

## Eph Ch 6Vs 10-12

(Examining the Enemy)

In light of the last few studies concerning marriage and family, it's not your husband or your wife. You may be thinking I knew there was a strategic placement of the last portion of the book of Eph regarding the subject of warfare, because 1<sup>st</sup> comes the wedding and then the warfare begins! But in reality that's not the fact of the matter; we left off speaking about the relationship that employees are to have with their employers, and how it is that they are to serve the Lord in the work place. It's to be with sincerity of heart, as to Christ and not with eyeservice, in other words we're not to only really work hard when we think the boss is watching because in reality the boss is always watching. His name is Jesus, and if you don't believe that there is any such thing as coincidence as a Christian, then you have to believe that you are where God has placed you at least for now.

(Now bear in mind that I'm speaking with in the confines of scripturally acceptable employment). If you come to Christ and a major portion of your income has been in dealing drugs or selling pornography, you can be assured of the fact that it's not God's will for you to be engaged in that type of activity and you need to quit and seek honorable employment. But outside of things that are scripturally unacceptable you're where God has willed you to be at least for now, can that change absolutely, but meanwhile wherever you are, you are to do the will of God from the heart, with good will and a pleasant attitude. Don't blow your witness by always whining and griping because you're service to that company as far as you're concerned is as to the Lord and because of that He's going to reward you accurately when you see Him face to face.

You may think that you're underpaid now, but God will give you a proper reward on that day because you serve the Lord. and So As Solomon said, "*Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.*" and Again Col 3:23-24 "*And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.*"

Now as for the employers Vs 9 of ch 6 says that you're to do the same things unto them, you should relate to them in such a way so as to be pleasing to the Lord, you're to use your authority "as to the Lord" even as they're to submit to your authority "as to the Lord." and Make your business decisions on God's standards of righteousness, honesty, and truth. and Bear in mind not only your own best interest but how about the interest of your employees, would the Lord be pleased with the way this decision is going to effect their lives? It's that whole "*do unto others as you would have others do unto you*" principal that the Lord taught. and If you just remember that you won't be abusive or inconsiderate to your employees, because you realize your own authority is temporary at best and you have a Master in heaven to whom you will give an account to as well.

So in light of everything the Holy Spirit through the book of Eph has brought us into the awareness and accountability of. The Christian who is utilizing by faith the resources as found in the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 ch, and through them living a life that accords with the godly standards of ch 4-6 (the 1<sup>st</sup> 9 vs), you can be sure that that person in going to be involved in the warfare that's depicted in ch 6 vs 10-20. The *faithful* Christian life (and I emphasize faithful) as sure as I'm standing here is a battle, and when you gave your heart to Jesus Christ you enlisted. and Believe me when I tell you, the warfare is fierce, because when God begins to bless, Satan begins to attack. and If you are walking worthy of the calling that's been placed on your life, again in light of the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 ch, in humility rather than pride, in unity rather than divisiveness, in the new self rather than the old, love rather than lust, in light rather than darkness, in wisdom as opposed to foolishness. In the fullness of the Spirit rather than the drunkenness of wine, and in mutual submission rather than self serving independence, then you can be certain that you will face opposition, and conflict.

Now if you lead a life of carnality or apathy as a Christian then you probably don't face much warfare, why? Because you're not a threat to the enemy, so what if you get salvation, (I mean, if he had his way you wouldn't) but if he has to settle for that, then whatever, but if you're a believer who's caught the vision and have a burden for the lost and have availed yourself to God to be used in whatever capacity He desires to see His kingdom increased, now you're a threat. and The battle begins, at the beginning of the ministry of Jesus was a battle, Satan tempted Him for 40 days while He fasted and prayed and then as the earthly ministry of Jesus was coming to a close, it was ending the same way, only this time the battle ground was a garden. and Satanic warfare became so overwhelming that Luke tells us that Jesus began to sweat great drops of blood being in agony over the reality of the cross.

What's my point? That you can safely assume that your faithfulness to the Lord and growing obedience to the Lord will not cause the battle to become any easier. If anything, Satan will only intensify his efforts against those continue to effectively serve the Lord and as you grow stronger, so will the attacks. and As one commentator points out (MacArthur) "A Christian who no longer has to struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil is a Christian who has fallen either into sin or into complacency. A Christian who has no conflict is a Christian who has fallen from the front lines of service."

Now, as you read through the book of Acts, you find that when Paul came to Ephesus some radical things began to take place in his ministry, I mean revival broke out, miraculous things were happening, people burning their occultic books. But along with that came massive opposition, he was ran out of the synagogue, threatened by silversmiths who's business was suffering because people weren't buying the idols they were making anymore.

