



Praying the Word Series Week 4 - Ephesians 6- Show up.

April 14, 2024 - Pastor Jason Carter

Christianity is a daily battle. There are 3 challenges we will face every day.

1. Battle your own Sin nature

Romans 8:7NIV ⁷ "The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so."

- All people, all races, all nationalities, male and female, young and old, all are affected by our sin nature.
- We can be tempted by our own desires and we can follow our own will. We have to tell ourselves to come under and surrender to God's will and make a decision to renew our mind to align with His will.
- We must read the Bible and be in biblical community. **Why?**

2. We live in a fallen world and imperfect world full of sickness, accidents, death, bad behavior, corruption.

3. We have a spiritual enemy (demonic influence, opposition, influence of others who come against us especially in terms of what we believe or stand for)

- Please do not become enemy-focused or obsessed, always claiming that the devil is on your back. The biggest hindrance in life is us, not the enemy. Most of our struggles are our own appetites, our lack of self-control, our justification of whatever we want to do, but we do have an enemy who hates us. **We must remember** that we serve a God who is greater than government, systems and the devil.
- We must be **God-focused** while acknowledging that we have a very real enemy.
James 1: 13-14 NIV "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed."

- Do you recognize these challenges in your own life?

Because of these very real challenges, we have to determine to show up every day in our walk with God. Some of us are new to faith/following Jesus, are inconsistent in walking out our faith, were convinced the Christian life would be easy but it's not. Some have been saved for

decades, yet there is still the chance you can be seduced/fooled into not engaging God, not gathering with other believers, not living out your faith every day. We **must** make a choice.

- Can you identify with any of these?

There may be some days where it feels like you have 100% to give. You read the Bible, pray, don't give in to temptation, treat people with kindness and honor. **But then there are days** when you only have 10% to give. You don't feel like praying, reading the Bible and it takes everything you to behave like Jesus would.

Why? Because you are human. You have limits, have patterns, have emotions. People get on your nerves. You do not have endless strength/ willpower, or you may have damaged emotions, a broken heart, low emotional intelligence, a bad attitude, or personality quirks. God still loves us in spite of those things. **But**, we have a tendency to drift, quit, give up, blame God, do some really stupid things, create theological positions that are not true to explain what we think is happening. We leak, get lazy, grow indifferent or complacent, and make emotional promises we don't keep. We still have desires that are contrary to God. **This is what it means to be human...** to have a sin nature, live in a fallen world, and have a spiritual enemy. By the Spirit of God, by renewing our mind, and making a daily commitment and decision, we can live out our faith.

- Which of these are the biggest tendencies in your life?

Every day we must decide to show up as a Christian. It must become a habit, a discipline, a decision to show up.

We often want to do big things but underestimate the necessity of being consistent and showing up every day and don't see the results it produces over time. Small things done well become big things well done, including in your faith. **Most of us like the idea of being successful more than the work it takes to be successful OR we like the idea of having strong faith more than the reality of developing strong faith.**

- Where do you see yourself in this statement?

Most of us want to be known for killing the giant Goliath, the challenge, the obstacle. David showed up when no one was watching; he killed the lion and the bear to protect the sheep. Showing up every day matters and there are benefits: you grow, mature, increase your capacity in faith, see opportunities, gain reward and trusted with responsibility.

- How have you seen this to be true in your life when you have shown up?

We live in a culture of image versus substance. We project something we are not versus giving our life to who we actually want to become. Your image and your substance need to be the same.

- Discuss this. What does this mean? What would it look like to live the same?

Sometimes we may think when it really matters, then I will show up, **but** you need to show up every day because it really matters. It takes endurance, sacrifice, courage, and the decision to show up every day, even when you are not feeling it. **Showing up is half the battle. To engage God moment by moment is half the battle.**

Ephesians 6 is our framework to help us show up every day.

Background: Paul has grown accustomed to seeing a soldier because he is in prison. He also understands this is a Praetorian Guard, one of the best trained soldiers in the world. Disciplined, under authority, fierce, powerful. Paul is using this imposing force guarding him as a metaphor to teach us spiritual implications. By using the Roman soldier, Paul is telling Christians to look at their example. Be fierce. Be steadfast. Be disciplined. Show up every day.

