

BRIAN BORGMAN & ROB VENTURA

SPIRITUAL
WARFARE

A BIBLICAL
& BALANCED
PERSPECTIVE

Spiritual Warfare Leader Guide

Debra A. S. Burton

Based on *Spiritual Warfare: A Biblical and Balanced Perspective* by Brian Borgman & Rob Ventura



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Based on *Spiritual Warfare: A Biblical and Balanced Perspective*
by Brian Borgman & Rob Ventura (Reformation Heritage Books, 2014).

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Course Overview

This study guide was prepared for the women's Bible study program at Grace Church of the Black Hills in Rapid City, South Dakota in 2025. We are pleased to share it with others who are reading Pastor Borgman's and Pastor Ventura's excellent book on spiritual warfare. We learned much from this study as Pastors Borgman and Ventura defined the concept of spiritual warfare, explained its significance in the life of believers, and instructed us about what God expects from us in that warfare.

Note to leaders: Throughout this guide I have used quotation marks to indicate direct quotations from the book, Spiritual Warfare. Items in [brackets] are my words and do not appear in the book. The remaining text is paraphrased material from the book. Also note that some versions of the book do not include the foreword. You may need to make some adjustments to page numbers depending on which version of the book your group is using.

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Course Schedule

Week 1: General Introduction to the Topic of Spiritual Warfare

Assignment: Read SW preface and introduction

Week 2: Being Strong in the Lord by Using the Armor He Provides

Assignment: Read chapters 1 and 2

Week 3: Know Your Enemy and the Nature of Our Conflict

Assignment: Read chapters 3 and 4 and Appendix 1

Week 4: Our Armor, Part 1. The Belt of Truth and the Breastplate of Righteousness

Assignment: Read chapters 5 and 6 and Appendix 2

Week 5: Our Armor, Part 2. Gospel of Peace Footwear and the Shield of Faith

Assignment: Read chapters 7 and 8

Week 6: Our Armor, Part 3. Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit

Assignment: Read chapters 9 and 10

Week 7: Warfare Prayer and Warfare Proclamation

Assignment: Read chapters 11 and 12 and Appendix 3

Week 8: Spiritual Warfare Debriefing

Assignment: Read chapter 13

Week 1

General Introduction to the Topic of Spiritual Warfare

Introductions: Let's get to know each other.

Course Overview:

- Why this topic?
- What resources will we use?
- Weekly schedule preview



Homework for Today's Lesson:

Read the foreword, preface, and introduction to *Spiritual Warfare* and answer the questions below.

Foreword:

1. (p. vii). Why is it so easy for we Christians to forget that we are in a war?

Answer: Because it is “an invisible war.”

2. What three forces (foes) are at work in this war?

A: The world (system); Our flesh (old nature); The devil

Preface:

1. Author Brian Borgman asserts that the war we are in is a “real” war. Think about that statement for a few minutes and then pretend that you are arguing with someone who does not believe that Christians are engaged in a war. What evidence would you provide to try to convince them that we *are* in a war whether we like it or not and whether we can see the enemy or not?

A: [various answers]

2. Why did the authors write this book?

A: They wrote the book to remind the church that we are in a war and to equip Christians “to think and fight biblically in a practical way.”

3. How would you answer the following questions: “What would our churches and families look like if we took the spiritual fight seriously? What would our marriages look like if

we remembered that our battle is not against flesh and blood? What would our evangelism look like if we were wide-awake to the battle that rages?

A: If Christians understood the nature of the war we are in, churches, families, and marriages would improve and our evangelism would include ensuring that people understand the nature of spiritual warfare. We would likely pray more diligently for the Holy Spirit to protect us as we strive to win others to Christ.

4. According to Rob Ventura, what two problems result from teachers not including all components of spiritual warfare in their lessons?

A: (p. viii) Christians are “either ill equipped or ignorant for this great fight of all fights.”

Introduction: “One Side of the Horse or the Other”

1. Why is it important to frequently remind ourselves of certain biblical truths? (p. 1)

A: Because when we don’t, we become “unbalanced or myopic [short-sighted] in our view of the Christian life.”

2. The key biblical truth this book focuses on is that Christians are “in a war of the most serious nature.” How is this war different than other wars humans experience?

A: It is invisible. It is “not with flesh and blood but against spiritual forces of darkness.”

3. What two different approaches do Christians take to this war?

Approach 1: They ignore it.

Approach 2: They give it more attention than they should.

The authors quote C. S. Lewis’s *The Screwtape Letters*: “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.”

They also quote Martin Luther who likened Christians to a drunk who tries to get on a horse. He/she first falls off one side and tries to get back on only to fall off the other side.

4. The 1700s ushered in an era known as the Enlightenment in which men increasingly emphasized rationalism over faith. Many Enlightenment thinkers discounted the possibility of anything supernatural. The worldview they espoused, which is quite common today is naturalism. How do the authors define *naturalism*? (p. 2)

A: A worldview in which “everything has a natural cause, and nothing exists beyond what we can see with our eyes.”

5. How is the biblical worldview different?

A: The biblical worldview affirms that a sovereign God created, and rules over, His creation and our lives. It also affirms the existence of angels, demons, and Satan.

6. What characterizes Christians who hold a worldview that mixes biblical and naturalistic viewpoints?

A: They acknowledge God's sovereignty in some aspects of life but tend to ignore things of a spiritual or supernatural nature.

7. What characterizes Christians who go to the other extreme and "treat spiritual warfare as the lens through which they perceive everything"?

A: They tend to attribute "everything that happens to demonic activity and spiritual warfare." Some even believe that Christians can be demon possessed or that there are formulas we can use to conduct exorcisms, and methods we can employ to "bind" the devil, rebuke demons, and map their physical location. "Many of these ideas have little or no biblical foundation" and, in fact, Paul makes no mention of them in Ephesians 6:10–20 when he addresses spiritual warfare.

8. What do the authors mean when they describe people building "doctrinal skyscrapers" on "chicken coop foundations" and why is it dangerous? (p. 3)

A: When people take one verse or a portion of a verse and build an entire doctrinal practice on it, they are erring. They are like the man in Matthew 7:25–27 who built his house upon the sand. It came crashing down with tragic consequences.

9. How will overemphasizing the influence of Satan and demons in our lives undermine our Christian walk according to the authors?

A: It can cause us to fail to take responsibility for our own actions, cause us to remain in sin, cause us to neglect the "character-changing power of the Spirit" and to underestimate the "centrality of the gospel."

10. What is the proper perspective that Christians should have about "spiritual realities and the spiritual warfare to which God calls us?"

A: We should maintain a balanced view [soundly grounded in Scripture!]

11. What is the origin of spiritual warfare in human history?

A: The events that led to the fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden.

12. How did Satan wage spiritual warfare on Adam and Eve?

A: He "twisted God's Word, challenged His authority, and lied" to them.

13. We have much evidence from Scripture that events in the Garden of Eden were only the beginning of a spiritual war that still rages on earth today. What do the following passages teach us about how humans are involved in this spiritual war on earth? (pp. 3–5)

Genesis 3:15: “God promised continued warfare and ultimate victory.” (p. 4) He noted that the “enmity” [hostility] between Satan’s “seed” and Eve’s “seed” would continue and that wounds on both sides would result.

1 John 3:10–12: Human history will be filled with conflicts between the “children of God” and the “children of the devil.” “In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous.”

1 Peter 5:8–9a: God warns us in Scripture that Satan is targeting us. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, . . .”

14. What does the following passage teach us about humankind’s bitter enemy, Satan, and his final destiny? [NOTE: The class will be reading and pondering this passage for week 5 preparation. Consider skipping or cover only briefly.] (p. 4)

Revelation 12:1–17: This prophetic passage also includes historical information. Some of the truths it contains are:

Satan is depicted as a “great, fiery red dragon” (v. 3) who threw a third of the stars from heaven with his tail (v. 4). The latter may well refer to the third of the angelic realm who were cast out of heaven with Satan.

Satan wanted to “devour” the Child of the woman (v. 4) who was destined to “rule all nations with a rod of iron.” (v. 5)

God sovereignly protects mankind. (v. 6)

There is a battle in heaven between “Michael and his angels” and Satan and “his angels.” Michael’s forces prevailed and Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven. They were sent to earth. Satan is identified as “great dragon,” “serpent of old,” “devil,” and “Satan” in these verses. (vv. 7–9)

Satan is called “the accuser of our brethren . . . who accused them before our God day and night.” (v. 10)

The battle was won because: “they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” (v. 11)

The passage alludes to the celebration that heavenly hosts have because Satan and his demons have been cast out of heaven, but it notes that men on earth will have “woe” because of Satan and his demons’ presence on the earth. “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.” (v. 12)

We are told that Satan specifically “persecutes” humans and “makes war against” those “who keep the commandments of God and [who] have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (vv. 13, 17)

15. How do the following verses convey the fact that Jesus’s earthly ministry demonstrated His power and authority over Satan and his kingdom? (pp. 4–5)

Matthew 12:25–29: Jesus identified the two kingdoms at play in the world. Satan’s kingdom and God’s kingdom. He noted that a “kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation,” using logic to explain that His casting out of demons could not have been by Satan since that would only weaken Satan’s kingdom. His work casting out demons was, therefore, clear evidence that “the kingdom of God has come upon you.” He was “first [binding] the strong man” so that he could “plunder his house.”

Luke 13:10–16: This passage describes Jesus healing a woman in a synagogue on the Sabbath. The leader of the synagogue was furious, to which Jesus responded (p. 5): “ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?” Note that some illnesses are actually manifestations of spiritual warfare.

16. How do the following verses convey the fact that “the cross was an act of judgment evicting the ruler of this world”? (p. 5)

John 12:27–31: In an event just after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus acknowledges that He wants to be saved “from this hour” but acknowledges that “for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” God speaks from heaven like thunder, stating that He has glorified His name and will do so again. Jesus tells the crowd who heard the thundering voice: “This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” Note that Jesus specifically links His upcoming crucifixion to the spiritual warfare prophesied in Genesis 3:15.

1 John 3:8: “He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

Colossians 2:15: “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

Hebrews 2:14–15: “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

17. How should the following passages encourage us as we endure spiritual warfare here on earth? (p. 6)

Romans 16:19–20: [God will be victorious!] “For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore, I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple [*innocent*] concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.”

Ephesians 6:10–20: [God has given us everything we need to be victorious in this earthly battle. Jesus’s death and resurrection demonstrated His triumph over Satan; we can be confident that we, too, will be victorious through Him. This is a passage that we should read again and again. It is foundational to our Christian walk.]

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles [*scheming*] of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, [*don’t cower in the foxhole!*] having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

[Like Paul, we are “ambassadors” for Christ. We can’t be cowering in our foxholes. We need to get up and confidently stand for Christ, opening our mouths “boldly” to preach the gospel and lead others to the safety of the cross.]

Selected End of Chapter Questions. (Paraphrased)

- What do you find encouraging about the history of this spiritual warfare?
- What area of your thinking or living was directly challenged by this history?



Review and Reflect: As you think back over the reading assignments for today's lesson, what key points struck you as important? Jot them down and share with the class.

Week 2

Being Strong in the Lord by Using the Armor He Provides

Lesson Preparation:

1. Read chapters 1 and 2 of *Spiritual Warfare*.
2. Spend 5–10 minutes reading and meditating on 2 Kings 6:8–23. Note that this passage addresses both visible and invisible warfare. What insights does this passage give us about the nature of spiritual warfare? Be prepared to share your thoughts in class.



Chapter 1: “Be Strong in the Lord”

1. What is “the first step in successfully waging spiritual warfare?” (p. 7)
A: “recognizing our weakness and the Lord’s great strength.” To try to be “self-sufficient” is deadly in this war; it is imperative to depend on Jesus Christ.
2. Look back at the discussion we had last lesson on Ephesians 6:10–20. This passage reminds us of the things that we need in order to be successful. What categories do the authors divide these needs into on page 1?(p. 7)
A: Strength (v. 10), weaponry (vv. 11; 14–17), and lines of communication with our Savior for aid (vv. 18–20).

The authors point out that everything we need is external to us. We are deficient for the task, but God does not leave us defenseless.
3. Into what two parts is the book of Ephesians divided? (p. 8)
A 1: Doctrinal foundation
A 2: Practical application of doctrine in the lives of believers and in the Church
4. The authors note that Ephesians 6:10–20 is the crescendo of Paul’s letter to the Christians in the ancient city of Ephesus. What was Ephesus like in Paul’s day?
A: Thriving metropolis; major Roman city, akin to Rome and Alexandria. It had a population of 250,000, making it the third largest city in the Roman Empire.

Its amphitheater could hold 24,000 people and it also had “baths, gymnasiums, and a medical training school.” It hosted the *Koina Asias* sports games.

5. What origin story did the citizens of Ephesus believe about their city's founding and how did this story influence their religious practices?

A: They believed it was founded by “giant female warriors” known as Amazons. This influenced their spiritual worship of the goddess “Diana of Ephesus” (Roman name) a.k.a. Artemis Ephesia (Greek name).

Artemis was a female figure featuring multiple breasts

Her marble temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was 93,500 square feet. Each of its 127 columns was 60 feet high. [By way of comparison, one square acre is 43,560 square feet. So, the temple covered more than two square acres.]

Ephesians believed that no other cosmic power or deity was stronger than Artemis.

6. Aside from the worship of Artemis, what spiritual and occult practices were common in Ephesus in Paul's day? (p. 9)

A: Many “magicians, sorcerers, and charlatans of all sorts” made Ephesus their home. It welcomed such people. (Quotes Bruce Metzger). Many people wore *Ephesia Grammata* (Ephesian letters) engraved on amulets to ward off evil spirits or to help them in difficult times. Many Jews were caught up in these types of practices too.

7. Acts 19 details Paul's arrival and sojourn in Ephesus. He spent about three months teaching in the Jewish synagogue there and another two years teaching in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:8–10). What evidence does Luke give that God worked through Paul to bring light into the Ephesian spiritual darkness?

A 1: In Acts 19:18–20, Luke records that many Ephesians were converted and those who had practiced magic and other occult arts publicly burned their books. Their collection was valued at 50,000 pieces of silver—the equivalent of hundreds of thousands, or perhaps millions, of dollars today!

A 2: So many Ephesians were converted that they stopped purchasing the idols of Diana that workmen manufactured to support themselves, which caused a major riot (Acts 19:21–41).

8. In light of what you have just learned about the city of Ephesus and the challenges that new believers faced there, why would the words of Ephesians 6:10–20 resonate so well with them? (p. 10)

A: Because it would affirm for them that the supernatural realm and spiritual warfare are real but that, unlike belief in a fake goddess, God had equipped them with the tools to be victorious in the war against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

9. What does Paul's admonition "be strong" mean? Why is it so important for us to embrace this disposition in our daily walk with Christ?

A: The literal meaning is: "be strengthened, or be made powerful." When soldiers go into a battle, it is imperative that they have a mindset of confidence and courage. The authors cite the examples of Joshua "be strong and of good courage" (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9) and David, who "strengthened himself in the LORD his God" (1 Samuel 30:6). We must do the same.

10. What two interesting grammatical points do the authors make about the way Paul worded the phrase "be strong?" (pp. 10–11)

A 1: The phrase is in the passive voice, meaning that the strengthening comes from outside of us. He identifies the source of strength as Jesus. (p. 11). He did the same in his letter to believers at Philippi when he wrote that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. (Philippians 4:13).

A 2: The phrase is in the present tense, meaning that the strength we derive from Christ is a continual and ongoing supply that will never be exhausted. Psalm 46:1 says: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." The Psalm goes on to say that because God is our refuge and strength: "Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." (v. 2)

11. What does being strong in the Lord look like in our own lives? (p. 11)

A: It means that we "maintain an ongoing awareness that the Lord Jesus has superabundant stores of strength for us" and that we "draw from that strength continuously." [We do that through prayer and Bible reading and meditation on God!] The authors refer to 2 Cor. 12:9 where God tells Paul that His strength is made perfect in Paul's weakness and to 2 Peter 1:3 where Peter tells believers that God has given them everything "that pertains to life and godliness."

12. Why does our perception about who Jesus is and who we are in Him make a difference in whether we are defeated or victorious in our daily spiritual battles?

A: We will be less courageous if we continually focus on Jesus as the "suffering servant" rather than as the conquering victor whose power God has endowed on us. The authors noted that earlier in the book of Ephesians, Paul had reminded believers that God wanted them to know what "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" was and "what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe"—the "mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:18–20). God has also "raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6–7).

13. What truths about Jesus do the authors urge us to rehearse again and again to strengthen us? (pp. 11–12)

A: Jesus is “King of heaven and earth reigning on high.” (1 Cor. 15:20–25)

He is also the “risen Head of the church who ‘fills all in all.’” (Eph. 1:23)

“In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. 2:9)

He does “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.” (Eph. 3:20)

He has equipped us with weapons that are “mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.” (2 Cor. 10:4)

14. The authors remind us that we are to be strong in the Lord “and in the power of His might.” They quote Ephesians 1:17–23. What three manifestations of the power of God does this passage describe? (p. 12)

A: Christ’s resurrection, ascension, and exultation to the right hand of God.

15. Why should this passage embolden us? (pp. 13–14)

A: Because, while we lack the power to defeat Satan and his demons, Christ has already rendered them defeated. We are weak, but He is strong. (p. 14) As Charles Hodge noted, “When most empty of self, we are most full of God.”

Selected End of Chapter Questions. (Paraphrased).

- What causes us to fall into an attitude of self-sufficiency?” How do we avoid it?
- As we meditate on Christ’s life, death, resurrection, and exultation, what attitude should we have as we engage in spiritual warfare?

Chapter 2: “Put on the Full Armor of God”

1. In what interim time do we live? (p. 15)

A: The time between Satan’s doom (and that of sin and death) being marked through Christ’s victory over death in His resurrection and the time when Satan’s (sin’s and death’s) final destiny will be carried out at Christ’s second coming.

In other words, we live between the “already” (cross and resurrection) and the “not yet” (second coming). The victory has been won (in a sense) but we are still in the war. The letter to the Ephesians is God’s instruction to us on how to live in this interim state.

2. What does God mean when He tells us to “clothe ourselves” with His armor? (p. 16)

A: It means we are to “[put] on spiritual or ethical qualities” like we put on a garment.

3. What are some other examples of believers having “put on” something?

A: Galatians 3:26–27: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

Ephesians 4:22–24: “That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

Colossians 3:9–10: “Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,…”

Romans 13:14–15: “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

4. Did you notice that God’s armor is part of the equipment of the “new man” that Christians need to “put on?” Wearing God’s spiritual armor is evidence of our new identity as believers who are “clothed with Christ;” it results in us striving to live differently than we did before we were “in Christ.” How do the authors describe what it means to put on God’s armor?

A: “Putting on God’s armor is taking what God has so richly supplied in His Son and appropriating it personally each day. When we put on God’s armor, we are doing more than applying a technique or method. We are doing something personal; we are putting on Christ Himself.”

5. What are some of the virtues of Christ that we have “put on” and that should be evidenced in our life? (p. 17)

A: Truth (John 14:6), righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30), and peace (Eph. 2:14).

6. The authors emphasize that we are not to put on selected pieces of the armor but all of the armor that God has provided. Why is this so important?

A: Because Satan will attack us where we are the weakest. [NOTE: In warfare, belligerents seek to exploit the weaknesses in their enemies’ defenses. Satan does the same. It is imperative that we don’t have any missing pieces (chinks) in our armor!]

7. The authors also emphasize that it isn't just any armor that we are to put on, but *God's* armor. It is the same armor that Jesus was prophetically described as wearing in Isaiah 11:4–5 and 59:16–17. What attributes of God comprise this armor? (p. 19)

A: Truth, righteousness, peace, faithfulness, and salvation

8. Why do we need to put on God's armor according to Ephesians 6:11?

A: So that we will be “able to stand.” Our Christian life is not “intended to be one of defeat in which the devil is constantly having his way with us.” We may lose some battles, but we will ultimately be victorious in Christ because “greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

Per the authors, we *should*, we *can* and we *must* stand against the devil.

9. The authors emphasize that, contrary to what we might think, standing is not a passive, relaxed activity. It requires extreme effort. What does Scripture mean when it tells us that we will be able to “stand?” (p. 20)

A: It means that we will be able to hold our position continually no matter how fierce an assault Satan launches. It means that Satan won't be able to push us around and get us to do things that we should not be doing.

As Stanley D. Gale says, “Standing is not passive. . . . It is to stand like an oak against the winds of Satan's lies that would sway us, against the floods of his temptations that would sweep us away, and against the leeches of his accusations that would deprive us of grace.”

[It is to live with a countenance of a victorious soldier. If we were to witness the signing of a peace treaty, shouldn't we expect it to be obvious which side won and which side lost? Do people who see you day-to-day know that you are living a life of victory in Christ?]

10. What is a key characteristic of “standing” as described here and in 1 Peter 5:8–9 and James 4:7? (pp. 20–21)

A: Resistance. The devil is “a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith. . .” (1 Peter) “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James).

11. Of what truths should we remind ourselves as we strive to “stand” in the power of God against Satan? (p. 21)

A: Though Satan is a ferocious foe, he is a defeated foe. He may roar fiercely, but he is conquered. We must balance our knowledge of ultimate victory with our obedience to do what God has called us to do—put on *all* of the armor He has given us and *stand*.

Selected End of Chapter Question. (Paraphrased).

- Think of a time when you lost spiritual ground to the enemy. What happened? What did you learn in this chapter that would have helped you prevent losing ground?

[illegible]

Review and Ruminare: As you think back over the reading assignments for today's lesson, what key points struck you as important? Jot them down and share with the class.

Week 3

Know the Enemy and the Nature of Our Conflict

Lesson Preparation:

1. Read chapters 3 and 4 and Appendix 1 of *Spiritual Warfare*.
2. Spend 5–10 minutes reading and meditating on Isaiah 14:12–17 and Ezekiel 28:11–19. What insights does it give us into who Satan is and what his future holds?



