

“A Unified Approach”

Summary

We are living in a moment that demands more than passive faith. There is a spiritual war unfolding around us, and the call on our lives is not to shrink back but to stand firm and move forward together. Drawing from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, we are reminded that our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against forces of darkness that operate in ways both obvious and subtle. The armor of God is not decorative — it is functional, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is our offensive weapon in this fight. What makes this message particularly compelling is its emphasis on unity as the foundation of spiritual effectiveness. Scripture tells us that love binds all virtues together in perfect unity, and that a house divided cannot stand. When we operate in our spiritual gifts alongside one another, with one mind and one voice, we become a force that pushes back the darkness in ways none of us could accomplish alone. This is not just a call to personal devotion, though that matters deeply. It is a call to collective action, to march in step with one another toward the purposes God has set before us.

Small Group Study Guide – A Unified Approach

Overview

This guide is based on a sermon exploring the call for Christians to engage in spiritual warfare through unity, prayer, and faithful action. The message draws on the imagery of spiritual armor, the power of unified effort, and the importance of operating in our spiritual gifts together as one body for the glory of God.

Key Takeaways

- There is a real spiritual war taking place, and Christians are called to stand firm and go on the offensive through prayer, worship, and the Word of God.
- The enemy is already a defeated foe, but we are not called to be idle while we await the final victory.
- Unity within the body of Christ is not optional. Division weakens our witness and our ability to accomplish God's purposes.
- Love is the binding force that holds all other virtues together and produces perfect unity among believers.

- God calls us to participate in His work through faith-filled action, trusting Him to multiply what we offer.
 - Operating in our spiritual gifts is not just a personal blessing but a communal responsibility. When we fail to use our gifts, others suffer.
-

Scripture References for Review

- Ephesians 6:10-13 -- The call to put on the full armor of God and stand against spiritual forces of darkness
 - Ephesians 6:16-18 -- The shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, and the importance of persistent prayer
 - Romans 16:17-20 -- The God of peace will ultimately crush Satan, and believers are called to avoid division
 - Revelation 20:10 -- The final defeat and eternal judgment of the enemy
 - Romans 15:5-6 -- God gives endurance and encouragement so that believers may be united in mind and voice
 - 1 Corinthians 1:10 -- A direct appeal for agreement, the absence of division, and unity in mind and thought
 - Colossians 3:14 -- Love as the virtue that binds all others together in perfect unity
 - Mark 3:25 -- A house divided against itself cannot stand
 - Psalm 127:1-5 -- Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain
 - John 6:9 -- The boy with five loaves and two fish, and what God can do with a small offering placed in His hands
-

Discussion Questions

Opening

1. When you think about the phrase "spiritual warfare," what comes to mind? Has your understanding of it changed over time?
2. The sermon opened with the reminder that "when people don't operate in their giftings, people suffer." Have you ever experienced a moment when someone else's faithfulness in their gifting made a significant difference in your life?

Going Deeper

3. Ephesians 6 describes the armor of God, and the sermon highlighted the sword of the Spirit as an offensive weapon. How consistently are you using God's Word as an active tool in your daily life rather than simply a source of comfort?
4. The sermon described several subtle forms of spiritual attack, including busyness, misplaced affections, pride, and the influence of social media on younger generations. Which of these do you find most difficult to guard against in your own life or household?

5. The military concepts of "unity of effort" and "lockstep" were used to describe what Christian community should look like. In what ways does your experience of this group or church reflect that kind of coordination? Where do you see room for growth?
6. Romans 15:5-6 and 1 Corinthians 1:10 both call believers to be of one mind and one voice. What are some of the most common sources of division within a church community, and how can love, as described in Colossians 3:14, address those specific sources?
7. The sermon referenced the story of the loaves and fish in John 6 to illustrate that God can multiply a small, faithful offering. Is there an area of your life where you have been holding back from giving or participating because what you have to offer feels too small?
8. Psalm 127 was shared as a word of confirmation over the building campaign, but its truth extends far beyond a construction project. Where in your own life are you tempted to rely entirely on your own effort rather than trusting God to build what only He can build?

Personal Reflection

9. The sermon included a call to repent of unbelief. Are there areas in your spiritual life, your family, or your church community where unbelief has quietly taken root? What would it look like to surrender that unbelief to God this week?
10. Pastor Jeff described unity as something that begins in our own households, referencing Mark 3:25. What is one practical step you can take this week to strengthen unity within your own home or closest relationships?

Practical Applications

This Week, Choose One or More of the Following:

- Set aside a specific, intentional time for prayer and worship each day this week. Treat it as a non-negotiable appointment rather than something you fit in when convenient.
 - Identify one spiritual gift you have been reluctant to exercise and take one small, concrete step toward using it in service to others.
 - Have an honest conversation with someone in your household about areas of division or disconnection, and pray together for God to bring unity.
 - Reach out to one person in your life who does not yet know Jesus or who is searching for a church community, and share something meaningful about what God is doing in your life or your church.
 - If the Building a Legacy of Faith capital campaign resonated with you, visit fcaangels.com and prayerfully consider establishing a recurring gift, no matter the size.
 - Read all of Colossians chapter 3 this week as a personal study on what a unified, Christ-centered community looks like in practice.
-

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together for the following:

- Unity within your group, your church, and your families
- Protection over children and young people from the schemes of the enemy
- Boldness to operate in your spiritual gifts without fear
- Faith to believe God for miracles, even when the resources in hand seem small
- The ongoing work of missionaries and outreach efforts, including those currently serving in the field

Main Points – A Unified Approach

Title: A Unified Approach: Standing Together for Such a Time as This

Sermon Summary:

In this message, Pastor Jeff calls the congregation to recognize the reality of spiritual warfare while embracing a unified, offensive posture as the body of Christ. Drawing on military concepts such as "unity of effort" and "lockstep," he challenges believers to operate in their spiritual gifts, pray boldly, stay rooted in Scripture, and stand together as one church with one mind and one voice. The sermon also serves as a call to action for the Building a Legacy of Faith capital campaign, connecting the theological truth of unity in the body of Christ to the practical, present-day mission of relocating and expanding the church and Faith Christian Academy. Pastor Jeff weaves together prophetic words, personal testimonies, and scripture to make the case that God has called this congregation to take new ground, and that a unified, faith-filled people partnering together in love is the means by which that ground will be taken.

Key Points:

- There is a real and active spiritual war taking place, and believers must not be passive or defensive but equipped and on the offensive
- The enemy is a defeated enemy, and Christians can stand firm with confidence in God's ultimate victory
- Spiritual gifts are not optional; when individuals fail to operate in their giftings, the whole body suffers
- Unity within the body of Christ is not merely organizational but is rooted in love, which binds all virtues together in perfect unity
- Prayer, worship, and time in God's word are essential offensive weapons in spiritual warfare
- The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, is the believer's primary offensive weapon
- Faith Christian Academy exists as a ministry that is actively taking ground from the enemy through discipleship, character development, and Christian education
- Prophetic words and testimonies confirm that God is changing the atmosphere at Living Waters and blessing the vision for the new campus
- The congregation is called to prayerfully consider supporting the Building a Legacy of Faith campaign through recurring financial gifts and by sharing the vision with others
- Unity applies not only to the church body but to individual families, who are also called to stand together and not be divided
- God is the one who builds the house; human effort apart from him is fruitless, but faith-filled participation invites his miraculous provision

Scripture Reference:

- Ephesians 6:10-13 -- Paul's call to put on the full armor of God and stand against the schemes of the devil
- Ephesians 6:16-18 -- The shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit, and praying at all times
- Romans 16:17-20 -- The God of peace will crush Satan under the feet of believers
- Revelation 20:10 -- The final defeat of Satan cast into the lake of fire
- Romans 15:5-6 -- God giving endurance and encouragement so believers may glorify him with one mind and one voice
- 1 Corinthians 1:10 -- Paul's appeal for unity, no divisions, and being perfectly united in mind and thought
- Colossians 3:14 -- Love as the bond that binds all virtues together in perfect unity
- Mark 3:25 -- A house divided against itself cannot stand
- John 6:9 -- The boy with five loaves and two fish, illustrating how God multiplies small offerings
- Psalm 127 -- Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain; children as a gift and reward from God

Discussion Questions – A Unified Approach

The sermon describes spiritual warfare as something we experience in everyday struggles, not just dramatic moments -- where in your daily life do you most often feel the subtle pull of lesser, non-eternal things drawing your attention away from God?

Pastor Jeff emphasized that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, an offensive weapon -- how intentional are you about studying Scripture not just for comfort but as an active tool in spiritual battle?

Romans 15:5-6 calls believers to have one mind and one voice toward each other as Jesus had -- what attitudes or assumptions do you carry that might be creating quiet divisions within your church community?

The sermon draws on military concepts like unity of effort and lockstep to describe how the church should function -- in what practical ways does your participation in the local church reflect coordinated, unified action rather than isolated individual effort?

Jeff shared that Pastor Rob's mission trip to Kenya grew directly out of an intentional, uninterrupted time of prayer -- how protective are you of your own dedicated time with God, and what might you need to set aside to guard it more seriously?

The sermon connects the unity observed among school staff directly to increased times of worship and prayer together -- what does this suggest about the relationship between corporate spiritual disciplines and relational harmony in any community?

Colossians 3:14 describes love as the virtue that binds all other virtues together in perfect unity -- which of the virtues listed in Colossians 3 do you find hardest to sustain in community, and how might love serve as the foundation for growing in it?

Scriptures – A Unified Approach

Directly Cited

1. Ephesians 6:10-13
2. Romans 16:17-20
3. Revelation 20:10
4. Ephesians 6:16-18
5. Romans 15:5-6
6. 1 Corinthians 1:10
7. 1 Corinthians 12:21
8. 1 Corinthians 12:20
9. Colossians 3:14
10. John 6:9
11. Mark 3:25
12. Psalm 127:1-5

Alluded To or Paraphrased

13. Esther 4:14 — the phrase "for such a time as this"
14. 2 Timothy 1:7 — the reference to God not giving a spirit of fear
15. Matthew 14:13-21 / Mark 6:30-44 / Luke 9:10-17 — the feeding of the thousands, referenced in connection with John 6:9

Devotional – A Unified Approach

Day 1: Standing Firm in the Battle

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-18

Devotional: The Christian life is not passive. Paul makes clear that we face real spiritual opposition from forces that are not made of flesh and blood. The armor of God is not decorative - it is functional, forged for an active fight. Notice that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. A sword left in its sheath is useless. Are you in the Word daily? Are you praying with intention and alertness? Standing firm begins with suiting up. Do not enter the day unarmed. The battle is real, but so is the One who equips you.

Reflection: What piece of the armor of God do you most neglect? Ask God to help you take it up today.

Day 2: The Defeated Enemy and the Victorious God

Reading: Romans 16:17-20 and Revelation 20:7-10

Devotional: The outcome of the war has already been determined. Satan is a defeated enemy operating on borrowed time. Romans 16 reminds us that God will crush Satan beneath our feet, and Revelation 20 shows us the final chapter -- the enemy cast into the lake of fire with no further power to deceive. This truth is not meant to make us careless; it is meant to make us courageous. You do not fight for victory -- you fight from it. Let the certainty of God's triumph fuel your boldness in prayer, in worship, and in how you live each day.

Reflection: How would your daily choices change if you lived with a constant awareness that the enemy is already defeated?

Day 3: One Mind, One Voice, One Body

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and Romans 15:5-6

Devotional: The body of Christ is not a collection of independent individuals -- it is a unified organism. Paul teaches that the eye cannot dismiss the hand, and the head cannot ignore the feet. Every member carries a function that the whole body needs. Division weakens the mission. Unity amplifies it. Romans 15 reminds us that God himself is the source of endurance and encouragement, and he calls us to share that same spirit with one another so that we may glorify

him with one mind and one voice. Unity is not uniformity -- it is the harmony of diverse gifts working toward a single, God-given purpose.

Reflection: Is there a relationship within your church community where you could take a step toward greater encouragement or reconciliation this week?

Day 4: Love as the Bond of Unity

Reading: Colossians 3:12-17

Devotional: Paul paints a vivid picture of what a unified community looks like from the inside out -- clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, patience, and forgiveness. But above all of these, he places love, describing it as the bond that holds everything together in perfect unity. Love is not a feeling that comes and goes -- it is a deliberate choice to put on, the same way you put on clothing each morning. When love governs a community, the peace of Jesus rules, and gratitude becomes the atmosphere. A church that loves well is a church that advances well. Let love be your daily uniform.

Reflection: In what specific relationship or situation do you need to deliberately choose love today, even when it is difficult?

Day 5: Unless the Lord Builds the House

Reading: Psalm 127:1-5 and John 6:1-13

Devotional: Psalm 127 is a sobering corrective for every driven, hardworking person who has mistaken effort for faith. Unless God is the builder, the labor is wasted. Unless God is the guardian, the watching is in vain. This is not a call to passivity -- it is a call to dependence. John 6 shows us what God can do when a small offering is placed in his hands in faith. Five loaves and two fish fed thousands, with leftovers remaining. God does not need your abundance -- he needs your surrender. Bring what you have, trust the One who multiplies, and watch him build what no human effort alone could accomplish.

Reflection: What area of your life or ministry are you straining to build in your own strength? Surrender it to God today and ask him to be the builder.