

[A Devotional Study *on* Spiritual Victory]

LORD, Is It Warfare? Teach Me to Stand



KAY ARTHUR

LORD,
IS IT WARFARE?
TEACH ME
TO STAND

A DEVOTIONAL STUDY

on SPIRITUAL VICTORY

K A Y
A R T H U R



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INTRODUCTION

As you pick up this book I want you to know, Beloved, that doing this devotional study will not *bring* warfare. Rather it will simply help you *recognize* and *understand* the warfare that is inevitable for those who know and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Once you become a believer—or begin to investigate the claims of Christianity—the warfare is on! The problem is that so many don't realize this. As they experience spiritual struggle, they think something is wrong either with them, with their faith, or with God.

They do not know basics of spiritual warfare nor do they understand their foe—his person, methods, tactics, devices. Nor do they understand his end—or when it is coming.

Truth is the weapon that will fell the enemy, and truth is what *Lord, Is It Warfare? Teach Me to Stand* is all about. It's a comprehensive study of what our textbook for life—the Word of God—has to say on this subject of spiritual warfare.

Of all the “Lord” studies, this is the most demanding when it comes to study time (averaging about twenty to thirty minutes daily, seven days a week). And yet its value far outweighs the cost in time and effort. It will be a small price to pay in light of these times in which we live and the increasing intensity of the battle as the coming of our Lord draws near.

The testimonies of victory in the lives of people who have applied the truths learned in this study would only increase your desire to know these principles for yourself. How I wish I could share all these testimonies with you! Just be assured, my friend, that victory is yours for the taking—for this assurance will help you find out the why and how of that victory.

Now, valiant one, if there's a possibility of your using this as a group study in which you would be a facilitator, then read “Guidelines for Group Use” in the “Study Resources” section at the back of this book, where you'll find other valuable tools to enhance this study.

For many, the blessing of this study has been enhanced by the companion video and audio teaching tapes. For more information on these, simply call Precept Ministries International at our toll-free number (1-800-763-8280) and let one of our staff members help you. It would be their pleasure. We also provide training if you would like to develop your skills in handling the Word of God more accurately or in leading others in group studies designed to minister to people of all ages at any level of commitment while respecting the restraints on their time. We're known as "The Inductive Study People: everybody, everywhere, any time, any place, any language, any age. One message: the Bible. One method: inductive." Please don't hesitate to call us.

Finally, let me share my vision—it's the possibility of a new avenue of ministry for you, Beloved of God...

*A new beginning—
An avenue of ministry—
A sense of doing something that has eternal value*

These are three things I think are so important for you and for me. There's so much to learn, to know, to experience, to do—and we never want to lose sight of that. To do so would be to miss what God has for us. To fall short of the tremendous potential of our lives—a potential that is ours because we are His, because we are children of the Creator of the Universe, indwelt by His divine Spirit and given the mind of Christ. You and I, Beloved, are God's workmanship gifted by the Spirit of God and created in Christ Jesus unto good works that would absolutely stagger our minds if we were to see them before they ever happened.

And what has God put into your hands? What are you holding and reading right now? Is it an accident? A coincidence? No! You are holding a devotional study that first and foremost will be the beginning of a new depth of understanding about spiritual warfare and spiritual victory.

God is going to speak to you because through this book you are going to come face to face with the living Word of God—the Word that not

only discerns the thoughts and intentions of your heart, but becomes the means of throwing His light on the direction your life is taking so you can know with absolute confidence where you are headed. If you listen to what He says—and by that I mean ordering your life accordingly—then there is, in a sense, a new beginning...of understanding, of purpose. A new level of Christlikeness is attained. You will be, as Paul would say, pressing on and attaining that for which Jesus Christ laid hold of you.

Which brings me to my next point—an avenue of ministry. What you have learned, God intends for you to share. I have a vision, and you, Beloved, are part of that vision. Our Lord's commission in Matthew 28 was that we make disciples of all men—that we teach them to observe all that He has commanded us. Acts 1 tells us that when we are saved and receive the Holy Spirit we become His witnesses—yet the question is often, “How?”

Here is the how. This “Lord” book contains truths every human being needs to know and to apply to his or her life. These are precepts for life; through them we will gain understanding and, as the psalmist says, “hate every false way” (Psalm 119:104). We hate it because it is false rather than true, and it is truth that sets us apart, sets us free.

So what is my vision for you, my friend? It is that you go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to direct you to at least one other person—but preferably at least ten—and that you, along with them, study this book together. You may not be a teacher, but you can be the group's facilitator. You can take the questions you'll find at the end of each chapter and use them to stimulate a discussion among those whom the Lord has brought together in answer to your prayer. These are those who will be part of your crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. As you watch them learn and grow in the knowledge of God and of His Word, you will experience the humbling joy of knowing that you have been used of God. That what you have done has eternal value. That your life and God-given gifts have not been wasted. That your work will live on—that the grace of God poured out on you was not poured out in vain, for you have labored in the strength of His grace.

So as you facilitate a group using this book, you need to watch for and encourage others in your group to do as you have done—to take what they have learned and impart it to another as you did with them. Think of the multiplication that will happen! Do you realize, Beloved, that this is the way we can reach our neighborhoods, our communities, our nation, and beyond? Think of the transformation that will take place among all those people today who are so interested in “the spiritual” but won’t step inside a church. Think—just think!—what is going to happen!