He wrote to the Corinthians and said, *“I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”* Notice that Paul wasn’t a hireling, when the going got tough, Paul didn’t get going, he stood his ground, Jesus said in John’s gospel ch 10, *“a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.”* But *“the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep”* and though ultimately Jesus was in reference to Himself, the application is relevant, Paul was a good under shepherd, he stood in the face of opposition so as to ward off the wolves.

There are a lot of pastors who are tempted to leave the church or the ministry when things start getting rough, but many times easy ministries are weak ministries. Why, because where Jesus Christ is genuinely doing a work you can be sure that Satan will not fail to oppose it. and Listen, as believers in Jesus Christ, we’re not only God’s *sons*, we’re not only God’s *servants*, but we’re also His *soldiers*, and a soldier’s job isn’t to flee in the face of opposition, but rather to stand and fight.

The battle takes place in more than one dimension, Christians aren’t the only one’s in the battle, the angelic hosts are engaged as well, and I’ll give you a couple of examples later on. But don’t be deceived the warfare is real and it isn’t limited to this world, but a significant portion of it takes place in the here and now, even within these 4 walls, as a matter of fact I would say major portion of the battle happens within the spectrum of the church.

Paul told the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:29-30 *“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”* The church is often attacked both from the outside and from within, many times simultaneously.

J. Vernon McGee said this, *“I do not think the Devil is concentrating on the night clubs or on skid row or in the underworld or in the Mafia. I think he is concentrating on the church on Sunday morning. His working on the spiritual front, and too many sleepy Christians see to be totally unaware of that. Too many Christians are concerned about closing up the cocktail parlors when they need to be closing their mouths from gossiping and criticizing. The devil is working in an area where we least expect to find him. He’s not out on the town on Saturday night. He has gone to bed early so he can get up and go to church on Sunday morning. The spiritual battle is being fought wherever a man is giving out the Word of God, where a church is standing for the Word of God. That’s the place the devil wants to destroy, and that’s the place of the spiritual battle.”*

Then he goes on to sight the night that Jesus arrested and how the most dangerous place to in Jerusalem that night wasn't in the presence of the plotting Pharisees or with the cut throats but right there in the upper room, why, because the bible tells us that Satan was there, and I'm sure that both Judas and Peter would attest to the reality of the danger of being present there that night. So be aware of the battle is taking place and don't be deceived regarding the warfare that takes place with in the body of Christ, Paul knew that it was very real and so he wrote to the Ephesians and before he finished his letter the Holy Spirit prompted him to warn them concerning the warfare and so we read in vs 10.

Vs 10

Why is this vs prefaced with the word "finally"? Because in reality you can only walk in the glory of chapters 1 through 3 and live in the integrity of chapters 4 through 6 by doing it all in the God's strength so it was necessary that all of those things precede this statement. "*Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*" The emphasis obviously being "in the Lord" have you noticed the overbearing emphasis of our need to do everything that we do "in" or "as to" the Lord in this letter? Even with in the 1<sup>st</sup> 9 vs of this ch we read in vs 1, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord.*" Vs 5, "*Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ*" and in Vs 7, "*with good will doing service, as to the Lord.*" 1 Cor 10:31 says, "*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*" Everything we do is to be either in or as to the Lord and as a Christian there's no avoiding this, why? Acts 17:28, "*for in Him we live and move and have our being*", so be strong in the Lord, why?

Because we have to find the strength that we need in the Lord alone, because there is no strength in us that is sufficient for the things of the kingdom, especially as it pertains to the subject or arena of warfare. and If you haven't found out yet you soon will, the Christian life takes strength. Only the strength of the Lord is sufficient, and His strength is actually perfected in you when you come the realization of your own weakness, because then there's no battle between you and the Lord for the throne of your heart. and When you realize that with out Him you can do nothing, and you humbly bow to His authority in your life, it's then that God will begin to strengthen you with *His* might in the inner man.

Jesus said to Paul in 2 Cor 12:9, "*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*" and Paul never forgot that, and when he wrote the Philippians he said, I can do all things (not when I try real hard, or when I concentrate and use my will power to the utmost of my ability, no Paul didn't glory in himself he realized that in him, that was in his flesh, no good thing dwelt, there was no valid strength there). So he said, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*"

I'm going to say something that the English language won't do justice but I hope you know where I'm coming from with this, but I'm going to step out on some thin ice when I say, it's not the amount of strength that you or I have that's important, - only it's source. Does that register with you? Because all of the strength in the world is irrelevant if it's not coming from the proper source, but if Christ is your source, then even a drop of His strength is more than sufficient for any battle this world might confront you with. Because if your strength is in the Lord, then victory is guaranteed, but anything less will result in dismal failure, remember that. So be strong *in the Lord, and in the power of His might*. Paul is here sort of wrapping up this epistle with a reminder, he's referred to this power once before in Ch 1 Vs 19-20.

When he said that he wanted you to know, "*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.*" We're talking about resurrection power, which is poured out and infused into your life by grace through faith; God's grace is a strengthening resource for every believer. 2 Tim 2:1, "*You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*"

The grace of God isn't limited to cleansing and forgiving, if that were the case we'd have no hope for victory in our lives, we would be destined to continually recycle, just trying and trying, failing and failing, repenting and repenting only to blow it again. and Yet how many Christians did I just summarize their lives, because all that they know about the grace of God is that it bring cleansing and forgiveness, not to take away from that, praise God for that aspect of His grace, we wouldn't make it if it weren't for that aspect of His grace. But it doesn't stop there; the grace of God is instrumental in every area of growth that takes place in the Christian life, you are strengthened by the grace of God in the power of His might. and We all need the power of God at rest upon our lives, why, because as a soldier the battle is fierce.

That's why Paul told Timothy to be strong in the grace that's in Christ Jesus, because you, "*must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.*" and So it doesn't matter if you're a house wife, sing in a choir, teach the kids, teach a congregation, or go on missions trip over seas, as a Christian, you're in the army now, and you are a soldier of the cross of Jesus Christ and When you're in a battle, you're in an exerting, draining, and demanding atmosphere, and it requires strength, stamina, focus and fortitude. and So as a believer it's absolutely critical that you be strong, not in your own might, but in the Lord, and in the power of *His* might.

One last reference before we move on Isa 40:29-31, "*He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*" Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Vs11

Notice put on the “whole” armor, not just this aspect or that aspect of it, but the whole defensive unit. That’s what armor is, it’s a protective covering, it defends you, and you and I are to put on the *whole* armor of God if we’re to stand against the wiles or the scheming of the devil. What’s the implication? That with out the *whole* armor you can’t stand, we are to avail ourselves of the full protective spiritual provision that God offers to us, by which we’re enabled to stand victoriously in the power of God. We’re outfitted for battle through His provisions for our lives, and in light of the fact that the battle never ends, the enemy doesn’t quit fighting in the evenings and on the weekends so this armor isn’t something that we’re to take on and off depending on the occasion, but rather it’s something that’s to be put on permanently and never removed. That’s the only way that you are able to “stand” against the wiles of the devil. That word stand means, “to establish a thing, to cause it to stand, to uphold or sustain the authority or force of anything.”

God provides you with the necessary resources to uphold and sustain His work, to His glory. It means, “to continue safe and sound, to stand unharmed, to stand ready or prepared, used of quality, one who does not hesitate, who does not waiver.” There’s no vacillating when you’re suited up in the whole armor of God, no retreat, no surrender, you’re where your at to claim ground for the kingdom and since your fighting from victory you don’t back down. As a child of God you don’t fight for victory, the victory was taken at the cross, you’re fighting from victory and there’s a big difference, and so you stand firm.

Against what? Wiles, or scheming; the tactics, or deceitful plottings of the devil, the enemy has been identified. Why do you need this spiritual armor? Because you have an enemy, and he wants to wipe you out, and your only legitimate defense is that which God supplies. He wants to use his undermining tactics to take you out, now I hope I don’t stumble you guys when you find out exactly how much of a babe in Christ I am, but I’ve been fighting the good fight of faith for approximately 10yrs up till this point. But my foe, the enemy that’s been identified here in the scriptures has been fighting against guys like me for literally thousands of years, he has literally thousands of years of experience. If you were given a thousand years to study any given subject you’d be very proficient concerning that subject at the end of that season, you’d probably know every language on the earth, you could be a mathematical genius, Einstein’s theory of relativity would seem like child’s play.

What if you had 5-6000 yrs to study whatever you wanted? That’s your enemy. He has literally thousands of yrs of experience fighting against man in things that pertain to spiritual matters, and prior to that he stood in the very presence of God as the anointed cherub, now how am I, just a natural son of Adam supposed to fight against him? That’s the picture that the scriptures paint, that’s why it’s so critical that I put on the full armor of God, that I might be able to stand against him.

Make no mistake, he’s very real, the bible is clear concerning his very real and personal existence, he shows up 1<sup>st</sup> in the scriptures in the form of a serpent (you know the story). Jesus

was tempted by him, spoke about him, and spoke to him (Matt ch 4). Paul, Peter, James, John and the writer of Hebrews all speak of him as a personal being. Throughout the scriptures we see him opposing God's work, perverting God's word, seeking to hinder God's servants, hindering the gospel, and due to his rebellion in heaven he brought sin into the world, which now lies under his sway, and his power. Some of his names include, "the anointed cherub", "the ruler of demons", "the ruler of this world", "the god of this age", "the prince of the power of the air", "the dragon", "the serpent of old", "the father of lies", "Beelzebub", "a roaring lion", "Satan", and "the devil". The word "Satan" means "adversary" or opponent and the word "devil" means "slanderer" or "accuser", which is why the bible also refers to him as the "accuser of our brethren".

