

Small Group Guide: Your Mission Should You Choose to Accept It

Ephesians 6:10-24

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to open your hearts to understand the spiritual battle we face and to give you courage to accept His mission.

Icebreaker

Share a time when you misidentified a problem or enemy in your life. What did you learn from that experience?

Key Takeaways

1. **Know Your Enemy:** Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:12)
2. **The Enemy's Schemes:**
 - a. Lies that distort reality
 - b. Accusations that distort our view of God and ourselves
 - c. Temptations that distort our desires
3. **How We Fight:**
 - a. Conquer evil with good (like Jesus did)
 - b. Pray continually for everything
 - c. Share the gospel boldly, even at personal cost
 - d. Fight together, not alone
4. **Our Position:** We fight from a place of strength in Christ, not weakness

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Enemy (15-20 minutes)

1. **Cultural Perspective:** The sermon mentioned that rejecting spiritual warfare is "culturally arrogant" since most of the world believes in spiritual realities. How does your cultural background influence your view of spiritual warfare? What might you be missing by having a purely "naturalistic worldview"?
2. **Misidentifying the Enemy:** Paul says our struggle is "not against flesh and blood." Who or what do you tend to blame for evil in the world? How might you be misidentifying the enemy?
3. **Friendly Fire:** When have you seen Christians "shoot at each other" instead of standing together against the real enemy? What causes this, and how can we avoid it?

How We Fight (20-25 minutes)

4. **Overcoming Evil with Good:** Read Romans 12:17-21 together. Share a specific situation where you're tempted to repay evil for evil. What would it look like to "conquer evil with good" in that situation?
5. **Prayer Life:** Paul says to "pray at all times" for "all things." The sermon challenged us not to filter what we think is "worth" praying about. What keeps you from praying about everything? What would change if you truly cast "all your cares" on God?
6. **Boldness in Witness:** Paul asked for prayer for boldness even while imprisoned. Why is sharing the gospel so difficult for most of us? What fears hold you back?
7. **Fighting Together:** How does your small group help you in this spiritual battle? What practical ways can you better support each other?

The Story of Joseph (15-20 minutes)

8. **Costly Obedience:** Discuss the story of Joseph who was beaten three times for sharing the gospel. What strikes you most about his response? What does this story reveal about the power of persevering love?
9. **Personal Application:** While most of us won't face physical persecution, what "cost" might sharing the gospel have in your context (relationships, reputation, comfort, etc.)? Are you willing to pay it?

Personal Reflection (5-10 minutes)

Take a few minutes of silence for personal reflection:

- In what area of your life are you most vulnerable to the enemy's schemes right now?
- Which of the four ways to fight (conquer evil with good, pray, share the gospel, fight together) do you most need to grow in?

- What is one specific action you can take this week?

Practical Applications

Choose 1-2 of these to commit to as a group this week:

Individual Actions

- **Prayer Audit:** For one week, pray about everything—parking spots, big decisions, small anxieties, miracles. Journal what happens when you stop filtering your prayers.
- **Identify the Real Enemy:** Write down a person or situation that frustrates you. Pray for that person/situation daily, asking God to help you see the spiritual battle behind it.
- **Armor Check:** Each morning this week, read Ephesians 6:14-17 and mentally "put on" each piece of armor, asking God to strengthen you in truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and His Word.
- **Gospel Boldness:** Identify one person you've been afraid to share Jesus with. Pray daily for boldness and an opportunity to share.

Group Actions

- **Prayer Partnership:** Pair up with someone in the group to text each other daily prayer requests—no matter how small or large.
- **Overcoming Evil Together:** Identify a specific way your group can "overcome evil with good" in your community (serve a struggling neighbor, bless someone who has wronged your church, etc.).
- **Encouragement Chain:** Like Paul sent Tychicus to encourage the Ephesians, commit to sending one encouraging text/message to another group member each day this week.

Memory Verse

Ephesians 6:12 - "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens."

Closing Prayer

Pray together as a group:

- Thank God for His strength that is available to us in Christ

- Ask for eyes to see the real enemy and wisdom not to attack each other
- Pray for boldness to share the gospel
- Ask for specific help in the areas your group members are struggling
- Commit your group to fighting together, not alone

Before Next Week

- Read Ephesians 6:10-24 daily
- Practice your chosen application
- Be ready to share what God taught you through it

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive that some may struggle with the concept of spiritual warfare—make space for honest questions
- The story of Joseph is powerful but intense—allow time for people to process
- Emphasize that we fight from victory (Christ's), not for victory
- Keep the focus on practical application, not just theoretical discussion about demons

5-Day Devotional: Accepting Your Mission in Christ

Day 1: Know Your True Enemy

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-12

Devotional: We live in a world that constantly tempts us to misidentify our enemies. We blame people—those who disagree with us politically, theologically, or culturally. But Paul reminds us that our struggle is not against flesh and blood. The real enemy operates in the unseen realm, seeking to alienate us from God and each other through lies, accusations, and distorted desires. When we recognize that people are prisoners of war rather than the enemy, our posture changes from attack to rescue. Today, ask yourself: Who have I been treating as an enemy when they're actually someone Jesus died to save? The devil delights when we shoot at each other instead of standing together against his schemes.

Reflection Question: Is there someone in your life you've been treating as an enemy rather than a person in need of rescue?

Day 2: Armed with Christ's Character

Reading: Isaiah 59:16-17; Ephesians 6:13-17

Devotional: When Paul describes the armor of God, he's not giving us military equipment—he's telling us to put on Jesus himself. Each piece of armor represents Christ's character: truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Word of God. God defeats evil not with superior force but with superior goodness. Jesus conquered sin and death not by overpowering Rome but by surrendering to the cross. This is our strategy too. We overcome evil with good, hatred with love, lies with truth. The armor isn't about defense alone; it's about becoming like Christ in how we engage the world. Today, consider which piece of armor feels weakest in your life and ask God to strengthen that area of Christ's character in you.

Reflection Question: Which aspect of Christ's character do you most need to "put on" today?

Day 3: The Power of Persistent Prayer

Reading: 1 Peter 5:6-7; Ephesians 6:18

Devotional: Paul's instruction seems almost excessive: pray at ALL times with ALL prayers for ALL the saints with ALL perseverance. But this repetition reveals something profound—our job isn't to filter what's worthy of prayer. God invites us to bring everything, from parking spaces to miracles. When we decide what deserves God's attention, we're playing God ourselves. Humility means casting ALL our cares on Him because He cares for us. Prayer isn't about informing God of problems He doesn't know about; it's about aligning ourselves with His mission and acknowledging our dependence on His strength. Even Paul, imprisoned for preaching the gospel, asked for more boldness. If he needed prayer, we certainly do. What are you holding back from God today?

Reflection Question: What concern feels "too small" to pray about, and why are you hesitant to bring it to God?

Day 4: Strength Through Weakness

Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 6:10

Devotional: The Christian life begins with a paradox: we are strong because Jesus became weak. He defeated death by dying. He conquered evil through suffering. He displayed ultimate power through ultimate humility. This is why Paul can confidently say, "Be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength." You are not weak if you are in Christ. The same resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in you. You are seated with Christ above every ruler and authority. Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. When you feel overwhelmed by the battle, remember your position: you stand on high ground, and the enemy will break against you like water on stone. Your weakness is the very place where Christ's strength is perfected.

Reflection Question: Where do you feel weakest right now, and how might that be the exact place where Christ wants to display His strength?

Day 5: Fighting Together, Not Alone

Reading: Hebrews 10:24-25; Ephesians 6:21-24

Devotional: Paul ends his mission briefing by mentioning Tychicus, sent to encourage the church. Why? Because we cannot fight alone. Lone wolf soldiers are easy targets. God designed His army to function together, drawing strength from one another, encouraging hearts that grow weary. We are not superheroes fighting individual battles; we are nameless, faceless parts of something far greater—God's unstoppable mission to reconcile all things in Christ. Like Joseph who returned again and again to his village despite brutal beatings, we need the community of faith to remind us of the gospel when we forget, to nurse our wounds, and to send us back into battle. The mission seems impossible alone, but together, empowered by Christ's undying love, we will see everything sad become untrue.

Reflection Question: Who in your faith community needs encouragement today, and how can you be a Tychicus to them?

Discussion Questions

In what ways do you find yourself misidentifying 'flesh and blood' people as the enemy rather than recognizing the spiritual forces at work behind them?

How does the Western naturalistic worldview limit our ability to understand and combat evil compared to the global perspective that acknowledges spiritual realities?

What does it look like practically in your daily life to 'conquer evil with good' rather than responding to evil with retaliation or avoidance?

Why do you think Paul, even while imprisoned for the gospel, still needed to ask for boldness to share about Jesus, and what does that reveal about our own need for courage?

How can we distinguish between appropriately calling out theological error and falling into the trap of treating fellow Christians as enemies through 'friendly fire'?

What specific lies, accusations, or temptations from the enemy are you currently facing, and how can you actively resist them using the armor of God?

In what ways does the story of Joseph returning to his village three times to share the gospel challenge your own willingness to sacrifice for the mission of reconciliation?

How does understanding that Jesus became weak so we could become strong change the way you approach spiritual warfare and your identity in Christ?

What would it look like for you to pray 'at all times' for 'all things' rather than filtering what seems worthy of bringing to God?

How does recognizing that we fight together as God's army rather than as individual soldiers impact the way you engage with your church community?