Why is Paul sending Tychicus to them? (verses 21-22)
To tell them everything going on and how Paul is doing and what he is doing in Rome, and to encourage them.
3. What is Paul sending to the readers in verses 23-24? Peace and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
These are special greetings from Paul “to the brothers” and “to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.”
*Verse 23 is called a Salutation and is a common part of Paul’s letters.
Verse 24 is called a benediction and is also commonly part of Paul’s letters.
Peace, grace and love are themes found in Ephesians. Verse 24 is a worthy conclusion returning to the fundamental thought in Ephesians 1:3-14.*

In closing, here is a quote from C. Erdman’s The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians:

“If in any of his writings reference to spiritual warfare might be omitted, it would most naturally be in the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians. The first half of the letter displays the predestinating grace of God, giving life to those who are spiritually dead, and raising them up with Christ, and enabling them to sit “in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.” The last half of the epistle contains exhortations to manifest the most elementary virtues in the common relations of life. However, Paul closes this letter with the most striking, the most detailed, the most instructive reference to Christian warfare which the Bible anywhere contains. It is the climax of the epistle as well as its close.”

DAY 6

APPLICATION: In what ways do you experience the power of evil? What Christian resources do you have to enable you in your battle to resist evil? Where in this city, country and world do we see evil? How can we help persecuted Christians (those being targeted by evil either individually or collectively as a group)?

FOR REFLECTION: Paul was often in situations where he was questioned about his faith or in prison for talking about Jesus Christ. If you notice from reading in the book of Acts about Paul's ministry, he gave his testimony, taught about Jesus and witnessed to all who would listen. He was never nasty or hateful, but showed respect and calmly gave his testimony, without apology. He did not intentionally intend to offend others, but made no excuses if others became offended by the message of the gospel. Many in other countries are beaten, tortured, imprisoned and killed because they believe in Jesus Christ and boldly say so. Very few of us at CCPC have experienced such treatment because we trust in Christ for our salvation. Sometimes others will ridicule us, shut us out, call us closed minded – even someone may lose a job. Yet, do we boldly yet humbly share with others that we are a Christian? Do we even pray for the opportunity to share with someone about who Jesus Christ is? Are we praying for each other to be bold to tell others about Jesus Christ? We have those opportunities now, but gradually others are working away at our constitutional rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion in the name of political correctness and tolerance. We need to access the power of the resurrection available to us through the Holy Spirit, equip ourselves with the "whole armor of God" and pray for boldness to witness for Christ and stand against evil in our day. Remember: We are blessed with every spiritual blessing –not to just keep for ourselves, but to share with others how they may too have these spiritual blessings in their lives!