What are some of his "wiles"? Boy we could talk all day about these things, lying; the bible says that he is a liar and the father of them. He lies to us, he lies about us, he lies about the truth, he lies about God and about God's word, you name it he lies about it, the bible says that he is a liar and that there is no truth in him. We mentioned the fact that he's an accuser, that too is one of his tactics, he accuses you night and day before the Lord, and then he brings to you condemnation. That's a good one, along with temptation and he often works combinations of his deceitful ingredients, 1<sup>st</sup> he lies and tells us something is great that's awful, then he begins to tempt you to indulge yourself a little, and if it's something that you know is just flat out wrong he whispers a little justification in your ear. "C'mon, God will forgive you, all you have to do is confess it later, after all you serve a God of grace and mercy." and So after he sets the hook and pulls you in, then comes the accusations and condemnation, the slander and ridicule. "I can't believe you did that, you call yourself a Christian you're pathetic. Don't go to God with that you know you should've never done that in the 1<sup>st</sup> place, you don't deserve His forgiveness, YOU'RE UNWORTHY!"

He mixes them all up like that, something else he does is counterfeit, he's a counterfeiter, i.e. this Toronto blessing of unholy laughter that swept through much of the church world. Just be alert, it all looks so good, "what's wrong with the joy of the Lord?" Absolutely nothing, I pray it abounds more and more, but to equate the joy of the Lord with the liturgy of uncontrolled corporate laughter, which escalated into barking and growling and shrieking and sounds that sound more like they came from hell than from heaven. They're counterfeit revivals, you say wait a minute Jeff you're dipping into things that are happening in the church. That's what we were talking about earlier, Satan's not afraid coming to church, he's joined several of them and created several cults through the misguided disguise of the true light. So many people when they have near death experiences speak of seeing this beautiful light and how they felt drawn to it, and yet prior to this experience they weren't even believers, they didn't know the Lord.

Now, true God dwells light unapproachable but listen, when Paul was writing to the Corinthian believers regarding false apostles he said in 2 Cor 11:13-15, "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder!*"

*For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”* Another tactic is intimidation, like a roaring lion, again heresy, which is truth out of proportion, and false doctrine. We need the armor of God if we're to stand against these things.

Vs12

This is in regards to various rankings with in the demonic forces, it's a spiritual battle, and Satan has a myriad of demonic forces, an entire network of fallen angels that heed his every whim. That's how he's able to counterfeit the omni-presence of God, Satan is not omni-present, which is to say all places at all times, that quality is reserved for God alone. But he's got a network of demons that keep him informed and carry out his commands, he wants you to think he's like God, but he's simply a created being who can be no more in more than one place than you or I can be.

But this is where the warfare is, it's a spiritual battle, now many times he wants you to think it's so and so that you have a problem with, and your real problem lies with them. But the fight isn't against flesh and blood, again I know it seems to surface there a lot but underneath it all is the influence of the wicked one. He would, that we would turn on one another, bite and devour one another and consume one another, but the word of God wants you to recognize the source. Mr. and Mrs. Jones isn't your problem, they may be being influenced to become a problem for you, but there's a root in it all and as believers we can't just deal with symptoms all the time, you've got to treat the disease itself if you're going to bring healing and resolve to the issue. If there's a lump in your arm and it's symptom is sharp shooting pain, but inside it's malignant and the doctor just gives you aspirin for the pain but doesn't cut out the cancer, there's a problem. and Yet in the body too many people just deal with symptoms with out going to the root or the source of the problem. We don't wrestle (finish vs)

Our battle is against a full hierarchy of evil spiritual entities, and the angels of God are right in the thick of it as well on our behalf. The very day that Daniel began to pray and understand the vision that he had we read in the book of Daniel that his prayers were heard immediately and an angel was immediately sent to give him understanding. But the angel said that he was held up for 21 days by the kings of Persia until Michael one of the chief princes came and helped him get free. Michael wrestled with Satan over the body of Moses, and said the Lord rebuke you.

So the battle goes well beyond the physical realm, and today we've examined for just a bit the enemy that we face, because it's impossible to wage an effective war knowing nothing about your enemy and his ploys and plotings and tactics. and So my hope was to equip you just

a bit so that you won't be ignorant (the bible says) of his devises. So that you might wage wise and effective war in your engagement of the enemy, and we'll talk about the weapons of our warfare as we close (Lord willing) next week.