



# UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

*Spiritual Warfare*

*June 8-14*

*Ephesians 6:10-13*

## Things to Know

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**Gospel Connections and Conversations**

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## Studying God's Word *In Community*

*Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.*

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## Sermon Recap

Ephesians 6:10-13 reminds us that spiritual warfare is real, but God has not left His people defenseless. We are born into a spiritual battle, and we cannot fight it in our own strength. God calls us to stand firm by drawing strength from Christ and putting on the armor He provides. Victory in spiritual warfare is often seen not in dramatic moments, but in faithful endurance, daily obedience, and steadfast trust in Jesus.

# Read

## Read Ephesians 6:10-13 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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# Scripture

## Ephesians 6:10-13

### The Whole Armor of God

[10] Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. (ESV)

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Ephesians 6:10-13.

# Living on Mission In Community

Living on mission as a group means recognizing that the Christian life is lived in the middle of a spiritual battle. Ephesians 6 reminds us that our unity, holiness, witness, and obedience will all face opposition. As a group, we help one another stay alert, grounded in truth, and dependent on Christ. We encourage one another when discouragement comes, pray for each other during difficult seasons, and remind one another that people are not the enemy. By standing firm together in God's strength, the church becomes a visible display of Christ's victory in a spiritually contested world.

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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# Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
  - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
  - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# *Leader Resources-June 8-14*

## **Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 6:10-13**

### **1. Session Overview**

Spiritual warfare is real, but God has not left His people defenseless. So we must draw strength from Christ and stand firm in God's power.

Ephesians 6:10–13 marks a major transition in Paul's letter and introduces the reality of spiritual warfare. After spending chapters 1–3 explaining the believer's identity in Christ and chapters 4–6 describing the believer's new walk, Paul now reveals the unseen battle beneath it all. The Christian life is not only resisted by difficult circumstances or cultural pressure, but it is also opposed by spiritual forces working against God's people.

Paul's response is not fear or panic, but preparation. Believers are commanded to "be strong in the Lord" and to "put on the whole armor of God." This strength is not self-generated; it comes from union with Christ and the power of God at work within His people. Paul repeatedly emphasizes the goal of standing firm. Spiritual victory is not always dramatic; it is often seen in faithful endurance, continued obedience, and unwavering trust in Jesus during seasons of temptation, discouragement, and opposition.

### **2. Opening**

#### **Ask:**

Have you ever faced a situation where you realized you were completely unprepared for what you were walking into?

When you hear the phrase "spiritual warfare," what comes to your mind?

### **3. Scripture Reading**

Have someone read Ephesians 6:10-13 out loud.

## 4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

### Ephesians 6:10-11 - We Are Born Into A War

In verses 10–11, Paul begins with a call for believers to be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of His might. This is important because the Christian life cannot be lived in human strength alone. Spiritual battles require spiritual power, and God never calls His people to fight in their own ability. Paul then commands believers to put on the whole armor of God, emphasizing that God supplies what His people need for the battle. The purpose of this armor is not merely survival, but steadfastness—the ability to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. These schemes are often subtle rather than sensational: lies, temptation, accusation, division, compromise, and deception that slowly weaken conviction and pull believers away from Christ.

### Ephesians 6:12-13 - We Must Stand in His Strength

In verse 12, Paul reveals the deeper reality behind the struggles believers face: “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.” The ultimate enemy is not other people, political groups, difficult relationships, or cultural opposition. While people may become part of the conflict, the real battle is spiritual. Paul describes organized spiritual forces opposing God’s people, reminding believers that the Christian life is lived in contested territory. This changes the way Christians respond to conflict. Instead of reacting with fear, hatred, or bitterness, believers are called to fight with truth, prayer, love, and faithfulness, recognizing that Christ has already secured ultimate victory.

In verse 13, Paul repeats the call to take up the whole armor of God so believers may withstand in the “evil day.” These are seasons when temptation, suffering, confusion, or spiritual pressure intensify. Paul’s emphasis is not on dramatic displays of power, but on endurance. Spiritual maturity is often seen in continuing to trust God, continuing to pray, continuing to resist temptation, and continuing to stand firm when the battle is difficult. The goal is not perfection or fearlessness, but faithful perseverance in the strength God provides.

## 5. Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 6:10-13?
2. Why do you think Paul ends Ephesians by talking about spiritual warfare?
3. What does it mean practically to “be strong in the Lord” instead of relying on yourself?
4. Which of the enemy’s “schemes” do you think believers are most vulnerable to today?
5. How does remembering that “people are not the enemy” change the way we handle conflict?
6. What does “standing firm” look like in your current season of life?

## 6. Application

This week, identify one area where you've been trying to fight spiritual battles in your own strength. Spend intentional time in prayer, asking God to strengthen you and help you stand firm by His power rather than your own.

## 7. Closing Prayer

### Prayer:

Father, help us to see the battle we're in. But Lord, we don't want to choose fear, we are asking you to help us walk in faith and wear the armor You provide. Use us to show the world what Your love looks like. In Jesus' name, amen.

## 8. Memory Verse

"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm."

Ephesians 6:13





# ***UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE***

*Spiritual Warfare*

*June 15-21*

*Ephesians 6:14*

*Matthew 4:1-11*

## *Things to Know*

**See Other Sermons Here**

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**Gospel Connections and Conversations**

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## **Studying God's Word *In Community***

*Reminder. The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.*

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# Sermon Recap

Ephesians 6:14 and Matthew 4:1-11 reveal that Satan's primary strategy is deception, but Jesus's strategy is truth. From the garden to the wilderness, the enemy attacks by twisting God's Word, questioning identity, and offering false promises. Jesus responded to every temptation with Scripture, showing believers that truth is our defense in spiritual warfare. In a world full of competing voices, we must know God's Word deeply enough to recognize lies and stand firm in truth.

## Read

**Read Ephesians 6:14 and Matthew 4:1-11 and make observations about the texts.**

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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# Scripture

*Ephesians 6:14*

*Matthew 4:1-11*

“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,”

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” <sup>4</sup> But he answered, <sup>z</sup>“It is written,

<sup>a</sup>“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple <sup>6</sup> and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

<sup>d</sup>“He will command his angels concerning you,’ and

“On their hands they will bear you up,

lest you strike your foot against a stone.”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.” Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

<sup>k</sup>“You shall worship the Lord your God

and him only shall you serve.”

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Ephesians 6:14 and Matthew 4:1-11.

# Living on Mission In Community

Living on mission as a group means helping one another stand firm in truth in a world full of deception. Ephesians 6 reminds believers that spiritual warfare often happens through lies that distort identity, truth, and trust in God. As a group, we encourage one another to stay rooted in Scripture, speak truth in love, and recognize the voices shaping our hearts and minds. When believers know God's Word deeply and apply it faithfully, they become people who are steady, discerning, and able to point others toward freedom in Christ.

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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## Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
  - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
  - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# *Leader Resources-June 15-21*

## **Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 6:14 and Matthew 4:1-11**

### **1. Session Overview**

In Ephesians 6:14, Paul begins describing the armor of God by commanding believers to “stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth.” The belt held everything together for a Roman soldier, making truth foundational for spiritual warfare. Without truth, believers become vulnerable to deception, confusion, temptation, and compromise. Satan’s primary strategy has always been deception—questioning God’s Word, twisting truth, and offering false promises that lead people away from trust and obedience.

Matthew 4:1–11 and Genesis 3:1–7 reveal this strategy clearly. In the garden, Satan caused Eve to doubt God’s goodness and distort His words. In the wilderness, Satan attempted the same strategy with Jesus by questioning His identity, twisting Scripture, and offering counterfeit glory. But unlike Adam and Eve, Jesus stood firm. Every temptation was answered with the words, “It is written.” Jesus shows believers that spiritual victory is not found in willpower or emotion, but in standing firmly on the truth of God’s Word. In a world full of competing voices, believers must know truth deeply enough to recognize deception quickly.

### **2. Opening**

#### **Ask:**

Have you ever believed something was true, only to later realize you had been completely misled?

Why do you think deception can sometimes feel more believable than truth?

### 3. Scripture Reading

Have someone read Ephesians 6:14 and Matthew 4:1-11 out loud.

### 4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

#### Ephesians 6:14

In Ephesians 6:14, Paul begins the armor of God with the belt of truth because truth is what holds everything together. A Roman soldier's belt secured the armor and prepared him for battle. In the same way, believers cannot stand firm spiritually without being anchored in truth. Satan's primary strategy is deception. From the very beginning in Genesis 3, he attacked by questioning God's Word: "Did God actually say?" He twisted truth just enough to create doubt, confusion, and disobedience. Satan rarely begins with obvious lies; instead, he disguises deception in ways that seem appealing, reasonable, or harmless. Paul warns believers that without truth, they become vulnerable and spiritually exposed.

