

EPHESIANS 6: READY FOR THE FIGHT

Neil Gallagher

Ephesians has been called "The Alps of the New Testament", "The Grand Canyon of Scripture", because it portrays both the glorious heights and depths of Christ's majestic splendour and His glorious plan for His followers. An outlined summary of this epistle: the first half (ch 1-3), is about the 'Believers Position'; the second half (ch 4-6), addresses the 'Believer's Practice.'

Paul in the first part of the last chapter of the book (Chapter Six); addresses relationship ethics. Then in the chapter's middle section, Paul provides us with the most detailed account in the New Testament of the nature of the Christians warfare with Satan and the means of withstanding it. Paul lays down ethical instructions for the following relationships. Please turn to (6:1-9):

A. CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Children are to:

- _____ their parents in the Lord (6:1)
- Honour their parents (6:2)

The two-fold promise for children who do this:

"This is the first commandment with promise" (6:2)

- They will enjoy a prosperous journey (Quality), (6:3)
- They will live a long life on the earth (Quantity), (6:3)

Parents are to:

- Avoid provoking their children to anger (6:4)
- Nurture and nourish their children in bringing them up in the ways of the Lord (6:4)

B. BONDSERVANTS (EMPLOYEES) AND MASTERS (EMPLOYERS)

Christian employees are to:

- Obey and serve their masters as they would serve Christ (6:5)
- Work wholeheartedly in their assigned place of work as unto the Lord (6:6-7)
- Work in full _____ (6:7)
- Trust Christ Himself will reward their hard work (6:8)

Christian Employers are to:

- Treat their servants as they would treat Christ (6:9)

Paul's final exhortation: *'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might'* (6:10)

We can make ourselves strong in the Lord through:

- Laying aside all self-sufficiency for total dependency upon God's power alone. (2 Corinthians 12:10)
- Encouraging ourselves in the Lord. (1 Samuel 30:6)
- Having the joy of the Lord. (Nehemiah 8:10)
- Pursuing the wisdom of God. (Proverbs 24:5)
- Waiting on the Lord. (Isaiah 40:31)
- The Word of God. (Psalm 119:28)
- Praying in the Holy Spirit. (Jude 1:20)

SPIRITUAL WARFARE (6:11-18)

Understanding Spiritual Warfare:

1. This passage along with other reference in the Bible makes it clear that we are in a battle as the Christian walk is not void of spiritual conflict and opposition. (Matthew 11:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:18)
2. We will never outgrow 'spiritual warfare' we must simply learn to fight. (Jude 1:3; 1 Timothy 1:18)
3. Physical forces are not our enemy. (Ephesians 6:12)
4. Our real enemy is the devil and all his powers of darkness (6:11-12).

What we need to know about our enemy the devil:

- Jesus taught that Satan's mandate mission behind everything he does is threefold
- To steal (2), to kill (3), to destroy (John 10:10)
- He is the great deceiver who attacks with lies and not with the truth (Revelation 12:9; John 8:44)
- He seeks to take out those who concede ground to him. (1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 4:27)
- Satan is a defeated foe. (Romans 16:20; Col. 2:15)
- 5. Spiritual Warfare is about _____ against the wiles of the devil that seeks to oppose us doing God's will. (Ephesians 6:11) (James 4:3)
- 6. We should not mistake 'Spiritual Warfare' with imaginary, unscriptural combat.
- 7. Frontline warfare consists of pursuing souls for Christ, by advancing the gospel of the Kingdom into unconverted and hostile terrains, through prayer and evangelism. (1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:1)

Paul uses the example of a Roman Soldier as a paradox in how to prepare for Spiritual Battle:

- Paul held Roman citizenship (Acts 22:27), giving him strategic insight into the Roman military.
- Paul wrote this epistle whilst himself being imprisoned in Rome (Ephesians 6:20)
- Ephesus itself was a major port city of the Roman Empire colony; therefore, its readers would easily visually connect and relate to a Roman soldier's military equipment in paradox to spiritual warfare.