Why Today’s Lesson is So Important: [One of the most common lessons that is taught to military leaders is the importance of knowing your enemy. A famous ancient Chinese military text entitled *The Art of War* (c. 475 BC) says: “If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles.”] Scripture makes it clear that Satan is the enemy of Christians. The New Testament alone refers to him as our foe more than thirty times. Peter calls him “your adversary” (1 Peter 5:8) and John calls him the “accuser of our brethren” (Revelation 12:10). The English word “Satan” is derived from a Hebrew word meaning “adversary” or “accuser.” Scripture also makes it clear that, like it or not, we Christians are soldiers engaged in a spiritual war “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). [Last week we focused on the “know yourself” aspect of this spiritual warfare. We learned that God has fully equipped us for the battle to which He has called us and that we are on the winning side because Jesus has already sealed the fate of Satan, sin, and death. This week, we will focus on the “know your enemy” aspect of preparation for spiritual warfare. Scripture provides ample insights into our enemy, Satan. It is up to us to study and master that knowledge so we will be more effective in our role as Christian soldiers.]

Chapter 3: “The Schemes of the Devil”

1. God tells us to put on *all* the armor He provides for us so that we can stand firm against the “wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). What is meant by the term, *wiles*? (p. 23)

A: The Greek word is *methodia* (English is “method”). John MacArthur notes that the phrase describes how a predatory animal “cunningly stalked and then unexpectedly pounced on its prey.” The same word is translated as “plotting” in Ephesians 4:14. The authors add that Satan, “the enemy of our souls is continually hatching new plans to oppose and injure us.”

2. Another term used to describe Satan’s schemes against us is found in 2 Corinthians 2:10–11. It is the term *devices* and refers to a “bad purpose, design, or plot.” What key point about Satan do the authors want us to recognize? (p. 24)

A: Satan is not a passive and unthinking enemy. He is “actively and intelligently spinning devious tactics together—tactics that we must oppose and of which we must never be ignorant.”

3. Why is it important that we know that Satan is actively plotting to find ways to attack us?

A: So that we are on our guard. “In this combat, knowledge of our enemy is vital in order to assure victory in battle.”

4. **Bonus Question.** Although we know that Jesus’s death and resurrection wrought victory in the war against Satan, it is possible for us as Christians to lose individual battles. How do those “losses” manifest themselves in our lives?

A: We can become worn down and “weary of well doing” (Gal. 6:9). We can lose the joy of our salvation (Psalm 51:11–12). We can lose confidence that we are really saved (Hebrews 10:35–36). Many verses offer encouragement that our salvation is guaranteed (1 John 5:13, Philippians 1:6, Romans 8:38–39, etc.); those would not be needed in Scripture if believers never doubted their salvation. We study our enemy and we focus on who we are in Christ so that we are more often victorious in spiritual battles than not. Also, so we can strengthen others in the battle.

5. What are some of the descriptions of Satan given in the Old and New Testaments? (p. 25)

Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess 3:5: “the tempter”

Rev. 9:11: “the destroyer” (Apollyon)

Matt. 6:13: “the evil one”

Rev. 12:3, 7–9; Rev. 20:2: “a great, fiery red dragon,” “the dragon”

1 Peter 5:8: “adversary,” “roaring lion”

2 Cor. 4:4: “the god of this age”

Eph. 2:2: “the prince of the power of the air”

John 8:44, 12:31, 16:11: “a murderer,” “a liar,” “the ruler of this world” (Jesus)

6. According to theologian, Frederick Leahy, how can Satan be “the ruler of this world” even though we know that God is sovereign? (pp. 25–26)

A: Leahy emphasizes that Satan did not wrestle the scepter away from man in the Garden. Man was never his own master, therefore there was no scepter of rule over men that Satan could take from man. “Man is within ‘the dominion of Satan’ (Acts 26:18; Eph 2:1–3) only because of his sin. In revolt against God, he aligned himself with Satan. In this sense Satan is his ‘god’ and ‘prince;’ man is a captive in the jurisdiction of darkness” (Col. 1:12–13).

[In Acts 26:18, Paul told King Agrippa that God told Paul that he was sending him to the Gentiles “to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, . . .”]

[Colossians 1:13 says that Jesus has “delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.”]

7. Scripture teaches us that Satan is “crafty” and “subtle.” What is his main goal? (p. 26)

A: To deceive us.

8. What was the first subtle suggestion Satan made to Eve in the Garden of Eden?

A: “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” (Gen. 3:1)
Satan wants us to question God’s goodness when we are in the midst of trials.

9. What are some of the subtle ways that Satan can cause us to question God’s goodness? What circumstances in your life have caused you to doubt God’s goodness? How did you overcome that doubt? (p. 27)

A: The book gives examples of a 40-year-old woman who longs to be married and have children and of a husband/father who just lost his job and health insurance.

10. Why is it critically important that we are well-versed in Scripture?

A: The book gives the example of a young Christian mother experiencing the normal trials of life who insisted that she was suffering horribly like Job. She discounted all of her pastor’s wise counsel from Scripture arguing that he was just like Job’s unhelpful friends.

11. In addition to getting Christians to misapply or twist God’s Word, what are two other tactics that Satan uses against God’s Word? (p. 28)

A: He convinces people to reject God’s Word entirely and he “tries to disfigure the Word through false doctrine.”

12. What is Satan’s principle weapon?

A: Lies. “You will not surely die!” “You will be truly happy only if you. . .”

13. What lies has Satan tried to sow in your heart and mind? How did you overcome them?

14. Lies are just one of the weapons Satan uses against humans What are some of the other things Satan can do?

A: Physically afflict us (Job), hinder us (1 Thess. 2:18), steal God’s Word from people’s hearts (Matt. 13:19), tempt us (Matt. 4:1), and use our sins to further his purposes.

15. What are some of the sins Satan uses against us? (pp. 28–29)

A 1: Anger. “Unrighteous and unresolved anger can give Satan a place in our lives (Eph. 4:26–27). [“Be angry, and do not sin.: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.”]

A 2: Unforgiveness. “Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2:10–11).

A 3: Sexual sins.

“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! . . . Flee sexual immorality.” (1 Cor. 6:15, 18a)

“His own iniquities entrap the wicked man, and he is caught in the cords of his sin. He shall die for lack of instruction, and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.” (Prov. 5:22–23) (7:6–7, 21–23 talk about a young man succumbing to a harlot being akin to an ox going to be slaughtered.).

“Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” (1 Cor. 7:5).

A 4: Pride. Satan’s primary downfall (1 Tim. 3:6 describes elder qualification: “not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.” Romans 12:3 tells us not to think of ourselves “more highly” than we ought, and Psalm 10:4 teaches that “the wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.” James 4:6 reminds us that “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Pride is especially dangerous to Christians because it causes us to avoid repentance for our sins. “How can we possibly submit to and do what God requires of us from His Word when our hearts are filled with arrogance?” We cannot!

16. What is Satan’s ultimate objective when he targets Christians? (p. 29)

A: To get us to doubt God and “destroy our faith in Christ.” In 1 Thess. 3:5, Paul related that he was concerned that the persecution the Thessalonian believers were suffering would weaken their faith to the extent that his labor among them would bear no fruit. Jesus told Peter that “Satan has asked for you, that he might sift you as wheat.” But He added that He had prayed Peter’s faith would not “fail” and that “when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren” (Luke 22:31–32). [Note the very important point that Jesus did not equate Peter’s temporary abandonment of Him a “failure” of Peter’s faith. We can fall into sin but not lose our salvation. And, sometimes, God allows us to go through a crisis of faith in order to strengthen us to help others struggling in a similar way.]

17. How should Jesus's words in Revelation 2:10 encourage us as we fight our daily spiritual battles?

A: "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." We can be assured that we are not going to suffer anything at Satan's hands that the Lord is not allowing. He *will* give us the strength to endure the trials and temptations that characterize our spiritual warfare and we *will* receive the "crown of life" when it is over. See also 1 Cor. 10:13.

18. How can knowing our enemy (Satan) help us to stand against his onslaught? (p. 30)

A: Because, armed with the knowledge that he has already been defeated by Jesus, and that the truth of God's Word is a powerful weapon against him, we can successfully resist him.

Selected End of Chapter Question. (Paraphrased).

- What schemes, tactics, or lies has Satan successfully used against you in the past or tried to use against you? How did you respond?

Chapter 4: "The Nature of Our Conflict"

1. Why did the advent of technology, such as light bulbs, make it easier for people to discount belief in the supernatural realm of principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness, and spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places? (p. 33)

A: Because they challenged people to give up *all* of their "premodern, prescientific primitive" beliefs.

2. What is the main reason Paul gives for putting on *all* of the armor that God has supplied us? (Eph. 6:12). (pp. 34–35)

A: "Because of the supernatural, crafty nature of our conflict." Because our adversaries are invisible, it is easy to forget that they are out there. The world's pleasure can numb us to our responsibility to wage spiritual warfare; or we may be lulled into complacency because we can't see the extent of the carnage our spiritual enemy is wreaking all around us. The bottom line is that "our fight is real!" (p. 35)

3. Why did Paul use the sports metaphor of "wrestling" to describe our battle against invisible evil forces? (p. 35)

A: Because wrestling was very popular in the Greco-Roman world at the time. It also involves a close-quarter, face-to-face battle for supremacy that requires focused and strenuous effort. [Also note that victory in wrestling requires knowing your opponent's

strengths and weaknesses. It means knowing how your opponent will likely target you so that you can be on guard against those tactics and knowing what sort of tactics have worked against him/her in the past so you can employ those tactics to secure victory.]

4. What do each of the terms Paul uses to describe our spiritual enemies mean? (p. 36)

Principalities: “a plural noun that suggests those who are of first importance or occupy eminent positions.”

Powers: “connotes demonic spirits.” Used in conjunction with “principalities” in Eph. 1:21 and 3:10.

Rulers of the Darkness of this Age: “represents the menacing powers of the kingdom of Satan and the reality of their influence at this present time.” It is used only here in Scripture.

Spiritual Hosts of Wickedness in the Heavenly Places: “Spiritual hosts” refers to “that which belongs to the spirit world as opposed to the natural world;” “of wickedness” means that “which is evil,” and “in the Heavenly places” identifies the realm these beings occupy most often.

5. Why is it so important that we accept the reality of demonic forces as fact? (p. 36)

A: Because to disbelieve it is to disbelieve God who divinely inspired the warning to us in Scripture. It also gives the upper hand to Satan who can strike us unexpectedly whenever he wants. [To doubt the demon world is to be exceedingly vulnerable to attack! Remember, Satan goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Lions always look for the weak, isolated animals to attack. Their job will be even easier if they can find animals who have no fear of them.]

6. Why was it so important for Paul to paint a grim picture of our enemy, Satan? (p. 37)

A: So that we would realize the importance of defending ourselves against him by putting on the armor God has given us.

7. What important grammatical point do the authors make about the phrase, “that *you* may be able to withstand in the evil day?”

A: The word *you* is in the second person plural. In other words, we don’t fight as individuals; we fight collectively. [There is strength in numbers. Lions don’t usually attack the center of a herd; they look for the stragglers who have gotten separated from the herd.]

8. How should our battle tactics mimic those of ancient Roman armies? (p. 38)

A: Like those soldiers, we should stand shoulder-to-shoulder and shield-to-shield so that none of Satan’s fiery darts can get through to wound any of us.

9. What is meant by “the evil day?”

A: It refers to the time in which we live. Some days may be filled with more spiritual danger than others, but we are in the “evil day” every day. There is never a time when we can say, “I’ve won; I can remove my armor now.” As Martin Lloyd Jones said in the quote the author’s cited, “You are always on duty in the Christian life, you can never relax. There is no such thing as a holiday in the spiritual realm.”

