



## Armor of God Week 1 & 2 Unseen Warfare & The Belt of Truth

### RECAP UNSEEN WARFARE:

- Satan's calling card is deception
- There is an enemy. He wants to distract you, discourage you, divide you from others, and disable you from experiencing everything that is rightfully yours as an adopted member of God's family. He wants to terrorize you until you're rendered incapacitated, miserable, and incapable of living in the benefits of a victory that has already been won.
- We have the home court advantage – once you've placed faith in Jesus, we can bring the victory of heaven into our experience on earth.
- Satan celebrates apathetic Christian living. When we're giving up on relationships, disregarding the purity of our reputations, yielding to our appetites without putting up much, if any resistance, he can basically go unchecked. We must put an end to this and always be alert.
- Anticipate the enemy to hit you in the area of your greatest influence. He will exploit your flesh's tendencies, innate passions, and weaknesses.
- Victory in spiritual warfare is inseparable from prayer.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Ephesians 6:10-19 as an introduction to this study. We will be referring to these verses often.

1. What does Ephesians 6:12 say we are not wrestling against? What are we wrestling against?
2. On your own, write or type the name of the most difficult person, most pressing problem, and/or most overwhelming circumstance you're facing in your life right now. Mention several if you'd like. Take your time. You'll be referring back to this list several times throughout your study.

Whatever you've written above, whether a person or circumstance – whoever or whatever it is – it is not your real problem. Hear that again: IT IS NOT YOUR REAL PROBLEM. The most troubling things in your life – things you perceive with your five physical senses – are not your real issue. Though you may be wrestling with them verbally, emotionally, financially, even physically, you are wasting precious time and energy that needs to be reserved for the real culprit – the one who is behind the scenes, striving to direct the details of some of your most acute difficulties. **Everything that occurs in the visible, physical world is directly connected to the wrestling match being waged in the invisible, spiritual world.**

Go back to your list "Not the Real Enemy" beside it.

Your real enemy – the devil – wants you to ignore the spiritual reality behind the physical one. Because as long as you're focused on what you can see with your physical eyes, he can continue to run rampant underneath the surface. The more you disregard him, the more damage he is

free to do. The enemy may be invisible, but he is not fictional. He is very real, and very persistent, waging war against us constantly. Being a believer doesn't give you immunity from the assaults of the enemy, but it does give you access to the power of the Father – His power to defend you as well as reverse what's been done to you.

3. Today, as we live out our beliefs about the spiritual realm, particularly in relation to our beliefs about Satan, we tend to make one of two mistakes:

1. We overestimate his impact in our lives, living with an inflated, erroneous perspective of his actual influence and abilities. As a result, we are laden with undue fear and anxiety.

2. We underestimate him and miscalculate the impact of his influence in our lives. We prioritize what we can see over what we can't.

What about you? Do you personally overestimate or underestimate the enemy's influence in the circumstances of your life? Based on the perspective you chose, how does it specifically impact the way you live? What are some of its more noticeable effects?

4. Christianity has become quite comfortable. Coffee shops in church lobbies. Shuttles to church from the parking lot on rainy days. Games to entertain our children in Sunday school, etc. The lazy days of Christian culture must come to an end. Starting today. Starting with you. Starting with us. Have you seen Christianity and the general church culture become more characterized by laziness and apathy than activity and alertness? If so, how?
5. How have you noticed spiritual apathy in your own life?

Our enemy celebrates lethargic Christian living. That's why he works so hard to beat you down with discouragement. Rag you with discontentment. Lie to you about who God is, causing you to doubt the Lord's all-good intentions toward you. Hammer you with accusations that place a burden of shame and guilt on your shoulders too heavy to carry. Trick you into thinking your situation will never change, and that God doesn't hear you or care when you call out to Him. Soon your fire of passion starts to burn low. You grow lackluster. Disinterested. Low in spiritual fiber. Your spiritual armor goes unworn and unused. Now you're exactly where the enemy wants you – where you no longer want to fight for peace and passion in your marriage, where you no longer believe your child can be restored, where you no longer hope for healing in your body, where you no longer see any path to freedom from your addictions, where you just see the purpose of praying anymore...so you don't. You don't ask or seek or knock. You don't take advantage of your heavenly-places position and benefits package that comes from having "every spiritual blessing" in the universe handed to you as an inheritance.

6. The enemy is a master at choosing the right kind of bait to snag you. Once you become aware of the enemy's strategy and begin to see his handiwork beneath the surface of your most trying life circumstances, you can not only begin to target the right culprit, but you can also start foreseeing some of his intentions and attacks. To decode his attack strategies, we need to ask ourselves two questions:

1. In what way(s) do I pose the biggest threat to the enemy and his purposes?
2. What are my flesh's tendencies, innate passions, and weaknesses?

#### **RECAP THE BELT OF TRUTH:**

- Strapping on the Belt of Truth allows you to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.
- Many people don't frame their decisions around the truth of God's Word, aren't stable and sturdy in their convictions, are too easily injured and wounded by others, and buckle under pressure rather than standing tough and persevering.
- God's truth is light. Why light? Because we cannot rely on feelings, intelligence, instinct or past experiences. Feelings, for example, change. Emotions are unstable. The same is true of intelligence. Even the most brilliant among us have changed our minds on an issue after acquiring more information or gaining new perspective. Nothing should be trusted to govern your life like an unchangeable standard.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

7. A Roman soldier "girded his loins" with something more akin to a girdle than a belt (A manly one, I'm sure.) The sturdy, leather girdle was made to reach around the torso and provide essential support for the core while he performed the quick, demanding movements of war. Why do you think the spiritual attribute of truth that Paul connects to this piece of equipment must come first in any successful spiritual warfare against the enemy? After answering this question, read Ephesians 4:21.
8. How, then, are you supposed to put on this belt of truth?

After your group has attempted to answer this, pass the following list around and have a different person read each bullet point.

- You uphold and affirm the standard – the truth and boundaries set by God in Scripture. You commit yourself to them and resolve to teach them to your family.
- You daily, systematically, repeatedly begin letting God help you align your decisions and responses, even your attitudes and ambitions, alongside His benchmark of truth.
- You continually learn about the character and purposes of God – both from the Bible and from His Spirit. Then you unapologetically synchronize your convictions, even when you find it hard or unpopular to do so.
- You filter every circumstance, personally and culturally, through the prism of His Word instead of merely leaning on your feelings, political correctness, or the opinions of others.
- Truth becomes your starting place, and then everything else begins falling into a much better place.

9. As with the soldier, the purpose of all this girding was to get moving and avoid falling – to experience freedom of movement. Restricting the tunic released and freed the feet. Read John 8:32. What spiritual lesson can be learned from this statement and this verse?
  
10. How can people be taught to think of truth as liberating and positive instead of restrictive and joyless?

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:**

Declare war against the enemy now. You won't let the enemy have on more moment of victory in your life. Victory starts here. It starts today. It starts with this. A prayer for vision. So join Paul in asking the Lord to open your eyes more fully throughout these next few weeks so you can not only detect the enemy's activity but can also be fully aware of what God has given you to disarm and defeat him in your life.