#### Matthew 4:1-11

Matthew 4:1-11 reveals the same strategy in Satan's temptation of Jesus. Satan attacked Jesus by questioning His identity, twisting Scripture, and offering false promises of power and glory apart from obedience to God. Yet every time Satan spoke, Jesus responded with truth: "It is written." Jesus did not fight deception with emotion, personal opinion, or human strength; He stood firmly on the authority of God's Word. This demonstrates that Scripture is not merely helpful information; it is spiritual defense. Jesus models what it means to stand firm in truth when lies, temptation, and pressure arise.

This matters because believers today are constantly being shaped by voices competing for their attention and affection. Culture, social media, fear, shame, temptation, and false teaching all attempt to redefine truth and distort identity. Spiritual warfare often happens quietly through subtle lies that slowly influence what people believe about God, themselves, and the world around them. That is why believers must know Scripture deeply enough to recognize what is false. Truth does not merely help believers win arguments; truth protects hearts, renews minds, and leads to freedom. As Jesus said in John 8, the truth sets people free.

### 5. Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 6:14 and Matthew 4:1-11?
2. Why do you think Satan's primary strategy is deception instead of direct attack?
3. What are some common lies believers are tempted to believe today?
4. Why is it significant that Jesus responded to temptation with Scripture?
5. What voices or influences shape people the most in today's culture?
6. How can believers grow in knowing truth deeply enough to recognize deception?

## 6. Application

This week, identify one area where you've been trying to fight spiritual battles in your own strength. Spend intentional time in prayer, asking God to strengthen you and help you stand firm by His power rather than your own.

## 7. Closing Prayer

### Prayer:

Father, help us stand firm with the belt of truth fastened securely. Shape our minds and hearts through Your Word so we can faithfully follow You in every battle. Amen.

## 8. Memory Verse

"Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth,"

Ephesians 6:14a





# ***UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE***

*Spiritual Warfare*

*June 22-28*

*Ephesians 6:14*

*Zechariah 3:1-4*

## *Things to Know*

**See Other Sermons Here**

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**Gospel Connections and Conversations**

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## **Studying God's Word *In Community***

*Reminder. The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.*

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## **Sermon Recap**

Ephesians 6:14 and Zechariah 3:1-4 reveal that Satan accuses believers based on their sin and failures, but Jesus stands as our advocate and clothes us in His righteousness. On our own, we stand guilty and unable to defend ourselves. But through the gospel, Christ removes our filthy garments and gives us His perfect righteousness

instead. The breastplate of righteousness enables believers to stand firm with confidence, knowing they are accepted before God because of Jesus, not by their own merit.

## Read

**Read Ephesians 6:14 and Zechariah 3:1-4 and make observations about the text.**

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
- 

## Scripture

### *Ephesians 6:14*

#### **The Whole Armor of God**

“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,”

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#### **A Vision of Joshua the High Priest**

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. And the LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, O Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a brand plucked from the fire?” Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” And to him he said, “Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.”

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# Living on Mission In Community

Living on mission as a group means helping one another stand confidently in the righteousness of Christ instead of living under shame and accusation. Spiritual warfare often targets identity, seeking to convince believers they are disqualified, condemned, or beyond grace. As a group, we remind one another of the gospel, speak truth over one another, and point each other back to Jesus, our advocate. When believers live in the confidence of Christ's righteousness, they become people marked by freedom, humility, assurance, and worship rather than fear and insecurity.

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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## Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
  - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
  - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# *Leader Resources-June 22-28*

## **Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 6:14 and Zechariah 3:1-4**

### **1. Session Overview**

As Paul continues describing the armor of God in Ephesians 6:14, he commands believers to put on “the breastplate of righteousness.” The breastplate protected a soldier’s vital organs, especially the heart, making it essential in battle. Spiritually, believers stand firm not because of their own goodness or performance, but because they are covered in the righteousness of Christ. This matters because one of Satan’s primary strategies is accusation—constantly reminding believers of their failures, sins, weaknesses, and unworthiness.

Zechariah 3:1–4 provides a vivid picture of this spiritual reality. Joshua, the high priest, stands before God wearing filthy garments while Satan accuses him. The accusations are not imaginary; Joshua truly is guilty. Yet instead of condemning him, God removes the filthy garments and clothes Joshua with clean garments, symbolizing righteousness given by grace. This points directly to the gospel, where Jesus stands as the believer’s advocate. Satan accuses based on our merit, but Jesus defends us based on His righteousness. Because of Christ, believers can stand with confidence, security, and freedom from condemnation.

### **2. Opening**

#### **Ask:**

Have you ever experienced a moment where someone defended you when you couldn’t defend yourself?

Why do you think guilt and shame can have such a powerful effect on people spiritually?

### 3. Scripture Reading

Have someone read Ephesians 6:14 and Zechariah 3:1-4 out loud.

### 4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

#### Ephesians 6:14

In Ephesians 6:14, Paul instructs believers to put on the breastplate of righteousness, emphasizing that spiritual protection comes through righteousness that is not self-earned, but provided by God. The breastplate guarded the heart and vital organs in battle, symbolizing the protection believers need against Satan's accusations. Zechariah 3 gives a powerful image of this reality as Joshua the high priest stands before God in filthy garments while Satan accuses him. Joshua's condition represents humanity apart from Christ. We are guilty, sinful, and unable to stand on personal merit. Satan's accusations are powerful because our sin is real. On our own, we cannot defend ourselves before a holy God.

#### Zechariah 3:1-4

But the story does not end with an accusation. In Zechariah 3:3-4, God commands that Joshua's filthy garments be removed and replaced with clean garments. This is a picture of grace and imputed righteousness. Joshua is not cleaned up because he earned it; he is clothed because God provides it. This points directly to Jesus Christ, who stands as the believer's advocate. While Satan accuses based on our failures, Jesus defends based on His perfect righteousness. The gospel is not that believers become righteous enough for God. Instead, it is Christ who gives His righteousness to those who trust in Him. Romans 8 declares that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus because Jesus has already satisfied the penalty for sin.

This truth matters deeply in spiritual warfare because accusation is one of the enemy's most common weapons. Satan seeks to trap believers in shame, fear, insecurity, and doubt by continually reminding them of their failures. But believers do not stand before God wearing their own record; they stand clothed in Christ. The breastplate of righteousness produces confidence, assurance, and stability because the believer's acceptance before God is rooted in Jesus's perfection, not personal performance. Standing firm means continually trusting what Christ has done rather than living under the weight of accusation and condemnation.

### 5. Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 6:14 and Zechariah 3:1-4?
2. Why do you think accusation is such an effective strategy of the enemy?
3. What stands out to you about Joshua's condition in Zechariah 3?
4. How does the gospel answer feelings of guilt, shame, and condemnation?
5. What is the difference between conviction from the Holy Spirit and accusation from Satan?
6. How does being clothed in Christ's righteousness change the way believers approach God?

## 6. Application

This week, identify an accusation or lie the enemy often uses against you. Then intentionally respond with the truth of the gospel; that your standing before God is based on Christ's righteousness, not your performance.

## 7. Closing Prayer

### Prayer:

Father, help us stand firm in the righteousness of Christ. Let our confidence come from what Jesus has done for us, not from our own merit. In Jesus' name, amen.

## 8. Memory Verse

"and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,"

Ephesians 6:14





# ***UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE***

*Spiritual Warfare*

*June 29-July 5*

*Ephesians 6:14-15*

## *Things to Know*

**See Other Sermons Here**

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## *Studying God's Word In Community*

*Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.*

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## *Sermon Recap*

Ephesians 6:14-15 teaches that the gospel of peace gives believers both stability and readiness. Through Jesus, we have peace with God, and that peace guards our lives amid spiritual battle. The gospel gives us a firm footing so we can stand confidently in Christ, and it also sends us out to share the message of reconciliation with others. Those who are made ready by the gospel are also made ready for the gospel.

# Read

**Read Ephesians 6:14-15 and make observations about the text.**

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
- 

## Scripture

*Ephesians 6:14-15*

### **The Whole Armor of God**

“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.”

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## Living on Mission In Community

Living on mission as a group means standing firmly in the peace of the gospel while carrying that peace to others. Ephesians 6 reminds believers that the gospel provides stability in spiritual battle and fosters readiness for mission. As a group, we encourage one another to stand confidently in Christ during difficult seasons while also helping one another move toward people who need hope and reconciliation. A church grounded in the peace of God becomes a church prepared to bring that peace into a restless and anxious world.

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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# Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
  - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
  - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# *Leader Resources-June 29-July 5*

## **Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 6:14-15**

### **1. Session Overview**

As Paul continues describing the armor of God in Ephesians 6, he tells believers to have their feet “having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.” Roman soldiers depended on sturdy shoes for stability, movement, and endurance in battle. Without proper footing, they would be vulnerable and easily defeated. In the same way, believers must stand firmly in the peace that comes through the gospel.

This peace is first vertical before it is horizontal. Through Jesus, believers are reconciled to God and no longer stand under condemnation or hostility. The gospel gives believers stability, confidence, and assurance in the middle of spiritual battle. But the peace of the gospel is not only something believers stand in, but it is also something believers carry to others. Those who have been reconciled to God are now sent as ambassadors of reconciliation into the world. The gospel makes believers ready to stand firm and ready to go share the good news with others.

