

Clothed and Ready

Eph 6:10-20

SS Lesson for 02/22/2015

Devotional Scripture: 2 Cor 10:3-6

OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON

Key Verse: Eph 6:11

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Commentary from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

CLOTHED AND READY WITH POWER FOR THE STRUGGLE (6:10-12)

Spiritual Warfare (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Strength of God (10)

All things can be done through the strength of Jesus (Philippians 4:13)

God said that it is only by His power (Zech 4:6)

In our weakness God is the strongest (2 Cor 12:10)

God is greater than anything in the world (1 John 4:4)

By being steadfast in the Lord (1 Cor 15:58)

Armor of God (11)

By being clothed with Jesus (Rom 13:12, 14)

By being defended by divine power (2 Cor 10:4)

Because God fights our battles (Deut 20:3-4)

Because God is our fortress and stronghold (Ps 144:1-2)

Recognition of the enemy (12)

By looking for the prowling lion (1 Peter 5:8)

By being watchful (Luke 21:36)

By being on guard and firm in the faith (1 Cor 16:13)

By testing the spirits (1 John 4:1)

By watching and praying (Matt 26:41)

CLOTHED AND READY WITH PROVISIONS FOR THE STRUGGLE (6:13-18)

Truth (14)

Truth sets us free (John 8:32)

Jesus is the truth (John 14:6)

The Holy Spirit guides us into the truth (John 16:13)

We are braced by truth (from Barnes' Notes)

Righteousness (14)

If we earnestly seek righteousness, we will be blessed with the filling of it (Matt 5:6)

We must seek righteousness first (Matt 6:33)

Righteousness from God is lived by faith (Rom 1:17)

Jesus alone brought righteousness to all men (Rom 5:18)

We must offer our body as an instrument of righteousness (Rom 6:13)

We must pursue righteousness (1 Tim 6:11)

We are defended by righteousness (from Barnes' Notes)

Gospel (15)

The gospel instructs us in the way to please God (Rom 14:17-18)

The gospel is all about the reconciliation of man (Eph 2:15-17)

The gospel should bring about belief and obedience (Rom 16:25-26)

By the gospel we are saved (1 Cor 15:2)

Service proves our confession of the gospel (2 Cor 9:13)

We must conduct ourselves worthy of the gospel (Phil 1:27)

The gospel holds hope (Col 1:23)

Prepared for the march of peace by the gospel (from Barnes' Notes)

Faith (16)

Faith says we trust God to the point that we are never afraid of what man can do to us (Ps 56:3-4)

It is by faith that we can stand firm (2 Cor 1:24)

We must realize that through faith inwardly we are being renewed daily regardless of what's happening outwardly (2 Cor 4:16-18)

Faith allows the overcoming of the world (1 John 5:4-5)

Faith is security from attack (from Barnes' Notes)

Salvation (17)

Salvation provides endurance through dying to sin (2 Tim 2:10-11)

Because we are saved, we have ministering angels to help us through the struggle (Heb 1:14)

God distributed His great salvation according to His will and we must never ignore it (Heb 2:2-4)

Salvation is made perfect through struggles and suffering (Heb 2:10-11)

Salvation is the goal of our faith (1 Peter 1:9)

Salvation provides preservation from blows of the enemy (from Barnes' Notes)

God's Word (17)

We live by what's in God's Word (Matt 4:4)

Have the knowledge and acceptance that the Scriptures are the actual Word of God (1 Thess 2:13)

Everything is consecrated by the Word of God (1 Tim 4:4-5)

We are born again through God's Word (1 Peter 1:23)

God's Word must and does live in us (1 John 2:14)

God's Word cleanses us (Eph 5:26)

Armed for victory (from Barnes' Notes)

Prayer in the Spirit (18)

What "In the Spirit" means (from Commentaries)

The Holy Spirit should be "In Control" of our prayers (from the UBS Handbook Series)

Holy Spirit helps in our weakness and expresses what we cannot (Rom 8:26-27)

Personal Study Notes on "Praying in the Spirit"

Prayer for the saints (18)

Prayers should be made for everyone (1 Tim 2:1)

Through prayer, God delivers (Phil 1:19)

Through prayers for others, many will give thanks to God (2 Cor 1:11)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

The Spiritual War From A Broad Biblical Perspective

Conclusion

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR

PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR

Introduction

Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson teaches how we as Christians should always be **Clothed and Ready** using the Full Armor of God daily. The **study's aim** is to sense the spiritual warfare we face and the need to be prepared for it. The **study's application** is to daily put on the spiritual armor that will enable us to stand against Satan. (*Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary*).

