

## **Week 13: Ephesians 6:10–20: The Armor of God**

### **Hook**



**Main Point:** God strengthens us to stand firm in spiritual warfare through the armor He provides.

**Q: Think about what you carried with you today – in your pockets, purse, backpack or work bag. What did you bring with you?**

Bible. Phone. Wallet. Keys. Laptop. Water bottle. Maybe a few things you haven't taken out of your bag in six months.

**Q: How much do you think all of it weighs?**

Most of us notice pretty quickly when we're carrying extra weight. But imagine carrying 60 pounds or more everywhere you went. That's approximately what a U.S. soldier may carry into battle – body armor, helmet, weapon, ammunition, water, communications equipment, and other supplies.<sup>1</sup>

**Q: Why would a soldier willingly carry all that extra weight?**

Because you don't go into battle unprepared.

In Ephesians 6, Paul tells us that whether we realize it or not, we are in a spiritual battle. And God has given us everything we need to stand firm.

**RECAP:** In the first half of the letter to the Ephesians (chapters 1–3), Paul gave us doctrine – how the Gospel transforms us into new creations in Christ. In the second half, he described how to apply that doctrine to our lives – how to live as transformed people in the church community (4:1–5:21), in the home (5:22–6:9), and in the world (6:10–20).

In the last two weeks, we heard Paul define the role of head of the household as a servant leader – a husband who loves his wife as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her; a father who raises his children with compassion, grace and truth; and a master who treats his servants with sincerity, respect and love.

This week, Paul turns to how to live as transformed people in a hostile world. He describes our lives on this earth as a spiritual battle and tells us to defend ourselves with the armor of God.

## **Week 13: Ephesians 6:10–20: The Armor of God**

### **Book**

**Main Point:** God strengthens us to stand firm in spiritual warfare through the armor He provides.

**Ephesians 6:10–12 [Read]**

**Talking Point 1:** Our battle is against evil, not other people.

**Q: Why does the Christian life often feel like a battle? How does war imagery help us understand what is going on in the spiritual realm?**

**Q: Why is it important to remember our battle is not against flesh and blood?**

We know this section is the end of Paul's letter because he starts with "finally." Just as Paul had ended his letter to Timothy, he closed Ephesians with encouragement to fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). He had told them how to live into their new identity in Christ in the world. Now, with his final words, he let them know it wouldn't be easy. It would be a daily battle. But because God fights for us with His immeasurably great power (1:19; 3:20), if we stand firm on Christ, we will overcome.

Having talked to them in more practical, day-to-day language about how to live with one another, he now returned to the lofty, spiritual language of the beginning of the letter. It may feel as though he's switching gears from loving and serving one another to our spiritual battles with evil, but the two things are intimately connected. Our biggest obstacle to loving one another is the spiritual battle in our hearts. Our biggest obstacle in giving in to the temptations of the old self is the spiritual battle in our minds (2:3).

Paul said the old self was following the way of the "ruler of the kingdom of the air" (2:2). Throughout the letter, he focused on spiritual blessings (1:3–14), prayers for wisdom and power (1:15–22), and knowledge of Christ (3:14–21). The entire letter shows a spiritual view of the world in which we live.

Spiritual warfare is one of those things some churches talk about non-stop and other churches shy away from talking about at all. Some Christians feel they are constantly in a spiritual battle, while others live as if they don't really believe demons exist. Not because evil isn't all around us but because Satan can be subtle and crafty and use all kinds of schemes to trick us (6:11). In his book *Angels*, Billy Graham, said we live in a *perpetual* battlefield. Every decision we make is part of a spiritual battle between good and evil. Every conversation, every interaction, every thought.<sup>2</sup> The stereotypical image of an angel on one shoulder and a devil on the other exists for a reason. Paul said that to fight, we must "take every thought captive to obey Christ" because the battle starts in our minds (2 Corinthians 10:5).

