

(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. 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! Stand therefore,

- > having fastened on the belt of truth, and
- > having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and
- > as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the Gospel of peace.
- > In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the Evil One; 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.

(18b) 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.

Think on these things:

- 1) V. 10 is kind of like a “therefore” statement. “Being strong in the Lord” and in His strength follows a discussion on what? Skim 5:22-33, 6:1-4, and 6:5-9.

**Relationship challenges at home (husband, wife, children) and work (employer, employee).**

- 2) Who does the Bible say is our chief enemy, and what is his name? Do you think he’s real? For a quick study on him, consider Job 1:9-11; 2:7; Zechariah 3:1; Matthew 4:1, 10; 13:39; John 14:30; Hebrews 2:14; 1 Peter 5:8; and 1 John 3:8.

**The devil, Satan.**

**Doctrinally, we believe Satan is a real being (not an allegory).**

- 3) V. 12 says our battles are not really with “flesh and blood,” that is, humans. However, we may be battling against people being under “evil influence.” The first 2-3 sources of confrontation and conflict could be viewed as “earthbound” (i.e., of this world) while the last clearly is not (see also Daniel 10:10-13). Take a **guess** at trying to identify these sources:

Rulers? **Government elected/chosen leaders at city-state-federal levels?**

Authorities? **Rich and powerful individuals who influence world events and trends?**

Powers of this Dark World? **Country cultures – the flow of evil accepted among peoples?**

Spiritual forces in heavenly realms? **Invisible beings (e.g., fallen angels) that exist outside of our concrete world but who influence individuals and events, and follow Satan?**

- 4) Let's look now at the "armor of God" for Christians. Rather than listing the armor components, list the Christian qualities/practices referred to in vs. 14-18. For example, v. 14 starts with Truth. Where appropriate, what parts of our lives are being "protected" with these?

**Truth** holds us together, **Righteousness** protects what is vital, **Readiness to Testify** about the Gospel's deliverance, **Faith** to shield us, **Salvation** to protect our minds, **God's Word** to fight back, **Prayer** that is constant and Spirit-led.

- 5) From v. 13, what is the ultimate purpose of having these Christian attributes and practices?

**When evil comes upon us, we need to be ready to fight it -> and, in the end, prevail. The goal is for Christians to firmly stand their ground for God!**

- 6) Christians are "targeted" by the Evil One (v. 16). Whether the evil schemes Christians face here and now arise from people under satanic influence or from spiritual forces in heavenly realms, their purpose is to take us out or make us become ineffective and unfruitful for God. What is Paul's guidance in 2 Corinthians 10: 3-5?

**We are to lean on God's divine power to tear down arguments, strongholds, and opinions set up against Him. We must also be disciplined to control our own thoughts by taking them captive.**

- 7) Looking again at v. 18a, how often should we pray, and for what kinds of things should we pray?

**We should ALWAYS pray in the Holy Spirit, lifting up our needs and supplications for others.**

- 8) In the latter half of v. 18(b), Paul gives two charges to all Christians. What are they?

For spiritual warfare? **Keep alert with all perseverance!**

For other Christians (in my church)? **Make supplications (prayers) for them.**

- 9) Even while imprisoned (v. 20), Paul considered himself an ambassador for Jesus. What was his final request from the Ephesian church?

**Pray for two things: 1) That God may give me the words to speak (in his legal case); and 2) That God would grant him the courage (boldness) to speak to them.**

People and situations I want to pray for this week: