

Spiritual Warfare: Armor of God

Four Week Small Group Series on the
Armor of God in Ephesians 6

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Eph. 6:12





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Instructions for the Study

A thematic study is a great discipleship tool. This Study has been designed to have two main components each week. We recommend that you take eight weeks to complete the study (one session per week), but feel free to adapt as needed.

1. Personal Study at Home (including study notes)
2. Small Group Session (optional)

The Personal study at home allows the participant to reflect on the Bible themes and passages at home and work through personal application questions on their own. Then, the person comes to the small group meeting ready to share what God has already been showing them.

The small group conversations and discussions are useful in diving deeper into the topic and seeing things from a different perspective or helping you see something that you may have missed when studying the topic at home on your own.

Doing a thematic study can be very simple. Just follow the template given for each session and make sure that each member of your group has a copy of this booklet so they can journal their responses and come to the small group meeting ready to share. This helps the small group time stay focused and gives everyone an opportunity to think through what they would like to share, adding value to the small group time.

If you have any questions about facilitating this Bible Study, give the church office a call. Someone from Cell Ministry would be happy to speak to you.

Session One: Spiritual Warfare Introduction

Part One: Personal Study

To do on your own before the small group meeting.

1. Prepare Your Heart

- Take a moment to prepare your heart and mind for what God has for you today.

2. Read: Session 1 Study Notes

- Write down 1-3 things that stand out to you and why. You can write down more but highlight 1 for sharing with your small group.

3. Personal Reflection Questions

- Verse 10: What does it mean for you to be strong in the Lord?
- Verse 12: How do you sense a battle around you?
- Verse 13: How does knowing God has given you armor bring you peace?

4. Obedience/Action Step

- What is one practical step that you can take this week to put this material into practice in your life?
- What is your plan to follow through on this step? (who will hold you accountable, consider texting your small group for accountability).

5. Repentance

- Ask Jesus if there is any sin you need to confess. Confess as necessary and take the necessary steps towards obedience.

6. Prayer

- Spend some time thanking Jesus for who He is and what He has revealed to you.
- Ask Him if there is anything else He wants to speak to you about.
- Pray and intercede for what He lays on your heart (marriage, kids, ministry, friends, etc.)

7. Optional: Pick a verse(s) from this week's Bible passage and memorize it.

Part Two: Study Notes – Spiritual Warfare Introduction

- Ephesians 6:10-20 is an important passage of scripture that gives insight on how to fight the spiritual battle that believers are at war against.
- The enemy is real, and he is waging a spiritual war against believers.
- **1 Peter 5:8** *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*
- Satan is a real adversary who, along with demons, attacks believers.
- **Read: Ephesians 6:10-20**
- The underlying assumption in these verses is that believers are in a spiritual battle.
- The wise will not ignore that fact.
- This battle lies not in the natural but in the supernatural realm.
- Paul says that the fight is not against flesh and blood therefore we need spiritual weapons.
- We cannot fight this enemy the way we would fight things in the natural.
- That is why we are told to be strong in the Lord and in His power.
- We cannot resist the enemy in our own strength.
- We are fighting against a strong foe – the devil and all his legions of fallen angels.
- They do not have power over the highest heaven where Christ is seated on the throne, but they do have much power in the natural realm.
- **1 John 5:19** *...the whole world is under the control of the evil one.*
- The enemy is powerful and is in constant battle against the believer.
- His intention is to destroy the people of God.
- As powerful as Satan is, he is not as powerful as God. God is Creator, Satan is a creation.
- **Verse 11** speaks of the *schemes of the devil*.
- Satan has been honing his methods for thousands of years.
- He is a master at hiding behind the scenes and when he attacks, we often don't even realize that it is him. We blame others or circumstances.
- Satan uses deception, 2 Cor. 11:14 tells us that he masquerades as an angel of light.
- Jesus uses the metaphor of wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15).
- Without God's gift of discernment (Philippians 1:9), we will lose our way.
- Another scheme Satan uses is lies.
- John 8:44 tells us that Satan is the father of lies.
- John also says that Satan has nothing to do with the truth because there is no truth in him.
- Our power and protection in spiritual warfare is God's power.
- If we rely on our own power, we will be defeated by the enemy.
- We can only defeat Satan when we rely on God's power.
- **Verse 10:** *Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.*
- This is critical because God is stronger than Satan.
- **1 John 4:4** *You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*
- Jesus ultimately defeated Satan at the cross.
- **Col 2:15** *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

- Even the demons shudder at the name of Jesus (James 2:19, Mark 3:11).
- Because we are in Christ, we have ultimate victory.
- But we must fight, not in our own strength, but being strong in the Lord. On our knees in prayer and wearing the spiritual armor.
- Our protection in spiritual warfare is the armor of God, which enables us to take a stand against the enemy in battle.
- **Eph. 6:11** *Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.*
- To take your stand against the devil's schemes, you must be wearing the armor of God.
- Over the next three lessons we will look specifically at each part of the Armor of God and what that means in our everyday lives.