It's crucial to understand that our battle is not against flesh and blood, but the "cosmic powers over this present darkness ... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Other human beings are not our enemy, even if they aren't on our side (God's kingdom) yet; they're victims of the Enemy and his schemes. They don't need to be fought; they need to be rescued. Even when we're in conflict with another human being, the real battle is what's going on in the heavenly realm between good and evil. God's kingdom is spiritual, and His Enemy is spiritual. Jesus didn't come to fight Rome; He came to fight evil. We see that in what He did in His ministry. He exorcised demons – literal spiritual warfare. But He also fought the “powers” in other ways. He healed disease, calmed storms, tore down human power structures, shared the Gospel, and changed hearts. And in His Resurrection, He defeated death itself.

Like Jesus, our battle is against evil itself. We struggle with it in our hearts (Romans 7:14–25), and as soldiers for the kingdom of God, we are to fight evil everywhere we see it in the world (Romans 12:21). Because our battle is spiritual, our weapons are spiritual. God has given us spiritual “armor” to put on every day to stand firm in our battle. This armor has the “divine power to destroy strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:4). It helps us to “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might” (6:10). When we use the armor of God instead of fighting in our own power, we can overcome, because “he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

The spiritual battle Paul described is intense. In Ephesians 6:12, he identified four descriptions of our spiritual enemies: rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, and spiritual forces of evil. Together, these terms emphasize that we face powerful spiritual enemies working against God and His people. These forces seek to rob believers of the spiritual blessings God has given them in Christ (1:3). Paul wanted believers to recognize the seriousness of this battle and stand firm in God's strength.

Even if we don't feel it or see it all the time, there is a spiritual battle raging against our faith, our families and our future.<sup>3</sup> The moment we forget that is the moment we let down our guard and become vulnerable to attack. That's why Paul repeatedly used the phrase “stand firm.” He didn't want us to let down our guard, even for a moment. Standing firm does not mean standing still or doing nothing; it means actively resisting the Devil in the strength and authority of Christ.

**Q: How does it change your concept of spiritual warfare to think of it as what is going on behind every decision, every action and every thought?**

**Q: How have you experienced spiritual warfare?**

**Q: What are some modern examples of "the devil's schemes" that Christians may overlook?**

**Q: How can you become more aware of spiritual realities without becoming fearful or obsessed with them?**

## **Ephesians 6:13–17 [Read]**

**Talking Point 2:** We can stand firm with the armor of God.

**Q: Why do you think the emphasis is on standing firm instead of going on offense?**

The enemy forces are intense, but God is stronger. When we are strong in His mighty power, we can stand firm against whatever schemes the Devil throws at us. “Stand firm” is the repeated refrain in this passage. In the Old Testament, the Lord continually told His people that it was He who fought their battles; they needed only to stand firm, be still, and watch what He would do (Exodus 14:14). From the beginning of this letter, Paul said the Gospel is all about *what God does for us*. We were dead in our sins; we could do nothing to save ourselves (2:1). Likewise, we can do nothing to fight evil in our own strength; we must depend upon God’s strength and use the resources He provides. This is the good news on which we can stand firm: God fights for us with the “immeasurable greatness of His power” (1:19). In Christ, we are “more than conquerors” (Romans 8:37). Our calling is to stand firm in His strength – resisting the Devil, obeying our Commander, and refusing to surrender to the Enemy.

Paul used armor as a metaphor to describe the spiritual things we need in order to stand firm in battle. Most of the armor is used for protection; our only offensive weapon is the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit.<sup>4</sup> The focus is on standing firm rather than attempting to fight in our own power. The armor belongs to God and is supplied by God, but Paul repeatedly commanded us to “put on” and “take up” that armor. God provides every piece and gives us the power to use it, but we are responsible for actively putting it on and standing against the Enemy.<sup>5</sup>

Belt of Truth (6:14). The literal Greek is “having girded your loins with truth.” Girding your loins was the process of wrapping your tunic up and tucking it into your belt so you could run or fight or do manual labor. So “gird up your loins” became an idiom meaning to get ready for something difficult, as people today use “put on your big boy/girl pants.”

