

Talk About It

Small Group Discussion Guide

I Have Questions

End Times & Spiritual Warfare

September 14 - 17, 2023

Start Talking

What is some unique and interesting fact about you that no one would ever guess? School spelling bee champion, ran a 4-minute mile, won a hot dog eating contest, jumped out of a plane?

Main Idea

We are in Week 2 of the teaching series "I Have Questions. Cypress asked 10,000 people what questions weighed on them. This week, we will be taking a look at the End Times and Spiritual Warfare. Are we living in the last days before Jesus returns? How can we tell? What is spiritual warfare and how do we fight it? Scripture tells us that end the end times, sin will be prevalent and expanding, but so will the preaching of the gospel. And rather than becoming discouraged at the decay and decadence of society, we can be encouraged that God's word is proving true, and that Jesus will be returning soon to take his believers home with Him to a place of no more death, no more crying, and no more pain. But until then, the spiritual battle rages around the world and in our own hearts. We must learn to recognize our triggers, know that the devil has his strategies against us, and wants to confuse us about who the real enemy is, which is him, not the people in our lives who hurt or frustrate us. We know the destination, so let's walk in that direction and see what the Lord has to say to us about the End Times and Spiritual Warfare today.

Personalize It

1. What do you think of when you hear the phrase "end times"? What feelings does it arouse fear, joy, worry, excitement, other?
2. If you knew that Jesus was going to return tomorrow at 12:00pm, how would you spend your time between now and then? If we are certain that Jesus' return is inevitable, why is it so hard to do those things anyway?
3. The root of spiritual warfare was summarized as "the enemy trying to convince you that you are not who Jesus says you are." Who does Jesus say you are? Do you find yourself melding His voice with other voices?
4. Who is your real enemy? Who is NOT your real enemy? (See Ephesians 6:12.) Is this principle true in all cases?

Let's Do It! Commit to a step and live it out this week!

1. Jesus' return is certain. What can you do to live ready, not just for yourself, but for those around you?
2. What piece of spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:1 -2) is your strongest? Weakest? What can you start doing to shore up the weak spot and protect yourself from the enemy's strategies?
3. When someone makes you feel as though they are your enemy, a boss, neighbor, or family member, resolve in advance to reframe it by remembering that the devil is manipulating you so that you will pin your anger and frustration that's meant for him on someone else.
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 4 this week, living to please God and our hope of the resurrection and meditate on the words as you do. Pray and listen for God's still, small voice to prompt you on what to take up, what to let go, and how to walk more closely with Him.
5. Remember that we don't fight spiritual battles for victory; we fight them from a place of victory. Reflect on the victory Christ has already won over you, His promises to stick with you closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24), to never leave nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:), and to be with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:2). The future victory has already been won!

Let's Pray

Father, thank you for the life, death, resurrection of Jesus. We know that His return is imminent, but Father, we confess that we don't often live like it. We get caught up in worldly vision and short-sighted thinking. Change our posture. Help us to live our lives and begin to see others with an eternity focus, especially with those closest to us, but even with those whom the enemy would trick us into wanting to fight. Help us to become wise and recognize the enemy's tricks. Help us desire to put on Your spiritual armor daily so that we can live our lives for Your use. Help us live from a posture focused on eternity, strengthened by Your past victory on the cross as a sure deposit on the future and final victory over the devil and all evil. We trust you. Help us to live for you, for your glory and for those You have put in our lives, starting this very day. We love you. In Jesus' mighty and victorious name, Amen.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 24:3 (NLT)

Later, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives. His disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will all this happen? What sign will signal your return and the end of the world?"

Matthew 24:36 (NLT)

"However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.

Matthew 24:6-8 (NLT)

And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

Matthew 24:12-14 (NLT)

Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations[c] will hear it; and then the end will come.

2 Timothy 3:1-4 (NLT)

You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God.

2 Peter 3:8- (NLT)

But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 (NLT)

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. So encourage each other with these words.

Ephesians 6:1 -12 (NLT)

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Luke 21:28 (NLT)

So when all these things begin to happen, stand and look up, for your salvation is near.

Notes

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It's important we don't confuse unprecedented times with uncharted territory for our generation ... black plague taking out 1/3rd of Europe and world wars not long ago... this is not to say that's it couldn't happen soon, or even in our lifetime...

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Whenever the end times is mentioned in Scripture, it talks about the increase of wickedness, but that's only half of the equation.

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Wycliffe Bible Translators Annual Report -

<https://cfbecdc18044a5f9a723.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Wycliffe-Annual-Progress-Report-2022-23.pdf>

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BE ENCOURAGED! Every day you go to sleep and wake up is one day closer to the return of the King.

Because God is faithful, all we need is the destination in order to walk in the right direction.

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NLT)

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

Did you know that the devil has strategies? You cannot resist what you do not recognize.

Ephesians 6:13-17 (NLT)

Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

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We don't fight our battles for victory... we fight our battles from a place of victory!