### **2. Opening**

#### **Ask:**

What is something that helps you feel steady or secure when life becomes stressful or uncertain?

When you hear the phrase “peace with God,” what comes to your mind?

### **3. Scripture Reading**

Have someone read Ephesians 6:14-15 out loud.

## 4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

### Ephesians 6:14-15

In Ephesians 6:14-15, Paul describes believers as having their feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In battle, a soldier's shoes were essential because they provided stability and prevented slipping during combat. Spiritually, believers stand firm because the gospel has given them peace with God. Through Jesus, hostility between God and humanity has been removed, and believers are no longer enemies of God but reconciled children of God. This peace guards the believer's life by producing confidence, security, and stability in the middle of spiritual warfare. The enemy often attacks through fear, anxiety, condemnation, and uncertainty, but the gospel reminds believers that they already stand secure in Christ.

This peace also produces readiness. Because believers are secure in Christ, they are prepared to endure trials, temptation, and opposition without being shaken. Spiritual stability comes not from circumstances, but from confidence in what Jesus has accomplished through the cross. The gospel becomes the firm footing that keeps believers standing when pressure increases. Without the peace of the gospel, believers become spiritually unstable, easily controlled by fear, worry, or discouragement. But when believers remember they are reconciled to God, they are strengthened to stand firm with confidence and endurance.

Finally, Paul's imagery reminds believers that the gospel not only prepares them to stand but also to go. Those who have peace with God are now sent to carry the message of peace to others. Christians are not called to isolate themselves from the world, but to move into the world with the good news of reconciliation through Jesus. The gospel makes believers ready for mission. As people who have personally experienced peace with God, believers now become ambassadors of that peace in their homes, workplaces, relationships, and communities. The same gospel that stabilizes the believer also mobilizes the believer.

## 5. Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 6:14-15?
2. Why do you think Paul connects peace with readiness and stability?
3. How does knowing you have peace with God change the way you face fear or uncertainty?
4. What are some ways the enemy attacks believers through anxiety, fear, or instability?
5. Why is the gospel meant to both stabilize believers and send them outward?
6. What does it look like practically to carry the "gospel of peace" into everyday life?

## 6. Application

This week, identify one area where fear, anxiety, or uncertainty has been affecting you. Spend time reminding yourself of the peace you already have with God through Jesus, and ask Him to help you stand firmly in that truth.

Also, pray for one person who needs the peace of the gospel and look for an opportunity to encourage or share truth with them this week.

## 7. Closing Prayer

### Prayer:

Father, help us stand firmly in Your peace and walk faithfully as ambassadors of the gospel in the world around us. Remind us that our security comes from what You, Jesus, have already accomplished. In Jesus' name, amen.

## 8. Memory Verse

“and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.” Ephesians 6:15





# ***UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE***

*Spiritual Warfare*

*July 6-12*

*Ephesians 6:16*

## *Things to Know*

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## *Studying God's Word **In Community***

*Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.*

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## *Sermon Recap*

Ephesians 6:16 teaches that believers must actively take up the shield of faith in the middle of spiritual warfare. The enemy attacks through lies, fear, accusation, temptation, and doubt, seeking to weaken trust in God. But faith protects believers by anchoring them in the truth of who God is and what He has said. The shield of faith is not the absence of fear—it is choosing to trust God when fear shows up.

# Read

## Read Ephesians 6:16 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
- 

# Scripture

## Ephesians 6:16

### The Whole Armor of God

“In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;”

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Ephesians 6:16.

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# Living on Mission In Community

Living on mission as a group means helping one another stand firm in faith when spiritual attacks come. Ephesians 6 reminds believers that the Christian life is lived in the middle of a real spiritual battle, and the enemy constantly seeks to weaken trust in God. As a group, we strengthen one another by speaking truth, praying together, encouraging perseverance, and reminding each other of God’s promises. Just as Roman soldiers locked shields together for protection, the church stands stronger when believers help one another trust God in difficult seasons.

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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# Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
  - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
  - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# *Leader Resources-July 6-12*

## **Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 6:16**

### **1. Session Overview**

In Ephesians 6:16, Paul commands believers to “take up the shield of faith” in order to extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one. The shield Paul references was the large Roman *scutum*, designed to cover the entire body of a soldier in battle. Soldiers often soaked these shields in water before combat so fiery arrows would be extinguished on impact. Paul uses this imagery to show that faith is not passive optimism or emotional confidence—it is active trust in God during spiritual attack.

