

Ephesians 6:10-24

Week 11 - Armor Of God: God's Protection, Our Action

Learning Objectives

- As Christians, recognize our true enemy
- Design a plan for putting on the armor of God
- Explore how we can be strong in the Lord

Leader's Note: The second part of this study asks the group to fill in a chart. You might want to have pens and handouts or post it notes handy.

Pray for your time together as a group.

Read Out Loud: Ephesians 6:10-24 (NIV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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. 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. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 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. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

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. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

²¹ Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. ²² I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

²³ Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

? Paul begins the final thoughts of his letter saying "Finally." In David Guzik's commentary, he highlights that this use of "Finally" is synonymous with "In Light Of." As we wrap up our study of Ephesians, think of the big takeaways from your small group discussions throughout this study. How might you approach this passage and the armor of God "in light of" Ephesians as a whole?

Possible Answer: The gospel should affect how we live because it helps us be clear about who we are. We were taught about our family, our redemption through Jesus, our beautiful unity under Christ, our power through his Spirit, and the new life and purpose we have in Christ. Therefore, our armor can protect us as

we put on our “new” selves and forsake the old. Satan and his schemes want to attack and prevent all of this remembering, fulfilling, and living in God’s perfect truth.

Leader’s Note: This may require some prep. Remind yourself of the previous studies and what your small group has talked about. Remind your small group of the different themes and request they share from memory as well. “In Light of” these good things, what is the use of the armor of God?

? Why might Paul have chosen to talk about the armor of God in the last chapter of Ephesians, right before his sign off?

Possible Answer: Paul has spent the majority of Ephesians talking about the good news in Christ, who his audience is and how they should act. In many ways, he calls them to a countercultural existence. He outlines what they are fighting for, why they are fighting, and then at the end, encourages them to prepare for the “how to” of the fight.

? Verse 10 encourages us to “be strong in the Lord.” What does this look like? Generally, how does the armor of God help us here?

Possible Answer: Refer to the text box as well. Being strong looks like trusting God to care for our eternity and resting on his blessings. Jesus can help us put on this armor because he already wears it. When we acknowledge our weakness and depend fully on him we are strong – 2 Corinthians 12:10

? How might verses 18-19 help you be stronger in the Lord?

Possible Answer: Prayer, in all things, at all times, constantly going back to God for strength and relying on Him instead of ourselves!

? Verse 12 highlights the real enemies we struggle against. Why is it important to know your enemy?

Possible Answer: Satan wants us to be confused and not fighting the right fight. Polarizing an issue gets an emotional response out of people - Satan tries to use this black and white thinking to pose people against each other rather than people against him. Just previous to this section, Paul talks about people that are sometimes at odds with each other: slaves/masters, wives/husbands, children/parents - culture may say that the other is the enemy when that is not the case.

The armor of God referenced here in Ephesians is taken from passages in Isaiah (11:5, 49:2, 59:17) that explain the Messiah’s armor.

“Now as the messiah’s followers we need to make the attributes of the king our own since we make up His body”
- The Bible Project.

? What people, or parts of culture, are treated as enemies today? What’s at the heart of this conflict?

Possible Answer: democrats/republicans, whites/people of color, immigrants/citizens, people that agree with you/people that don't agree with you. We are tempted to turn anyone or anything we disagree with into an "enemy," but the true enemy attacks our heart.

? How should the way Christian's battle look different from the way the rest of the world battles?

Possible Answer: We don't fight against flesh and blood - rather we recognize the schemes of the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms". The shield of faith "distinguishes the flaming arrows" and the armor of God may actually help us discern the enemy as well! We turn to God for courage to discern when to speak truth and love boldly.

? We aren't equipped with the armor of God automatically. We choose to put it on (verse 13). How do you "put on" each item in the armor of God?

Possible Answer: Answers will vary. You can put the armor on through meditating on and studying scripture, praying to align yourself with God's will and taking on his holy characteristics.

Design Your Armor Plan

Fill in the following chart. What spiritual disciplines could assist you in putting on the armor of God? What are the enemies' tactics that make it difficult to do so?

Leader's note: We've simply listed the disciplines here but your group should talk about how these disciplines work to support and put on the armor of God. Highlight what a believer can do for each piece of armor – the answer should always turn us back to God, not self-sufficiency.

Armor of God	Enemies' Tactics/Attacks	Armor's Purpose	Dressing/Cultivating Strategy
Belt of truth	<i>Possible answer: Twist God's word, Lies, separation from God's word for other things</i>	<i>Possible answer: The belt holds everything together.</i>	<i>Possible answer: Bible reading, Meditation, Worship, Study in community, Confession</i>
Breastplate of righteousness			
Shoes of readiness from the gospel of peace			

Shield of faith			
Helmet of salvation			

? The sword is an offensive weapon. How can the word of God be used offensively? How can we do so responsibly?

Possible Answer: When Jesus was in the desert fighting Satan's lies, he used scripture. Hebrews 4:12 says "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." Also, 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." Bible basher has come into our vernacular because Christians have used scripture aggressively to hurt others.

For Discussion And Accountability

? Consider the spiritual disciplines we just talked about. What are 1 or 2 you could practice this week? How can we, as your small group, encourage you in this?

? During your next conflict, how can you stop and remind yourself of the true enemy?