Key Verse: Eph 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

WHAT: TO BE STRONG IN THE LORD (6:10)

Paul exhorted believers to **be strong in the Lord and in the might** (“**power** that overcomes resistance” as used in Christ’s miracles) of God’s inherent strength (cf. “the power of His inherent strength” in 1:19). Hence believers can be strengthened not only by the person of the Lord but also by His resources (cf. Phil. 4:13).

HOW: TO PUT ON GOD’S ARMOR (6:11A)

The form of the Greek imperative **put on** indicates that believers are responsible for putting on God’s (not their) **full armor** (panoplian, also in v. 13; all the armor and weapons together were called the hapla; cf. 2 Cor. 6:7) with all urgency. The detailed description of the armor (given in Eph. 6:14-17) may stem from Paul’s being tied to a Roman soldier while in prison awaiting trial (cf. Acts 28:16, 20).

WHY: TO STAND AGAINST THE DEVIL’S STRATEGY (6:11B-13)

The purpose of putting on God’s armor is to be able to **stand against** the **schemes** or stratagems (used in the NT only here and in 4:14) of the devil or adversary (cf. 4:27). 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. Without God’s armor believers will be defeated by the “schemes” of the devil which have been effective for thousands of years. The **struggle is not** physical (**against flesh and blood**); it is a spiritual conflict against the spiritual “Mafia.” Though the ranks of satanic forces cannot be fully categorized, the first two (**rulers** and **authorities**) have already been mentioned in 1:21 and 3:10. Paul added **the powers of this dark world** (cf. 2:2; 4:18; 5:8) and **the spiritual forces of evil**. Their sphere of activity is **in the heavenly realms**, the fifth occurrence of this phrase, which is mentioned in the New Testament only in 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12. Satan, who is in the heavens (2:2) until he will be cast out in the middle of the Tribulation (Rev. 12:9-10), is trying to rob believers of the spiritual blessings God has given them (Eph. 1:3). Some think this verse implies that a believer, having subdued all, is able to stand in victory. It is preferable to think that this is summarizing what has been stated: that having made all the necessary preparations (with **the full armor of God**; cf. v. 11), one is then ready and **able to stand** in defense. This view fits better with the context because immediately after this verse Paul described the armor to be put on. This would be unnatural if he were speaking (in v. 13) of standing in victory. Also, to say that verse 13 refers to standing in victory but that verses 11 and 14 refer to standing in defense is inconsistent. Too, the word **stand** in verse 13 is *antistēnai*, “to withstand or stand against” (cf. James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9).

THE MANDATE: TO STAND (6:14A)

Verses 14-20 make up the eighth long sentence in this epistle. Others are 1:3-14, 15-23; 2:1-7; 3:1-13, 14-19; 4:1-7, 11-16. The imperative **stand** denotes urgency. This is followed by four Greek participles that denote either the cause or means of standing. The participles are rendered as follows in the NIV: “buckled,” “in place,” “fitted,” “take up” (6:14-16).

THE METHOD: TO ARM (6:14B-16)

Before a Roman soldier put on his armor, he put a belt **around** his **waist**. This held his garments together and served as a place on which to hang his armor. **The belt of truth** refers not to the facts of the gospel but to subjective truth, a believer’s integrity and faithfulness. As a soldier’s belt or sash gave ease and freedom of

movement, so truth gives freedom with self, others, and God. **The breastplate of righteousness** refers not to justification, obtained at conversion (Rom. 3:24; 4:5), but to the sanctifying righteousness of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30) practiced in a believer's life. As a soldier's breastplate protected his chest from an enemy's attacks, so sanctifying, righteous living (Rom. 6:13; 14:17) guards a believer's heart against the assaults of the devil (cf. Isa. 59:17; James 4:7). This verse does not speak of the spreading of the gospel, for Christians are pictured in vv. 10-16 as standing, not advancing. Instead this refers to a believer's stability or surefootedness **from the gospel** which gives him **peace** so he can stand in the battle. **The shield** in a Roman soldier's attire, made of wood, was about 2 1/2' wide and 4' long. It was overlaid with linen and leather, to absorb fiery arrows. Thus it also protected the other pieces of the armor; hence Paul used the phrase, **in addition to all this. Of faith** is a genitive of content; the shield consists of faith. The idea, then, is that a Christian's resolute faith in the Lord can stop and extinguish **all the flaming arrows of the evil one** aimed at him. (Cf. "evil one" [Satan] in John 17:15; 1 John 5:19.)