The enemy’s attacks often come through lies, accusations, fear, temptation, doubt, and discouragement. These flaming arrows are aimed at weakening trust in God’s goodness, truth, and promises. Paul’s command to “take up” the shield reminds believers that faith must be actively exercised. Spiritual warfare is not won through self-confidence or willpower, but through trusting God in the middle of pressure and uncertainty. The shield of faith protects believers because it anchors them in the truth of who God is rather than the lies of the enemy.

### **2. Opening**

**Ask:**

What is something that tends to make you feel anxious, uncertain, or fearful?

What do you think it means to “take up the shield of faith” in everyday life?

### **3. Scripture Reading**

Have someone read Ephesians 6:16 out loud.

## 4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

### Ephesians 6:16

In Ephesians 6:16, Paul shifts from armor that is worn constantly to armor that must be actively taken up in battle. He tells believers to “take up the shield of faith” because spiritual attacks are real and ongoing. Paul describes these attacks as “flaming arrows of the evil one,” pointing to targeted lies, accusations, fears, temptations, and doubts meant to weaken trust in God. In ancient warfare, flaming arrows were intended to create chaos, fear, and destruction before close combat even began. In the same way, the enemy seeks to attack believers internally. He constantly targets their thoughts, confidence, identity, and trust in God. Spiritual warfare often happens through subtle lies that slowly pull believers away from dependence on Christ.

Paul’s solution is the shield of faith. Faith is not merely believing facts about God; it is actively trusting who God is and what He has said. The shield must be intentionally raised. Faith is not passive, automatic, or dependent on feelings. Believers often misunderstand faith as emotional certainty or fearlessness, but biblical faith operates even when fear and uncertainty are present. Taking up the shield means deliberately choosing to trust God’s promises over the enemy’s lies, even when circumstances feel overwhelming. The strength of faith does not come from the believer’s willpower, but from the trustworthiness of the God their faith rests in.

Paul also emphasizes that the shield can extinguish “all” the flaming arrows of the evil one. No attack from the enemy is beyond God’s provision and protection. Whether the arrows come through suffering, temptation, accusation, discouragement, pride, fear, or success, faith in God remains sufficient. Roman soldiers often locked shields together in battle, forming a wall of protection for one another. This reminds believers that faith is not meant to be lived out in isolation. The church stands together, helping one another trust God in the middle of spiritual battle. As believers strengthen and encourage one another, they become a community protected by faith in God’s promises.

## 5. Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 6:16
2. Why do you think Paul describes spiritual attacks as “flaming arrows”?
3. What are some common lies or fears believers face today?
4. How is biblical faith different from emotional confidence or positive thinking?
5. What does it look like practically to “raise the shield” during spiritual attack?
6. Why is it important that believers stand together in faith rather than fight alone?

## 6. Application

This week, identify one fear, lie, temptation, or accusation that has been affecting your thoughts. Then intentionally respond by reminding yourself of a specific truth or promise from God's Word each time that attack resurfaces.

Also consider reaching out to another believer for encouragement and prayer, rather than fighting in isolation.

## 7. Closing Prayer

### Prayer:

Father, thank You for giving us the shield of faith. Help us raise it daily, trusting fully in who You are and what You have promised. Amen..

## 8. Memory Verse

"In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which is the word of God"

Ephesians 6:16





# ***UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE***

*Spiritual Warfare*

*July 13-19*

*Ephesians 6:17*

## *Things to Know*

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**Gospel Connections and Conversations**

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## *Studying God's Word In Community*

*Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.*

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## *Sermon Recap*

Ephesians 6:17 teaches that the helmet of salvation protects believers in spiritual warfare by guarding their minds with the assurance of the gospel. The enemy attacks through doubt, condemnation, and discouragement, but salvation is accomplished by Christ's work on the cross and secured by Christ's sovereignty. Because believers belong to Jesus and are held securely in His hand, they can stand firm with confidence and hope.

# Read

**Read Ephesians 6:17 and make observations about the text.**

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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# Scripture

*Ephesians 6:17*

## **The Whole Armor of God**

“and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God,”

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Ephesians 6:17.

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# Living on Mission In Community

Living on mission as a group means helping one another stand confidently in the assurance of salvation. Ephesians 6 reminds believers that spiritual warfare often targets the mind through fear, doubt, and discouragement. As a group, we strengthen one another by continually pointing each other back to the gospel and reminding one another of Christ’s finished work. A church grounded in the security of salvation becomes a people marked by confidence, hope, endurance, and courage in the middle of spiritual battle.

