

## Ephesians 6:10-24

**What is Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians (v. 10)?** *"Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power."*

**Why would they need to be strong?** Every true child of God soon learns that the Christian life is a battleground, not a playground, and that he faces an enemy who is much stronger than he is—apart from the Lord. The hosts of Satan are committed to hinder and obstruct the work of Christ and to knock the individual soldier out of combat. The more effective a believer is for the Lord, the more he will experience the savage attacks of the enemy; the devil does not waste his ammunition on nominal Christians. In our own strength we are no match for the devil. God's best soldiers are those who are conscious of their own weakness and ineffectiveness, and who rely solely on Him.<sup>1</sup>

**How are we to be "strong in the Lord" (v. 11)?** The believer must put on the whole armor of God to stand against the schemes of the devil. It is necessary to be completely armed; one or two pieces will not do because the devil has various weapons/tactics -- discouragement, frustration, confusion, worry, moral failure, and doctrinal error. He knows our weakest point and aims for it. If he cannot disable us by one method, he will try for another.<sup>2</sup>

Note that it is God's armor. He supplies it for the believer (Isaiah 11:5; 59:17) but it is our responsibility to put it on.

**How does Paul describe our battle (v. 12)?** It is not a battle against human opponents but rather against evil, demonic, heavenly forces. This "struggle" does not take place on the physical level primarily. It is a battle for our hearts and minds against an enemy that we cannot see. This enemy is Satan and his hosts, as well as the philosophies and feelings he promotes that people implement. It is a spiritual conflict against the spiritual "Mafia." It is a battle that cannot be fought using merely human resources.

**How does Paul tell us to fight this battle (vv. 13-18)?** By putting on the complete armor package of God.

**What does the armor enable us to do in battle (v. 13)?** Stand (repeated 3 times). **What does it mean to stand?** A military term meaning to hold out in a critical position on the battlefield. To stand means to survive, to be victorious. The opposite of falling down which equates with defeat. Pictures of the victor inevitably feature the victor standing, weapon in hand, with one foot on the defeated. It is largely a defensive position – against temptation and other forms of attack.

**The evil day** probably refers to any time when the enemy comes against us like a flood. Satanic opposition seems to occur in waves, advancing and receding. Even after our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, the devil left Him for a season (Luke 4:13).<sup>3</sup>

**Notice there is no armor for the back – why not?** The Lord doesn't expect us to be running away or retreating in this battle.

**What is the first piece of Armor (v. 14)?** The belt of truth. **How do we use truth in the battle?** To refute falsehood. To convince, confront and convict. John 14:6 It is significant that Paul puts truth first. In Christianity truth comes first, then action follows.

**Where/how do we get truth?** From the scriptures which contain God's revealed truth. And from the Holy Spirit. John 16:13: *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.*

**What is the second piece of Armor (v. 14)?** The breastplate of righteousness. **Where/how do you get it?** Romans 3:21-22 *But now a righteousness from God..... has been made known.....This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.* Every believer is clothed with the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

**Why is righteousness important?** As a testimony to those around us. If we live a righteous life, we will be less open to criticism and judgment. People are attracted to a life lived righteously. We have it, now we have to live it. Our walk must match our talk.

**What is the third piece of Armor (v. 15)?** “Sandals” of the Gospel. *“Feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace.”* **How does that fit in our armor?** Fitted feet take us outside our comfort zones – to wherever called. Missionaries are prime examples. This suggests a readiness to go out with the good news of peace, and therefore, an invasion into enemy territory.

**What is the fourth piece of Armor (v. 16)?** The shield of faith. Faith here is firm confidence in the Lord and in His Word.

**Where does faith come from.** Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). **Why is faith important in the battle?** When life gets tough, temptations arise, circumstances are adverse, when doubt creeps in, when shipwreck threatens, faith looks up and says, “God I still trust you.”

**What is the fifth piece of Armor (v. 17)?** The helmet of salvation. **Why is salvation important in the battle?** In the heat of battle, the Christian is not daunted. He knows that ultimate victory is certain. Assurance of salvation negates the need for retreat or surrender. “If God is for us, who can be against us” (Romans 8:31).

**What is the sixth piece of Armor (v. 17)?** The sword of the Spirit, i.e., the Word of God. **What is unique about the sword of the spirit as a piece of the full armor?** It is the only offensive weapon in the armor. Hebrews 4:12: *For the word of God is living 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.*

**What is the classic illustration of the Lord’s use of this sword (Luke 4:1-13)?** His encounter with Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). Three times He quoted the word of God—not just random verses but the appropriate verses which the Holy Spirit gave Him for that occasion. The value of scripture memorization is clearly illustrated.

**What is the element that Paul describes to undergird the use of all the pieces of armor (v. 18)?** Our secret resource is prayer. You and I can be clothed in all the pieces of God’s armor and yet fail to triumph because we do not call upon God. Prayer should be continual, not sporadic; a habit, not an isolated act (Colossians 4:2). It is the atmosphere in which the soldier must live and breathe. And prayer should be in the Spirit, that is, praying in harmony with the Spirit’s desires, with the Spirit’s enablement and by His grace (Romans 8:26-27; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Jude 20).

**Who should be the subject/object of our prayers (v. 18)?** All the saints (believers). They are engaged in the conflict too. Satan’s spiritual warfare attacks against Christ and the church requires help.

**What was Paul’s perspective on his plight (vv. 19-20)? Was he praying for God to get him out of his predicament?** Paul was writing from prison. Yet he did not ask for prayer for his early release. Paul sensed his own great need for the prayer support of his readers because an encounter with spiritual enemies awaited him when he would make his upcoming defense before Caesar. He wanted to declare the Gospel in a fearless fashion and he recognized that he needed prayer to do so. He was more interested in God’s glory than his predicament. That’s why he referred to himself as an ambassador (for Christ) in chains.

Application: Are you praying for God to get you out of something or to use you in the midst of it? Whenever we’re in a jam, our primary prayer concern should be, “May you, God, be glorified in the midst of my trial.”

**What is the “mystery of the Gospel?”** The mystery of the gospel is God’s provision of salvation through Jesus Christ. It needed defending in Rome because the Romans viewed Christianity as simply a sect within Judaism (Acts 18:12-17) while the Jews saw it as a heretical religion (Acts 21:27-28).

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<sup>1</sup> MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (p. 1951). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 1952