Roman Military Equipment	Believer's Spiritual Equipment	Spiritual Application
1. The Belt: It was a leather belt with an apron. It clung closely to the soldier and shielded some of the most vulnerable areas of his body. The belt secured the rest of the armour, as well providing an attachment for the soldiers' sword.	Truth: (6:14) <i>'The Belt of Truth'</i>	Jesus taught that it is the truth that sets us free (John 8:32). We are to believe the truth of what God says instead of succumbing to what Satan lies about. Grinding ourselves in the truth secures and upholds our whole lives in Christ. We are also to live a life of integrity, as someone who is honest and fully truthful in the way we conduct our everyday lives.
2. The Body Armor: The breastplate was a central part of the Roman soldier's armour, which was fastened around his chest, to protect the vital organs of his heart and lungs, by deflecting away the deadly arrows and fatal body blows inflicted from the enemy, which result would lead to certain death.	Righteousness: (6:15) <i>'having put on the breastplate of Righteousness'</i>	Christ has accredited His righteousness onto our account (Romans 4:22-24). We can therefore stand secure as we have a right standing with God. Satan cannot touch us as the righteousness that comes through Christ guards our heart from succumbing to the relentless temptation and snare of the wicked one (1 John 5:18).
3. The Sandals: Made from thick leather to form strong army boots thickly studded with sharp nails designed to provide a firm grip, to prevent the soldier's feet from slipping in battle, as well as enabling soldiers to march long-distances over rough and treacherous terrain.	Peace: (6:15) <i>'and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace'</i>	Peace is the absence of worry, and it is living in full confidence that God has everything in control. Peace is good news, because we are free from condemnation and inner spiritual turmoil. Therefore, we are called to firmly fix our feet upon the gospel of peace in which we take a firm stand in ourselves, and it is our marching orders to go out in the world, and tell others about the gospel of peace (Isaiah 52:7).
4. The Shield: The Roman shield stood four feet long and was three-feet wide, which gave the soldiers a great deal of protection from the enemy. Before going to battle, Roman soldiers drenched their leather coated shields with water to nullify the fiery flames of the enemy	Faith: (6:16) <i>'above all, taking the shield of faith with which, you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one'</i>	Stepping up in faith (firm trust in God) protects and shields us from the onslaught of whatever the enemy throws at us, as it deflects away and extinguishes all of the enemies' fiery darts that he would seek to inflict us with. i.e. condemning, doubt, discouragement, fear, lust (1 John 5:4).
5. The Helmet: The Roman soldier's helmet was fashioned from bronze or iron, designed to protect the skull and neck from the enemy's weapons.	Salvation: (6:17) <i>'And take the helmet of salvation'</i>	To wear the helmet of salvation is to have full confidence in the assurance of our own personal salvation in Christ. (1Thessalonians 5:8)
6. The Sword: The Roman soldier's sword was little more two feet long, which was made from iron. The sword unlike the rest of the armour which not only defends but it is an offensive weapon for the soldier to use to attack and push back the enemy head on.	The Word: (6:17) <i>'And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'</i>	'The word of God' is likened to a spiritual sword, that uniquely serves as a two-fold role of defence against the attack of the enemy as well as being used, as a spiritual weapon that believers are to attack and defeat the enemy's plan and rescue lives with (Luke 4:4; Hebrews 4:12)

THE BATTLE ITSELF (6:18-19)

Prayer is the means in which believers are to effectively engage in spiritual warfare itself:

Putting on the armour of God and applying our chief weapon the 'Word of God', provides the platform for us to engage effectively in 'Prayer' which is the battle itself against Satan during our struggles.

Paul's guidelines for prayer state we should: (6:18)

- Use different types of prayer that are appropriate to what we are praying for (6:18)
- Pray in the Spirit: (6:18)
- Be always watchful in prayer (6:18)
- Persevere in prayer: (6:18)
- Pray for all the saints: (6:18)
- Pray for the purpose of the gospel to be boldly made known in all our un-converted world (6:19)

The Apostle Paul: Christ's ambassador in chains (6:20)

Paul serves as a great example of how no matter how adverse our circumstances can be, should not deter us from representing Christ through it all.

Who is Tychicus? (6:21)

- His name in Greek means 'Fortune' or 'Chance'
- He was a native of the province of Asia (Acts 20:4)
- Paul calls Tychicus a 'faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord, (Colossians 4:7)
- Paul also refers to Tychicus as a much-loved brother and a faithful servant of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:21)
- Tychicus frequently accompanied the apostle Paul on his travels. (Acts 20:4) (Acts 21:8)
- He was someone whom Paul dearly entrusted to carry and herald his letters to several churches.
(Ephesians 6:21) (Titus 3:12) (Colossians 4:17) (2 Timothy 4:12)

Paul concludes with a gracious benediction (6:23-24)

Bibliography:
The New Spirit Filled Life Bible, The Armor of God