Part Three: Small Group Plan

Do this section with a small group.

1. Open in Prayer

2. Weekly Connect

- Have each person share 1-2 things that they are thankful for from the past week.
- What was a struggle from the past week?

3. Group Discussion

- Have you ever heard of spiritual warfare? If so, what do you know about it?
- What do you think Satan uses most often to attack you? Example, temptation, bad attitude, health struggles, discouragement, etc.
- Have you experienced God's protection during a spiritual battle?

4. Sharing

- Share something from the study notes and the personal bible study that stood out to you and why.

5. Obedience/Action Step

- As part of the Personal Bible study, you were asked:
 - What is one practical step that you can take this week to put this passage into practice in your life?
 - What is your plan to follow through on this step? (who will hold you accountable, consider texting your small group for accountability).
- Share with your group how this went for you this past week.

5. Prayer

- Share a personal prayer request and pray for each other.
- Pray for churchwide prayer requests as well as our region, province, and nation.

Session Two: Belt of Truth & Breastplate of Righteousness

Part One: Personal Bible Study

To do on your own before the small group meeting

1. Prepare Your Heart

- Take a moment to prepare your heart and mind for what God has for you today.

2. Read Session 2 Study Notes

- Write down 1-3 things that stand out to you and why. You can write down more but highlight 1 for sharing with your small group.

3. Personal Reflection Questions

- Why do you think truth is an essential piece of the Christian's armor?
- What does it mean to walk in righteousness through godly living?

4. Obedience/Action Step

- What is one practical step that you can take this week to put this material into practice in your life?
- What is your plan to follow through on this step? (who will hold you accountable, consider texting your small group for accountability).

5. Repentance

- Ask Jesus if there is any sin you need to confess. Confess as necessary and take the necessary steps towards obedience.

6. Prayer

- Spend some time thanking Jesus for who He is and what He has revealed to you.
- Ask Him if there is anything else He wants to speak to you about.
- Pray and intercede for what He lays on your heart (marriage, kids, ministry, friends, etc.)

7. Optional: Pick a verse(s) from this week's Bible passage and memorize it.

Part Two: Study Notes - Belt of Truth & Breastplate of Righteousness

- All Christians are caught up in a war between God and Satan.
- This war has already been won when Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave.
- But that does not stop the enemy from waging war against the believer.
- Therefore Paul, in Ephesians 6, tells the believer to stand and to fight the enemy.
- **Read: Ephesians 6:10-18**
- This passage clearly tells of the battle between the believer and a powerful adversary.
- To engage in this battle properly, the believer needs spiritual weapons because it is a supernatural war.
- The weapons that Paul writes of are the armor of God.
- Many people assume that the various pieces (belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, sword of the Spirit, and so on) are correlated to what Paul would have witnessed by the Roman soldiers of his day.
- This assumption misses the fact that each of the pieces of armor has a rich background in the Old Testament, where they describe God's armor – the armor that God Himself wears to rescue His people.
- The victorious believer must wear the full armor.
- Each aspect of this armor is symbolic and represents a specific dynamic within the Christian life.
- Each piece, when used together, enable us to stand against spiritual attack.
- **Armor Piece #1: Belt of Truth**
- **Verse 14:** *Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist*
- Truth is symbolized as a belt, which comes from Isaiah.
- In Isaiah 11, God's people, Israel, had turned their back on the light and chosen to live in darkness, spurning the Lord's revelation.
- Yet God promised he would send a messianic figure from the line of David to deliver them.
- This coming King would wear righteousness as a belt around his waist and "faithfulness" as a belt around his loins.
- **Isaiah 11:5** *Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.*
- Truth is an essential piece of the Christian's armor.
- We must be rooted and grounded in truth.
- The Bible continually speaks of the indispensable nature of truth.
- Truth is unchanging.
- New discoveries or new information never change that which is true.
- Truth is objective, verifiable, absolute.
- **John 8:32** *Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*
- If we are to stand firm in spiritual warfare, we must be immersed in objective truth, which is the Word of God.
- Truthfulness is a lifestyle. We are to be known as truth-tellers.
- When someone lies, they are imitating and acting like the enemy, who is the Father of lies.
- Instead, we are to imitate and at like Jesus, who is Truth.
- To know what is truthful, to imitate truth and to walk in a truthful lifestyle – the first step is to immerse yourself in the truth of God's Word.
- Then make a commitment to deal truthfully with others.