THE MANDATE: TO RECEIVE (6:17)

The outline is divided here because the Greek word **take** is an imperative, rather than another participle. This parallels the imperative "stand" in verse 14. The helmet and sword are the last two pieces a soldier takes up. A helmet, being hot and uncomfortable, would be put on by a soldier only when he faced impending danger. Having one's head guarded by a helmet gives a sense of safety, so **the helmet of salvation** refers either to present safety from the devil's attacks or to a future deliverance, "the hope of salvation as a helmet" (1 Thes. 5:8). Finally, a Roman soldier would take in hand his sword, his only offensive weapon. **Of the Spirit** refers to the source or origin of **the sword**; hence it is "the sword given by the Spirit." "The sword of the Spirit" is specified as **the Word of God**. "Word" (cf. Eph. 5:26; Rom. 10:8, 17; 1 Peter 1:25) refers to the preached Word or an utterance of God occasioned by the Holy Spirit in the heart. Believers need this "sword" to combat the enemy's assault, much as Christ did three times when tempted by the devil (Matt. 4:1-11).

THE METHOD: TO CARE (6:18-20)

The manner in which a soldier takes up these last two pieces of armor is suggested by two Greek participles: "praying" and "being alert." When the enemy attacks—and **on all occasions**—Christians are to **pray** continually **in the Spirit** (i.e., in the power and sphere of the Spirit; cf. Jude 20). **With all kinds of prayers and requests** suggests the thoroughness and intensity of their praying. And like reliable soldiers, they are to **be** keeping **alert**, literally, "in all persistence" (the noun is used only here in the NT). Their requests are to be **for all the saints** because of Satan's spiritual warfare against Christ and the church. In the Greek "all" occurs four times in this verse; three are translated in the NIV and the fourth is rendered as **always** (lit., "in all times" or "every time"). Paul asked his readers not only to **pray** in general for all saints but **also** specifically to pray **for him that** he might **make known the mystery of the gospel**. Here Paul probably did not refer to witnessing or preaching the gospel of Christ. Instead he may have referred to his need to be bold (twice he said **fearlessly**) and clear regarding the "mystery of the gospel" when he would be on trial before Caesar in Rome (when and if the Jewish accusers would make charges against him). The Romans looked on the Christians as a sect of the Jews, and the Jews considered them as a heretical group. In his trial Paul needed to make clear that Christians are neither a Jewish sect nor a heretical group but a new entity, the church, the body of Christ, composed of Jewish and Gentile believers. This recalls Paul's lengthy discussion of this "mystery of the gospel" in 2:11-3:11. For this reason Paul was **an ambassador in chains** (cf. Acts 28:16, 20; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Phil. 1:7, 13-14, 16; Col. 4:3, 18; Phile. 1, 9-10, 13).

Commentary from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Paul now introduces an illustration of God's provision for our spiritual protection. Comparing the church with an army, he notes that the Lord has provided armament for his troops, equip-ping us for spiritual battle. The elements of this armament will be discussed shortly, but first Paul pauses to make two key points about its nature and purpose. Repeating the thought of verse 10, Paul first stresses that the armament is provided by God himself. God does not leave us defenseless or send us into situations where we are unequipped for success. Our heavenly commander knows that the challenges are difficult, so he prepares us before-hand to succeed. The main question is whether we will avail ourselves of what he provides. Second, Paul names the enemy and (in v. 12, next) the context in which our armament will be used. The devil is constantly on the prowl, seeking to undermine our faith and commitment (compare 1 Peter 5:8). Since knowing one's enemy is critical to victory, Paul proceeds to elaborate on the true source of our struggles. People today commonly think of Heaven as the place of God's abode, a place somewhere above the earth, while Satan and his angels live in Hell, a fiery place under the earth. This thinking is reflected in the popular notion that Heaven is "up above" while Hell is "down below." However, Judaism and other

ancient religions taught that good and evil spirits all live in the heavens above the physical world, with human beings living in the bottom layer of a massive cosmic hierarchy. Elsewhere, Paul describes a visionary experience of his own as a trip to “the third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2), the place where God himself dwells beyond the sky (the first heaven) and the stars (the second heaven). A similar outlook is reflected in the verse before us, which envisions Satan and other evil spirits living skyward (in the heavenly realms; see also Ephesians 3:10), between the earth and God’s abode. From this vantage point, demons can descend to move quickly among humans to threaten and tempt us in various ways (Job 1:7). As “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Ephesians 2:2; compare John 14:30), Satan’s influence extends from certain high places to the world in which we live. As a result flesh and blood people, including some who have influence over our lives and livelihoods, can serve as tools of Satan to bring the powers of darkness to bear in concrete ways. Of course, such people are not always aware that their actions are serving the devil’s purposes, and many do not even believe in Satan at all. This does not change the fact, however, that their actions can present serious challenges to us as believers, challenges that we must be prepared to face. These challenges can take the form of outright threats, persecution, ridicule, and rejection, but also (and more often) of more indirect temptations to join in their sin. Even so, flesh and blood people are never the real enemy. They are victims of the real enemy: Satan. Against him is our struggle.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Military leaders as well as political and business strategists around the world have been influenced by the teachings of an ancient Chinese general named Sun Tzu. His classic work *The Art of War* offers timeless pearls of wisdom for victory on the battlefield. Deceptively simple in his approach, Sun Tzu consistently emphasizes three principles critical to success: knowing yourself, knowing your enemy, and being prepared for every circumstance, particularly so that you can leverage your strengths against your opponent’s weaknesses. The nature of spiritual warfare requires principles specifically tailored for it, and this is where the apostle Paul provides inspired help. To him, at least three principles are essential to success in our spiritual battles: awareness of the situation, advance preparation, and mutual support during the conflict. Unlike Sun Tzu’s principles, each of these has both a physical and spiritual side as we fight our battles on the spiritual plane. Through good stewardship of our spiritual resources, we will win!

Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians when he was especially conscious of the stakes in the battle between good and evil. Having planted churches across the Roman world over the course of more than two decades, the apostle had been arrested in Jerusalem during a riot (Acts 21:26-35). A corrupt governor refused to resolve his case (24:27), so after sitting in jail for two years Paul appealed to Caesar. This appeal resulted in a trip to Rome to stand trial (25:1-12). Paul then spent two years under house arrest in Rome, waiting for a hearing before the emperor (Acts 28:30). During this time (about AD 61–63) Paul wrote letters to his churches in cities back east, including the one in Ephesus. Doubtless the circumstances of his arrest and the daily frustrations of his imprisonment led Paul to greater awareness of Satan’s schemes and the preparation necessary for defeating them.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Clothed and Ready With Power for the Struggle (6:10-12)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Spiritual Warfare (from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Various doctrinal points of view divide today’s Christians. One such divide concerns Christian pacifists and what might be called Christian militarists. Some with a pacifist bent believe we need to get rid of the war imagery when we talk about the faith. For example, the words of Sabine Baring-Gould’s 1864 hymn are deeply troubling to some:

“Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war ... forward into battle ... like a mighty army moves the church of God,” etc. After all, isn't Jesus the Prince of Peace? Didn't he command us to “turn the other cheek”? Then how can we use the imagery of warfare when praising him? Other Christians see all of life as a continuous, “every incident” cosmic and/or physical battle against the forces of evil. Armies from supposedly Christian nations went on religious “crusades” in centuries past. Not many propose a return to that line of thinking. Yet some Christians see demons behind each and every incident that seems to be even the slightest bit troubling. To the former group we may ask, have you ever read Ephesians 6? To the latter group we can say that implements of war are not the only images Scripture uses to describe the Christian life. With study and prayer we can find between these two perspectives the biblical view of the nature of our struggles.

Strength of God (10)

All things can be done through the strength of Jesus (Philippians 4:13)

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

God said that it is only by His power (Zech 4:6)

So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.

In our weakness God is the strongest (2 Cor 12:10)

That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

God is greater than anything in the world (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.

By being steadfast in the Lord (1 Cor 15:58)

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Armor of God (11)

By being clothed with Jesus (Rom 13:12, 14)

12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

By being defended by divine power (2 Cor 10:4)

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

Because God fights our battles (Deut 20:3-4)

3 He shall say: "Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them. 4 For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

Because God is our fortress and stronghold (Ps 144:1-2)

Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. 2 He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.

Recognition of the enemy (12)

By looking for the prowling lion (1 Peter 5:8)

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

By being watchful (Luke 21:36)

Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."

By being on guard and firm in the faith (1 Cor 16:13)

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.

By testing the spirits (1 John 4:1)

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

By watching and praying (Matt 26:41)

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

Clothed and Ready With Provisions for the Struggle (6:13-18)

13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

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.

17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

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 saints.

Truth (14)

Truth sets us free (John 8:32)

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Jesus is the truth (John 14:6)

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

The Holy Spirit guides us into the truth (John 16:13)

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

We are braced by truth (from Barnes' Notes)

The idea here may be that as the girdle was the bracer up, or support of the body, so truth is suited to brace us up, and to gird us for constancy and firmness. The girdle kept all the parts of the armor in their proper place, and preserved firmness and consistency in the dress; and so truth might serve to give consistency and firmness to our conduct. Truth preserves a man from those lax views of morals, of duty and of religion, which leave him exposed to every assault. It makes the soul sincere, firm, constant, and always on its guard. A man who has no consistent views of truth, is just the man for the adversary successfully to assail.

Righteousness (14)

If we earnestly seek righteousness, we will be blessed with the filling of it (Matt 5:6)

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

We must seek righteousness first (Matt 6:33)

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Righteousness from God is lived by faith (Rom 1:17)

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Jesus alone brought righteousness to all men (Rom 5:18)

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

We must offer our body as an instrument of righteousness (Rom 6:13)

Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.

