

☞ Be the Church

The church is God's people. Several images in Ephesians help us to understand just what that means. **The Church is the body of Christ.** He is the head. **We are his hands and feet.** We work together in unity, **representing Christ to the world. The church is God's temple. He wants to fill you with his spirit** and live in you and have full access to every part of your life. **The church is God's family.** He is our perfect, loving father. **We are brothers and sisters** who put up with each other, encourage each other and forgive each other.

☞ Last time... **Church, we are the Bride of Christ.** He loves us intensely and sacrificially. He wants us to be pure and holy; trustworthy and wise servants; generous and thoughtful; **honoring and submissive to him**; becoming more like him. We are marrying into a royal kingdom.

☞ The Church is; we are the Army of God, Ephesians 6:10-18

1. ☞ We have a real Enemy

v. 11 the Devil

v. 12 **Spiritual forces of evil; not flesh and blood**

☞ In John 8:44 he is a murderer and the **Father of all lies**

In 2 Corinthians 4:4 he is the god of this age who blinds people's minds to the truth

In 2 Corinthians 12:7 he is a tormenter

☞ In 1 Thessalonians 3:5 he is a **tempter**

In 1 Peter 5:8 he is a roaring lion looking to devour

In Revelation 9:11 he is Apollyon, the Destroyer

In Revelation 12:3 he is the great Dragon who pursues and devours

In Revelation 12:9 he is Satan who leads the whole world astray

☞ In Revelation 12:10 he is the **Accuser of the brothers**

v. 11 we take our stand against his schemes

1 Timothy 3:7 mentions the trap of the devil

2 Corinthians 2:11 says we are not unaware of his schemes

☞ So, let's talk about his traps and schemes. I call these the **Devil's Devices: Deception; Division; Distraction; Doubt; Discouragement**

Ultimately, he wants to destroy us...

☞ Remember, **we are the body of Christ... the Devil wants to disable us**

We are the temple of God... the Devil wants to desecrate us

We are the family of God... the Devil wants to divide us

We are the bride of Christ... the Devil wants to debase us

We are the army of God... the Devil wants to disarm us

All of these things are traps and schemes of the enemy. When we are discouraged, it's the enemy. When we are deceived, it's the enemy. When we are divided, it's the enemy. Don't be fooled. To be at odds with each other is actually part of his strategy. To dive into desecration and debauchery is part of his strategy. Don't be deceived; don't be distracted; but stand firm!

2. ☞ We have reliable Equipment

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. **4** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **5** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The list in Ephesians 6 is primarily defensive, for our protection so that we can stand. One ☞ of the ways we stand is simply by **knowing who we are in Christ**. We are his body; we are his temple; we are his family; we are his bride; and in verse 18 it says we are saints.

We've talked before about being spiritually clothed with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Today, we need to be in our battle gear...

☞ **Truth** – Satan is a liar, but we **know the truth** and are not deceived. As well, we **speak the truth**. As the body Christ and the family of God, we must have open and honest communication. It is misunderstandings and hidden motives that disable and divide us. So, let's always be truthful.

☞ **Righteousness** – This is the **consistent daily walk** of the Christian. Satan is the accuser, but if we walk in the light, we give him no opportunity to attack. This kind of living guards our hearts (the breastplate).

Ephesians 5:3-4

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. **4** Nor should

there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

As the temple of God, immorality and impurity will bring desecration and disruption to our fellowship with God. So, let's walk consistently with God.

☞ **Peace** – Christ gives us peace with God and with each other.

Ephesians 4:3

Make every effort to **keep the unity** of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

When we walk in the way of peace, Satan can't reach us. As the family of God, it's when there is strife and when we are not living peacefully together, that we become divided. And once divided, we are much easier targets for the enemy. Let's keep the unity and be at peace.

☞ **Faith** – We maintain a confident hope in the reality and power of God. Remember, in the Garden of Eden? His ploy was to cast doubt... "Did God really say?" This **trust** can extinguish the doubts that the enemy casts on us.

☞ Faith can also mean **faithfulness**. We know this is a highly treasured characteristic that God looks for. As the bride of Christ, it's when we are unfaithful and indulging in sinful behavior that we become debased and degraded. But Christ is looking for a bride and church without spot or wrinkle. So, let's be faithful to him.

☞ **Salvation** – this helmet is a mind focused on our ultimate salvation when Christ returns.

Colossians 3:2,4

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things... When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

His return means our ultimate victory. As the army of God, when we take our eyes off of the goal and don't really believe in our victory, then the enemy has disarmed us. So, let's keep our eyes on the end goal. Christ is coming soon and the victory is his and ours with him.

☞ **The Word of God** – this is our offensive weapon. His word drives the enemy back.

Revelation 12:11

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony

In John 18 when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus, he spoke and they drew back and fell to the ground.