- **Armor Piece #2: Breastplate of Righteousness**
- **Verse 14:** *with the breastplate of righteousness in place*
- Righteousness is represented as a breastplate which provides essential protection for the most vital organs.
- The breastplate of righteousness comes directly from Isaiah 59:17.
- **Isaiah 59:17** *He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.*
- In the preceding chapters, Isaiah describes God's promise to deal with the physical enemies of his people, especially Babylon.
- But now the prophet describes the divine warrior coming to deal with the far greater and more dangerous enemy of their souls: sin.
- The righteousness Paul writes of in Eph. 6:14 does not refer to self-righteousness.
- Following a list of do's and don'ts or being legalistic just feeds the ego and leads to pride.
- God's people have no righteousness of their own.
- Apart from Jesus, the believer's best righteousness is nothing more than filthy garments.
- **Isaiah 64:6** *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.*
- Yet there is an element here of walking in righteousness through godly living.
- **Psalms 106:3** *How blessed are those who keep justice, who practice righteousness at all times!*
- To be righteous means to obey God's commands and to live in a way that is honorable to Him.
- Righteousness is something that is to be practiced.
- It means living in obedience to the Father and includes bearing fruit.
- Through prayer, we ask God to empower us to resist living in sin and to help us do what is right.
- Living righteously matters to God and protects the believer from the enemy.

Part Three: Small Group Plan

Do this section with a small group.

1. Open in Prayer

2. Weekly Connect

- Have each person share 1-2 things that they are thankful for from the past week.
- What was a struggle from the past week?

3. Group Discussion

- When have you felt you took a stand for Christ? Tell us about it.
- What are a few ways that you can ensure that you are living in truth?
- How can righteous living be joyful living? Give an example.

4. Sharing

- Share something from the study notes and the personal bible study that stood out to you and why.

5. Obedience/Action Step

- As part of the Personal Bible study, you were asked:
 - What is one practical step that you can take this week to put this passage into practice in your life?
 - What is your plan to follow through on this step? (who will hold you accountable, consider texting your small group for accountability).
- Share with your group how this went for you this past week.

6. Pray for Each other

- Share a personal prayer request and pray for each other.
- Pray for churchwide prayer requests as well as our region, province, and nation.

Session Three: Shoes of Peace & Shield of Faith

Part One: Personal Bible Study

To do on your own before the small group meeting

1. Prepare Your Heart

- Take a moment to prepare your heart and mind for what God has for you today.

2. Read Session 3 Study Notes

- Write down 1-3 things that stand out to you and why. You can write down more but highlight 1 for sharing with your small group.

3. Personal Reflection Questions

- Verse 15: We receive peace with God the moment we are born again, so why must we put on the peace of God daily? How can you put on God's peace daily?
- Verse 16: What are the flaming arrows? What does it mean to extinguish them?
- Throughout the Old Testament, it is God, not faith, that is repeatedly described as our shield. How does this bring comfort to you?

4. Obedience/Action Step

- What is one practical step that you can take this week to put this material into practice in your life?
- What is your plan to follow through on this step? (who will hold you accountable, consider texting your small group for accountability).

5. Repentance

- Ask Jesus if there is any sin you need to confess. Confess as necessary and take the necessary steps towards obedience.

6. Prayer

- Spend some time thanking Jesus for who He is and what He has revealed to you.
- Ask Him if there is anything else He wants to speak to you about.
- Pray and intercede for what He lays on your heart (marriage, kids, ministry, friends, etc.)