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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# Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
  - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
  - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# *Leader Resources-July 13-19*

## **Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 6:17**

### **1. Session Overview**

In Ephesians 6:17, Paul tells believers to “take the helmet of salvation.” Drawing from Isaiah 59, where God Himself wears the helmet of salvation as the Divine Warrior, Paul reveals that believers are clothed in God’s own armor through Christ. The helmet protected a Roman soldier’s head, guarding the mind, thoughts, and awareness during battle. Spiritually, this points to the assurance and confidence believers have because salvation has been fully accomplished by Jesus and securely held by Him.

The enemy’s attacks often target the believer’s mind with doubt, fear, condemnation, insecurity, and discouragement. Satan seeks to make believers question God’s love, their standing before Him, or whether they truly belong to Christ. But the helmet of salvation guards believers with the settled confidence that salvation is not based on human performance, but on Christ’s finished work and sovereign grip. Jesus declares in John 10 that no one can snatch His sheep out of His hand. Because salvation is accomplished and secured by Christ, believers can stand firm with confidence in the middle of spiritual battle.

### **2. Opening**

**Ask:**

What is something in life that makes you feel secure or protected?

Why do you think doubt and discouragement can be such powerful spiritual struggles?

### **3. Scripture Reading**

Have someone read Ephesians 6:17 out loud.

## 4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

### Ephesians 6:16

In Ephesians 6:17, Paul commands believers to “take the helmet of salvation,” emphasizing that salvation itself becomes protection in spiritual warfare. The Roman helmet guarded the head from deadly blows in battle, and Paul intentionally connects salvation to the believer’s mind and thought life. Spiritual warfare is often a battle for confidence, assurance, and identity. The enemy’s attacks frequently come in the form of thoughts of condemnation, shame, fear, insecurity, and doubt. From the very beginning, Satan’s strategy has involved questioning God’s Word and undermining trust in Him. The helmet of salvation guards believers by reminding them that their hope and security are rooted in what Christ has already accomplished.

Paul’s language points to salvation in its fullness. Believers have been saved from sin’s penalty, are being saved from sin’s power, and will one day be saved completely from sin’s presence. This means salvation is not fragile or temporary—it is grounded in the finished work of Jesus Christ. John 10 reinforces this truth as Jesus declares that His sheep are known by Him, held by Him, and eternally secure in His hand. No enemy, circumstance, or spiritual force is powerful enough to undo what Christ has accomplished. The helmet protects because salvation itself is secure through the sovereignty and power of God.

This matters deeply in spiritual warfare because discouraged and uncertain believers struggle to stand firm. The enemy loves to target assurance because a believer consumed with doubt becomes spiritually weak, fearful, and distracted. But the gospel calls believers not to constantly look inward at their own performance, but outward to Christ’s finished work. The helmet of salvation is not built from feelings or personal strength—it is built from the certainty of what Jesus has done. As believers continually rehearse gospel truth, their minds are guarded against despair and their confidence is strengthened in Christ.

## 5. Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 6:16
2. Why do you think the enemy often attacks believers through doubt and discouragement?
3. What does the “helmet of salvation” protect spiritually?
4. How does knowing that salvation is secured by Christ change the way believers face spiritual battles?
5. Why is assurance important for spiritual endurance and confidence?
6. What are some practical ways believers can “put on” the helmet of salvation daily?

## 6. Application

This week, identify an area where doubt, fear, shame, or insecurity has been affecting your thinking. Spend time intentionally reminding yourself of gospel truths about what Christ has accomplished and secured for you.

Consider writing down specific Scriptures about salvation and reading them daily to strengthen your confidence in Christ.

## 7. Closing Prayer

### Prayer:

Father, thank You for the helmet of salvation. You are our strength, protection, and assurance. Help us wear this helmet and meditate on Your Word, rather than the enemy's lies. Thank You, Jesus, for accomplishing salvation on our behalf. In Jesus' name, amen.

## 8. Memory Verse

“and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,”

Ephesians 6:17





# UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE

*Spiritual Warfare*

*July 20-26*

*Ephesians 6:17-18*

## Things to Know

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**Gospel Connections and Conversations**

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## Studying God's Word *In Community*

*Reminder: The goal of group time is not to re-preach the sermon, but to understand and apply God's Word together.*

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## Sermon Recap

Ephesians 6:17-18 teaches that the sword of the Spirit is the powerful and precise application of God's Word against the lies of the enemy. Satan attacks by distorting God's character and truth, but believers are not defenseless. Through prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit and faithful application of Scripture, believers can confront deception, stand firm in truth, and walk in obedience to God.

# Read

## Read Ephesians 6:17-18 and make observations about the text.

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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# Scripture

## Ephesians 6:17-24

### The Whole Armor of God

“and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything, I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.