The belt of truth refers both to knowing God’s truth and to living truthfully. Because Satan is the father of lies, believers must be grounded in the truth of God’s Word. But we must also live with integrity and faithfulness so there is no gap between what we profess and how we live. Pastor Jack Graham calls this our “integrity in truth.”<sup>6</sup>

We need to know God’s truth to be able to fight the lies and schemes of the Devil. Satan is “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). He will use whatever deception he can to trap us. The only way to defeat His lies is with the truth of God’s Word, as Jesus did in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1–11). Jesus told His disciples if they abided in His Word, they would know the truth, and the truth would set them free (John 8:31–32). But Jesus didn’t just *tell* the truth; He *is* the truth (John 14:6). The first step to being ready for battle is entering into relationship with Jesus, the Truth Himself. Then the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth who guides us into all truth (John 16:13), dwells in us. As we walk by the Spirit and abide in Christ, we grow in knowledge and wisdom, as Paul prayed for the Ephesians (1:17–18).

Breastplate of Righteousness (6:14). Our right standing before God rests entirely upon Christ's righteousness, not our works (2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9). But the breastplate in this passage particularly emphasizes the righteous living Christ produces in us. Pastor Graham describes it as "living a pure life in Jesus Christ." When we walk in obedience and purity, we are guarded against Satan's attempts to defile our hearts and draw us into sin.<sup>7</sup>

Righteous living in Christ functions like a breastplate because it protects our hearts. Proverbs tells us, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life" (Proverbs 4:23). Satan will try to entice us through our "deceitful desires" (4:22). But Christ gives us new hearts and new desires, to do what He says is right. In our spiritual battles, we must guard our hearts. We can't just "follow our hearts" as the world says; we must follow Christ, walking in His truth and righteousness (Proverbs 3:5–6).

Boots of Peace (6:15). In the ancient world, people typically wore sandals, but to protect their feet, Roman soldiers wore hard leather boots that included hobnails, small spikes nailed into the sole that provided traction on soft or rocky ground. The word "readiness" here means a "firm footing." A more literal translation is: "having put on your feet the firm foundation of the Gospel of peace." As Paul wrote earlier, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, built on the firm foundation of the apostles, with Christ as the cornerstone (2:20–21). Just as hobnails gave soldiers a firm footing on rough terrain, so the Gospel gives us a firm foundation during spiritual warfare. No matter what is going on in our lives, the Gospel gives us peace (John 14:26–27). We don't have to be afraid, even when storms rage around us (Matthew 14:22–33). We can offer our anxieties to God, and He will give us peace (Philippians 4:6–7).

These shoes give us not only stability but also readiness and mobility. We stand firmly in the Gospel, but we must also be ready to carry the Gospel into a lost world (Romans 10:15). As Pastor Graham puts it, the Gospel gives us "stability and mobility" – we stand in the Gospel and run with the Gospel.<sup>8</sup>

Shield of Faith (6:16). "Shield" can also mean "door"; it refers to the heavy oblong Roman shield that was so large it looked like a door, not just a small chest shield. In ancient Roman warfare, a group of soldiers would arrange their shields in a tortoise formation (like a turtle in its shell for safety), which gave them protection on all sides so that even flaming arrows could not hit them from above. The unity of the body of Christ was a theme earlier in Ephesians; now we're seeing how the body of Christ *together* offers much stronger protection from evil.

The flaming arrows represent the many different attacks Satan directs against believers – doubt, fear, anxiety, temptation, lust,



discouragement and addiction. Paul did not minimize the strength or variety of Satan's attacks.

He said our faith not only can protect us from them but *extinguish* them!

