

Ephesians

Lesson 10

Participant Guide

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Lesson 10

More on Spiritual Warfare

Let the word of Christ dwell among you richly, *Colossians 3:16*
Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.
Ephesians 6:11

Prayers

Introduction

The Holy Scriptures are described as “the word of God” or as “the sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17), the single offensive weapon against the attacks of Satan. In a recent sermon on the importance of reading the Bible daily to combat the world's influence on our thinking, our Pastor used a hilarious example of a can of Spam for what it means to fill your mind with good and beneficial things rather than worldly junk. He opened the can of Spam and asked the kids, “What kind of meat is this?” “I don't know; I'm not eating that,” was the reply. “Go ahead and smell it,” he said. The kids said, “I'm not smelling that!” Then the Pastor made the analogy between Spam (mystery meat) and steak. Eating mystery meat is like being focused on the things of the world; eating steak is like reading the Bible. Don't set your mind on mystery meat.

In this lesson, we will continue looking at spiritual warfare in our lives and our need for the spiritual armor Paul discussed in Ephesians 6:10-20.

Read

In Colossians 3:1-17 Paul compares things above (Steak) with earthly things (Mystery Meat). Read Colossians 3:1-17 and compare Mystery Meat to Steak.

¹ Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. ⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. ¹¹ Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:1-17

Discuss

1. Use the analogy of mystery meat to steak and compare what is good and beneficial to our earthly nature from Colossians 3:1-17.

Mystery Meat

Steak

2. Another way to view Paul's list in Colossians 3 and a similar discussion in Ephesians 4:7-5:20 is through the law and the gospel. The law demands obedience, "Thou shall not eat mystery meat." The gospel beckons obedience, calling us into a new life in Christ through grace and mercy. Satan would have us remain under the law, convicting and condemning us, never looking to Christ for our redemption and new life. We often become distracted in our meditation on the gospel, not turning to the scriptures through which the Holy Spirit transforms our thinking. What are some of the obstacles you face that interfere with personal time reading the Bible?
3. What are some actions you can take to find time for Bible study?
4. C. S. Lewis said, "You can give the Devil too much or too little attention." We should know our adversary and follow C.S. Lewis' caution not to see Satan work everywhere. What do spiritual warfare and the attacks of Satan look like in our world? Refer to the following scriptures on how Satan has worked in the lives of others in the past.

a. How did Satan attack Job?

^{Job 1:12} The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

¹³ One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁴ a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵ and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

^{Job 1:17} While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁸ While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

^{Job 2:6} The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life." ⁷ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head.

b. How did Satan attack Peter?

^{Lk 22:31} "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

^{Lk 22:54} Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. ⁵⁵ And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. ⁵⁶ A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him."

⁵⁷ But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.

5. Jesus discusses how Satan is active in the world in the Parable of the Sower. How does Satan take away the word of the gospel as people hear it?

^{Mark 4:15} Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

6. How would you summarize the work of Satan in the world and areas you are engaged in spiritual warfare?

Read Ephesians 6:21-24, Paul's Final Greetings.

Eph 6:21 Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing.

Eph 6:22 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

Eph 6:23 Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph 6:24 Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

7. How would you summarize Paul's closing comments to the Ephesians?

Epilog, Read Revelation 2:1-7, Christ's Words to the Church of Ephesus

Rev 2:1 **"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:**

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands:

Rev 2:2 **I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.**

Rev 2:3 **You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.**

Rev 2:4 **Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love.**

Rev 2:5 **Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.**

Rev 2:6 **But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.**

Rev 2:7 **He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.**

8. Christ explains the symbolism of the seven stars and seven lampstands in Revelation verse 1:20. The stars are the angels (or messengers) to the seven churches in Asia Minor and the lampstands are the churches. How did Christ commend the church of Ephesus?

Note: Church fathers (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus) wrote from the mid to the end of the 2nd century AD that the Nicolaitans practiced sexual debauchery and orgies.

9. Despite their works, Christ rebuked the church of Ephesus. What did the church fail to do over time?

10. What lesson do you learn from the Ephesian's relationship to Christ?

11. What advice did Christ give on how to revitalize their relationship with him? This is practical advice to revitalize any relationship!

12. Paul and the apostle John grounded the church in Ephesus in sound doctrine. The church recognized false teaching and didn't tolerate it. They received the benefit of Paul's intercessory prayers and began their church with a strong faith in Christ and by showing their love to all the saints. Yet within 20 years of Paul's death, they had grown cold in their love for Christ. Looking back through Paul's letter to the Ephesians, what are some lessons from Paul's teaching they could have remembered to help vitalize their Christian walk?

(Ephesians 1:1-14)

(Ephesians 2)

(Ephesians 2:10)

(Ephesians 3:14-21)

(Ephesians 4:1-5:20)

(Ephesians 5:22-6:9)

(Ephesians 6:10-17).

(Ephesians 6:17-18)

Closing Prayer

Dear Precious LORD,
Help me remember the depth of your love for me as I go through my day. I pray for Your protection. You are my hiding place; I can always find refuge in you. Protect me from trouble wherever I go, and keep evil far from me. No matter where I am, I will look to You as my Protector, who fights for me every day. AMEN