

SPIRITUAL: WARFARE

LifeGroup LEADER Notes

Ephesians 6:10-20

LEADER'S INTRO

The fact that we are both physical and spiritual beings, body and soul, is obvious. What's not so obvious is what it means to be spiritual. Some today use the label "spiritual" to mean they believe in a higher power but not in organized religion. Others use spiritual to mean that they have a moral compass, guiding values like being kind to other people and caring for the environment. Simply put, there's a lot of confusion in and out of church as to what it means to be spiritual. **Our hope is that this series will not only clear up some of the confusion, but also ignite a passion for spiritual growth.** In this series we'll be touching on spiritual warfare, strongholds, disciplines and gifts. We're so glad that you're along for the journey with us, knowing that God will strengthen and stretch us as to dive in together. Our launching point is spiritual warfare. To be spiritual we must first recognize that it's not just a matter of what is happening inside us, it's also a reality around us.

Given the subject matter, we strongly recommend you pray before you start. Pray for God given protection, insight, conviction and application. Once you've prayed, take a few minutes to watch the following video together. BTW, a great way to prepare for the study is to read the passage, watch the video and answer the questions on your own before hand.

Video Element -- J. D. Greear on Ephesians 6:10-18

<https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/195647?episode=9>

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Leaders, be ready! This week we are diving right into the deep end. Be strategic and connect with your LifeGroup ahead of time. Make sure everyone knows each other, and find out how the summer has been.

Next Level - Throughout the notes you will see "Next Level." This indicates that it is time to read your group and determine if this is an area your group is ready to dig deeper into together or if it's better left for personal reflection.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Read Ephesians 6:10-18

1. Pick one of the following.
 - a. Share an *Aha!* from either Sunday's sermon or J D Greer's video.
 - b. If you took up the challenge, how has the Ephesians 6:10-18 daily reading impacted you?
 - c. How does the conversation of Spiritual Warfare sit with you?

2. Commenting on 6:10, J D says *If dependance is the objective, then weakness is an advantage.*
 - a. Do you tend to think of your weaknesses this way?
 - b. Can you think of a weakness that God has used to grow greater dependance?
[This question might be too personal for new groups or new people. One way of softening the blow would be to ask for examples from the Bible and history.]
 - c. ***Next Level*** Use the biblical example of Paul. What scriptures can you use to prove this?

3. 6:12 tells us that *our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against . . . spiritual forces of evil.*
 - a. Do you tend to make too little or too much of the devil and his schemes?
 - b. What effect does this have on you spiritually?

4. The call to stand firm against the devil's schemes is not limited to Sundays at church. Our home, school, work and leisure lives are all part of the frontlines of the battlegrounds.
 - a. To raise our awareness, with spiritual eyes, what are some of the places in our community or city that you can see the devil's lies and schemes being believed or followed? Have someone write a list of these items as they're discussed. At the end of the evening you will pray through them. [Remember this is not a battle against humanity, "flesh and blood." People are the ones who Jesus gave His life for, and we need to remember this as we speak about them. This is not a time for a political rant, or belligerent bunny trail. This is a time to look with Spiritual eyes at our culture and context.]
 - b. ***Next Level*** Where is "*standing firm*" hardest for you and why?

5. Reread through the armour Paul uses as an illustration in 6:14-17. [This is like the act of Communion. There are physical elements that connect to an abstract spiritual reality. Help your group to remember and understand these abstract concepts by rooting them in the physical examples.]
 - a. In a sentence or two, what does each armour represent? Feel free to refer back to the J.D. Greear video and/or to the notes below. [Idea: Depending on your

group and time you might want to get people to each pick a piece of armour. Give them a minute or two to think about it and then have the group report back to each other.]

- b. ***Next Level*** How do your definitions compare to J.D.'s or the commentary provided below?
6. Time to get practical!
- a. How might one go about putting on each piece of armour? [One way to help people think through putting on the armour is to get them to think through the connection between spiritual disciplines--reading, meditating, memorizing, praying, fasting, serving, giving, silence, etc--and spiritual armour.]
 - b. The Apostle Paul went out of his way to underscore the importance of putting on ***all* God's armour**, not just some.
 - i. What armour do you gravitate to most readily?
 - ii. What armour do you find most challenging to put on?
 - iii. What happens when you don't put all the armour on?
 - c. Note that two times we are commanded to put on the armour of God (6:11 & 6:13) followed by the command to pray (6:18). Why is prayer essential to being a spiritual person? [Prayer is driven by our admission of being weak and needy and is an expression of our dependence on God.]
 - d. Note the command is to "*pray in the Spirit.*" As J.D. put it, *don't pray to God but with God* which he describes as praying with confidence in God's love and plan for us while also listening to his leading and nudging. How can you practice praying in the Spirit more? [Help people think outside the box here. Note the "*with all prayers*" in the verse. There's not just one kind of prayer - before bed or a meal. There's literally all kinds of ways to pray. For example, taking a walk with a friend and praying back and forth as you do (eyes open) is a great way to tune in to God's heart while also enjoying his creation.]
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PRAYER

Suggestions for prayer format this week.

- Divide up into groups of 3-4 people.
 - We encourage you ***not to skip dividing up into groups for prayer.*** This is a great way for people to get to know each other. Consider it an act of strategic leadership in discipleship. Most people don't feel comfortable praying in large groups. Smaller groups also foster deeper praying. It also helps set a precedent. Throughout this series we will be calling on people to pray in small groups given the subject matter..
- Following the pattern of 6:18, prayer through both personal and corporate requests.

Pray for...

- All of God's Church to stand strong in the spiritual warfare.
- For the churches in Kingston to stand strong in its spiritual warfare.
- Pray through the list you came up with during discussion in section 4a.

APPENDIX - The Armour of God

The belt of truth pictures the large leather belt the Roman soldier wore. It held other weapons and kept his outer garments in place. To put on the belt of truth can be understood as accepting the truth of the Bible and choosing to follow it with integrity.

The breastplate of righteousness pictures the metal armor in the shape of a human torso common to the Roman uniform. To put on the breastplate can be understood as choosing not to harbor and nurture known sin. It is striving to be like Christ and live according to his ways of righteousness.

Feet fitted with the readiness pictures the hobnailed shoes which kept the soldiers footing sure in battle. To put on these shoes could be understood as believing the promises of God in the gospel and counting on them to be true for you. Faith in these promises yields peace in the Christian's life.

The shield of faith pictures the small, round shield the Roman soldier used to deflect blows from the sword, arrow, or spear of the enemy. To take up this shield can be understood as rejecting temptations to doubt, sin or quit, telling yourself the truth and choosing on the basis of the truth to do the right thing.

The helmet of salvation pictures the Roman soldier's metal protective headgear. It does not refer to our salvation in Christ. First Thessalonians speaks of the helmet of the "hope of salvation," which is probably a parallel idea. That being the case, taking the helmet of salvation could be understood as resting our hope in the future and living in this world according to the value system of the next.

The sword of the Spirit pictures the soldier's weapon sheathed to his belt and used both for offensive and defensive purposes. Taking the sword of the Spirit—defined for us as the Word of God—can be understood as using Scripture specifically in life's situations to fend off attacks of the enemy and put him to flight. We see the example of Jesus using the Scripture this way in Matthew 4:1–11.

Always keep on praying. We petition God for our own needs in the battle, and we pray for the spiritual victory of other saints.

Anders, M. (1999). [*Galatians-Colossians*](#) (Vol. 8, pp. 190–191). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.