Paul told us that salvation is a gift from God, received by grace through faith (2:8–10). When those flaming arrows come, we must actively raise the shield by trusting Christ, standing on His promises, and refusing to surrender to doubt and fear (Proverbs 30:5).

Helmet of Salvation (6:17). A soldier's helmet protected his head from a potentially fatal blow. In the same way, Satan seeks to attack our minds with deception, doubt, temptation, guilt and confusion. The helmet of salvation protects the way we think and, therefore, the way we live.<sup>9</sup>

The phrase "helmet of salvation" comes from Isaiah, where righteousness is also described as a breastplate (Isaiah 59:17). In Isaiah, God Himself puts on the armor, as the warrior who fights our battles for us. The helmet showed God would bring salvation for His people. This was accomplished in Jesus, whose name means "the Lord is my salvation" (Acts 4:12).

When we put on the helmet, we are resting in the assurance of our salvation in Christ. We remember that Christ has saved us from sin, that we are secure in Him, and that He continues to protect and deliver us during our daily spiritual battles. Satan often attacks through lies and thoughts raised against the knowledge of God, but God's Word gives us the power to "take every thought captive" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Our minds are the front lines of the spiritual battle, but God fights for us and He is mighty to save (Zephaniah 3:17).

The Sword of the Spirit (6:17): Up to this point, all the armor has been defensive, protection from the attacks of the evil one. The Sword of the Spirit is the only offensive weapon Paul described, and he told us exactly what it is – the Word of God.

The sword of the spirit is the Word of God applied by the Holy Spirit in our spiritual battles. God's Word enables us to recognize Satan's lies and answer them with truth. Jesus modeled this when He responded to each of Satan's temptations with the words, "It is written" (Matthew 4:1–11). As we read, study, memorize, and obey Scripture, the Holy Spirit uses it to expose deception, renew our minds, and develop new patterns of godly thinking (Romans 12:2; 2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Hebrews also describes the Word as a sword, not for fighting something external, but for cutting into our own hearts, where the spiritual struggles are most deeply hidden (Hebrews 4:12). The Bible isn't a weapon to use against other people but against the lies of the Devil. It's like a surgeon's knife that God uses to cut open our own hearts so He can heal what is broken inside us (Psalm 139:23–24; 2 Timothy 3:16).

But too many of us in the modern American Church don't really know the Word. Many researchers say we have a *crisis* of biblical illiteracy in America.<sup>10</sup> Too many believers only have a vague idea of what they have heard about the Bible or nuggets of truth from

sermons, memes and TikToks but not a wide and deep knowledge of the entirety of God's Word. How can we fight the lies of the Devil if we don't know the truth of God's Word? Hebrews says the spiritually mature have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil by "constant use" of the Scriptures (Hebrews 5:14). If we don't keep our swords "sharp" by constant use, they won't be very effective in battle.

Paul said to take up the *whole* armor of God. No one goes into battle with just a helmet or just boots or just a shield; we can't defend ourselves with just one or two of these things. They all work together. Truth protects us from Satan's lies. Righteousness protects us from temptation. Peace protects us from anxiety. Faith protects us from doubt and fear. Salvation protects us from destruction. The Word cuts through the lies of the Devil.

It's the armor *of God* because it is His immeasurably great power, not our own. Faith, truth, salvation, righteousness, the Gospel, His Word – all these things are resources God graciously provides, spiritual blessings He has showered on us with hyper-abundance. We have more than enough to win the battle. The Enemy is strong, but God is stronger. The battle belongs to the Lord, but He calls us to put on His armor, trust His power, resist the Devil, and stand firm in obedience.

**Q: What would it look like for you to put on God's armor every morning before you go out into the world and face your spiritual battles?**

**Q: How can training in God's Word help us be ready for spiritual attack?**

**Q: How might neglecting one piece of armor leave a believer vulnerable?**

**Q: What can happen when Christians rely on personal experience or emotions more than God's truth?**

**Q: What would it look like for our group to help each other put on the armor of God daily?**

**Ephesians 6:18–20 [Read]**

**Talking Point 3:** We can stand firm with perseverance in prayer.

**Q: When and how did Paul tell us to pray?**

**Q: How is this consistent with his earlier prayers in Ephesians?**

Paul wrote that as we take up the armor of God, we must pray at *all* times in the Spirit, with *all* prayer and supplication with *all* perseverance, making supplication for *all* the saints. That's four "alls" in one verse! "Supplication" here is specifically praying for a need, an "asking" kind of prayer. But there are many other facets of prayer, including praise, confession, listening, etc. By saying both "prayer" and "supplication," Paul covered every facet of prayer one could possibly imagine. Paul's point is clear: Everything

we do all day every day must be covered in prayer. United prayer, as one body of Christ, just as Paul had been emphasizing throughout Ephesians.

Acts tells us that the disciples in the very first church devoted themselves to constant, united, persevering prayer, just as Paul described here. People from different backgrounds came together with one mind and one heart in prayer “with one accord” (Acts 1:14; 2:42–47). They let go of their own preferences and together sought *only* the Lord’s will in prayer. The result? The Holy Spirit moved through them in a mighty way and the world was never the same.

Every spiritual revolution in history started with this kind of prayer. From Pentecost to the Protestant Reformation to the Great Awakening, in story after story, we hear the same thing. People prayed, and God’s Spirit moved. Not because their prayer forced God’s hand but because they invited Him to move in their lives. Because they sought His will together. Because they asked His Spirit to come and move in whatever way He willed. Our prayers don’t control God, but He is always ready to work in our lives when we ask. He is always working, even when we don’t see it or know it or ask for it. But something powerful and world-changing happens when people pray for God’s Spirit to move.

In spiritual warfare, the battle is won not on a battlefield but on our knees. Prayer is a powerful thing (James 5:16), not because if we pray in just the right way with just the right words, we can get God to do what we want, but because prayer is the way we join God in what He is doing. Prayer is how we connect with God, how we depend upon His immeasurably great power.

Praying “in the Spirit” simply means praying under the direction, influence and wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Because the Spirit indwells the believer, He is with us every time we pray, but we don’t always align our hearts with His will. Prayer “in the Spirit” is prayer that intentionally asks the Holy Spirit to guide us and submits to His leading.

We pray for many reasons, but prayer is primarily about our relationship with God. It is two-way communication with Him, both listening and speaking. It is about connecting with God, hearing from Him, and becoming more like Him. Prayer doesn’t change Him; it does not alter His character or force Him to act against His will. But Scripture repeatedly shows that God moves in response to believing prayer. Prayer changes us as we submit ourselves to His will. This is why Paul spent so much of this letter in prayer for the Ephesians. He was leading by example.<sup>11</sup>

Ephesians paints an intense picture of a world with two opposing spiritual armies, the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light, in constant battle for the souls of humanity. But we don’t just have to stand by and watch these two armies fight; we can join the battle. Paul was telling us our purpose on this earth is bigger than most people understand. What we do with our lives has cosmic, eternal significance. When we live as children of the light, we are doing so much more than just “being good people.” We are fighting a cosmic battle against evil in the heavenly realms.

**Q: In what specific ways can you increase prayer in your own life? How can you join others in united, persevering prayer?**

**Q: If we really understood the cosmic eternal significance of everything we do in this life, how would it change the way we live?**

**Q: Why might prayer be one of the most neglected spiritual disciplines despite its importance?**

**Q: What would it look like for our group to become a more prayer-centered community?**

## **Week 13: Ephesians 6:10–20: The Armor of God**

### **Took**

**Main Point: God strengthens us to stand firm in spiritual warfare through the armor He provides.**

Paul doesn't end Ephesians by telling us to go looking for a fight. He tells us to be ready for the one we are already in. There is a spiritual battle being fought every day – in our thoughts, our choices, our relationships, our families, our workplaces and our churches. Satan would love for us to forget that battle exists. Because when we forget there is an Enemy, we stop watching for his schemes. But we do not need to be afraid.

