

Ephesians

Transformed by Grace, Empowered by Peace

Study 19

Spiritual Warfare I

Ephesians 6:10-20

Ephesians 6:10-20

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

A. We Need To Know Our Enemy

1. Objective question. Based on the video lecture, who/what is the enemy of spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6?

- A. Demons
- B. Schemes of the devil
- C. Unrighteousness
- D. False Gospels
- E. Fallen angels
- F. Faithlessness
- G. False teaching

2. Discussion question. How does spiritual transformation relate to spiritual warfare?

Ephesians 1-3 teaches us about who God is and what He has done for us in Christ.

Ephesians 4-6 teaches us how we should live because of what He has done for us.

Ephesians 6 is challenging us in terms of action in view of the theological themes of the earlier chapters. This process of spiritual transformation is an active one - spiritual warfare working out our lives based on faith.

3. Discussion question. "God's plan of salvation is for lost people to be saved from sin's penalty". How are we saved from sin's power?

God's plan of salvation is also for Christians to be saved from sin's power. The same Gospel message that saves sinners also sanctifies the saints.

4. Comprehension question. Why did Paul describe Christian living as warfare?

- Urgent
- Life and death
- No choice
- Not to glorify war

5. a) Discussion question. Discuss what are the telltale signs of the "schemes of the devil".

- Does not look evil until it accomplishes its goal
- Gains entrance by appearing:
 - Attractive
 - Desirable
 - Perfectly legitimate
- Subtle

b) Comprehension question. Where is the sphere of Satan's influence?

- Our mind (Mark 8:32-33)
- Our heart (Acts 5:3)

B. We Need To Use His Armor

6. Based on 2 Corinthians 10:4-6 below, how do we fight our spiritual warfare against the devil?

2 Corinthians 10:4-6

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, **bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ**, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.”

7. Comprehension question. Based on the video lecture, what is the character of God's spiritual armor in Ephesians 6:10-20?

- It is related to the body parts
- It is personal armor
- Their metaphorical power derive from the part of the body they cover
- All the armor has been drawn from OT passages

8. a) Comprehension question. What are we required to do as Christians - create our own armor or put on God's armor?

b) Comprehension question. By extension to the answer above, where/who is the source of the armor? Whose strength is it that we draw from?

c) Discussion question. How do we practically put on spiritual armor? Refer to Ephesians 4:22-24)

Ephesians 4:22-24

“that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

9. Comprehension question. The decision to act (to put on spiritual armor) is based on a previous reality. What previous reality is this? Refer to Romans 6:10-13.

Romans 6:10-13

“For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be **dead indeed to sin, but alive to God** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Therefore **do not let sin reign** in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”

10. Comprehension question. Spiritual warfare is the struggle of expression of what is already implanted. What was implanted and what should be the expression?

The seed of God’s righteousness through faith in the Lord Jesus was implanted at the point of salvation. The expression of God’s righteousness is the fruit - through our new identity, motives, thinking, and action.

11. Comprehension question. “To belt on truth means to be strengthened by God’s truth in the Gospel and resolve to live truth”. What is the fruit of God’s truth in us?

- Integrity
- No deception

Takeaway

- A. The enemy of spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6 are:**
 - a. Schemes of the devil**
 - b. Unrighteousness**
 - c. False Gospels**
 - d. Faithlessness**
 - e. False teaching**
- B. God’s plan of salvation is for lost people to be saved from sin’s penalty and sin’s power**
- C. The same Gospel message that saves sinners also sanctifies the saints**
- D. To belt on truth means to be strengthened by God’s truth in the Gospel and resolve to live truth**

Case Study

Case 1 – Who is the Enemy

Nu Khis Tian was a very staunch Taoist who recently came to accept Christ as Saviour after she heard the sermons at Second Baptist Church.

She bought a new house but it was previously inhabited by a Hindu family. When she first stayed there, she felt very uncomfortable and worried. She felt that there may have been spirits within the house.

After reading Ephesians 6 during a Gamma session, she decided that she needed to wear an actual helmet, breastplate, and belt with Bible verses written on them to protect herself from “evil spiritual forces”.

1. Discussion question. What did Nu Khis Tian fail to understand?

- The real spiritual enemies in Ephesians 6 are not demons or fallen angels
- The real spiritual enemies in Ephesians 6 are the
 - Schemes of the devil
 - Unrighteousness
 - False Gospels
 - Faithlessness
 - False teaching
- Evil spirits as found in the Bible need to possess a living creature and not inanimate objects (like idols/houses)
 - The perception that certain objects are possessed is not a Biblical idea, but is the result of a weak conscience
 - Cross reference: Matthew 8:28-34
 - Note how the Lord gave permission to the demons who possessed men to possess pigs instead

2. a) Objective question. What should you do to comfort Nu Khis Tian as a Gamma member?

- A. Condemn her for her weakness of faith
- B. Bear with her weak conscience
- C. Pray with her
- D. Sponsor and give her a helmet, breastplate, and belt with Bible verses

b) Discussion question. Read 1 Corinthians 8. Explain how your response to Nu Khis Tian should be based on this passage.

Case 2 – Belt of the truth

Matthew has been a Christian for a long while and is very fervent in his desire to study the Bible. He has successfully memorised many Bible verses and constantly quotes them all the time. In fact, he has continuously won multiple memory verse competitions since his youth. He did all this because Ephesians 6 tells him to “belt on the truth”.

However, he was known to say things that he does not mean and make promises he does not keep. He had promised countless people to help them in times of need but would not do so when the need arose.

He was also known to tell white lies to get people to like him better. He reasons that it is only a small thing that is not going to hurt or harm anyone.

He also lacks integrity in his workplace - he would manipulate the numbers of the accounts because he was instructed to by his boss. He says that he is afraid to displease his manager by not complying with his request.

- 1. Is Matthew’s understanding of “belting on the truth” correct?**
- 2. What is the correct understanding of “belting on the truth”?**