

Ephesians – Week 17 – Standing in the Battle – Bible Study Helps

Title: Stand in the Battle

Sermon Summary: This sermon from Ephesians 6:10-13 addresses the reality of spiritual warfare that every believer faces daily. The sermon emphasizes that Christians are engaged in an invisible spiritual battle against a highly intelligent and organized enemy - Satan and his demonic forces. The central message is that victory in this warfare comes not from our own strength, but from being "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." The sermon challenges believers to put on the whole armor of God daily, recognize the enemy's strategies (wiles), and stand firm in faith. The sermon warns against self-sufficiency and emphasizes that spiritual strength comes from daily dependence on God through prayer, Bible study, and faithful obedience. The ultimate goal is not offensive warfare but to stand firm, remain faithful, and not be overrun by the enemy's attacks.

Key Points:

- The source of our strength is in the Lord, not in ourselves - we possess resurrection power through Christ
- Christians must daily put on the whole armor of God to withstand spiritual attacks
- The enemy is highly intelligent, organized, and employs specific strategies (wiles) to bring believers down
- Satan uses various tactics including deception, bitterness, impatience, envy, revenge, anger, unbelief, covetousness, self-reliance, compromise, lust, flattery, discouragement, pride, fear, busyness, greed, doubt, and worldliness
- The spiritual battle is not against flesh and blood but against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, and spiritual wickedness in high places
- Satan's forces are organized in ranks with demonic rulers assigned to territories and nations
- The command repeated four times is to "stand" - hold the line, don't retreat, don't surrender, don't quit
- Every believer will face seasons of intense spiritual testing ("the evil day")
- Victory comes through standing firm in God's strength, not negotiating with the devil
- Daily time with God in prayer and Bible study is essential preparation for spiritual battle

Scripture Reference:

- Ephesians 6:10-17 (primary passage)
- Ephesians 1:16-23 (resurrection power in believers)
- Romans 8:11 (Spirit of God dwelling in believers)

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- Isaiah 9:6 (Jesus as the Mighty God)
- Psalm 73:26 (God as our strength)
- Revelation 12:7-11 (war in heaven, Satan cast down)
- 1 Samuel 17:45-47 (David and Goliath - the battle is the Lord's)
- Daniel 10:13-21 (angelic warfare, prince of Persia)
- 2 Kings 6:15-17 (Elisha's servant sees angelic host)
- Luke 8:26-33 (demon-possessed man with Legion)
- 1 Peter 5:8 (devil as roaring lion seeking to devour)
- Matthew 4 (Jesus tempted by Satan in wilderness)

Stories:

- David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17) - example of trusting in God's strength rather than human ability
- Samson (Judges 13-16) - negative example of trusting in personal strength and self-sufficiency, leading to defeat
- Joseph (Genesis 37-39) - enduring seasons of intense testing while standing faithful to God
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3) - standing firm in the fiery furnace
- Daniel in the lion's den - refusing to compromise prayer life despite death threats
- Job - enduring severe testing while maintaining faith in God
- Elisha and his servant (2 Kings 6) - seeing the unseen angelic forces protecting them
- The demon-possessed with "Legion" - illustrating demonic possession and spiritual warfare
- Illustration of leaving home without prayer visualizing the dragon waiting to devour the family
- Wrestling anecdote illustrating hand-to-hand combat nature of spiritual warfare
- Beach illustration with children and waves representing the need to stand firm against incoming attacks

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Discipleship Questions

How does the concept of being 'strong in the Lord' rather than in ourselves challenge our natural tendency toward self-reliance and independence?

In what specific areas of your life do you find yourself most vulnerable to the devil's 'wiles' or strategies, and how can you better prepare for those attacks?

The sermon mentions that the devil uses different strategies for different people (lust for David, discouragement for Elijah, pride for Uzziah). What particular strategy does the enemy seem to use most effectively against you?

How does understanding that we have 'resurrection power' inside us through the Holy Spirit change the way we approach daily spiritual battles?

The sermon warns against thinking 'I got this' as a sign that we've already stepped outside God's strength. When are you most tempted to rely on your own strength rather than depending on God?

What does it practically look like in your daily routine to 'put on the whole armor of God' each morning before facing the spiritual battles of the day?

How does the reality of an organized, intelligent spiritual enemy change your perspective on the struggles and temptations you face in everyday life?

The sermon emphasizes 'stand' four times as the goal of spiritual warfare rather than offensive attack. Why do you think God's strategy focuses on standing firm rather than aggressive warfare?

Considering the examples of Joseph, Daniel, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, how can we prepare ourselves spiritually for seasons of intense testing before they arrive?

In what ways might you be unknowingly 'negotiating with the devil' through small compromises rather than standing firmly on God's Word like Jesus did in the wilderness?

Small Group Guide: Stand in the Battle

Ephesians 6:10-13

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open your hearts to understand the spiritual battle you face and to strengthen your faith in His power.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you felt overwhelmed by a challenge but God showed up in an unexpected way.

Key Scripture

Ephesians 6:10-13 *"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 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."*

Key Takeaways

1. **The Source of Our Strength is God Alone**
 - Christian strength is never found in ourselves
 - We must daily depend on the Lord's power
 - Yesterday's strength doesn't carry over to today
2. **We Have a Real, Intelligent Enemy**
 - Satan is highly organized and strategic
 - He uses specific "wiles" (schemes) tailored to each person
 - The battle is unseen but very real
3. **Our Goal is to Stand**
 - Victory means remaining faithful and not retreating

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- We must put on the whole armor of God daily
 - Expect "evil days" of intense spiritual attack
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Battle

1. **Before this sermon, how did you view spiritual warfare?** Has your perspective changed? How?
2. **Read Ephesians 1:19-21.** What does this passage tell us about the power available to believers? How does this relate to the spiritual battle described in chapter 6?
3. **The sermon mentioned that many Christians go through life "not paying any attention" to the spiritual war.** What are some signs that someone might be unaware of the spiritual battle in their life?

The Source of Our Strength

4. **What's the difference between asking "Lord, make me stronger" and "Lord, keep me close to You because You are my strength"?** Why does this distinction matter?
5. **The sermon mentioned we often gain confidence in ourselves over time.** Share an area where you've caught yourself thinking "I got this" instead of depending on God. What was the result?
6. **Look at 1 Samuel 17:45-47 (David and Goliath).** What can we learn from David's approach to his giant? How did he demonstrate being "strong in the Lord"?
7. **Compare David's story with Samson's (Judges 13-16).** What happens when we trust in our own strength rather than God's presence?

The Strategy of Our Enemy

8. **The sermon listed various "wiles" the devil used against biblical figures:**
 - Eve: Deception
 - Cain: Bitterness/hatred
 - Abraham/Sarah: Impatience
 - Joseph's brothers: Envy
 - Moses: Anger
 - David: Lust
 - Elijah: Discouragement
 - Peter: Fear of men

Which of these strategies do you find yourself most vulnerable to? (Be honest but appropriate with the group)

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9. **Read 1 Peter 5:8.** The devil is described as a "roaring lion seeking whom he may devour." How does this image change how you view daily temptations?
10. **The sermon mentioned that the devil uses "calculated attacks by personal temptations."** What does it mean that his attacks are personalized? How should this awareness change our approach to spiritual warfare?
11. **In Daniel 10:12-13, we see demonic warfare over nations.** How does this passage help you understand the organized nature of spiritual forces? How should this affect our prayers?

The Goal of Standing

12. **The word "stand" appears four times in Ephesians 6:10-14.** Why do you think God emphasizes standing rather than attacking or advancing?
 13. **What does it mean to "stand" in practical, daily terms?** Give specific examples from your life.
 14. **The sermon mentions "the evil day"—seasons of unusually intense testing.** Have you experienced such a season? How did you see God's faithfulness during that time? (Or if you're in one now, how can the group pray for you?)
 15. **Read 2 Kings 6:15-17 (Elisha and his servant).** When have you needed God to "open your eyes" to see His power in your circumstances?
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Personal Reflection

Take 3-5 minutes of silence for group members to reflect on these questions individually:

- Am I trying to fight today's battles in my own strength?
 - What "wile" (strategy) does the enemy most often use against me?
 - Have I put on the whole armor of God today?
 - In what area do I need to stop negotiating with the devil and simply say, "It is written"?
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Practical Application

This Week's Challenge

Daily Armor Check Each morning this week, before you start your day:

1. Get on your knees and pray
2. Ask God to be your strength for this specific day
3. Mentally "put on" each piece of armor (we'll study them in detail next week):
 - Belt of truth
 - Breastplate of righteousness

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- Shoes of the gospel of peace
 - Shield of faith
 - Helmet of salvation
 - Sword of the Spirit (God's Word)
4. Ask God to help you recognize the enemy's schemes when they come

Accountability Questions:

- What time will you wake up to do this?
- Where will you pray?
- Who will hold you accountable?

Additional Applications

Choose one:

1. **Scripture Memorization:** Memorize Ephesians 6:10-11 this week. When temptation comes, speak it aloud.
 2. **Identify Your Wiles:** Journal about the specific strategies the enemy uses against you. What patterns do you see? Share with an accountability partner.
 3. **Prayer Warrior:** Commit to praying daily for one person in the group who is in their "evil day" of testing.
 4. **Study Biblical Examples:** Read one of the stories mentioned in the sermon (Job, Joseph, Daniel, etc.) and note how they stood firm. What can you apply?
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Prayer Time

Group Prayer Focus

1. **Confession:** Acknowledge areas where we've tried to fight in our own strength
2. **Petition:** Ask God to open our eyes to the reality of spiritual warfare
3. **Strength:** Pray for each member to be strong in the Lord this week
4. **Protection:** Pray for families represented in the group—that they would stand firm
5. **Specific Needs:** Allow members to share specific battles they're facing

Prayer Prompts

- "Lord, help us to be strong in You and not in ourselves..."
- "Open our eyes to see the spiritual battle as You see it..."
- "Protect us from the wiles of the enemy, especially in our areas of weakness..."
- "Help us to stand firm and not retreat or compromise..."
- "Give us victory in our 'evil day' of testing..."