Selected End of Chapter Question. (Paraphrased).

- What are some of the ways we can help each other as fellow believers to take up the armor of God collectively so we can stand together in spiritual warfare?

Appendix 1: “The Sovereignty of God and Satan”

1. This appendix addresses the question of whether God or Satan is in charge of affairs on the earth today. Many people believe that God is in charge of the “good stuff” and Satan is in charge of the “bad stuff.” Others believe that God tries to prevent Satan from scoring victories against us but that sometimes “Satan gets one by Him.” While it is true that Scripture identifies Satan as “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4) and the “ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), he does not have limitless authority. What biblical truths about Satan’s power can we glean from the accounts of Job and Paul in Scripture? (p. 111)

Job: (pp. 112–113).

It is God, not Satan, who “initiates the conversation about Job,” asking Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?” (Job 1:7–8).

Note that God limits what Satan is allowed to do to Job. (Job 1:9–12). Even as Satan puts Job through suffering (vv. 13–19), God has Satan “on a chain” so to speak. Though Job says in verse 21 that “the LORD has taken away,” verse 22 makes it clear that “In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.” [He was simply acknowledging God’s sovereignty in his life.]

When Satan wants to up the ante, so to speak, God again limits what he can do (2:4–6). In the final chapters of the book, (38–42), God “affirms His sovereign authority” over all His creation, including Leviathan “which may be an allusion to Satan.” (p. 113)

Paul: (pp. 113–115).

In 2 Cor. 12:7–10, Paul relates that he was given “a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.” [He had been given visions of

Week 4

Our Armor, Part 1

The Belt of Truth and the Breastplate of Righteousness

Lesson Preparation:

1. Read chapters 5 and 6 and Appendix 2 of *Spiritual Warfare*.
2. Spend 5–10 minutes reading and meditating on Job 1:1–12 and 2:1–10. What insights does this passage give us about the nature of spiritual warfare and the sovereignty of God in our lives? Be prepared to share your thoughts in class.



Chapter 5: “The Belt of Truth” *“Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth.”*

1. What warning regarding spiritual warfare does Pastor John MacArthur make in the excerpt from his book, *Our Sufficiency in Christ*, quoted in this chapter? (p. 41)

A: That God has provided all we need to wage spiritual warfare the way it needs to be waged. We don’t need to attend “spiritual boot camps” to learn specialized techniques, especially non-biblical approaches like “binding” Satan and “breaking the strongholds” of demons. We just need to study and apply the Bible, using the armor God has provided us.

2. What action does Paul repeat for the fourth time in Ephesians 6:14? Why does he emphasize this action? (p. 42)

A: “Stand.” Paul does not want us to give a single inch of spiritual ground to Satan. Satan loves to see “God’s people regress . . . [and] stunted and stumbling on their way to heaven.” Paul wants us to be “perpetually alert, always prepared to ward off the advances of our spiritual opponent with unyielding defense.”

3. What interesting dichotomy characterizes the life of believers according to the passage quoted from Stanley Gale’s book, *What is Spiritual Warfare?* (p. 43)

A: We can “rest” in the peace of knowing that Jesus has overcome the world (John 16:33) [i.e. Satan, sin, and death], but we must simultaneously be constantly “on guard” against the enemy who is on the prowl to strike us where he can.

4. What was the purpose of the belt on an ancient Roman soldier’s waist?

A: Among other things (like holding his sword), he used the belt to tuck up the long tunic he wore as an outer garment so he could move freely in battle.

5. Why does Paul call this piece of spiritual armor the belt “of truth”? (p. 44)

A: Because “truth is our first line of spiritual defense against the devil.” Just as a Roman soldier first tucked his tunic into his belt in preparation for combat, we must reach for truth when spiritually attacked. [NOTE: Not all of the temptations, doubts, and fears that we experience in our life are a result of demonic attacks. Many are simply the result of our own sin nature. No matter what the cause of the symptoms we are experiencing, “truth” is the sure remedy.]

“As the soldier’s belt was placed at the center of his body, so truth must be central in our lives, encompassing all that we do if we are to be prepared for the fight with Satan, our crafty foe.”

6. What are the two aspects of truth Paul is referencing in Ephesians 6:14?

A 1: The “objective theological truth concerning God, Christ, and the gospel” as seen in Eph. 1:13 and 4:20–24.

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,” (Eph. 1:13)

“But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:20–24)

A 2: The “more subjective aspect of living according to truth as believers” as seen in Eph. 4:13–15, 25 and 5:9.

“Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ. . . . Therefore, putting away lying, ‘Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another.” (Eph. 4:13–15, 25)

“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.” (Eph. 5:9)

“The belt of truth, then, refers to the truths of God as contained in His Word and our living uprightly because we have been saved by those truths.”

7. How do these dual aspects of truth (and truthfulness) work together in a believer’s life according to the quotation from Harold Hoehner? (p. 45)

A: When believers have their waists girded with God’s objective truth, it becomes part of them. They internalize it and it governs their behavior as Christians “As believers internalize God’s truth they live and move in it.”

8. The authors point out that if we don’t embrace the truths of the gospel and strive to live out that truth in our own lives, “we leave ourselves open to be ‘tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine’ (Eph. 4:14). They add that “Since God’s Word is truth (John 17:17), and we have been saved by Jesus who is the truth (John 14:6), we are to walk in truth (3 John 1:3–4) so that we will not be tricked by the enemy or his emissaries, who love to twist the truth (Gen. 3:1; Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:28–30).”

The authors give practical advice on how we are to wrap the belt of truth around us daily. What tips do they give for applying the *objective* aspect of the belt of truth? (pp. 45–46)

A: Read, meditate on, and memorize the Word of God *daily*. “God’s divine truth as contained in the Bible is the great antidote to falsehood.” We are called to “let the Word of Christ dwell richly within us” (Col. 3:16) and to “hide it in our hearts” (Psalm 119:11).

The authors quote D. Martin Lloyd Jones who emphasized that we will fail if we wage spiritual warfare using only our reason and feelings or by relying on our church, or any church. Only truth will secure us against defeat.

The authors also remind us that Satan is a master of his craft; we must be masters of the Word of truth to thwart his evil plans.

They quote 1 John 2:14b. “I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.” [They are strong and victorious over Satan *because* God’s Word abides in them.]

9. What tips do they give for applying the *subjective* aspect of the belt of truth? (PP. 46–47)

A: As we read, mediate on, and memorize God’s Word, it should transform us. We should be “persistently walking in the truths of God in every area of life.” (p. 47). “Remember, Satan is a deceiver (Rev. 12:9). He is the devil, the father of lies (John 8:44). Therefore, if we entertain *untruth* and *unrighteousness* at any point, we give him opportunity to harm us greatly.”

10. What is the danger of living hypocritically, i.e. of not having our actions match our calling to “walk in truth?” (p. 47)

A: We are giving place to the devil, something Paul warns against in Ephesians 4:25–27.

“We are incapacitating ourselves for spiritual combat and will be defeated.” When we live in sin we are basically inviting Satan to “come have his way with us.” “May it never be!”

“If you are not living a holy life by mortifying sin by the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:13) and by walking in the ways of God’s truth by His grace, you will be weighed down with guilt and, like a soldier trying to run through a battlefield with his robe around his ankles, you will fall.”

Selected End of Chapter Questions. (Paraphrased).

Before answering these questions, spend some time reflecting on your own life. Are you diligent to read God’s Word every day? Do you consciously think about it throughout the day and strive to memorize key passages? Do you battle against sin daily, striving to “be holy as God is holy” or are you allowing a particular sin (or sins) to reside unmolested in your life?

- What are some areas of your life where truth is eroding? How will you bring God’s truth to these areas?

- What steps can you employ to better learn the objective truths from God’s Word and employ them in your life?

Chapter 6: “The Breastplate of Righteousness”

1. What should the words “put on” teach us about the armor of God? (p. 49)

A: “It is not just something to admire or put in a display case; it is something we must take action to make part of our life. We are to *use* the armor, not just look at it.

2. What were the breastplates worn by Roman soldiers in Paul’s day like? (p. 49)

A: They were made of metal or very tough leather. They covered the soldier “from his neck to his navel, both front and back.” Their purpose was to protect the soldier from mortal wounds.

3. What metaphorical vital spiritual “organ” does God’s “breastplate of righteousness” protect? (p. 50)

A: Our hearts.

4. In Paul’s day, the heart wasn’t understood to be a pump that circulated blood; it was seen as the seat of emotions. How do the following Scripture verses reflect this ancient perception about the heart of man? (p. 50)

A: Proverbs 4:23: “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”

Deuteronomy 30:1–3: God tells the people that after God has driven them into captivity and they finally remember Him and return to Him to “obey His voice . . . with all your heart and with all your soul,” that He will have compassion on them and end their captivity.

Hosea 10:2: God tells the disobedient Israelites that “their heart is divided” in its loyalties between God and idols. [Here we have a sense of the heart as the seat of faith.]

Matthew 22:37: “Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’”

5. What four aspects of man are rolled up in the term “heart” according to Jerry Bridges? (p. 50)

A: The mind (reasons, discerns, judges); the emotions (like or dislike things); the conscience (determines and warns); and the will (chooses or refuses).

6. Why is it so important that we protect our heart from Satan’s attacks? (p. 51)

A: “If the enemy’s subtle suggestions penetrate our hearts, they can cause us great ruin. If the devil’s attacks reach the core of our being, he can influence us to live with guilt, fear, anxiety, depression, and discouragement.”

[This is a key point to emphasize. Note that Satan can’t take our salvation away from us, but he can cause us to live as though we are defeated which renders us ineffective for God’s service.]

7. The authors describe two types of righteousness connoted by the term “breastplate of righteousness” The first is *objective righteousness*. What is it and how should it help us defeat the tactics of the devil? (pp. 51–52)

A: Objective righteousness is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us by God. (Rom. 4:6–11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9)

This righteousness should cause us to feel great confidence; “because it is Christ’s, [it] cannot be, in any way, diminished or jeopardized.”

It should also remind us to continually reflect on the “flawless righteousness of our Lord when the devil brings a railing accusation against us.” (p. 52)

One of Satan’s chief tactics is to accuse us of being unworthy. We must remind ourselves, as we continually confess our sins, that “there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

[Satan can bring myriad charges against us in God's courtroom, but he can never prevail because Christ's righteousness has been credited to our account and we are eternally declared "Not guilty!"]

8. The second type of righteousness connoted by the term "breastplate of righteousness" is *subjective righteousness*. What is it? (p. 53)

A: Subjective righteousness is a way of characterizing our daily experience as Christians. Some think of it as "ethical, or practical, righteousness." The Puritans called it the "imparted righteousness of the believer."

Paul alluded to this aspect of righteousness when he called on believers to "put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:24) and to "walk as children of light" since we are no longer darkness (Eph. 5:8). He went on to add: "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth." (Eph. 5:9)

Note, too, that in 1 Thess. 5:8, Paul equates subjective righteousness with "faith and love." "But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation."

9. How do we deploy *subjective righteousness* in our Christian walk to thwart the schemes of the devil? (p. 53)

A: When we live godly lives "our hearts will be protected and fortified when the devil seeks to lure us to sin." In his defense before Felix, Paul noted: "I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men" (Acts 24:16).