7. Optional: Pick a verse(s) from this week's Bible passage and memorize it.

Part Two: Study Guide – Shoes of Peace & Shield of Faith

- Christians are in a spiritual battle against a formidable foe.
- We cannot use conventional means to fight such a strong enemy.
- **Read: Ephesians 6:10-18**
- Last session we discussed the first two pieces of armor for the Christian to wear in battle.
- Today we will look at two more vital pieces of equipment.
- **Armor Piece #3: Shoes of Peace**
- **Verse 15:** *With your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.*
- Imagine going into battle barefoot? This would definitely inhibit a soldier's ability to fight as they would need to be careful not to step on anything that could cause pain.
- The believer is told to put on the gospel of peace as shoes.
- This concept is rooted in the Old Testament.
- **Isaiah 52:7** *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation...*
- The gospel provides the footing for everything that we do.
- When Paul speaks of the gospel in this verse, he is not talking about taking the good news to the world, he is talking about standing firm.
- This verse is not about evangelism but about a spiritual battle.
- The believer can have peace with God because he has received the gospel.
- **Phil. 4:6-7** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
- We must daily put on the peace of God; if we don't the enemy will devour us.
- We do this through prayer, through petition, with thanksgiving.
- **Armor Piece #4: Shield of Faith**
- **Verse 16:** *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*
- Faith protects us from Satan's attacks because faith takes hold of the power and protection of God Himself.
- Throughout the Old Testament, it is God, not faith, that is repeatedly described as our shield.
- **Psalms 91:4-5** *He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. ⁵You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day.*
- Faith becomes our shield in Paul's imagery because it is how we flee to God for refuge.
- This is personal faith – our confidence in God, believing what God has said and being committed to it.
- Our shield against the devil's attack is faith that God will keep His promises and that He will be faithful to us.
- In several passages the Bible says, "The just shall live by faith."
- **2 Corinthians 5:7** *We live by faith, not by sight.*
- The image is that the Lord is like a shield for those who trust him; it is seen in many, many passages.

- **Psalm 5:12** *For surely, O LORD, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield.*
- **Psalm 91:4** *He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.*
- **Psalm 119:114** *You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word.*
- **Proverbs 2:7** *He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless.*
- **Proverbs 30:5** *Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.*

Part Three: Small Group Plan

Do this section with a small group.

1. Open in Prayer

2. Weekly Connect

- Have each person share 1-2 things that they are thankful for from the past week.
- What was a struggle from the past week?

3. Group Discussion

- Because we have received the gospel, we have peace with God. Share of a time when you felt peace with God?
- Our shield against the devil's attack is our faith that God will keep His promises and that He will be faithful to us. What is an example of this in your life?
- What are some examples of fiery arrows that the enemy shoots at believers? For example, disappointment, lust, doubt, criticism, pride, etc.

4. Sharing

- Share something from the study notes and the personal bible study that stood out to you and why.

5. Obedience/Action Step

- As part of the Personal Bible study, you were asked:
 - What is one practical step that you can take this week to put this passage into practice in your life?
 - What is your plan to follow through on this step? (who will hold you accountable, consider texting your small group for accountability).
- Share with your group how this went for you this past week.

5. Prayer

- Share a personal prayer request and pray for each other.
- Pray for churchwide prayer requests as well as our region, province, and nation.

Session Four: Helmet of Salvation & Sword of the Spirit & Prayer

Part One: Personal Bible Study

To do on your own before the small group meeting

1. Prepare Your Heart

- Take a moment to prepare your heart and mind for what God has for you today.

2. Read Session 1 Study Notes

- Write down 1-3 things that stand out to you and why. You can write down more but highlight 1 for sharing with your small group.

3. Personal Reflection Questions

- The helmet of salvation gives us an assurance that I can make a stand in this present battle, I have a “blessed hope” that one day the battle will be over. What does this hope mean to you?
- The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. How is the believer to use this weapon on a regular basis?
- How is prayer essential to fighting in the spiritual realm?

4. Obedience/Action Step

- What is one practical step that you can take this week to put this material into practice in your life?
- What is your plan to follow through on this step? (who will hold you accountable, consider texting your small group for accountability).

5. Repentance

- Ask Jesus if there is any sin you need to confess. Confess as necessary and take the necessary steps towards obedience.

6. Prayer

- Spend some time thanking Jesus for who He is and what He has revealed to you.
- Ask Him if there is anything else He wants to speak to you about.
- Pray and intercede for what He lays on your heart (marriage, kids, ministry, friends, etc.)