We must pursue righteousness (1 Tim 6:11)

But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

We are defended by righteousness (from Barnes' Notes)

Integrity, holiness, purity of life, sincerity of piety. The breast-plate defended the vital parts of the body; and the idea here may be that the integrity of life, and righteousness of character, is as necessary to defend us from the assaults of Satan, as the coat of mail was to preserve the heart from the arrows of an enemy. It may be added here, that we need a righteousness which God alone can give; the righteousness of God our Saviour, to make us perfectly invulnerable to all the arrows of the foe.

Gospel (15)

The gospel instructs us in the way to please God (Rom 14:17-18)

17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

The gospel is all about the reconciliation of man (Eph 2:15-17)

15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

The gospel should bring about belief and obedience (Rom 16:25-26)

25 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him-

By the gospel we are saved (1 Cor 15:2)

By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

Service proves our confession of the gospel (2 Cor 9:13)

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

We must conduct ourselves worthy of the gospel (Phil 1:27)

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

The gospel holds hope (Col 1:23)

if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Prepared for the march of peace by the gospel (from Barnes' Notes)

The apostle figured to himself a soldier, clad in the usual manner. Christians were to resemble him. One part of his dress or preparation consisted in the covering and defense of the foot. It was to preserve the foot from danger, and to secure the facility of his march, and perhaps to make him firm in battle. Christians were to have the principles of the gospel of peace—the peaceful and pure gospel—to facilitate them; to aid them in their marches; to make them firm in the day of conflict with their foes. They were not to be furnished with carnal weapons, but with the peaceful gospel of the Redeemer; and, sustained by this, they were to go on in their march through the world. The principles of the gospel were to do for them what the greaves and iron-spiked sandals did for the soldier—to make them ready for the march, to make them firm in their foot-tread, and to be a part of their defense against their foes.

Faith (16)

Faith says we trust God to the point that we are never afraid of what man can do to us (Ps 56:3-4)

3 When I am afraid, I will trust in you. 4 In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?

It is by faith that we can stand firm (2 Cor 1:24)

Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

We must realize that through faith inwardly we are being renewed daily regardless of what's happening outwardly (2 Cor 4:16-18)

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Faith allows the overcoming of the world (1 John 5:4-5)

4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Faith is security from attack (from Barnes' Notes)

Faith here is made to occupy a more important place than either of the other Christian graces. It bears, to the whole Christian character, the same relation which the shield does to the other parts of the armor of a soldier. It protects all, and is indispensable to the security of all, as is the case with the shield. It comes to his aid in every attack that is made on him, no matter from what quarter; it is the defense and guardian of every other Christian grace; and it secures the protection which the Christian needs in the whole of the spiritual war. (from Barnes' Notes)

Salvation (17)

Salvation provides endurance through dying to sin (2 Tim 2:10-11)

10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. 11 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him;

Because we are saved, we have ministering angels to help us through the struggle (Heb 1:14)

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

God distributed His great salvation according to His will and we must never ignore it (Heb 2:2-4)

2 For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3 how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Salvation is made perfect through struggles and suffering (Heb 2:10-11)

10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. 11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.

Salvation is the goal of our faith (1 Peter 1:9)

for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Salvation provides preservation from blows of the enemy (from Barnes' Notes)

The idea is, that a well-founded hope of salvation will preserve us in the day of spiritual conflict, and will guard us from the blows which an enemy would strike. A Christian could not contend with his foes, without the hope of final salvation; but, sustained by this, what has he to dread?

God's Word (17)

We live by what's in God's Word (Matt 4:4)

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Have the knowledge and acceptance that the Scriptures are the actual Word of God (1 Thess 2:13)

And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

Everything is consecrated by the Word of God (1 Tim 4:4-5)

4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

We are born again through God's Word (1 Peter 1:23)

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

God's Word must and does live in us (1 John 2:14)

I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

God's Word cleanses us (Eph 5:26)

to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,

Armed for victory (from Barnes' Notes)

Error and falsehood will not put back temptation; nor can we hope for victory, unless we are armed with truth. Learn, hence: (1) That we should study the Bible, that we may understand what the truth is. (2) We should have texts of Scripture at command, as the Saviour did, to meet the various forms of temptation. (3) We should not depend on our own reason, or rely on our own wisdom. A single text of Scripture is better to meet a temptation, than all the philosophy which the world contains. The tempter can reason, and reason plausibly too. But he cannot resist a direct and positive command of the Almighty. Had Eve adhered simply to the Word of God, and urged his command, without attempting to "reason" about it, she would have been safe. There is nothing which will furnish a better security to them in future life, when temptation comes upon them, than to have a pertinent text of Scripture at command. Temptation often assails us so suddenly that it checks all "reasoning;" but a text of Scripture will suffice to drive the tempter from us.

Prayer in the Spirit (18)

What "In the Spirit" means (from Commentaries)

That it should be in or through the Spirit-that the heart should be engaged in it, and that its infirmities should be helped by the Holy Spirit. (from Adam Clarke's Commentary)

It is He in us, as the Spirit of adoption, who prays, and enables us to pray (Rom 8:15,26; Gal 4:6; Jude 20). (from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary)

The Holy Spirit should be "In Control" of our prayers (from the UBS Handbook Series)

The preposition in here most probably means "in the control of," "under the inspiration of," "guided by," or "by means of the power of." In other words, when they pray they should always seek and follow the guidance of the Spirit, so that by the Spirit's power they are able to pray properly and according to God's will. So we may also say "You should pray through the power of the Holy Spirit," "... guided by the power of the Holy Spirit," or "When you pray, the power of the Holy Spirit will guide you."

Holy Spirit helps in our weakness and expresses what we cannot (Rom 8:26-27)

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

Personal Study Notes on "Praying in the Spirit"

Holy Spirit and Prayer

KEY POINTS:

1. I do not know how to pray or what to pray for.
2. The Holy Spirit helps me in my prayers by first knowing what's in my mind (spirit) and then interpreting to God what is really needed (Of course, God already knows).
3. The Holy Spirit intercedes for me in several areas:
 - Using words that I cannot express or even know
 - Prays to God in accordance with His Word and Will
 - Provides the strength (faith and substance) in my prayers to really make a difference

LESSONS LEARNED:

1. I must pray in the Spirit - Realize that the Holy Spirit is working in my behalf and let Him guide me in my communication with God
2. Ask for understanding of what the Holy Spirit is doing for me. I must mature in my prayer life so that I can become more effective.
3. In my prayers, I must talk less and listen more. Use the Bible so that God can talk to me through it. Meditate longer so that God can move within me as He desires.
4. Be more alert and discerning of answered prayers so that I know what and how God is working in my life.
5. Get more into God's Word to know His Will for my life.

6. Have more faith in God's power and abilities so that I will go to Him for all things.

Prayer for the saints (18)

Prayers should be made for everyone (1 Tim 2:1)

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-

Through prayer, God delivers (Phil 1:19)

for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

Through prayers for others, many will give thanks to God (2 Cor 1:11)

as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

The Spiritual War From A Broad Biblical Perspective

Ephesians chapter 6 is one of the most thorough treatments of the spiritual war in the New Testament, it is but one of many texts which sheds light on this subject. In addition to the contribution of Ephesians chapter 6, we may add several other observations concerning the spiritual war which will help us in our study of Ephesians 6:10-20.

(1) Our victory over Satan's attacks is not always evident in terms of his defeat and our success, but is sometimes won in what looks like our defeat and his success. When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, it looked very much like he had won. But in our Lord's apparent defeat (and Satan's apparent victory) the Savior brought about our salvation and Satan's defeat. So it will be for some saints. The Book of Revelation informs us that there will be a time when Satan and his subordinates will appear to triumph over the saints, but this should be viewed as a momentary defeat which accomplishes the purposes of God, and which serves as a prelude to Satan's final destruction (Revelation 6:9-11).

(2) Satan's opposition is not to be found so much in the bizarre and the supernatural as it is in that which seems natural and even human. You will notice that the subject of demonization is not raised in our text. Neither is any emphasis given here to lying wonders and signs, although these are a part of Satan's arsenal of weapons. Satan tempted Adam and Eve to doubt God's goodness and to disobey His Word. His opposition to Job was evident in the form of natural disaster and human illness. The same appears to be the case with his affliction of Paul (see 2 Corinthians 12:7). His temptation of David seems to be in terms of an appeal to his pride (1 Chronicles 21:1). So, too, his temptation of our Lord was an appeal to what we would think of as natural ambitions and desires (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13).

(3) Satan's opposition to the believer is seldom direct, and is most often through other means, which we might not recognize as being satanically inspired. In very few instances does Satan directly involve himself in his attack against men. He did directly tempt our Lord, but this is certainly the exception. Usually, he prefers to "speak" through other instruments, so that we don't recognize that it is he who is opposing us. He spoke through a serpent in the garden of Eden, and he spoke through Peter when he resisted Christ's plan to die on the cross (Matthew 16:23). More often, Satan employs his demons to do his bidding (see 2 Corinthians 12:7). We are all familiar with these three forces, all of which are hostile to the believer: the world, the flesh, and the devil. I would like to suggest that Satan most often employs the world and the flesh to attack the believer. And so it is that Satan is sometimes identified as the ultimate culprit, when it would appear that the world or the flesh were the source of one's temptation. Who would have seen Satan behind David's numbering of the Israelites (1 Chronicles 21:1)? Who would have imagined that Judas' temptation arose from anything other than his own greed? Who would have thought that the deception of Ananias and Sapphira was motivated by anything more than their own greed and desire for man's praise? When the Scriptures inform us that Satan is behind a particular temptation, it is because the forces seem so natural we would not have

