

Small Group Discipleship Guide

Ice Breaker

Question: What's something in your life you have a routine to prepare for — a sport, a job, a presentation, parenting? What happens when you skip the prep?

Scripture Reading

Have someone read **Ephesians 6:12-15** aloud:

“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. For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace.”

Setting the Scene

The sermon started with Scar from *The Lion King* — and pointed out that even a villain understood something important: you don't walk into a battle unprepared. Paul says *stand* three times in this passage. That's not an accident. The Christian life isn't passive — there is a real enemy, a real battle, and real armor God has provided. The question this week isn't whether we're in a fight. It's whether we're showing up prepared for one.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. Pastor Phil said: *“If you don't realize you're in a fight, you've already lost.”* How aware are you — day to day — that there's a spiritual battle going on around and within you? What makes it easy to forget?
2. Verse 12 says our struggle is *not* against flesh and blood — it's against spiritual forces. How does that reframe a current conflict or difficulty in your life? What changes when you stop seeing the person in front of you as the real enemy?

3. The belt of truth is the foundation everything else depends on — if it's not buckled, you trip. Where are you most tempted to let the world's version of "truth" shape your thinking more than God's Word? What does that cost you?

Going Deeper

4. The breastplate of righteousness guards the heart — and we were reminded that it's *Jesus'* righteousness covering us, not our own. How does that change the way you handle failure or shame? Do you tend to forget that the breastplate is His to give, not yours to earn?
5. The gospel of peace can mean so many things but here are two ways we look at it: being *ready to share* peace with others, and being able to *stand in peace* before God because of what Jesus did. Which of those two feels more real to you right now? Which feels harder to walk in?
6. You are being disciplined by what you give the most attention to. When you honestly look at your daily habits — what you read, watch, scroll through — what is actually shaping your understanding of truth right now?

Personal Reflection

Read this slowly and sit with it:

The roaring lion has no teeth. Jesus has knocked his teeth out — and when we hear his roar, we need to remember that our King already won and our power comes from him.

Ask yourself: - Which piece of armor — truth, righteousness, or peace — do I most often leave at home? - What would it look like to put that on intentionally, starting tomorrow morning?
