

Ephesians

Lesson 9 Ephesians 6:10-20

Leader Guide

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Lesson 9

Ephesians 6:10-20

The Armor of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. Ephesians 6:10-11

Prayers

Introduction

In the first three chapters, Paul writes to the Christians in Ephesus to tell them how God glorified Jesus Christ by raising him from the dead and seating him in glory in heaven. Just as God glorified Christ, he will also glorify us and seat us with Christ in heaven (Ephesians 2:6). In Chapters 4 and 5, Paul focused on how Christians were to live and walk in the light of Christ. In his closing words, Paul tells Christians how to stand in the face of spiritual warfare with their adversary, the devil (Ephesians 6:11).

God does not leave us to our own strength to face spiritual warfare. He gives us every gift we need to stand against Satan. As we have learned in Ephesians, God provides for every part of our spiritual well-being. He chose us before creation, gave us faith to believe in Christ's sacrificial death for all our sins, gave us his Holy Spirit as our guide and to keep us in Christ, and will call us home at his appointed time. God supplies us with his gifts of divine power against our spiritual struggles. Paul refers to these gifts as the armor of God. God's armor is truth, the gospel, faith, salvation, and prayer. They are not to be taken selectively but whole so that we are equipped with every spiritual blessing, and nothing can separate us from God.

Read Ephesians 6:10-24, The Full Armor of God.

Eph 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Eph 6:11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

Eph 6:12 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.

Eph 6:13 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.

Eph 6:14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

Eph 6:15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Eph 6:16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Eph 6:17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Eph 6:18 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.

Eph 6:19 Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel,

Eph 6:20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Discuss

1. The first piece of armor Paul mentions is the belt of truth. The devil attacks us with lies, doubt, fear, and guilt so that we feel separated from the truth God has revealed to us. Some of the great scriptural truths that strengthen us in spiritual warfare are given below. What are some others that give you strength and assurance?

^{Jn 15:16} You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

^{Eph 1:4} For he chose us in him before the world's creation to be holy and blameless in his sight.

^{Ro 8:38} For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

My assurance comes from the knowledge that God chose me and placed me in Christ, who is my righteousness. God is infinitely more powerful than I, and He will keep me in Christ.

2. The second piece of the armor of God is righteousness. One of our greatest spiritual struggles is with sin. It is in our struggle that Satan attacks us with a truth: we sin despite our calling to live holy lives. What are some truths about righteousness in the scriptures that strengthen us?

^{1Co 1:30} It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

^{Gal 2:21} I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”

^{Ro 3:22} This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

I know that God is quick to forgive when I sin and fail to live to the holy standard that He calls me. He joined me with Christ, who is my righteousness. If I could live a perfect and sinless life in my thoughts, words, and actions, I would not need Christ, but oh, how I do need him! Satan can convict me of sin, but I am secure in Christ's righteousness.

3. God's third defense given to us are feet made swift and ready through the gospel. What are some uses for swift and ready feet?

^{1Co 6:18} Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

^{1Ti 6:11} But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

^{Tit 3:1} Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good

^{Lk 12:35} **Be dressed ready for service**

Scripture and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit give us the desire to flee from sin and live for righteousness. Our love for Christ makes us ready to do whatever is good we are able, and swift feet carry us to help our neighbor!

4. Our faith is given to us by God so that we believe in his Son, Jesus Christ, as our savior. But our faith can be tested by pain, suffering, and loss, leading us to question God's love for us or our love for God. How does your faith strengthen you during times of suffering?

^{1Co 1:8} He [God] will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

^{1Pe 1:6} In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

^{Philippians 3:20} But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Suffering causes some to reject their faith, but I do not know any Christians who have not suffered and felt closer to God than ever before. Many were healed, others died, and some live with broken bodies. Yet their faith was strengthened, not defeated. As I approached retirement, I was diagnosed with the onset of kidney failure that would likely require regular dialysis. My dreams of an active and productive retirement evaporated. On the way home from the medical clinic, my prayer was, "Lord, now what would have me do," knowing God had already prepared good works for me to do in whatever condition God called me to live. With time, a skilled surgeon was able to help my condition and has given me more years of activity and freedom from dialysis.