The Enemy is real, but God is greater. The battle is fierce, but God has not left us defenseless.

He has given us truth as Satan lies.  
Righteousness when Satan tempts.  
Peace when Satan brings anxiety.  
Faith when Satan sends doubt.  
Salvation when Satan attacks our minds.  
His Word when Satan deceives.  
And prayer that continually connects us to His power.

So tomorrow morning, before you think about what you need to wear for the day, ask yourself another question: Have I put on the armor of God?

### **CHALLENGES**

**THINK:** Think about all the places you go on a daily, weekly, monthly basis. What kind of spiritual warfare could be going on in those places that people aren't even aware of? Think about people you know – family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, etc. How might they be experiencing spiritual warfare, whether or not they realize it? How can you be a soldier for the kingdom of light in the world? How can you fight evil in the world around you? How can you be better prepared to defend yourself against spiritual warfare?

**PRAY:** Thank God first for His immeasurably great power to fight evil in our hearts and minds and in the world around us. Thank Him that He is stronger than the powers of evil in the world. Pray specifically for situations in which it appears evil is winning. Ask God to move in those situations and bring light to the darkness. Pray for the Church to be a force for good in the world. Pray for strength to stand firm in your spiritual battles. Pray for your Christian friends to help one another stand firm.

**ACT:** Sharpen your sword. Think and pray about any spiritual battles you may be facing right now, any ways in which you feel attacked. Using a concordance, Bible dictionary,

online search, or other resources, search the Bible for passages that may help in your specific spiritual battle. Study, read, meditate, and pray. Then memorize a few key passages of Scripture to have ready at the front of your mind when you are attacked.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.army.mil/article/231403/ccdcs\\_road\\_map\\_to\\_modernizing\\_the\\_army\\_soldier\\_lethality?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.army.mil/article/231403/ccdcs_road_map_to_modernizing_the_army_soldier_lethality?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>2</sup> Billy Graham, *Angels: God's Secret Agents* (Thomas Nelson, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Jack Graham, "What to Wear in the War," *PowerPoint*, June 21, 2016, [OnePlace](#).

<sup>4</sup> Roman soldiers could use their shields as weapons, and in a really fierce battle perhaps their boots or helmet, but only the sword is officially an offensive weapon.

<sup>5</sup> Jack Graham, "How to Win the Spiritual Battle," *PowerPoint*, [OnePlace](#).

<sup>6</sup> Jack Graham, "Power Point – June 1, 2005," [OnePlace](#).

<sup>7</sup> Jack Graham, "Power Point – June 1, 2005," [OnePlace](#).

<sup>8</sup> Jack Graham, "Power Point – June 1, 2005," [OnePlace](#).

<sup>9</sup> Jack Graham, "The Battle for Your Mind," sermon on Ephesians 6:17, [SermonCentral](#).

<sup>10</sup> [New Research Shows Even Committed Christians Struggle with Application, As Overwhelming Majority of U.S. Adults Lack Biblical Basics - George Barna](#) – March 25, 2026

[The Crisis of Biblical Illiteracy in Today's Churches - Huntsville Theological Institute](#) – Dec 17, 20125

[America's real crisis is biblical illiteracy](#) – *The Christian Post*, April 23, 2026

[Why Is Biblical Illiteracy On the Rise in a Time of Religious Liberty? - Institute for Faith and Culture](#), August 4, 2025

[State of the Bible Report Highlights Americans' Biblical Illiteracy](#) – April 14, 2026

[Biblical Illiteracy and Christian Education | Christianity.com](#) – August 16, 2026

<sup>11</sup> Jack Graham, "Power Point – June 2, 2005," [OnePlace](#).