Hebrews 4:12

☞ For the **word of God is living and active**. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

☞ All of this armor is related to the Bible, so **Read your Bible:**

John 17:17 says that the word is truth.

2 Timothy 3:16 says scripture trains us in righteousness.

Right here it says that readiness comes from the gospel.

Romans 10:17 says faith comes from the word.

Romans 1:16 says the gospel is power for salvation.

☞ And, all this armor is tied to Jesus, so **Draw near to Jesus:**

John 14:6 says he is the truth.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says through him we become righteous.

Ephesians 2:14 says we have peace through Christ.

Hebrews 12:2 says he is the perfecter of our faith.

Acts 4:12 says salvation is found in Christ.

Revelation 1:16 shows us a sword coming out of his mouth.

3. ☞ We have reachable Energy

v. 18 **pray in the Spirit**

Jude 20

build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 6:4 (*this is a priority*)

and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.

Ephesians 3:20

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according

☞ to **his power that is at work within us,**

Mark 14:38

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

We are to be alert and always keep on praying. This is where our energy comes from.

Notice the “A’s” here. Perhaps this is God’s clever way of showing the priority of prayer.

☞ **On all occasions – anytime; anywhere;** always ready to pray.

With all kinds of prayers and requests – publicly and privately; leave nothing untried... pray for yourself; ask a friend to pray; ask the elders to pray; etc. A request here means to ☞ **ask with urgency.**

☞ **Be alert** – always be alert to the enemy’s opposition; and always be alert to evangelistic opportunities. This literally means “don’t be sleeping.” In 1 Samuel 26, Saul was asleep when his spear and water jug were taken. In Judges 16, Samson was asleep when his hair was cut and his strength departed. So, be alert.

☞ **Always keep on praying** – pray with perseverance. In Luke 18, Jesus told the parable of the persistent widow to show us that we should pray and not give up. Prayer is where our strength comes from. If your prayer isn’t answered right away, keep on praying. That is not a lack of faith, but actually reveals your belief that God can answer your prayer. And, even if he doesn’t answer as we wish, prayer is what will build our faith to keep on trusting him anyway. So, always keep on praying.

☞ **For all the saints** – that’s you and me, church. We need each other’s prayer, and even more so as the end draws near. Jesus said we would face persecution and trouble. Our strength to stand ultimately comes from him, so we must pray.

☞ We are **the Army of God**... we know our enemy; we are equipped for battle; we are empowered by the Holy Spirit through prayer.

I am a soldier in the army of my God.

The Lord Jesus Christ is my commanding officer. The Holy Bible is my code of conduct.

Faith, prayer, and the Word are my weapons of warfare.

I have been taught by the Holy Spirit, trained by experience, tried by adversity and tested by fire.

I am a volunteer in this army, and I am enlisted for eternity. I will not get out, sell out, be talked out, or pushed out.

I am faithful, reliable, capable and dependable. If my God needs me, I am there.

If He needs me to teach the children, work with the youth, help adults or just sit and learn, He can use me because I am there!

I am a soldier. I am not a baby. I do not need to be pampered, petted, primed up, pumped up, picked up or pepped up.

I am a soldier. No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me, or lure me.

I am a soldier. I am not a wimp. I am in place, saluting my King, obeying His orders, praising His name, and building His kingdom! No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy or give me handouts. I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for, or catered to. I am completely committed.

I cannot have my feelings hurt bad enough to turn me around. I cannot be discouraged enough to turn me aside. I cannot lose enough to cause me to quit.

When Jesus called me into this army, I had nothing. If I end up with nothing, I will still come out ahead. I will win.

My God has and will continue to supply all of my needs. I am more than a conqueror. I will always triumph. I can do all things through Christ.

Devils cannot defeat me. People cannot disillusion me. Weather cannot weary me.

Sickness cannot stop me. Battles cannot beat me. Money cannot buy me. Governments cannot silence me and Hell cannot handle me.

I am a soldier. Even death cannot destroy me. For when my commander calls me from this battlefield, He will promote me to Captain and then allow me to rule with Him.

I am a soldier in the army, and I'm marching, claiming victory.

I will not give up. I will not turn around. I am a soldier, marching heaven bound.

Here I stand...

Will you stand with me?

Altar Ministry:

Some here have been wrestling with the enemy and not taking it very seriously.

Temptations and distractions are real weapons the enemy uses. It's time to suit up. Be truthful, righteous and trustworthy. Read your bible and pray. Quit messing around and suit up for the battle. Resist the enemy and he will flee from you.

For others, perhaps you've been battling with the enemy and are growing weary. Whether it's division, deception, doubt or discouragement - you've been struggling. If you are feeling overwhelmed, then I want to pray with you and have others join to lift you up in prayer. You do not have to be defeated. Through our God we have the victory.