5. Just as we can come to doubt our righteousness and faith, we can also doubt our **salvation**. But God is faithful and assures us of our salvation. How does God assure us of our salvation?

God gives us assurance of our salvation through his word and the guidance of his Spirit. Following are some passages that may have come to mind:

^{2Th 2:13} **But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.**

^{1Co 1:7} **Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸ He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.**

Eph 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions —it is by grace you have been saved.

Ro 10:8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved.

1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹² Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

6. Spiritual warfare against sin is unrelenting. Preparation for spiritual warfare begins with and is sustained by prayer. Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God for their readiness for spiritual warfare, "lead us not in temptation, but deliver us from evil."
 - a. How are we led into temptation?

We are led into temptation by our sinful desires. As James wrote, "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed." James 1:13-14. We pray that God keeps us from temptation because we know we are weak and prone to sin.

- b. What are some promises in scripture that give you assurance and strength in the face of temptation? Some you think of may be listed below.

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are —yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Colossians 1:13-14

- c. Sometimes we are confronted by evil and will need God's full armor to take a stand in our defense. Can you think of any times when you were confronted by evil (slander, lies, malicious attacks) and had to take a defense? How did you deploy God's armor? How did God deliver you?

There were several times in my career when I was slandered unexpectedly. The truth was my defense. Once after a transfer and new job assignment, my new supervisor came into my office and had a disciplinary note for me to sign, to admit I had been inappropriately using company time and

equipment. I looked at him incredulously and said I would not sign the note because I did not know what he was referring to and that I had done nothing wrong. He explained that a security audit found searches for pornography on my company computer. I said I had not accessed any of the websites and that he could investigate any of them, and they would lead to another source. Fortunately, even though I had not yet established a personal working relationship with him, he said he would investigate the matter. After about a month, security officers found a computer user with administrative privileges using other people's accounts, including mine, to look at pornography. I always felt thankful that I worked with people who gave me the opportunity for a defense and had the skills and interest to find the truth.

7. The work of Satan might be very difficult to recognize, so God gives us his word, the Sword of the Spirit, to defend ourselves against his lies and deceit. What are some common lies in our culture that are misleading many away from Christ and the Church but can easily be shown as errors with the scriptures? A few of them are below. Can you think of any others and the scriptures that refute the lies?
 - a. God loves everyone and will not condemn anyone to hell.
 - b. Jesus never claimed to be God. His disciples made up the idea of Jesus' deity after his death.
 - c. God promises to make us healthy and wealthy if we live righteously and give generously to the church.
 - d. I am assured of going to heaven because I am a good person.
 - e. I am a person of faith and a good Christian, but I do not believe in attending church.
 - f. The Bible is just a historical book with men's wisdom about God and life.

a. God loves everyone and will not condemn anyone to hell.

² Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; ⁶ if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; ⁷ and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless ⁸ (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— ⁹ if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. ¹⁰ This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

b. Jesus never claimed to be God. The idea of Jesus' deity was made up by his disciples after his death.

John 10:24 The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." ²⁵ Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me"

John 8:56 [Jesus speaking] **“Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”** 57 [Jewish Pharisees and teachers of the law speaking] “You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!” 58 **“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am! [I Am is God's name for himself, Exodus 3:14]”** 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him [the punishment for blasphemy was death by stoning], but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

- c. God promises to make us healthy and wealthy if we live righteously and give generously to the church.

Jesus said] "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." Luke 12:14-15

[Paul wrote] But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. 1 Timothy 6:6-10

[James wrote] 2Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4

- d. I am assured of going to heaven because I am a good person.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ephesians 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith —and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name [Jesus Christ] under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

- e. I am a person of faith and a good Christian, but I do not believe in attending church or organized religion.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- f. The Bible is just a historical book with wisdom.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Closing Prayer

May the peace and grace of God fill us with imperishable love for Christ Jesus, and may He keep us safe and our minds pure until we meet again.

Amen