Looking Ahead

Next week we'll dive deeper into the individual pieces of the armor of God. Come prepared to discuss:

- Which piece of armor do you most need right now?
 - Where have you been vulnerable because you weren't wearing the whole armor?
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Closing Thought

"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

This isn't just good advice—it's a command. You cannot fight today's spiritual battles in yesterday's strength or your own power. Draw near to God today. Put on the armor. And stand.

Additional Resources

- **For Further Study:** Read Ephesians chapters 1-5 to understand the full context of chapter 6
 - **Recommended Reading:** "The Screwtape Letters" by C.S. Lewis (fictional insight into demonic strategy)
 - **Worship Song:** "Stand in Your Love" by Josh Baldwin or "Surrounded (Fight My Battles)" by UPPERROOM
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Remember: The battle is real, but the victory is already won in Christ. Our job is to stand firm in His strength.

5-Day Devotional:

Standing Strong in Spiritual Warfare

Day 1: The Source of Our Strength

Reading: Ephesians 6:10-13; Psalm 73:26

Devotional: "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." These words remind us that Christian victory never comes from self-reliance. Like a lamp that gives no light apart from its power source, we possess no spiritual strength apart from God. Every morning presents a new battle requiring fresh dependence on Him. The resurrection power that raised Christ from the dead now dwells within you. Today, resist the temptation to say "I've got this." Instead, pray "You've got this, Lord." Your flesh and heart may fail, but God is the strength of your heart forever. Begin each day on your knees, acknowledging your complete dependence on His mighty power.

Day 2: Recognizing the Enemy's Strategy

Reading: 1 Peter 5:8-9; Ephesians 6:11-12

Devotional: We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against a highly intelligent, organized spiritual enemy. The devil employs calculated strategies—wiles designed specifically for you. For some, it's lust; for others, discouragement, pride, or busyness. Like David facing Goliath or Daniel in the lion's den, you face an enemy seeking to devour you and your family. The devil's goal is to make you think you don't need God, that you can handle life on your own. This is deception. Your enemy is real, powerful, and relentless—but he is not almighty. God has already defeated him through Christ. Recognize the attacks when they come, and stand firm in faith.

Day 3: Putting On the Whole Armor

Reading: Ephesians 6:13-17; Romans 8:11

Devotional: "Put on the whole armor of God" is not a suggestion—it's a command for daily obedience. Just as Roman soldiers wouldn't enter battle half-dressed, you cannot face spiritual warfare unprepared. Each piece of armor matters: truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, and God's Word. This isn't a children's story; it's your survival guide. Before rushing into your day, suit up spiritually. Spend time in God's Word. Pray for protection over your mind and heart. Shield yourself with faith against the fiery darts coming your way. The battle is real, and the enemy is waiting. But when you're clothed in God's armor, you can withstand any attack.

Day 4: Standing in the Evil Day

Reading: Daniel 3:16-18; Job 1:20-22

Devotional: There will come seasons of unusually intense testing—your "evil day." Like Job losing everything, Joseph sold into slavery, or Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego facing the furnace, you'll encounter moments when the enemy unleashes coordinated attacks. In these times, God's command remains: stand. Don't retreat. Don't surrender. Don't quit. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego declared, "Our God is able to deliver us...but even if He doesn't, we will not bow." That's standing faith. Sometimes God doesn't remove the fire; He joins you in it. When everything falls apart, when injustice prevails, when you feel overwhelmed—stand firm. Trust His timing. The battle is the Lord's, and He will bring you through.

Day 5: Standing Faithful Until He Comes

Reading: Revelation 12:7-11; 1 Corinthians 15:58

Devotional: "Having done all, to stand." After you've obeyed, prayed, trusted, and resisted—keep standing. The victory in spiritual warfare isn't about conquering territory; it's about remaining faithful. History is repeating itself as we approach Christ's return. The world grows darker, opposition intensifies, but our mission remains clear: preach the gospel, make disciples, rescue souls. You overcome the enemy by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony. Jesus Christ has already won the war; we're called to hold the line until He returns. Don't negotiate with the devil. Don't compromise. Stand on God's Word. Be strong in His might. Your faithfulness today echoes into eternity.

Reflection Questions for the Week:

- Where am I trying to fight in my own strength instead of God's?
- What specific "wiles" does the enemy use most effectively against me?
- Am I putting on the whole armor of God daily, or am I entering battle unprepared?
- How will I respond when my "evil day" comes?
- What does standing faithful look like in my current circumstances?