

# Spiritual Warfare

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 1, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ~Ephesians 6:10 (ESV)**

## 1) God's Great Plan For Victory

- A) In Ephesians, the Apostle Paul writes first about our identity in Christ (Ephesians 1-3), describing the fullness of our new life as those who are “his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.” Secondly, Paul writes about how our new identity in Christ is lived out “in a manner worthy” of the Gospel (Ephesians 4-6).
- B) In the latter section of the letter (Ephesians 4-6), Paul describes God’s great plan to accomplish victory, centered on Jesus Christ, who established the Church as His own body in the universe, meant to function in unity as a new divine weapon of the Gospel. Every tribe, tongue, and nation fit into this eternal family of Christ’s Church. The Church is a declaration of ultimate victory in a grand spiritual battle!
- C) Simply stated, the church exists to live out unity “in Christ” (first “vertically,” then also “horizontally”) to reveal God’s great glory (his character and purposes) to a world living in spiritual darkness and helplessness. As the Apostle Paul comes to the end of his letter, he “finally” (Ephesians 6:10) speaks to a tremendous battle existing in a mysterious, unseen, and often ignored spiritual realm within which our universe exists.

## 2) The Urgency of Submission

- A) Following the flow of thought, the spiritual realm which we are about to explore is set within the same abiding relationship of submission to the Spirit (5:18). Submission in the physical world is tremendously difficult, even with clear direction from God for the design of the church (4:11-16, 25-32, 5:1-21), the individual (4:17-32, 5:1-21), and of the household (5:18-6:10). But now, the urgency for submission is raised much higher.
- B) Everything in the physical realm has its source in the spiritual realm. One of the reasons God “designs” submission as a necessary component of human relationships is because it corresponds with the way God has designed everything for submission in the spiritual realm. Submission in the physical realm corresponds with spiritual submission, and intentionally chooses to reveal the Kingdom of God.
- C) Christians are living examples of the union between the spiritual and physical worlds. The church is the physical manifestation of spiritual truth, the living body of Christ for the world, a community of Christ designed and placed “in the world, but not of the world” for the purposes of the Gospel (John 17:14-19).

## 3) The Mystery Of An Unseen Realm

- A) What is the most significant expression of the spiritual realm? All spiritual strength and power comes from Christ (Ephesians 6:10). Author and pastor David Platt notes, “we do not fight this battle for victory; we fight this battle from victory. We stand on the merits of the Lamb who was slain... who has already won the ultimate battle; and we sacrifice our lives in death-defying obedience to His commands.”
- B) Built on the victory of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross and the provision it provides, we “put on the whole armor of God” (6:11), a metaphor for living spiritually and physically integrated lives as Christ’s followers.
- C) Despite this, many blood-bought Christians sleepily ignore living spiritually, dulled by worldly counterfeits. Lulled by possessions and prosperity, choosing comfort and complacency, many Christians receive Christ as Savior and then live in His church, in their families, and in the world as though the spiritual world isn’t real.
- D) But God is real, Heaven is real, and eternity is real. And the enemy of God, the devil, is also real (6:11). The devil hates God, and desires that God’s image is destroyed, especially in people, because we are distinctively created in God’s image. The devil wants God’s image destroyed, for all people to experience a deserved and designed everlasting hell of suffering and separation. So, image-bearer of God, what reality are you living?

# Growth Group Guide Week 9: Ephesians 6:10-20

## Opener

What have you been taught about the spiritual realm, of demons specifically? What have you thought about them?

## Discussion

1. We seem to be in a culture that is now opposed to Christ, but His kingdom will still advance. How do you see Christ advancing spiritually in His word? How do you see our church advancing in this culture (or planning to, based on our vision)? How are you advancing Christ in your context?

## Bible Study

Read through Ephesians 6:10-20

1. Finally, be \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord and in the \_\_\_\_\_ of His \_\_\_\_\_. (6:10)
2. What is the purpose of putting on the full armor of God? (6:11)
3. Who are our enemies? (6:12)
4. Take up the whole armor of God that you be able to \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_, and having done \_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_. (6:13)
5. List the pieces in the armor of God:

Read about Christ's victory over His enemies in Psalm 110

1. What does the Lord do as King?
2. What does He do with His enemies?
3. How are His people involved? (110:3)

2. What is the character of Satan? How have you seen his character played out in your life, in your relationships, in your culture, and in this world?
3. The birth of Christ is God's declaration of war on the powers of this present age. In this war of good vs evil, we started out on the wrong side, and we cannot change sides in our own power. How do we rely on Jesus to bring victory and goodness in our lives, relationships, culture and world?

## Making Room to Make Disciples

How does spiritual warfare impact your relationships with unbelievers? Do you think there is a spiritual element that you do not see involved in making disciples of unbelievers? Have you noticed this with people in your life?