We can pray through these verses together or, if there is one particular place you need to put your focus, then you can consistently pray in that area all day.

Remember: Check in prayer, Devotional Prayer, Extended Prayer.

Ephesians 6:10-18 NIV

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

- **Who or what is your source?** This determines where your focus goes.
- It means we have access to His strength for the moment we are in.

PRAY: Lord, teach me to receive your strength when needed. I need your strength. I cannot do this by myself or in my own strength. Don't let me look to another source. Today I look to you. In this moment, I look to you. I will be strong in You and in your power. I have access to what I need in You.

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

- Paul points out we have spiritual armor to live out our faith and states an expectation that we will show up in our faith, in our armor, every day, so that we can take our stand against the enemy's schemes.
- You have been called into the battle. When you take a stand be aware, be on guard.
- We can stand against the devil's schemes. He uses predictable traps and methods.
 - o We have to know the ways we are seduced or enticed into sin.
 - o **Do you know what ways the enemy uses to entice you?**
- **This means we must be trained to call on Him first in any situation.** Our words hold power and train us.
 - o **What does this mean that our words train us?**

PRAY: God help me to show up and stand today. Help me to be aware of the ways the enemy entices me and stand firm against them. I want to be in the habit of calling out to you first in any situation.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

- Again, are you aware of the traps, schemes and temptations you fall for?
- If we have a supernatural enemy, don't we need God's supernatural help? Guidance? Strength? Wisdom? Power? How do we get it?

I may *not be an expert yet*, or proficient in the battle yet, but I will show up and *take my stand* today. *God will show up with me.*

PRAY: If the battle is spiritual, then God has provided and will provide what I need. **I may not be an expert yet, or proficient in the battle yet, but I will show up and take my stand today. God will show up with me.** Lord, I know there is a real spiritual world. I clothe myself in what you have provided for me. God help me be ready for today. You did not send me into daily life without provision and protection. Remind me God to be engaged and be aware.

- Keep the world in your prayers yet focus on asking for God's will in everything.
- You have to preach to you! We must be proactive not reactive. Memorize and speak the word into your situations: **"No weapon formed against me will prosper..." (Isaiah 54:17). "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;" (Psalm 23:4)**
- Satan's method's work better when we are Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired (when we HALT). It doesn't matter where you find yourself, take your stand.
 - When we think about a soldier, we think of a person trained, ready, equipped, rehearsed, practiced and prepared, so how are you trained and prepared? How will you respond to difficulty? Temptation? Fatigue? Frustration?
 - Do you have a verse ready to implement in any situation? Share it.

13 "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

- Paul is giving us spiritual directions- full armor, not just parts of it.
- This word "to stand" implies firmly standing undeterred in the face of trials and tribulations.
- I get the sense God is just saying "Take your place. Don't make this more complicated. Do the things you know to do."
- Sometimes these hard days turn into **seasons**. Seasons of temptation, frustration, sickness, disappointment. Seasons when things are good, so we get comfortable, lazy, and distracted. We have to learn how to handle seasons in our Christian walk and we do that by choosing to show up and stand in **every** season.

PRAY: Don't let me give in or give up today. Help me to stand my ground. Help me to be ready for today, to stand in the fight today, to stand strong against my temptation. Help me to stand when I want to quit. If I fall, I will rise. I will get back up. **Proverbs 24:6 says, "For though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again, but wicked stumble when calamity strikes."** Holy Spirit, give me the instinct to get up if I fall.

- This is a mindset we must develop. No place in Christianity do you get to quit

14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist,

- The belt held the armor together as well as the weaponry
- Everything must be held together by truth.
 - o Are we grounded in biblical truth?
- **Denial is not a strategy.** We tend to lie to ourselves. **We can't deny biblical truth and then blame God when we don't like the results.**
 - o What does this mean?
- Some things may feel like truth because you have grown up in it but it may not be biblical truth. **Just because this is all you know does not mean this is all there is in God.** Just because you can't see a way doesn't mean God can't make a way. Keep engaging God. Keep going. We don't stay stuck in seasons; we go through seasons. Stand firm in truth and move forward.

