

Our Battle is Spiritual

Intro

- **We are studying through Eph 6:10-17 to understand...**
 - How to recognize the true nature of the battles we face
 - How to rely on God's strength, rather than our own

Today's Scripture

Ephesians 6:12–13 CSB

¹² 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. ¹³ 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.

- **Our battles are spiritual, and our enemy is spiritual**
 - Therefore, other people are not our enemy (we don't struggle against flesh and blood)
 - *It may sound “easy to say” but remember that Paul and the early church suffered persecutions and betrayals from many different groups of people*
- **The only way to be able to stand against our enemy is by the power of God**

- If we try to do battle on our own, our own strengths and abilities will prove useless

Our common problem...

- **We live in a physical world – therefore...**
 - We think in terms of what we can see and touch
 - We limit reality to what our five senses can detect
- **This causes us to...**
 - Be blind to spiritual causes and forces at work
 - Think of our problems as physical, rather than spiritual
 - See other people as our enemy – a.k.a. the ultimate source of our problems
 - Attack the symptoms of a problem, rather than the cause

What we have to realize...

- **Other people are not our enemy / they are not the ultimate source of our problems**
 - Other people are facing their own struggles, pain, and abuse
 - Other people are also loved by God and precious to Him, just like us
 - We should be seeking their healing and restoration, not battling against them

- **Our enemy is spiritual, literally invisible spiritual beings that we cannot see. They are opposed to God and opposed to what God is doing in and through us**
 - 1 Peter 5:8 “Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.”
 - ***He devours through using deception...***
 - When speaking of the the devil in John 8:44, Jesus said, “*He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies.*”
 - And in 2 Corinthians 11:14 Paul talked about how Satan, “*disguises himself as an angel of light.*”
 - **So the spiritual enemy we face, intentional conceals himself to...**
 - Make it look like our problems are physical / other people
 - Make bad choices look like good choices

So we need discernment...

- **Which can only be acquired by relying on God’s strength and His insight into the battles we are facing**
- **We gain discernment and insight by...**
 - Scripture study
 - Prayer
 - Godly counsel

- Putting on the armor of God – which is the point of what we’re learning in this series

Today's challenge...

- **Identify who you have been viewing as an enemy**
 - Who have you allowed yourself to hate?
 - *Maybe hate is too strong, but you harbor feelings against them*
 - Who have you been denying forgiveness?
 - Who have you been blaming for your problems?
- **Go to God in prayer, confess your feelings and release that person**

If we can learn to see through spiritual eyes...

- We can begin to address our problems at the root
- We can release bitterness and anger towards others
- We can focus our energy on the real enemy

REFLECT

Let's take a moment to pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our attention and lead our conversation, helping us see and understand what He wants us to apply in our lives.

APPLY

Process the passage together with these questions:

- How does harboring bitterness toward a person actually help the spiritual enemy?
- In what ways does the enemy use deception to make bad choices appear to be good ones?
- What are some specific ways we can distinguish between a physical symptom and a spiritual cause?

Where we want to “land the plane”

- We must fundamentally shift our worldview to realize that our battle is never against other people, but against the spiritual forces of evil that influence them. Because our enemy relies on deception to make us attack one another, we need God's discernment to see past physical symptoms to the spiritual root of our problems. By relying on God's strength rather than our own, we can release the bitterness we hold against others and stand firm against the true enemy. Ultimately, we are called to identify who we have wrongly viewed as an enemy and release them to God through prayer and forgiveness.