

Ephesians - Fullness Dressed for the Battle

Dr. John Carmichael

[Eph 6:10-20 NASB95] 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual [forces] of wickedness in the heavenly [places.] 13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil [one.] 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and [pray] on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in [proclaiming] it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- Have you ever experienced a season when everything seemed to fight against you?
- Paul reminds us that some struggles are deeper than what we can see.
- [Eph 6:12 NASB95] 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual [forces] of wickedness in the heavenly [places.]
- People are not the real enemy. Your spouse is not the enemy. Your children are not the enemy. Your boss is not the enemy. The person sitting across the church is not the enemy.
- Behind many visible conflicts, there is an invisible battle. But Paul does not tell us to be afraid. He tells us to get ready.
- Paul closes Ephesians by connecting spiritual warfare to everything he has already taught:
 - We have been blessed in Christ.
 - We have been raised with Christ.
 - We have been filled with the Spirit.
 - We have learned to walk in unity, holiness, love, light, and wisdom.
- Now we must stand against everything that tries to steal what God has given us.
- The word stand appears repeatedly in this passage. Our assignment is not to run from the devil or surrender ground to him. Our assignment is to stand in the victory of Jesus.

How can we stand when the enemy attacks?

Paul gives us three simple commands: stand strong, suit up, and pray through.

- I. Stand Strong in the Spirit Against the Spirits - [Eph 6:10 NASB95] 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.**
 - a. Paul does not say, "Be strong in yourself."
 - b. Your intelligence is not enough. Your willpower is not enough. Your experience is not enough. Your personality is not enough.
 - c. Our strength comes from the Lord. [Isa 40:31 NASB95] 31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up [with] wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

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- d. The enemy wants you to fight spiritual battles with human strength against humans. If he can exhaust you, discourage you, and isolate you, he can convince you to give up.
- e. Know Your Real Enemy - [Eph 6:12 NASB95] 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual [forces] of wickedness in the heavenly [places.]
- f. Spiritual warfare becomes destructive when we attack people instead of resisting the devil.
- g. We need to know who to fight and how to fight. We fight evil spirits in the Holy Spirit.
- h. Stop fighting the person and start fighting the spirit behind the problem.
- i. Stop fighting flesh in the flesh and start fighting the spirits in the Spirit.
- j. Application: Stop treating people like enemies. Refuse to fight spiritual battles with fleshly weapons. Draw your strength from Jesus every day. When pressure comes, do not retreat; stand.
- k. Declaration: "I may feel pressure, but I will not surrender my position. I am standing in the strength of the Lord!"

II. Suit Up - [Eph 6:11 NASB95] 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

- a. The devil has schemes, but God has armor.
- b. Paul does not tell us to put on part of the armor. He tells us to put on the full armor of God.
- c. The Belt of Truth - [Eph 6:14 NASB95] 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,
 - i. The enemy fights with lies. We stand with truth.
 - ii. When the devil says you are abandoned, truth says God will never leave you. When the devil says you cannot change, truth says you are a new creation in Christ.
 - iii. Application: Replace every lie with God's truth.
- d. The Breastplate of Righteousness - [Eph 6:14 NASB95] 14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,
 - i. Christ's righteousness protects us from condemnation, and righteous living protects us from compromise.
 - ii. Imputed righteousness and lived righteousness. We are declared righteous by the blood of Jesus Christ. We need to live out the righteous by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - iii. Application: Guard your heart by trusting in Jesus' atonement and by living clean.
- e. The Shoes of the Gospel - [Eph 6:15 NASB95] 15 and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;
 - i. The gospel gives us firm footing and makes us ready to carry the good news to others.
 - ii. Simple application: Wherever your feet take you, take Jesus with you. You walk in the authority of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- f. The Shield of Faith - [Eph 6:16 NASB95] 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil [one.]
 - i. The enemy fires arrows of fear, doubt, temptation, accusation, and discouragement. Faith does not pretend that the arrows are unreal. Faith declares that God is greater than the attack.
 - ii. Application: When the enemy fires, raise your faith.

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- g. The Helmet of Salvation - [Eph 6:17 NASB95] 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
 - i. The enemy attacks the mind. Salvation gives us a new identity and a secure hope.
 - ii. Application: Guard what you allow to live in your thoughts.
- h. The Sword of the Spirit - [Eph 6:17 NASB95] 17 And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
 - i. The Word is the believer's offensive weapon. Jesus answered Satan's temptations with Scripture: "It is written" [Mat 4:4, 7, 10 NASB95] 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" ... 7 Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" ... 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" ...
 - ii. You cannot use a Word you do not know.
 - iii. Application: Read the Word, remember the Word, speak the Word, and obey the Word.
 - iv. I know the truth. I am covered by righteousness. I carry the gospel. I walk by faith. My mind belongs to Jesus, and God's Word is in my mouth!

III. Pray Through - [Eph 6:18 NASB95] 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

- a. The armor is activated in an atmosphere of prayer.
- b. Paul says: Pray with all prayer; use every kind of prayer. Pray at all times; not only during emergencies. Pray in the Spirit; under the Holy Spirit's direction and empowerment. Pray with perseverance; do not quit too soon. Pray for all the saints; do not fight alone.
- c. Praying in the Spirit includes prayer directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. This can include praying with our understanding and, for Spirit-baptized believers, praying in tongues.
- d. [1Co 14:14 NASB95] 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.
- e. [Jde 1:20 NASB95] 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,
- f. Paul even asks the church to pray for him: [Eph 6:19 NASB95] 19 and [pray] on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,
- g. The purpose of spiritual warfare is not merely personal survival. We stand so that the gospel can keep advancing.
- h. Application: Pray before the battle, during the battle, and after the battle. Pray until fear breaks and faith rises. Pray for your family, your pastors, your church, and other believers. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you when you do not know how to pray. Do not stop praying simply because you have not yet seen the answer.
- i. Declaration: "I will not panic. I will pray. I will not quit. I will pray through!"

- **We stand strong against spiritual attack by relying on God's power, wearing God's armor, and praying in the Spirit.**

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- The battle is real, but so is the victory of Jesus.
- [Rom 8:37 NASB95] 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

Altar: