

## Ephesians 6:10-18

### *Stand and Pray*

**Main Idea:** God equips us with His armor so that we stand strong against the enemy, using His Word not merely to fight, but to pray.

In 2021, Alan Slattery tried to rob a bank, and failed. [photo]

- He slipped a note to the bank teller, and she simply couldn't read his handwriting. [photo]
- He tried two more times, and actually robbed one bank for \$3,300, but ultimately got caught. [photo]
- He was found guilty and sentenced to up to 6 years in prison.
- When he was released in 2024, he was 71 years old.
- But in 2025, he gave this note to another bank teller. [photo]
- And once again, he was arrested. Here's his mug shot. [photo]

We live in a sinful world.<sup>1</sup>

- That's made clear not only through the Bible, from time and time again through current events.<sup>2</sup>
- But the problem isn't just somewhere out there, it's even our own lives and hearts.<sup>3</sup>
- So when we gather as a church, we're not saying that we're better than others.<sup>4</sup>
- We're saying that we rejoice in the grace of God, and we need to rely on His strength as we seek to follow His plan for our lives.<sup>5</sup>

Read Ephesians 6:10-18

One experience that unites all mankind, even if they say otherwise, is weakness. [Matthew 26:41]

- We all, at times, feel weak and unsure of ourselves.<sup>6</sup>
  - And even when we don't feel weak, it's likely that we are weak and just don't know it. [Galatians 6:3]
  - Sometimes that causes us to double-down on our pride and self-reliance. [1 Corinthians 10:12]
  - But often our weakness causes us to shrink back in fear.<sup>7</sup>
- But God gives us the armor to find strength when we feel weak.<sup>8</sup>

In fact, God even commands us to be strong, but in a certain way. (v. 10-11)

- Our strength does not come from ourselves, but from Christ.<sup>9</sup>
- So we're called to "put on the whole armor of God" so that we can stand against the devil's schemes.
- There's a great example of this in the story of David and Goliath. [1 Samuel 17:45]
- We do not fight in our own power, but in the Lord's. Our dependence must be on Him from the start.<sup>10</sup>

Because, the reality is, we are all engaged in battle, whether we know it or not. (v. 12-13)

- I recently learned about a woman who was forced to rob a bank.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 John 5:19

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 6:11

<sup>3</sup> Romans 3:23

<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9

<sup>5</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:9

<sup>6</sup> Romans 8:26

<sup>7</sup> 2 Timothy 1:7

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 73:26

<sup>9</sup> Philippians 4:13

<sup>10</sup> Exodus 14:14

- If the courts chose to prosecute her instead of the kidnappers, they would be focused on the wrong person.
- We can often get so focused on the wrong people so easily, thinking they're our enemies.<sup>11</sup>
- Our real struggle is spiritual, and it's against rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. [chart]
  - And because the enemy is unseen, and spiritual, we need God's armor.
  - Don't misidentify the enemy (people are not our enemy).<sup>12</sup>
  - Remember the true spiritual battle and stand firm in Christ.<sup>13</sup>

And God Himself gives us the tools to do so. (v. 14-17)

- Paul details each piece of armor, all rooted in Christ and the gospel.
  - First, he mentions the Belt of Truth.
    - For a Roman soldier, the belt was what secured all the other pieces of armor together.
    - Truth holds everything in place. It's a foundation for everything else.
    - And it's God's truth, revealed in His Word, that keeps us from stumbling.<sup>14</sup>
    - And Jesus Himself said, "I am the Truth."<sup>15</sup>
    - To fasten the belt of truth is not only to read, memorize, and believe the Bible, but to cling to Christ, who holds our lives together and keeps us from being entangled by lies.
  - Second, Paul talks about the Breastplate of Righteousness.
    - A Roman breastplate covered the chest and vital organs.
    - In the same way, the righteousness of Christ covers and protects us.<sup>16</sup>
    - When Satan accuses or tempts, righteousness guards us from fatal blows. We stand not in our own goodness, but in Christ's.
  - Third comes the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace.
    - Roman soldiers wore heavy sandals with studded nails for traction.
    - Spiritually, the gospel gives us both mobility and stability.
      - The gospel is simply that although we've all sinned, Jesus saves us through His body broken and blood shed for us on the cross.<sup>17</sup>
      - So even when everything around us is in chaos, we can stand firm in peace.
    - This is not peace as the world gives, but the deep, settled peace of reconciliation with God that makes us unshakable, because Jesus Himself is our peace.
  - Next, Paul talks about the Shield of Faith.
    - The Roman battle shield was large, often 4 feet tall and 2.5 feet wide, covered with leather that could be soaked in water. When flaming arrows were shot, the wet shield would extinguish them.
    - So Paul pictures the temptations and lies of Satan as fiery darts aimed at our souls.
    - Faith in Jesus and His love for us extinguishes those darts before they can pierce us.<sup>18</sup>
    - We lift the shield of faith every time we say, "I believe God's Word over the enemy's lie."
  - Next comes the Helmet of Salvation.
    - The Roman helmet was made of bronze or iron, lined with leather, protecting the head from fatal strikes.
    - Salvation guards our heads, too.

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<sup>11</sup> Matthew 7:3

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 5:44

<sup>13</sup> James 4:7

<sup>14</sup> John 17:17

<sup>15</sup> John 14:6

<sup>16</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:30

<sup>17</sup> John 3:16

<sup>18</sup> Romans 8:1

- We're protected by knowing who we are in Christ, by resting in the assurance of His saving work, and by setting our minds on eternal hope rather than temporary struggles.<sup>19</sup>
- Without assurance, the mind is vulnerable; with it, we are unshakable.
- Finally, Paul ends with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.
  - This is the only offensive piece mentioned in the armor of God.
  - The Roman soldier's sword was short, designed for both defense and close combat.
  - God's Word is the Spirit's sword! It pierces to the heart, rebukes the devil's lies, and strengthens us in battle. It is not only defensive, but also offensive, enabling us to push back against darkness with truth and love.<sup>20</sup>
  - And Jesus Himself is the Word of God.<sup>21</sup>
- In other words, to "put on the armor of God" is to put on Christ Himself. He is our truth, our righteousness, our peace, our salvation, the object of our faith, and the living Word of God.

But notice that in putting on this armor, the final command is not to fight, but to pray. (v. 17-18)

- The way that we fight, spiritually, isn't primarily through words or actions, as important as those can be.
- The way that we fight is through prayer.
  - We pray God's promises back to Him.
  - We pray Scripture into our own hearts.
  - We pray for others with God's Word in hand.
- The armor of God is not just about standing against the enemy: it's about staying connected to God.
- This week, don't just read the Word: pray it. Turn the armor of God into frequent prayers. In fact, let's pray this together right now:
  - Lord, fasten me with the belt of truth: help me walk in honesty and cling to Jesus, who is Truth.
  - Guard my heart with the breastplate of righteousness: thank You for Christ's righteousness.
  - Fit my feet with the readiness of the gospel of peace: make me ready to share it with others.
  - Help me to cling to the shield of faith: help me to trust You when the enemy throws doubts my way.
  - Cover my mind with the helmet of salvation: remind me constantly of my hope in Christ.
  - Place in my hand the sword of the Spirit: teach me to effectively use Your Word to fight evil, even the evil in my own heart.
  - And Lord, keep me praying in your Spirit, at all times, for myself and for all the saints: because prayer is how I stay close to You.

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<sup>19</sup> Colossians 3:2, 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

<sup>20</sup> Hebrews 4:12

<sup>21</sup> John 1:1, 14