expected any deeper, more sinister, source. Satan is more than willing to accept men's adoration and obedience indirectly. If we become his servants by serving our own interests and seeking the satisfaction of our fleshly desires, Satan gladly accepts our indirect submission to him. In fact, I think he even delights in it, because he is the great deceiver. How he must find pleasure in letting men think they are free, when they are really his slaves! It does not seem advisable to give Satan credit for every evil deed, or to blame him for every instance of opposition, difficulty, or temptation. Job did not know the Satan was behind the tragedies which came into his life. It does not seem that he needed to know. What he needed to know was that an all-wise, all-powerful God was in control of the universe, and of his life. What Job needed to do more than to "bind Satan" was to believe and obey God. Satan's fingerprints may often be found on much of the evil and suffering which takes place in this world, but some of the evil comes from our own flesh (James 1:13-15), and from living in a sinful and fallen world (Romans 8:18-25).

(4) Satan's opposition is the outworking of his own rebellion and distorted perception. To put it simply, Satan's opposition is guided by his own warped perception of reality. He cannot believe that anyone would worship God on the basis of Who He is, rather than on the basis of what He gives. Satan cannot think of God as our Reward, but only as the Rewarder of those who do His bidding. And so it is that Satan sought to afflict Job, thinking that his submission and obedience would immediately cease. Satan tempts those in power by appealing to their pride and ambition, because that is the way he responded to his position of power. He appeals to those under authority to act independently, rather than to submit to those over us. He appeals to self-interest and he urges us to shun self-sacrifice. He knows nothing of grace, and he delights in the downfall of others. Satan's perception is warped. He is not all-knowing, nor is he all-powerful. He operates on the basis of his own distorted perception of reality. Sinful men easily and readily identify with his mindset and motivation, but Christians must reject it for the evil it is. And when Christians act like their Master, Satan is mystified and angered. He cannot fathom why anyone would submit to God and worship him.

(5) Satan is a defeated foe, but his complete demise is yet future. We have already alluded to Satan's defeat at the cross of Calvary. Nevertheless, we shall say it once again. Satan's demise is certain.

(6) Satan's present opposition to the people and purposes of God appears to be detrimental to the church, but in reality Satan is actually furthering God's purpose and plan for creation. God has purposed to delay casting Satan into the lake of fire because in his freedom to operate as the "god of this world" he is unwittingly fulfilling God's purposes. He is thus bringing glory to God and producing that which God uses for our good. While Satan inspired Judas to betray our Lord, this was necessary to accomplish our salvation. And although Satan's messenger may have afflicted Paul with a thorn in the flesh, this was for Paul's good (see 2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Satan is always on a chain, God's chain. While he carries on his work with evil intent, God uses him for our good, and for His glory. There is not one thing which Satan is allowed to do which does not promote God's purposes, His glory, and our good. The outcome of the spiritual war between Satan and God is certain. The struggle is a part of God's eternal plan. And standing against his attacks in the strength of the full armor of God is our duty.

Conclusion

There is a war going on. It is not a war that is like the wars which are currently going on between nations today (although such wars may be a part of the bigger war). It is a spiritual war. It is a war between Satan and his fallen celestial allies and Christ and His church. It is an invisible war in that we fight against unseen forces. It is therefore a war which must be waged by faith, and not by sight. It is a war that we cannot fight in our own strength, but only in the strength which God Himself supplies. The war is not being waged to see which side will win. God has already won the war by the death of His Son on the cross of Calvary (see John 12:31; 16:11). The war is for our good, and for God's glory. The war is a part of God's instruction to the angelic hosts (see Ephesians 3:8-11). The war is a part of God's eternal plan and purpose for his creation. The great question is not, "Who will win?," but "Who will stand?" The question is not whether God is on our side as much as whether or not we are on His side. I remember this fascinating event in the Old Testament (Joshua 5:13-15).

Joshua initially failed to recognize the captain of the Lord's host. And so, when he approached him, Joshua asked this "man" if he was for or against Israel. The angel identified himself as the captain of the Lord's host, making it clear that Israel was to follow him. We are sometimes too interested in getting God on our side, rather than getting on His side. He is the commander. His is the battle. David understood this even as he single-handedly opposed Goliath in the name of the Lord (1 Samuel 17:44-47). And so I must ask you this simple question, my friend. In this great spiritual war, whose side are you on? If you are still "dead in your transgressions and sins," you are unknowingly under Satan's

control, serving him and in rebellion against God (Ephesians 2;1-3). You are at war *with* God. If, by faith in Jesus Christ, you acknowledge your sin and trust in the victory which Jesus has already won on the cross, then you shall be saved, in which case you shall wage war *for* God. How great is the difference between those who fight *with* God and those who fight *for* Him. Whose side are you on in the spiritual war?

