

Fight the Right Battles

We face battles every day, but which ones do we fight, and which ones do we ignore and move on? Today we're talking about fighting the right battles.

Introduction

There is a constant in this world that is hard to ignore. We face opposition often. The opposition we face goes from politics to finances, the way we raise our children, what should be legal and what should not, the entertainment we enjoy, the clothes we wear, and so much more. Everyone has an opinion on everything and in this fast-paced world, arguments are sparked constantly. These are all a result of living in a fallen world with the prince of darkness controlling things.

It is the devil that is doing his best to take our focus off God and the mission we have as Christians. Church, we have a mission that Jesus commissioned us to do. We each have a part and place in the mission of the Church; to go and make disciples. We are to go and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus' gospel is one of love and reconciliation with God. That is the problem the devil has. He wants to keep as many of us from God as he can.

Satan carries out his plans and purposes by distracting us with social issues, political disagreements, liberties, entertainment, and more. He does his best to keep our eyes off Jesus and on anything else he can draw our attention away with. Sometimes he even uses good things to draw our attention away because we make the good thing our focus instead of Jesus. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood. We must fight the right battles to continue to make disciples and live a life that honors God.

The Right Fight

The Apostle Paul gives us great instructions for many things. In his letter to the church in Ephesus, he spoke about many doctrinal issues concerning the Church, that is the Body of Christ. He closes out the letter to the Ephesians with instructions about family and work relationships and then moves on to define the battle we will face every day and how we can endure the attacks of the enemy.

Let's read Paul's instructions to us in Ephesians 6:10-12.

Ephesians 6:10-12

(10) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. (11) Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. (12) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Paul's final instruction is to be strong in the Lord and his mighty power. Our own strength is not sufficient to battle the forces of darkness around us. Our own power is not enough to stop the attacks of the devil against us. We need the Lord's strength and his mighty power to fight the devil on his turf.

One of the things the devil has been very successful at is distracting God's people from fighting the devil himself and fighting against issues and societal practices and norms. The devil tries to distract us from one political candidate or another, so we do not see what he is really doing. The devil is a master manipulator and the king of distraction.



Paul tells us in verse 12 that our struggle is not against flesh and blood. Our fight is not against people. Our fight is against the prince of this world, Satan, and his rulers, authorities, and powers. Going against these is fighting the right battles. Our fight is spiritual more than anything else. The only way to fight the right battles is with the right gear and protection. We need the full armor of God.

The Armor of God

We must have the full armor of God to carry out the mission Jesus gave us to go and make disciples and to preach his gospel to the ends of the earth. We must be prepared to recognize the attacks and schemes of the devil so that we can effectively fight them and destroy them. Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:13:

Ephesians 6:13

(13) Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

We must put on the full armor of God. Evil is going to come our way. The devil is going to try and distract you from the mission. We are going to be attacked mercilessly. It is going to hurt and be discouraging. We must stand against Satan's schemes. We have to see his distractions coming. Our stand must be made in the face of his attacks and despite his distractions.

Knowing which battles we should choose to fight is critical. When we choose the battles in our own understanding or viewpoints we give the devil an advantage. He can distract us. We must choose to fight the battles the Lord shows us and equips us to fight. Anything else is vanity and for our own egos. We must allow the Lord to equip us with his whole armor if we expect to know the right battles to fight and to successfully stand against them.

Paul does a wonderful job of painting a picture of the full armor of God using the implements of war that a Roman soldier would wear going into battle. Let's review each piece of spiritual armor we must put on every day before we face the world.

Ephesians 6:14

(14) Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,

The belt of truth symbolizes the truths we know from God through his word, the Bible. We must bathe ourselves in God's truths and stay faithful to them. We must also allow God's truths to shape and mold us. We cannot lean on our own understanding, it is God's truths that we must measure and judge everything against.

We are all clothed in the righteousness of God from the moment we say yes to Jesus but it is up to each one of us to maintain our integrity and uprightness in a world that is full of people that are only looking out for themselves and to get ahead of everyone else. Someone has said, "When a man is clothed in practical righteousness, he is impregnable. Words are no defense against accusation, but a good life is." Live a blameless life. No one is perfect, but when we daily put on the breastplate of righteousness, knowing our righteousness is not in ourselves, but in Jesus Christ, we can face the day blamelessly.



Ephesians 6:15

(15) and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

We must be on the move. Having the right shoes for whatever task you have is important. Putting on the armor of God is no different. When Paul tells us to have our feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace, he is telling us we must be on the move loving people in the name of Jesus Christ.

We cannot stand still and can not lounge around in past accomplishments. We need to be constantly and actively promoting the love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness only found in Jesus Christ. We must continue to live out the Great Commission daily. Saying yes to Jesus is a lifetime commitment, it is not an enlistment for a year or two.

Ephesians 6:16

(16) In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

It is our faith in the Lord that will knock the attacks of the devil down. Just as a shield will deflect fiery darts, arrows, and sword strikes, our faith in Jesus will deflect the constant attacks of the devil. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior we become a target for the devil. The more we stand for Jesus, the more of a target we become. It is our unwavering faith in Jesus that deflects those attacks and keeps us from being harmed by them.

Ephesians 6:17

(17) Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Helmets are important things to wear. They protect our heads from injury and shield us from danger. A true follower of Jesus is not surprised or discouraged when in the heat of a spiritual battle because the knowledge of their salvation is secure. No matter how difficult or painful an attack is we endure, ultimately, we know our fate is sealed and we are the Lord's no matter what.

Then the sword of the Spirit, the only offensive weapon in the armor of God. The sword of the spirit is the Bible. A good swordsman knows what part of his sword to use and when to use it. The Christian must know what part of the Bible to use and when to use it. We must read and study the Bible to know these things. A great example of this is in the gospels when Jesus is tempted three times by the devil. In all three, Jesus responds to the temptation with different pieces of scripture to answer the devil's temptation. We must know scripture and be able to apply it appropriately to everything we face in life.

Conclusion

That is the whole armor of God. We must prepare ourselves every single day before we face the world whether that be at work, in school, in the marketplace, or at home. We must be ready to recognize, deflect, and extinguish the devil's attacks and promote the love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ in this lost and dying world.

Put on the full armor of God every day so that you know how to fight the right battles and ignore the others which are just distractions from the truths of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Fight the right battles.