Romans 6:12–13 reminds us: "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

Titus 2:11–12 has a similar theme. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."

[By striving to eschew sin and live a godly life we are, in essence, "resist[ing] the devil" so he will flee from us. (James 4:7)]

10. What point do the authors make about the relationship between objective righteousness and subjective righteousness? (p. 54)

A: "A believer cannot have imparted righteousness without first having the imputed righteousness of Christ, and a person who has the imputed righteousness of Christ must live a life that reflects the will of Christ. Biblical purity and holiness of character are the

fruits of someone who is saved. Subjective righteousness has its roots in objective righteousness; the two belong together in an integrated whole.”

11. What point do the authors make about the danger of toying with sin in our lives? (p. 55)

A: “We leave ourselves open to be wounded in battle like Ahab, who was struck ‘between the scale armor and the breastplate.’” (1 Kings 22:34).

12. How do we avoid falling into this danger?

A: We must “not live passively.” We must “engage all of [our] redeemed faculties to live in a way that pleases God.”

Eph. 5:8: “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.”

1 John 1:7: “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

13. What final advice about the breastplate of righteousness do the authors give us? (p. 56)

A: “Never take it off. Daily meditate on Christ’s perfections, which are yours before God, and daily seek to live a holy life—being ‘blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world’ (Phil. 2:15).”

Selected End of Chapter Question. (Paraphrased).

- Why is it important that we protect our mind and emotions?

Appendix 2: “Can a Christian Be Demon-Possessed?”

1. Why do the authors reject the concept that Satan can “possess” or “own” a believer? (p. 117)

A: They prefer the term “demonized” rather than possessed because, for one thing, the New Testament never uses the word “possessed” when speaking of people and demons. Instead, it says in many places that people “had” a demon or unclean spirits.

2. The authors describe various viewpoints on the issue of whether Christians can be owned or controlled by demons before giving their own response that is based on two truths from Scripture. What is the first truth they emphasize? (pp. 118–119)

A: “Christ has triumphed over the principalities and powers (Col. 2:15). He has rendered Satan powerless (Heb. 2:14). Because we are in union with Him, we share His victory

(Eph. 2:6). . . . Union with Christ also means that He dwells in us by His Spirit, and we dwell in Him (Rom. 8:9).” We see from Scripture (Matthew 12:43–45) that “an unclean spirit cannot take up residence in a place that is already occupied. Therefore, since the Holy Spirit permanently indwells the believer, this can never happen (Rom. 5:5).”

3. Though confident that unclean spirits cannot indwell a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, what second truth do the authors warn us not to ignore? (p. 119)

A: “The enemy is real, and he can gain a foothold in our lives and exert considerable influence (Eph. 4:27).”

4. The authors conclude that the New Testament emphasizes “that the devil’s influence on the Christian is primarily deceptive scheming and trickery, *not* indwelling and controlling. What often characterizes the lives of Christians who believe they *can* be indwelt or possessed by demons? (p. 119)

A: They tend to blame Satan or demons for all the sin in their life instead of taking responsibility for it themselves.

5. Though we shouldn't overemphasize the influence of demonic activity in our lives, what warning do the authors give about not taking demonic activity seriously? (p. 120)

A: We don't want to "fall off either side of the horse." "We need a biblical and balanced perspective at all times."

[In addition to the authors' first example here, I would say the danger of ignoring demonic activity is that we leave ourselves vulnerable to attack if we are not constantly watching out for them.]



Review and Reflect: As you think back over the reading assignments for today's lesson, what key points struck you as important? Jot them down and share with the class.

Week 5

Our Armor, Part 2

Gospel of Peace Footwear and the Shield of Faith

Lesson Preparation:

1. Read chapters 7 and 8 of *Spiritual Warfare*.
2. Spend 5–10 minutes reading and meditating on Revelation 12:1–17. We mentioned this passage during our week 1 discussions. What insights does this historic and prophetic passage give us about the nature of spiritual warfare and of the means through which Satan will ultimately be vanquished? Be prepared to share what you learned in class.



Chapter 7: “The Gospel of Peace Footwear”

1. The authors point out that footwear is an important part of our daily lives. We choose our footwear (sandals, tennis shoes, hiking shoes, etc.) based on the activity we are doing. Ephesians 6:15 instructs us to have our feet “shod . . . with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” What function did the footwear of a Roman soldier serve and how does our spiritual footwear serve a similar function? (pp. 59–60)

A: A Roman soldier’s footwear allowed him to be sure-footed in close-range combat. It was “leather half-boots or sandals tied with straps at the ankles and shins. The soles were thick leather, having hollow-headed hobnails under them that greatly improved the warrior’s balance. These were like athletic cleats . . .” His shoes allowed him to be nimble as well. Losing one’s balance in hand-to-hand combat was deadly.

We must be equally sure-footed against Satan’s assaults.

2. Our spiritual footwear consists of the “preparation of the gospel of peace.” What is the first meaning of this phrase that the authors give? It has to do with “going on the offensive” against Satan and his kingdom. (pp. 60–61)

A: The word “suggests the idea of promptness or readiness.” In our case, “we must always be ready to go on the offensive by taking the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world so that people might be saved and delivered from Satan’s tyranny.” In other words, we must always maintain “a readiness to *proclaim* the gospel of peace.”

In Romans 1:15, Paul says: So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.”

Romans 10:15: (Quoting Isaiah 52:7). “And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!’”

The authors explain that Isaiah 52:7 refers to the prophecy of the Jewish people returning from exile. As they traveled back toward Jerusalem, heralds would go before them proclaiming the joyful news, “Your God reigns.”

The authors argue that Paul is alluding to this passage in Ephesians 6:15 and that he is calling on us to be heralding the good news of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to whomever we meet. “Wherever we go and at every opportunity God grants, we must seek to assault Satan’s kingdom, telling men and women who are under his power (Eph. 2:2) that spiritual freedom is found in Jesus.” (p. 61)

3. What is the second meaning of the phrase “preparation of the gospel of peace” that the authors give? It has to do with “standing defensively” against Satan and his kingdom. (pp. 61–62)

A: Ephesians 6:14 had told us that we are to put on our armor and “stand therefore.” Just as with the Roman soldiers of old, our gospel footwear allows us to be “firmly rooted in the truths of the gospel” so that we can stand against Satan’s accusations and temptations. In this sense, our “readiness” originates in “the gospel of peace.” Satan wants to make our lives miserable. The gospel of peace gives us peace in the midst of trials.

4. The authors write: “Just as the gospel is a powerful means for advancing God’s truth and delivering many from Satan’s clutches, it is also a powerful means for stabilizing us as believers, helping us to stand against his attacks.” What are some of the ways that Satan attacks believers? (p. 62)

A: Plagues our conscience with the guilt of past sins. “When the devil seeks to plague our consciences with guilt after we have confessed sin, we remember what the gospel of peace tells us: ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’ (1 John 1:9).” They also reference Romans 8:33a: “Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect?”

Tries to convince us we are not really saved. “When the devil attacks our assurance, we must remember that we are in an unbreakable union with the living God through Jesus and that nothing will be able to ‘separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Rom. 8:39).

Tempts us to sin. [Remember that temptation can also originate in our flesh.] “When the devil tempts us to sin, we must push back and resist his enticements, recalling our deliverance from such things and our newness in Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17).”

5. The authors point out that some Christians have a mistaken view that the gospel is somehow only a stepping stone to “deeper things.” What examples do they give to prove

their assertion that, “in truth, nothing is deeper than the gospel?” The gospel “teaches us about:” (pp. 62–63)

A: Election. (Eph. 1:4): “just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,”

His effectual calling. (2 Tim. 1: 9): God “has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,”

His propitiation through Jesus. (Rom. 3:25): Christ Jesus was “set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,”

Our justification. (Rom. 5:1): “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,”

Our adoption as sons. (Gal. 4:5–6): God sent forth His Son “to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’”

Our ongoing (progressive) sanctification. (1 Thess. 5:23): “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our [future] glorification. (1 Cor. 15:50–55): “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (p. 63)

6. The authors conclude by stating: “These grand themes should fill our minds constantly.” How does thinking about these amazing truths and promises of God help us stand firm against Satan’s assaults? (p. 63)

A: “The devil loves to move us away from these glorious realities. When he does this, we are on slippery ground.” If we meditate on these truths, we will maintain our traction. We will “stand strong and not fall.” Remember that when we fix our minds on the things spelled out in Philippians 4:8, [and when we are “anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving” make our requests known to God, His peace will sustain us.] (Phil. 4:6).

Just as the footwear of Roman soldiers allowed them to stand fast in battle, our footwear equips us to stand firm too. “Under enemy attack, we can dig firmly into the soil of the good news. The gospel is an indispensable part of our spiritual military equipment.”

Selected End of Chapter Question.

- “Where in your life has the enemy scored repeated hits? What Scriptures can you bring to bear in this battle? What aspects of the gospel do you need to believe more firmly and rehearse to yourself during and after these attacks?”

Chapter 8: “The Shield of Faith”

1. (pp. 65–66). The authors describe the ancient Roman shield as a “large, heavy, rectangular shield [that] covered the warrior’s entire body.” It was about 4–6 feet tall and 2–3 feet wide, almost as big as a door. It was lined with metal so that it was fireproof. [Enemy armies often shot flaming arrows at each other in those days.] (p. 66). The authors emphasize that our shield is a shield of *faith*. What two types of faith does it involve?

A: Subjective faith (“our personal belief in God and His truth”) and objective faith (what we believe in—“the faith once for all delivered to the saints” as cited in Jude 3).

It’s not just any faith that protects us; we must believe in the right thing, i.e. the truth of God.

2. The authors point out that faith is not just an “intellectual assent in some abstract ideas concerning God,” nor is it “having some vague notions or feelings” about God and the Bible. What is faith according to Scripture and the authors? (pp. 66–67)

A: Authors: “Faith, simply defined, is a conviction of a known truth and the solid confidence that springs from that conviction.” Further, it is “a firm persuasion of an unwavering trust in God and His Son, Jesus Christ.” (p. 67) (See John 14:1).

Ephesians 2:8–9: Faith is the “channel through which God brings us salvation.” “For by grace you have been saved, through faith.”

Romans 1:17b: Faith is what sustains us through our entire walk as Christians. “The just shall live by faith.”

Ephesians 6:10–13: Faith is confidence in God’s power and in His ability to do everything He has said He will do. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” (v. 10).

In the midst of Satan’s attack, we can stand strong in our faith in God.

3. What grammatical points do the authors make about our responsibility with regard to the shield of faith? (p. 67)

A: We are to “take it up.” The verb is in the active voice, meaning it requires an action on our part. Note, too, that the phrase is preceded by the words, “above all,” reminding us of the importance of this particular action. Finally, the authors emphasize that this is an action that we must do continually. We must take up the shield and never put it down.

“We are to habitually trust in the Lord, who is a shield about us (Gen. 15:1), and believe all that He has said to us in Scripture. Only then will we be greatly protected from the devil’s attacks against us.”

4. What important encouragement do the authors give with regard to taking up the shield of faith? (p. 67)

A: “In truth, the devil cannot touch the believer who exercises faith in this way. Try as he will, Satan cannot penetrate this defense.”