PRAY: Please don't let me be manipulated by lies or culture or feelings. Don't allow me to be deceived God. Don't let me deceive myself God. Help me to stand in your truth.

14b "with the breastplate of righteousness in place,"

- Breastplate: Serves to protect the most inward parts- the organs and center of mass. If you are hit in an organ, you would bleed out in battle
- The armor was for the front, and it implies we **face** the battle. The Bible says God is our "rear guard" meaning He has our back. We do not run, turn or quit.
- **Psalms 51:6 NKJV** "Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom."
- This is where meditating in God's word matters. **We are always meditating anyway. We are processing what is already there.**
 - o So what is there? What are you meditating on?
- Meditating is muttering God's word. We turn it over and over in our mind and engage God on it. We ask questions, we try to apply it to make it part of us, saying the verse out loud, confirming and affirming it in our mind and heart.

PRAY: Protect my heart God. Protect my inmost self. Don't allow something to get in the depth of who I am that is not from you. Remove those things in me or reveal those things in me that are not true that I have internalized in thoughts or belief.

- Find a verse- sit with it, pray it, figure out how to apply it. Ask God to reveal more about it. Let God's truth become part of you and to guard your heart

15 "and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."

- Soldiers had cleats- for traction so their feet would not slip and for solid footing regardless of terrain or opposition.
- Readiness that comes from the core truth of the gospel. Who God is. What Jesus has done for us and will do. This readiness grounds us and helps us stand firm.

- The word peace implies we can walk in peace, quietness, and rest despite the battle we may face. We are not frantic, worried or anxious. Stand firm. **Psalm 121:3 NIV "He will not let your foot slip– he who watches over you will not slumber;"**

PRAY: Lord don't let me go back to my old life. Help me to be ready to walk in faith. God, how do I put into motion or practice what I know to be true? God, show me how to gain traction in doing right. God, give me opportunities to help people, serve people as they come across my path. Help me be ready.

16 "In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."

- The shield was large enough to hide behind individually and corporately together they could create a "shell" to hide under. Depending on the shield, they would apply layers and it would become strong as steel. Over time, your faith will grow and layer upon layer of experiencing God show up will make your faith stronger.
- We must learn to put our trust in our faith and take refuge in what we know about God through His word. The enemy often moves in discouragement and fear and wants you to get to a place where you drop your faith. When we are confronted with challenge, difficulty, fear, we must learn to hide ourselves behind the truth of God. Take up residence there.
- You can carry a verse day by day. (ie. **Psalm 46:1 NIV God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.**)
- The shield is also a weapon you use to **move forward** and take ground.
 - o How so?

PRAY: God, You have called me. Help me to move forward.

17 "Take the helmet of salvation"

- Take- means receive, accept or welcome. Receive it and remind yourself you have been bought, redeemed with a price. You are saved. You are loved. God is for you. We can be secure in our salvation and in God's goodness. God can guard our minds and thoughts in His truth and His character.
- If you grew up in a highly volatile home, you may fear consequences of a mistake...God does not fluctuate. He does not change.

PRAY: I am saved, secure, established in the family of God

17b "and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

- Rhema is a word of God quickened to us through the Spirit as we read the word, or the Holy brings things to our mind specific to the moment we are in. We should use scripture as a weapon in things like the need for healing, to fight discouragement, fear, anxiety, impossible situations, etc.

18 "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

- Keep praying. Stay connected to God. Stay connected to Biblical community
- Like we discussed last week, "Our Father" means we are family. We need to be others focused in the battle too. Pray for each other. Stay connected. Stay in relationship. Stay intentional. Rise above your feelings. Rise above your emotions that may lie to you.
- Example: Nike: Just Do it

God will meet us in the battle because He is already there. Train yourself to show up every day.

What needs to shift in your life so that you will choose to show up every day and put on the full armor of God?

What are some check-in and daily prayers you can incorporate into your life? What extended prayer is Holy Spirit challenging you to take as you determine to "show up" and fight?