We are in great danger, not when the enemy is great and powerful, but when we think that we can stand in our own strength, rather than in the strength which God provides. Peter learned this lesson the hard way (see Luke 22:31-34). Paul warns every Christian about the danger of self-confidence: “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12). When God delivered the Israelites out of their Egyptian captivity and brought them into the land of Canaan, He purposely did not drive out all of the Canaanites. He purposed that they would have to possess the land by waging war against the Canaanites (Exodus 23:29-31). God did not give the Israelites an immediate and total victory over their adversaries the Canaanites. They were to wage war against them and drive them out, but it was the Lord who would give them the victory, and to this end He sent His angel to defeat the enemy (Exodus 23:20-23; 32:34; 33:2). We are in a spiritual war and we must put on God’s armor and stand against the enemy. But the victory will be the Lord’s, for it is only in His strength that we stand. When we fail to enter into the war as God has commanded us, the consequences are most serious. I wish to remind you of two of the great sins in David’s life, which had devastating consequences for himself and for his nation. I want you to note that both of these sins were directly related to his failure to go to war, as was his duty as the king of Israel. Two times we read that David stayed in Jerusalem “at the time when kings go to war” (2 Samuel 11:1). Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that Joab led out the army and ravaged the land of the sons of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. And Joab struck Rabbah and over threw it (1 Chronicles 20:1).

In the Book of 2 Samuel, David’s decision to stay at Jerusalem, rather than to go to war, resulted in a great moral disaster. Not only did David sin by sleeping with Bathsheba, he then attempted to cover up his sin by having Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, killed in battle. David was not killing the enemy, but was killing his trusted soldier. In the account recorded in 1 Chronicles, David’s decision to stay at home (perhaps the same one recorded in 2 Samuel 11) was followed shortly by his sinful decision to number the Israelites, which led to divine judgment. Now, instead of waging war against the enemy, Satan is waging war against David, and God brings judgment on the nation. When we fail to wage war, we are really losing the war.

One final thing should be said as we conclude this study of the spiritual war. As I understand Paul’s words about spiritual warfare in chapter 6 in the context of the entire epistle to the Ephesians, I am inclined to say that at this moment in time we wage the spiritual war, not in terms of grand battles and heroic actions, but in terms of simple faith in the teachings of Paul in chapters 1-3 and in terms of our obedience to the commands of Paul as found in chapters 4-6. Where are the battle lines drawn for children in Ephesians? In terms of their obedience to their parents, as to the Lord. Slaves stand firm in the faith as they obey their masters. Fathers stand fast as they love their wives and as they teach their children the “discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Wives stand fast when they submit to their husbands as to the Lord. We all stand fast as we cease to walk as we once did as Gentiles (4:17-32), and as we walk in love (5:1-6), in light (5:7-13), and in wisdom (5:15ff.) and in submission one to another (5:22–6:9). The war is a matter of trusting and obeying our Lord. As we do so now, in these evil days, we prepare ourselves for the great “evil day” which is yet to come. When our life comes to an end, I pray that we will be able, like Paul, to say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

(Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/26-spiritual-warfare-ephesians-610-20>)

Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

We have reviewed some familiar truths. We must not forget that Satan and his hosts seek to attack us every day. What are some ways they do that? We need to be prepared to stand against these attacks by putting on all the pieces of the Christian armor. Let us think through each piece of the armor.

- **Truth** - In what ways do you need to increase the presence of truth in your life?
- **Righteousness** - How can you give righteousness a greater role in your life?
- **Peace** - What steps can you take to increase the level of peace in your life?
- **Faith** - Do you need to have greater confidence in the Lord to help you stand?
- **Salvation** - Are you resting in the Lord's eternal and temporal deliverance from Satan?

- **Scripture** - Do you need to increase your intake of Scripture so that you can stand more securely? Being prepared to stand against the wiles of the devil requires us to limit our personal pleasures and give our attention to important spiritual matters.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. Our power and strength come from God alone (Eph. 6:10-11)
2. We have an outside enemy in addition to our flesh (vss. 11-12)
3. We are able to stand against the devil, not merely escape him (vss. 13-14)
4. God has equipped us with everything we need to defend against the devil (vss. 14-17)
5. The Word of God is able to defeat the forces of evil
6. Prayer keeps us alert and helps us persevere in spiritual warfare (vs. 18)
7. The gospel is our plan of attack in spiritual warfare (vss. 19-20)