

## **BATTLEFIELD**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Ephesians chapter 6

Up to this point in Ephesians, we have been overwhelmed by God's blessings, lavished with his grace, and awed by his majesty. We have also seen the importance of linking our beliefs with our behaviors so that we live consistent with our calling as God's people. It's been a remarkable journey through this book but, if we're not careful, we might come away with the idea that it's easy being a believer. With God's blessings so grand, and the provision and power so readily available for holy living, we might be tempted to view our Christian life in a lighthearted fashion like we're children playing on a playground. If we do so, we would be tragically mistaken.

Why? Because of what Paul teaches us in today's chapter reading: *"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."* We are engaged in a battle with forces of evil that are spiritual in origin. There is a very real spiritual enemy, the devil, who has schemes to trip you up. His goal is to separate people from God where he can and to make folks unfruitful and miserable when he can't. As we saw back in 2 Corinthians chapter 2, he comes with demonic plans to tempt, ensnare, hinder, harass, oppress and intimidate you. He looks to establish footholds in your life (Eph 4:27). He certainly doesn't play fair and he plays for keeps. Believers who view the Christian life as a picnic are setting themselves up for disaster.

The good news is that we are not defenseless in this battle. No, not at all! According to Paul, the Lord has supplied us with quality armor that keeps us safe: a belt of truth, a breastplate of righteousness, proper footwear, a shield of faith, a helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. Such armor, contrary to some folks' beliefs, is not to be put on every morning because that implies you took it off at night! Instead, each part is to be a permanent piece of equipment that adorns our life. How so? Because each piece is linked to our relationship with Christ, to his gracious gift of salvation, and to the character he develops within us by His Spirit. Remember, everything we have according to Paul in Ephesians is because we are in Christ and that is true in the morning, afternoon, evening and overnight. We put the armor on at our salvation and we keep it on throughout our Christian life. We meditate on God's Word day and night so the sword of the Spirit, our offensive weapon, is available any time for battle to declare *"It is written."*

So, be warned and encouraged child of God. You're in a battle but the Lord who conquered Satan at the cross and triumphed over the principalities is our Commander-in-Chief and he can be counted on to lead us through to victory. He conquered and that makes us more than conquerors. *"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."*

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** Go back through the list of armor. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to utilize fully each piece provided for you so that you can take your stand.

**Take-a-way:** *The Christian life is a battlefield, not a playground.*