

# EVEN THE DEMONS

JAMES 2:19

## Week of January 23 – A Spiritual Warfare Handbook<sup>1</sup>

### Overview:

This spiritual world in which we live is more real than we know. But into this spiritual darkness, Jesus' light has crashed in to replace lies with truth and destruction with power. Jesus also gives believers that same authority over darkness. "Even the Demons" believe this and shudder, knowing they are already defeated!

Last week we began looked at how Satan uses deception to distract us from our mission. This week we'll look at specific spiritual warfare tactics to fight against the devil's schemes. Jesus has all power and authority over the spiritual forces of evil and empowers believers with that same authority to bring God's kingdom here on earth.

### Group Objectives:

- Reflect on this past Sunday's message and other devotional reading.
- Pray together and provide encouragement for other group members.
- Have each person apply specific next steps for their lives related to spiritual warfare & today's text.

### DNA statement(s) tie-in:

- *We are all for Jesus.* We know God best through Jesus, our Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King. Jesus has power and authority over all things.
- *We are empowered by the Holy Spirit.* God the Father speaks to us through the Bible, and we commune with him through prayer.

### Conversation Starters:

- Are you a parent or grandparent of young children who like to wrestle with you? Or did you ever "play wrestle" with your friends, or "actually wrestle" for a club or on a school's team? If so, what do you remember about the experience(s)?

### Read and Reflect: Inductive Bible Study Discussion

#### **This week's text is Ephesians 6:10-20**

*If you've ever experienced any of those forms of wrestling, you know what it's like to be near another person and to "wrestle" with them for fun or sport. In Ephesians 6:12, Paul uses the Greek word palē which means when translated, "wrestling - a contest between two in which each tries to throw the other, which is decided when the victor is able to hold his opponent down with his hand upon his neck."<sup>2</sup>*

**Read Ephesians 6:10-20 (NIV)** (Also ask someone to read v. 12 as a stand-alone verse once the initial reading is done.)

- According to the NIV Application Commentary this is the only place in the New Testament where this word palē, translated struggle, is used and the implication is significant. When we look at the whole of Paul's message in these verses we come to understand that we are in a struggle or are wrestling with spiritual forces as Christians. We are then encouraged to find victory in the struggle by "drawing strength from Christ."
- We are to be strong in the Lord by drawing upon his strength over our lifetimes. We don't become strong by some human effort, we become strong by drawing nearer to Jesus.
- **So, how do we do that? What are some specific practices that draw us nearer to Jesus?**

<sup>1</sup> This week's lesson was written by Marc Montayne and edited by Dawn Gentry.

<sup>2</sup> Blue Letter Bible. *G3823 - palē - strong's greek lexicon (ESV)*. Blue Letter Bible. (n.d.). Retrieved December 10, 2021, from <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g3823/esv/mgmt/0-1/>.

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- Paul's analogy is to compare Christ-like character to first century weapons of war. As Christians our only true weapon is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In John 14 Christ says, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth".
- Our weapons are not swords and shields but rather truth, righteousness, readiness, faith, salvation, and the Word of God that comes to us through Christ's victory over death
- **Do you think these weapons (truth, righteousness, readiness, etc). are gifts given to us by the indwelling Spirit or are they practices of obedience to God in some sense? Why?**
- The answer is both. Let's look at faith or the shield of faith as an example.
- We could draw the conclusion that the shield of faith is something that we utilize through our own ability to believe, but Paul's meaning for us in this analogy is about God's faithfulness to us, not our human effort. As you read through this passage and consider The Armor of God, I encourage you to consider each piece of the armor by asking two questions.
  - **What action am I to take?**
  - **What action is God taking, or has God already taken on my behalf?**
- **Where might you recognize "the devil's schemes" or "the powers of this dark world" in your own life?**
  - A hint, if you're thinking of government or social constructs, pause for a moment and think more about "personal spiritual beings seeking to disrupt life as God intended it". (NIV Application Bible)

## Summarize and Respond

Consider breaking into groups of 2-3 to discuss the following

- When you consider The Armor of God, what is Paul calling you to do with each of the weapons mentioned?
  - The belt of truth
  - The breastplate of righteousness
  - Feet fitted with readiness
  - The shield of faith
  - The helmet of salvation
  - The sword of the Spirit that is the Word of God

## Prayer Prompts:

- Allow time for silent reflection on the following questions:
  - *How might I need to incorporate spiritual warfare into my own daily practice?*
- A worship song to consider including - *My Weapon* by Natalie Grant (Sacred Version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BpirBRWGU&list=RDo4KEgwLDLHw&index=28>

- Invite members of the group to share personal prayer requests.

## To Learn More:

- **Plan to attend the Soul Care conference with Rob Reimer, Feb 3-5.** For more information, go to <https://cccomaha.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/947190>
- Tim Keller on Spiritual Warfare – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcPlfM7w-ZE&list=RDLVJcPlfM7w-ZE&start\\_radio=1&rv=JcPlfM7w-ZE&t=9](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcPlfM7w-ZE&list=RDLVJcPlfM7w-ZE&start_radio=1&rv=JcPlfM7w-ZE&t=9)
- "Strength for the Battle" – A series from Alistair Begg – <https://www.truthforlife.org/resources/series/strength-for-the-battle/>
- Mark I. Bubeck, *Warfare Praying: Biblical Strategies for Overcoming the Adversary*, 2016