5. What tactic does Satan employ to weaken our faith? (p. 68)

A: He tries to sow doubt in our hearts. He wants us to question God’s Word. He used this tactic in the garden of Eden. “Has God indeed said, . . . ?” (Gen. 3:1)

[We live in a time scholars have labeled “post-modernism.” One of its hallmarks is the rejection of the idea of absolute truth. This way of thinking is from the pit of hell itself.]

6. What must we do as Satan tries to get us to doubt God and to get us to move us even just slightly off course? (p. 69)

A: “Keep your faith active in God.” The authors quote William Gurnall [1616–1679] who reminds us that we stand by faith and that if our faith fails, we fall at our enemy’s feet.

7. What five steps can we take to keep our faith “active?” (pp. 69–70).

A 1: Regularly listen to sermons in a Bible-believing local church. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by God’s Word” (Rom. 10:17). See also:

Acts 14:1: “Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.”

1 Cor. 3:5: “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?”

[Listen to sermons on the radio and internet too. Fill your day with God’s Word, whether in spoken, written, or even musical form.].

A 2: Maintain regular fellowship with other believers. [There is strength in numbers.] We can “stir one another up in our faith, and as we do this, we help each other with the spiritual battles we face.”

Heb. 10:25: “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Heb. 3:12–13: “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

Proverbs 27:17: “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” [They did not cite this verse.]

A 3: Read God’s Word regularly on your own. Memorize it too!

1 Peter 2:1–2: “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,”

Psalms 1:1–3: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.”

2 Tim. 3:14–17: “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man [and woman!] of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

A 4: Spend time praying. When we spend time with communing with God, we keep our focus on Him which strengthens our faith. (p. 70)

Hebrews 12:1–2: “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Hebrews 4:15–16: “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

A 5: Keep your conscience clean. [As my husband says, “Keep short accounts with God.”] Don’t let unconfessed sin put a wedge between you and God. If you sin, repent and turn back to God.

[The authors don’t cite the verse below.]

Isaiah 59:1–2: “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

8. The authors emphasize that “faith is our impenetrable covering” against Satan’s “fiery darts.” It doesn’t just nullify some of Satan’s attacks. It nullifies *all* of them. What are some of the “fiery darts” that Satan sends against humans? (pp. 70–71).

A: “Unholy thoughts, temptations, blasphemies, fear, false teachings, oppression, doubt, despair, discouragement, distrust, discontentment, worry, envy, pride, and atheism.” (p. 71)

9. The authors quote a sermon by Charles Spurgeon in which he describes how Christians are protected against attacks on our head [our mind] and our heart. How does faith protect us in each case? (pp. 71–72)

A: Attacks on our mind: Knowing sound doctrine means that we *know* what we believe and what we have received from God so well that we would never dream of giving it up.

A: Attacks on our heart: “When temptation to love the world comes in, then faith holds up thoughts of the future and confidence of the reward that awaits the people of God, and enables the Christian to esteem the reproach of Christ greater than all the treasures of Egypt, and so the heart is protected.” (p. 72)

Pray regularly that God would give you the same assurance of God’s providence that Paul had. Recall his words to the frightened sailors onboard the storm-tossed ship bound for Rome:

“For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.’ Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me.” (Acts 27:23–25)

Do you believe as Paul did?

Selected End of Chapter Questions. (Paraphrased)

- [illegible]

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Week 6

Our Armor, Part 3

Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit

Lesson Preparation:

1. Read chapters 9 and 10 of *Spiritual Warfare*.
2. Spend 5–10 minutes reading and meditating on 2 Corinthians 10:1–6 and Matthew 4:1–11. What guidance do these passages give us for waging spiritual warfare? Be prepared to share your insights with the class.



Chapter 9: “The Helmet of Salvation”

1. What does the “helmet of salvation” protect? (p. 74)
A: [Our minds.](#)
2. What do the following verses teach us about the relationship between our minds and spiritual warfare? (p. 74)
A: [2 Cor. 4:3–4](#): “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”
[2 Cor. 10:3–5](#): “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,”
[2 Cor. 11:3](#): “But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”
3. What is the relationship between our minds and our lives? (p. 74)
A: [What we think governs how we act. Proverbs 23:7](#) says that “as he thinks in his heart, so is he.” “[W]e must diligently wear a helmet, for if Satan can tamper with our minds, he can tamper with our lives.”
4. Where do we get the helmet of salvation? (pp. 74–75)

A: It is given to us by God (along with the rest of the pieces of our armor). Paul tells us to “take” the helmet of salvation. (p. 75). We are to wear it constantly.

5. Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians to believers like us. The literal meaning of the word “helmet” is “that which is around or encircles the head.” What three aspects of salvation does Paul want us to consider when wearing “the helmet of salvation?” (pp. 75–76)

A 1: “That which is past.” Our salvation was won through an action of the Lord Jesus Christ in the past when we believed in Him in the past. . . . At a definitive point in time in the past, when we trusted in Christ after we heard the gospel, we were legally declared not guilty in God’s sight, given the righteousness of Christ, and forever sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Nothing can ever change these facts—glory be to God! (Rom. 3:24; 4:5–8; 5:1, 9; 8:1; Eph. 1:13)

A 2: “That which is present.” Our salvation is also ongoing. “From the day God saved us, He has been graciously changing and renewing our hearts and our character, which is sanctification. He is progressively delivering us from sin and evil by His working in us through the Spirit and by our working in concert with Him. (p. 76) (Rom. 6:11–14; 8:13; Eph. 4:20–24; Phil. 2:12–13).

A 3: “That which is future.” “The work of salvation, which began when we first believed and continues through the entirety of our lives, will one day be completed. . . . In the future, when either Christ returns or we die and go to be with Him, we will be perfected, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, which is glorification. In heaven, the work started on earth will be finished.” [Praise God!] (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:54; Eph. 5:27; Phil. 3:20–21; Heb. 9:28 and 12:23; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24).

6. Which of the three aspects of salvation does Paul seem to be emphasizing when he tells us to put on the helmet of salvation? (pp. 76–77)

A: The future. “His point is that to fight well *now* we must always be mindful of the *future*.”

The authors mention 1 Thess. 5:8 where Paul tells those of us who are “of the day” to be sober, “putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the *hope* of salvation.” [emphasis added] (p. 77)

It is as if he is reminding us that, while we must battle through trials and hardships in this life, “we will not always be combatants in this war. There is a coming day of triumph. . . . Though at times it seems as though the enemy gets the upper hand in our lives, his day is coming (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10) and so is ours (Matt. 25:34)!”

They quote John MacArthur who says, “If we lose hope in the future promise of salvation, there can be no security in the present. The helmet of salvation is that great hope of final salvation that gives us confidence and assurance that our present struggle with Satan will not last forever and we will be victorious in the end.”

7. What final encouragement do the authors offer us with regard to the helmet of salvation? (pp. 77–78)

A: “Daily meditate on the eternal glory with Jesus that awaits you. Regularly dwell on the reality that a day is coming when you will have no more struggles at all! Let these thoughts constantly fill your mind. . . . As these truths saturate your thinking, you will be sustained, strengthened, and steadfast in battle.” (p. 78)

[They conclude with a wonderful quote from William Gurnall (1617–1679)]: “Take it [the helmet of salvation] so as never to lay it down until God takes off this helmet to put a crown of glory in its place.”

Selected End of Chapter Questions. (Paraphrased)

- Why is it so important for us to protect our minds spiritually? What happens when we don’t?
- “What are some signs that you might not be wearing the helmet of salvation?” What can you do to rectify this weakness in your life?

Chapter 10: “The Sword of the Spirit”

1. What is the “sword of the Spirit” according to Ephesians 6:17? (p. 79)

A: “The word of God”

2. What are the two different Greek words for “sword” used in the New Testament and how do they differ? Which word is used in Ephesians 6:17? (pp. 79–80)

A 1: “*rhomphaia*” is used seven times. It refers to a broadsword. [The ancient Roman broadswords had either straight or slightly curved blades. They were four to almost five feet long with blades of two to almost three feet long and handles about two feet long. They were wielded with either one or two hands and used for both slashing and stabbing attacks.]

This term appears in Luke 2:35 to refer to the sword that will figuratively pierce Mary’s heart. It is used repeatedly in the book of Revelation (1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21) to refer to the sword that proceeds from Christ’s mouth.

A 2: “*machaira*” is the word translated sword twenty-nine times in the New Testament. It refers to a “short, double-edged dagger or sword that was about one to two feet long” (p. 80) —about the same length as a paper towel tube.

This term appears in Matthew 26:47–55 to describe the “swords and clubs” wielded by those who came to arrest Jesus and by Peter when he cut off Malchus’s ear. James was put to death with a *machaira* (Acts 12:2) and the Philippian jailer was going to use one to commit suicide (Acts 16:27). Jesus prophesied that Jerusalem would fall by the edge of a *machaira* (Luke 21:24). “The word is also used symbolically of violence, or a violent death (Rom. 8:35; Heb. 11:34, 37; Rev. 6:4; 13:10) and has a metaphorical use for division in Matthew 10:34 (‘I did not come to bring peace but a *machaira*.’) and the power of the government to punish evildoers (Rom. 13:4).”

It is used twice in the New Testament to refer to the Word of God:

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;” (Eph. 6:17)

“For the Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12)

3. Which Greek word for sword did Paul use in Ephesians 6:17? What type of combat was this type of sword particularly suited to? (p. 80)

A: “*machaira*.” This type of sword was used for close-quarter combat. It was used in tandem with the shield as both an offensive and a defensive weapon.

4. What is the source of the sword given to us for spiritual warfare? (p. 80).

A: The Holy Spirit. The sword is the “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” “The Word is the breath (same word as ‘spirit’) of God’s mouth (2 Tim. 3:16; cf. Isa. 11:4; 49:2), and the Holy Spirit is the divine author of the Word. We cannot exaggerate the dynamic power of this piece of armor; it is no ordinary sword.”

Isaiah 11:4: [Speaking of the “rod from the stem of Jesse” and the “branch” on whom the Spirit of the LORD would rest]: “But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.”

Isaiah 49:2: “And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver He has hidden Me.”

5. According to Clinton Arnold, in what way can Christians use the *machaira* sword as a defensive and offensive weapon in our spiritual warfare? (pp. 80–81)

A: Defensive. We use Scripture to fight off demonic attacks. [more on that later]

A: Offensive. We preach the gospel. Preaching the gospel represents “an action that amounts to a major form of aggression against the kingdom of the devil.” (p. 81)

6. What two Greek words are usually used interchangeably to refer to the “word” of God? Which one does Paul use in Ephesians 6:17 and how is it subtly different from the other word? (p. 81).

A: “*logos*” and “*rhema*.”. The latter usually refers to the spoken word. That seems to be the reason Paul chose it. We are to speak (“proclaim”) God’s Word as part of our defensive tactics against spiritual attack and as part of our offensive attacks on Satan’s kingdom.

7. Read Matthew 4:1–11. How did Jesus demonstrate the defensive use of God’s Word during His encounter with Satan in the wilderness after His baptism at the commencement of His earthly ministry? (p. 81)

A: Temptation 1: “Command that these stones become bread.”

Jesus’s response: “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” [Deut. 8:3]

Temptation 2: “If you are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ [Psalm 91:11] and ‘In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone [Psalm 91:12].’” [Note that Satan knows God’s Word too! But He always seeks to twist it for his own purposes.]

Jesus’s response: “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God.’” [Deut. 6:16]

Temptation 3: After taking Jesus to an “exceedingly high mountain,” and showing Him “all the kingdoms of the world and their glory,” Satan said: “All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”

Jesus’s response: “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” [Deut. 6:13–14; Exodus 20:3 is similar—“You shall have no other gods before me.”]

8. The authors describe six principles that should govern our use of the “sword of the Spirit.” What is the first principle? (p. 81)

A: Know your enemy. “Remember, Satan is a master strategist. His weapons are lies and half-truths designed to deceive and enslave. Satan wants to attack and destroy our faith. . . . We must know the truths of God’s Word in order to combat his lies with it.” [If you have forgotten the various tactics Satan uses, go back and review week 3’s lesson.]

9. The authors describe six principles that should govern our use of the “sword of the Spirit.” What is the second principle? (p. 82)

A: Wield the sword of the Spirit in evangelism. “We are in a war for people’s souls. Those who are lost are under the dominion of darkness, held captive by Satan. Only one thing can liberate them and bring them spiritual life, and that is the everlasting gospel.” The authors quote Clinton Arnold: “The Word of God and the work of the Spirit are the means by which the people of God step out in defiance of Satan and rob his domain.”

10. The authors describe six principles that should govern our use of the “sword of the Spirit.” What is the third principle? (pp. 82–83)

A: Wield the sword of the Spirit to strengthen fellow soldiers. We shouldn’t try to wage spirit warfare like some sort of John Rambo. We need to fight alongside our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and we need to use the Word of God to encourage and strengthen each other. (p. 83). The authors recount the story of a Christian who was brought out of the depths of despair by his wife reading him Scripture and his pastor preaching the Word on Sunday morning.

11. The authors describe six principles that should govern our use of the “sword of the Spirit.” What is the fourth principle? (pp. 83–84)

A: Wield the sword of the Spirit against sin and temptation. “Satan makes sin look good. He is the best spin-doctor, plastic surgeon, and infomercial artist ever. We can be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13). We must resist temptation by knowing God’s Word. John Piper points out that we will be tempted by the allure of sin until “we believe that God is more to be desired than life itself (Psalm 63:3). [The] power of sin’s promise is broken by the power of God’s [promise, through His Son, Jesus.]”

As we wield the sword against sin, we use both edges of the blade—“the promises and the threats. The battle comes down every time to this: Whom will we believe? . . . the photo-shopped lies of Satan” or the cherished promises of God’s Word? (p. 84)

12. The authors describe six principles that should govern our use of the “sword of the Spirit.” What is the fifth principle? (pp. 84–85)

A: Wield the sword of the Spirit to strengthen our faith. This is similar to the previous point but applied in a more general way. Rather than focusing on a specific target (temptation), we read and meditate on the Word of God to “nourish and strengthen our faith every day.” According to the authors, the Word of God:

Produces perseverance. (Psalm 119:28, 116; Mark 4:16–17; Luke 8:15)
Instructs us about God and His character and will. (Psalm 119:27, 105)
Exposes and convicts our hearts and motives. (Psalm 119:176; 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:12)
Sanctifies us by instructing us in righteousness. (Psalm 119:9, 11, 33; John 17:17; Eph. 5:26)
Enlightens and influences our minds and changes the way we think. (Psalm 119:98; Rom. 12:2; James 3:17–18)
Renews and revives us. (p. 85). (Psalm 119:25, 50, 93, 107, 149, 154, 156, 159)

“Hearing the Word proclaimed, reading it, meditating upon it, and memorizing it builds the muscles of our faith like nothing else.” Doing these things is “our maintenance program, which keeps us spiritually in shape and sharp in battle.”

13. The authors describe six principles that should govern our use of the “sword of the Spirit.” What is the sixth principle? (pp. 85–86)

A: Wield the sword of the Spirit in worship. We often don't think about worship as being part of spiritual warfare, but it is. "The Word and Spirit always go together. . . . To be a Spirit-filled person is to be a worshiping person (Eph. 5:18–19). For our worship to be filled with the Spirit, it must be filled with the Word. When we sing the Word in our worship, we are wielding the sword in song, and the enemy cannot stand."

“Corporate worship is not just a time to express emotion or to practice our singing; it is a time for warfare. When we sing God’s truth, when we sing Scripture, we are wielding the sword of the Spirit in a mighty way in worship and praise.” (p. 86)

Selected End of Chapter Questions. (Paraphrased)

- As you review the six principles of wielding the sword of the Spirit in your life discussed above, which are your weakest? What can you do to improve your swordsmanship?
- What sin or sins tend to be your “besetting” sins, i.e. the ones you often fall prey to? Find one or two Scripture verses that speak directly to these sins and write them here. Work on memorizing them over the course of the next few weeks.



Review and Reflect: As you think back over the reading assignments for today's lesson, what key points struck you as important? Jot them down and share with the class.

Week 7

Warfare Prayer and Warfare Proclamation

Lesson Preparation:

1. Read chapters 11 and 12 and Appendix 3 of *Spiritual Warfare*.
2. Spend 5–10 minutes reading and meditating on Daniel chapter 10, especially verses 10–20. What insights does this passage give us about the nature of spiritual warfare? Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.



Chapter 11: “Warfare Prayer”

1. The authors point out that Paul emphasizes prayer in his letter to the church at Ephesus. Of its 155 verses, 31 (20%) of them mention prayer. According to Clinton Arnold, why does Paul put so much emphasis on prayer? (p. 88)

A: “Prayer is the essence of spiritual warfare and the most important means by which believers are strengthened by God.”

2. What point do the authors make about the connection between verses 14 and 18 in Ephesians 6? (p. 88)

A: Verse 14 tells us to “stand therefore” and begins listing the six components that comprise the “whole armor of God” (v. 13). Verse 18 provides the key to how the armor is employed—through prayer! “[P]rayer always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. . .” Prayer is not a piece of armor, it is “the means by which each piece is effectively employed.” It is this effective use that allows us to “stand.”

Joel Beeke writes: “Prayer is critical because every piece of Christian armor is useless without it. Prayer is like oil. Just as every part of an engine is useless without oil, so every part of Christian warfare is vain without prayer.”

3. What point do the authors make about our spiritual armor and its relationship to prayer? (pp. 88–89)

A: “The armor of God does not consist of literal pieces we can put on; rather, it consists of spiritual truths that the Christian appropriates through prayer. Prayer imparts effectiveness to the armor and employs God’s strength, enabling us to stand.” (p. 89)

4. The authors give five attributes of “warfare prayer.” What do they mean by their first attribute: “Warfare prayer is varied and intense?” (p. 89)

A: “Prayer consists of much more than making requests. Biblical prayer is filled with praise, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, worship, silence, supplication, intercession, and petition. . . . Paul is calling us to warfare prayer that is not sleepily rambling through a grocery list of requests but is earnest and urgent.”

5. What do they mean by their second attribute: “Warfare prayer is constant?” (pp. 89–90)

A: Paul tells us that we should be praying “in all instances.” (Eph. 6:18, Phil 4:6, 1 Thess. 5:17). Jesus taught that we “always ought to pray” and not lose heart (Luke 18:1).

The authors point out that “our real obstacle to frequent and consistent prayer is often our failure to acknowledge our deep need for God or a pressing dependence upon Him. When we do not sense our weakness, our helplessness, our dependence, and our danger, we will not pray.”

Clinton Arnold notes that warfare prayer is like talking to our commander-in-chief during battle. “Our awareness of the battle heightens our sense of need to stay in constant touch with our superior officer, who can resupply us and provide us with our orders.”

6. What do they mean by their third attribute: “Warfare prayer is in the Spirit?” (pp. 91–92)

A: Paul wants us to “pray with the help, motivation, guidance, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.” Jude 20 echoes this: “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.” [Notice from that verse that prayer helps build us up in our faith, i.e. it helps us “stand.”] (p. 91)

Romans 8:26 reminds us that it is the Spirit who helps us “in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Praying in the Spirit reminds us of the promise of Romans 8:16–17, that “we are children of God,” “joint heirs with Christ” and that we will suffer with Him but also be “glorified together.”

“One of the powerful ways to pray in the Spirit is actually to use the words that the Spirit inspired.” In other words, pray the Bible. “Learn to plead God’s Word with Him, praying it back to Him, praying the promises. . . . Wielding the sword of the Spirit by praying the words He has given in Scripture is a powerful weapon.” (p. 92)

7. What do they mean by their fourth attribute: “Warfare prayer is watching and persevering?” (pp. 92–93)

A: Paul uses the phrase “to this end” or “for this very purpose” to remind us that warfare prayer has a purpose—“so that we can be watchful.” Jesus taught His disciples this principle too:

Luke 21:36: “Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

Mark 13:33: “Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.”

Jesus also used the term, “stay awake” (Mark 13:33–37; 14:34, 37–38) to encourage His disciples “to an eschatological and moral alertness.” [Think of the role of military sentries—always on alert to approaching danger.] (p. 93)

Peter, who heard Jesus’s admonitions about staying awake emphasized the same idea in his letter to Christian exiles: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Paul told the Colossians: “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2).

The message is that prayer helps us to stay mentally alert for lurking spiritual dangers.

8. What do they mean by their fifth attribute: “Warfare prayer is for all the saints?” (pp. 93–94)

A: The authors emphasize that we must earnestly pray for each other. Praying for individual Christians is important but, we should also be praying for “the global church, the persecuted church, and frontline missions. We pray for all the saints when we remember our local church and other local churches.” (p. 94)

As we pray for individual’s needs, there is nothing wrong with asking for things like jobs, journey mercies, health, etc., but even more importantly is to be praying Ephesians 6 for them, i.e. that they would be able to stand firm in their Christian walk.

Selected End of Chapter Question. (Paraphrased)

- Why is prayer such a difficult discipline for Christians? Jot down some of the strengths of your prayer life and some of the weaknesses. How can you strengthen the weaker areas?

Chapter 12: “Warfare Prayer and Proclamation”

1. The authors discuss the fact that the types of things we ask others to pray about on our behalf reveal a lot about our spiritual state. What do they mean by that? (p. 97)

A: They point out that some people ask for things that promote false piety [think of the prayer of the Pharisee who thanked God he wasn’t like the poor man praying nearby (Luke 18:9–14.) Our prayer requests should reflect a genuine humility on our part. We should be confessing our weaknesses to our brothers and sisters so they can come

alongside us and help bear the spiritual burdens we are carrying and help us shore up our spiritual armor.

2. Read Paul's prayer request in Ephesians 6:19–20. What specific things does he confess and ask for? (pp. 97–98)

A: Eph. 6:19–20: [praying always] “and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Paul portrays himself “in both the dignity of his calling and the weakness of his own humanity.” (p. 98)

3. What does it mean that we, like Paul, are Christ's “ambassadors”? (p. 98)

A: Ambassadors are dignitaries who serve as official representatives of governments. As Christians, we represent Christ here on earth. We speak on Christ's behalf. We tell others about God's “terms of peace and reconciliation” and we announce “the good news of the forgiveness of sins” and proclaim “His reign and power.”

4. The authors point out the irony that although Paul (and we) are ambassadors of God and could expect to be arrayed in fancy clothing and jewelry as a representative of the King of kings and Lord of lords, and to be wined and dined as dignitaries, he (and we) are actually called to suffer for Christ's sake. How should this recognition of our status as suffering ambassadors motivate our requests for prayers? (p. 99)

A: We should follow Paul's example and recognize that “suffering is glory. Imprisonment and chains are signs of gospel dignity.” [We should not try to portray ourselves as somehow above the fray of spiritual battle, untouched by its viciousness. We should be honest with each other.]

[Mention the scene in the sermon by C. H. Spurgeon, “Salvation: All of Grace” in which he describes a battlefield of wounded soldiers with medical personnel arriving on scene to treat them. If you were one of those soldiers, would you try to minimize the extent of your injuries (in which case the medical personnel would bypass you for more grievously wounded people) or would you precisely convey the severity of your injuries so as to receive immediate treatment? We should be willing to confess to our brothers and sisters in Christ the extent of our spiritual wounds so they can uplift us in prayer.]

5. What important point do the authors make about Paul's willingness to ask the Ephesians (Colossians, and Thessalonians) to pray for him? (p. 99)

A: Paul did not “think more highly of himself than he ought (Rom. 12:3).” He also never assumed that, as a hand-selected Apostle of Christ, he was somehow better than ordinary believers. Paul recognized the value of the prayers of God's people and he frequently requested them.

Col. 4:2–4: “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”

1 Thess. 5:25: “Brethren, pray for us.”

2 Thess. 3:1–2: “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith.”

[Note in the next passage that Paul pulled no punches with telling the Corinthians exactly what had happened to them. He was not ashamed to admit that he “despaired” of life itself. He thought he was going to die. Also note, though, that he attributed his deliverance to (a) the fact that the Corinthians and others had been praying for him and (b) that God answered the prayer so that He would be glorified (i.e. that people would offer thanks to God for Paul’s deliverance.) We should be just as willing as Paul was to be honest with our Christian brothers and sisters when we make prayer requests.]

2 Cor. 1:8–11: “For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.”

6. What is the relationship between preaching [proclaiming the gospel] and praying? (p. 100)

A: The authors argue that: “Preaching is the unsheathing of the sword of the Spirit. . . . The promise of the Spirit’s power and blessing is attached to the Word. Preaching depends on the power of the Spirit to make the sword of the Spirit effective in delivering sinners from the dominion of darkness and building up the saints in their faith.” The power of preaching comes through the unction of the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught that God would give the Holy Spirit to those who asked for it. (Luke 11:13).

Spurgeon put it this way: “The sinew of the minister’s strength under God is the supplication of his church. We can do anything and everything if we have a praying people around us.” The prayers of a congregation “link us [preachers] with the omnipotence of God.”

7. What is the first component of warfare proclamation? (p. 101)

A: The Word must be given. Paul asked his fellow believers to pray that “utterance” (logos) would be given to him. He wanted God to give him the message he needed to preach. He wasn’t relying on his years of training in the Scriptures [or in the one-on-one

instruction he had received from Jesus Himself after he was saved (Gal. 1:11 through 2:8)]; he was relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to teach him what to say. Jesus had told His disciples not to worry about what they would say when they were arrested and hauled before their enemies. He promised that the Holy Spirit would give them the words to say. (Matt. 10:19–20).

8. What is the second component of warfare proclamation? (p. 102)

A: The mystery of the Gospel must be made known boldly. “A mystery is something that must be revealed. Paul felt the weight of knowing that if the opening of his mouth was to be effective, not only must the Word be given, but it must also be revealed.” It was God who would do the revealing, not Paul or any other flesh and blood being. “Only the sovereign Spirit can open eyes blinded by Satan (2 Cor. 4:6). Paul wanted Christians to pray that he would open his mouth boldly and that he would speak “directly and openly.”

“Effective, Spirit-empowered proclamation is always ultimately before an audience of One. It fears no man; it is courageous in the face of opposition and bold as it assaults the forces of darkness. . . . Warfare proclamation demands Aarons and Hur to hold up the arms of the preacher with intercessory prayer (Ex. 17:12).”

9. What is the third component of warfare proclamation? (pp. 102–103)

A: It is a Holy obligation. Paul asked for prayer that he would speak “as I ought to speak.” (p. 103). Paul knew that he, like all of us, needed the Spirit’s help to speak the gospel as he ought.

10. What are the three things preaching (sharing the gospel) involves? (p. 103)

A 1: *Antithesis*. “Fighting the lies of the devil with the truth of God.”

A 2: *Rescue*. “Plundering the strongman’s house, entering boldly into enemy territory to preach liberty to the captives.”

A 3: *Empowerment*. “Being filled with the Holy Spirit so that the word preached will truly benefit the hearers and bring much glory, praise, and honor to Jesus Christ, the risen and exalted king.”

Selected End of Chapter Question. (Paraphrased)

- What kinds of things do you ask others to pray for on your behalf? Do you honestly admit the struggles you are having in particular areas of your life? If not, how can you change this habit of withholding the truth of your struggles from your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Appendix 3: “Christian, Pray for Your Pastors!”

1. Read this appendix carefully, making note of the Scripture passages and insights from preachers like Charles H. Spurgeon about the importance of Christians praying for their pastors. Do you regularly pray for the pastor, elders, and deacons at your church? If not, what steps can you take to establish a habit of prayer for them. What specific things can you pray for on their behalf? (pp. 121–124)

[illegible]

Review and Reflect: As you think back over the reading assignments for today's lesson, what key points struck you as important? Jot them down and share with the class.

Week 8

Spiritual Warfare Debriefing

Lesson Preparation:

1. Read chapter 13 of *Spiritual Warfare*.
2. Spend 5–10 minutes reading and meditating on Ephesians 6:10–18. Jot down the key insights emphasized in this passage in the space below. Also, jot down how your understanding of “the whole armor of God” has changed since beginning this course. Which part(s) of the armor do you find most useful in the daily spiritual battles you face? Why? Which part(s) of the armor do you want to learn to use more effectively? Be prepared to share your insights with the class.



Chapter 13: “Spiritual Warfare Debriefing”

1. What is a “debriefing?” (pp. 105–106)

A: It is what military personnel receive after being involved in a military operation or battle. [It involves reviewing what the original plan was and how events actually played out. It also involves compiling “lessons learned” and brainstorming ideas on how to fix any problems that arose so they don’t recur in future operations/engagements.]

2. What is the first “summary principle” that the authors want us to remember? (p. 106)

A: The Christian life is a struggle. “When we come to faith in Christ, we become liberated prisoners of war. However, the battle is not over; we just changed sides. Indeed, a new battle begins within us—the battle between the flesh and the Spirit.” Satan wants to reclaim us. He wants us to doubt our newfound place in God’s kingdom.

“To be a Christian is to be painfully aware of our enemies.” [“I once was blind, but now I see.”—John Newton, *Amazing Grace*].

3. The authors note that our struggles against the powers of darkness usually occur in the “mundane.” What are some of the examples of the “mundane” where Satan attacks?

A: In our “marriage, family, relationships, trials, afflictions, and suffering.” Also, “temptations, besetting sins, and struggles with the flesh.”

4. What question should we be asking when under spiritual attack?

A: “What is God, my sovereign Father, doing in this?” “We need to be alert to God’s redeeming purpose and work and Satan’s destructive purpose and work.”

5. What is the second “summary principle” the authors want us to remember? (p. 107)

A: The Christian life must be lived in God’s strength. “We do not get rushed through basic training and then thrust out onto the battlefield. We are called to war and to be strong.” More importantly, we are not called on to war in our own strength. We are to acknowledge that “God is the One to whom all power and might belong.” This power has been on display through the millennia and, particularly in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As Christians, we are told that this “resurrection-ascension-exaltation power is at work in us by the Father and the Spirit, through the Son (Eph. 1:19; 2:6; 3:16, 20). The power is ours in Him. The power is His in us.”

Eph. 1:15–20: “Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

Eph. 2:4–7: “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Eph. 3:14–21: “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

6. What is the third “summary principle” that the authors want us to remember? (p. 107)

A: The goal of the Christian life is to stand and resist. “When the devil assaults our soul, attacks our mind, and attempts to bend our will, and when he tries to exploit our flesh and

destroy our faith, our goal is not to give one inch, mentally, morally, or spiritually.” We must resist him! (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9).

7. Though we have the ability to stand fast against Satan’s attacks in the power of Christ, we do sometimes fail and temporarily succumb to his wiles. What encouragement do we as Christians have that we will not be “hanged as traitors?” (pp. 107–108)

A: “Christ always offers forgiveness and a fresh start with fresh power and new mercies.” [The authors don’t mention any Scripture verses, but if time permits, read Lam. 3:22–23; Romans 8:31–37; 1 John 1:8–9.] (p. 108)

8. What is the fourth “summary principle” that the authors want us to remember? (p. 108)

A: The goal of the Christian life is to advance the Gospel of Peace. Our warfare is not just defensive in nature (i.e., standing firm against Satan’s attacks), it also involves offensive warfare (proclaiming the gospel to the unsaved.) We have been commanded to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19–20). “So we are to wield the sword of the Spirit, [which is the Word of God], step forward with the footwear of gospel peace, proclaim with boldness the mystery of the gospel and pray.”

9. What is the fifth “summary principle” that the authors want us to remember?

A: The only way to stand and advance is to use God’s resources in Christ. “The resources in Christ are the full armor of God.” Putting it on is not just a matter of learning certain techniques. It is a matter of harnessing the power of Christ and using the benefits of His redemptive work in our lives.

10. What examples do the authors give of applying Christ’s redemptive work in our lives? (They recommend praying that God would help you do each of these things.) (pp. 109–110)

A 1: Fasten the belt of truth around our core. “Truth must be the center of our strength.”

A 2: Consciously embrace the breastplate of righteousness. “This standing before God, in Christ by grace, protects our emotions and gives us security and motivation to live a holy life.”

A 3: Stand firm in the gospel-of-peace footwear against the attacks of the enemy. “That warfare footwear grips us in the grace of the gospel.”

A 4: Lay hold of the shield of faith. It allows us to extinguish all the fiery darts of the enemy. “The promises of God are ours; His truth is ours.” Believe it!

A 5: Put on the helmet of salvation. “The mighty work of God in salvation by grace alone should permeate the way I think and live.”

A 6: Use the sword of the Spirit to advance and defend. “We cannot exaggerate the power of [God’s] Word.”

A 7: Put on each piece of armor with prayer. “Warfare prayer is how we survive.” We need to “call on our commander-in-chief for fresh resources, supplies, and help in the battle.” (p. 110)

A 8: Proclaim the gospel. “Warfare proclamation is the great offensive weapon that topples enemy fortresses, rescues the captives, and strengthens the troops.”

The authors conclude with the reminder to all of us that “We are not lacking anything necessary for battle. We are strong in our victor, Jesus Christ, . . . In Him ‘we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us’ (Rom. 8:37).” Let’s live like we believe it!

Selected End of Chapter Questions

- What can you do to remind yourself that you are in a battle?
- What is the most important lesson you have learned in this book?



Review and Reflect: As you think back over the reading assignments for today’s lesson, what key points struck you as important? Jot them down and share with the class.