7. Optional: Pick a verse(s) from this week’s Bible passage and memorize it.

Part Two: Study Guide – Helmet of Salvation & Sword of the Spirit & Prayer

- According to the Bible, life on this earth is a battle against a powerful adversary.
- To engage in this battle properly we need to fight with spiritual weapons.
- To be prepared to engage in this battle, we dress ourselves in the armor of God.
- **Read: Ephesians 6:10-18**
- **Armor Piece #5: Helmet of Salvation**
- **Verse 17:** *Take the helmet of salvation*
- Helmets are invaluable in battle.
- Imagine a warrior standing amid flaming arrows, swinging swords, and thrusting spears without something to protect his head.
- A hard blow to the body might maim or seriously injure, but a hard blow to the head would kill instantly.
- The idea of salvation as a helmet is rooted in the Old Testament
- **Isaiah 59:17** *He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.*
- In the preceding chapters Isaiah describes God's promise to deal with the physical enemies of his people, especially Babylon.
- But now the prophet describes the divine warrior coming to deal with the far greater and more dangerous enemy of their souls: sin.
- Salvation means being saved—receiving deliverance. For Christians, salvation means receiving deliverance from the penalty of sin.
- **Romans 5:8-10** *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*
- What is the “wrath” we are saved from? It is the wrath of God against sin.
- Since we have all sinned, the penalty we would all face without the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is eternal death. (Romans 6:23)
- Knowing that we have received salvation and eternal life through Jesus work on the cross brings a calm assurance to the believer.
- The Christian can have confidence because we know that Jesus has won the battle against sin.
- As the enemy rages against us, even though we may suffer, falter or stumble, we can rest assured in the Cross and that victory is ultimately ours.
- The helmet of salvation also gives us hope.
- **1 Thess. 5:8** *But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.*
- We have hope that one day the battle will be over.
- When we are discouraged or troubled or when we feel like giving up and think that we can't go on – we remember that we have an eternal salvation. This life is but an instant compared to eternity.
- **Armor Piece #6: Sword of the Spirit**
- **Verse 17:** *...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*

- The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is drawn from Isaiah 49:2
- **Isaiah 49:2** *He made my mouth like a sharpened sword...*
- This verse means that the very words of the Messiah have power and authority. While some might need to brandish a weapon to show their authority, the Messiah needs only to speak.
- **Hebrews 4:12** *For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*
- The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God—a spiritual, powerful, and necessary weapon.
- Paul likens the “sword of the Spirit” to the “Word of God”.
- The Bible is the inspired “Word of God”. It is not merely a book; it is God’s very words and is a spiritual weapon.
- Jesus used the Word of God against Satan’s attack when He was being tempted in the desert. Each time Jesus said, “It is written...”.
- Most Christians agree on the power and authority of the Scriptures, its reliability and that it is the very Words of God.
- But do they take the next step and read it? Can they recite it? Do they meditate on it?
- This sword of the Spirit is only useful if it is read, meditated on, studied, and memorized.
- **Armor Piece #7: Prayer**
- **Verse 18:** *And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.*
- We should use every kind of prayer we can think of. Group prayer, individual prayer, silent prayer, shouting prayer, walking prayer, kneeling prayer, eloquent prayer, groaning prayer, constant prayer, fervent prayer – just pray.
- We can say that it is through prayer that spiritual strength and the armor of God go to work. In theory, the prayerless Christian can be strong and wearing all the armor; but never accomplishes anything because he fails to go into battle through prayer.
- Often, we do not pray because we are simply overconfident in our own abilities.
- We can battle spiritually not only on our own behalf, but also on the behalf of others. The soldier isn’t only concerned for his or her own safety. He feels an instinct to protect and to battle on behalf of others.

Part Three: Small Group Plan

Do this section with a small group.

1. Open in Prayer

2. Weekly Connect

- Have each person share 1-2 things that they are thankful for from the past week.
- What was a struggle from the past week?

3. Group Discussion

- Salvation equips us with a calm assurance. What does this mean? How does this bring you hope?
- Read Hebrews 4:12. Explain how you have seen God use his Word to do all the things mentioned in this passage.
- Why isn't it enough to just read the Word? Why must we go beyond to meditate, study, and memorize it?

4. Sharing

- Share something from the study notes and the personal bible study that stood out to you and why.

5. Obedience/Action Step

- As part of the Personal Bible study, you were asked:
 - What is one practical step that you can take this week to put this passage into practice in your life?
 - What is your plan to follow through on this step? (who will hold you accountable, consider texting your small group for accountability).
- Share with your group how this went for you this past week.

6. Prayer

- Share a personal prayer request and pray for each other.
- Pray for churchwide prayer requests as well as our region, province, and nation.

References

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