Peace be to the brother, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.”

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Ephesians 6:17-24.

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# Living on Mission In Community

Living on mission as a group means helping one another recognize lies and faithfully apply the truth of God's Word. Ephesians 6 reminds believers that spiritual warfare is often fought in the mind and heart through distorted views of God and His purposes. As a group, we sharpen one another by studying Scripture together, praying together, and speaking truth into one another's lives. A church that knows and applies God's Word becomes a people equipped to stand firm against deception and point others toward the truth and goodness of God.

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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## Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
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3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# *Leader Resources-July 20-26*

## **Small Group Curriculum - Ephesians 6:17-18**

### **1. Session Overview**

Paul concludes the armor of God in Ephesians 6 with the only offensive weapon mentioned—the sword of the Spirit, which he identifies as the Word of God. Unlike the other pieces of armor that primarily defend, the sword is used actively in battle. Yet Paul’s emphasis is not simply on owning a Bible or knowing isolated verses. The term Paul uses points to the timely, Spirit-led application of God’s truth in specific moments of spiritual attack.

This matters because Satan’s primary strategy is deception. From the garden in Genesis 3 to the temptation of Jesus in Matthew 4, the enemy seeks to distort God’s character, question God’s Word, and undermine trust in God’s purposes. The sword of the Spirit confronts those lies with truth. But Paul immediately connects the sword to prayer, reminding believers that Scripture is not wielded through intellect or self-confidence alone. Spiritual victory comes through Spirit-dependent believers who know God’s Word, apply it accurately, and trust the Spirit to empower its use.

### **2. Opening**

**Ask:**

Have you ever used the wrong tool for a job and realized how important the right tool is?

Why do you think simply knowing Scripture is different from actually applying it?

### **3. Scripture Reading**

Have someone read Ephesians 6:17-24 out loud, focusing on verses 17-18.

## 4. Teaching Points (Systematic Walkthrough)

### Ephesians 6:17-18

In Ephesians 6:17, Paul describes the “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” This is the only offensive weapon in the armor of God, showing that believers are not merely called to survive spiritual warfare, but to actively confront deception with truth. Paul’s wording points to more than general Bible knowledge; it refers to the precise and appropriate application of God’s Word in specific situations. Scripture is not merely informational. Scripture is powerful, living, and confrontational. Hebrews 4:12 describes the Word as sharper than any two-edged sword, able to pierce deeply and expose what is false. The authority of the sword is found in God’s Word itself, but its effectiveness is seen in the faithful application of truth to the lies of the enemy.

Satan’s strategy throughout Scripture has consistently been deception. In Genesis 3, he questioned God’s Word and distorted God’s character by implying that God was withholding good from Adam and Eve. In Matthew 4, Satan even attempted to twist Scripture itself while tempting Jesus. This reminds believers that spiritual warfare is ultimately theological. Every temptation and lie seeks to distort who God is, whether by questioning His goodness, His trustworthiness, or His intentions toward His people. That is why accurate understanding and application of Scripture matters deeply. Jesus responded to every temptation not with emotion or personal opinion, but with the precise truth of God’s Word applied directly to the situation.

Paul then connects the sword of the Spirit to prayer in verse 18, emphasizing that Scripture must be wielded with dependence on the Holy Spirit. Spiritual warfare is not won through intellect, debate skills, or self-generated strength. Believers need discernment to recognize lies, wisdom to apply the right truth, and courage to obey what God has said. This requires prayerful dependence on the Spirit. The Word and prayer work together. As believers store Scripture in their hearts, the Spirit brings truth to mind at the right moment, enabling them to confront deception faithfully and confidently.

## 5. Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you most in Ephesians 6:17?
2. Why do you think Paul describes God’s Word as a sword?
3. How does Satan commonly distort God’s character or truth today?
4. Why is the accurate application of Scripture important in spiritual warfare?
5. What is the difference between simply knowing Scripture and actually wielding it?
6. How do prayer and dependence on the Spirit help believers use the Word effectively?

## 6. Application

This week, identify one specific lie, temptation, or struggle you've been facing. Then intentionally find and memorize a passage of Scripture that directly speaks truth into that situation.

Spend time praying through that Scripture daily, asking the Holy Spirit to help you believe it, apply it, and obey it.

## 7. Closing Prayer

### Prayer:

Father, thank You for giving us Your Word and Your Spirit. Help us wield the sword of the Spirit wisely and faithfully as we stand firm in spiritual warfare. In Jesus' name, amen.

## 8. Memory Verse

"and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,"

Ephesians 6:17