The time is now. The hour is short. Stop and pray right now and ask God what He would have you to do. He will show you, because He is God and because such prayers are in accordance with His will. As you step out and begin, just know that if you will step out in faith, God will give you an avenue of ministry, person by person or group by group, that will not only stagger your mind but absolutely delight your soul.

I cannot wait to hear what God does in and through you, my friend.



LORD, IS IT WARFARE?

— D A Y O N E —

O God, will I ever be free? I don't want to live like this for the rest of my life."

I knew my immoral thoughts weren't pleasing to God, but what could I do? I didn't want them running through my mind. They were unwelcome intruders, disturbing my peace, tormenting my soul.

I couldn't figure it out. Although I knew marriage was a covenant that wasn't to be broken, I would suddenly find myself wondering what it would be like to be married to someone else. Further, I knew God had told me to marry Jack! Why these unpredictable thoughts about other men? I was a child of God—I didn't want thoughts like these.

Sometimes I'd be driving along the freeway and remember an event from my immoral past. Then I'd try to figure out how and why I ever got into such compromising relationships. Depression would settle like a heavy fog.

Even when I was an unbeliever, I never intended to be immoral. Although I didn't have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, I thought I was a Christian and knew that immorality was sin. Oh, I often fantasized, but that was in the privacy of my mind. My fantasy world was one I had enjoyed even as a child. I convinced myself that as long as I only thought these things, I was all right.

I never acted out my thoughts. They were just dreams—dreams to hold me until marriage. I had every intention of keeping my virginity until a ring was on my finger, and I did. I walked the aisle dressed in white. Physically I was a virgin, but not mentally.

Six years later I divorced my husband. Disillusioned and lonely, I shook my fist in the face of God and said, “To hell with You, God. I’m going to find someone to love me.” Little did I realize that before the foundation of the world, God had said, “To heaven with you, Kay.” His Son would take my hell so I could have His heaven.

In my search for love, I now gradually surrendered every moral conviction to my passion to be loved unconditionally, by someone other than my parents. I became what I thought I would never become—an immoral woman.

But then on July 16, 1963, at the age of twenty-nine, I became God’s child. Wooed by His love and grace and consumed by a passion to be pleasing to Him, I finally came to the place where I told God I would remarry Tom. No, I didn’t love him. But I knew that if God could change me so radically, He could do the same for Tom. And I wanted to be obedient.

I never had the opportunity to tell Tom I would come back. Tom committed suicide by hanging himself.

When God later brought Jack into my life, I was determined to be a godly wife. Why, then, was I wrestling with such ungodly thoughts? I knew that Jesus knew everything I was thinking. Thoughts like these belonged to my B.C. (before Christ) self, not to a Bible teacher with a growing ministry.

As I continued to study the Bible, I learned how to bring my thoughts under control. Every time a D.T. (dirty thought) would come to my mind, I would refuse it and think about something else. It may have knocked at the door of my mind a dozen times, but I persisted in slamming the door in its face each time. It was wearing, but it worked.

Yet, I couldn’t control my dreams!

My immoral dreams would haunt me as I went about my day. Between the D.T.s and dreams, I wondered how Jack and I could ever add a man to the staff of our growing ministry. What if I became attracted to him?

Only God knew my agony. I had tried to tell another Bible teacher, but she wouldn't believe it. Not me! I couldn't be having problems like that! So I kept it all to myself. I'd go to bed, praying, pleading, reading my Bible or a good Christian biography, but the dreams still came.

Then one day, a day I'll never forget, God set me free! I discovered my problem! I was in warfare! When I finally recognized it as warfare, I knew what to do. What a relief!

How did God set me free? I'll share the details later in our study. At this point let me simply say that the attractions, the D.T.s, and the dreams were gone, destroyed by the sword of the Lord. Did they ever come back? Occasionally they tried. But I knew *who* sent them, and I'd have none of it!

I don't know what kind of a battle you're in, my friend, but I can tell you that if it's warfare, victory is assured. You simply need to know how to stand firm in the Lord.

If you're not in a battle, don't breathe a sigh of relief and think, *I don't need this study*. If you're a child of God, an attack *will* come. The question is, Will you know enough to recognize what's happening, and will you know how to win the war?

That is what this study on warfare is all about. Therefore, let's get started today. Why wait until tomorrow!

At the back of this book you'll find a copy of the entire book of Ephesians. A mother lode of truth on spiritual warfare runs through Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, a mother lode we are going to mine carefully in the weeks to come.

1. Today your assignment is to read carefully Ephesians 6:10-20. When you finish, write out below exactly whom your struggle is with.

2. Now, if you're brave enough, write down anything that has been tormenting you that you can't seem to shake or conquer. If you are hesitant to write it down because someone might see it, name it in your mind. Then talk to God about it. It's good to write out your prayers to God. So, I'll leave you some space to do so.

3. Finally, ask God to give you strength and clarity of mind to memorize Ephesians 6:10-18, which you'll begin working on later. As you will discover, knowing these verses will help in warfare. Memorizing scripture is not as difficult as it may seem. Simply read the verses aloud three times in succession, three times a day, for three days. It's important to read aloud. One day you'll find you can say the verses from memory. It's also important to understand what you're memorizing, or otherwise you'll find yourself quoting verses simply by rote. So, take time to think about what you're reading.

Well, Beloved, we've begun our study! (I call you *Beloved* because that is what God calls you.) Please take to heart the fact that if you're going to benefit from this study, you must determine to do your daily assignments. Since there are many excellent books on spiritual warfare, we don't need another one unless it provides something unique. If you use this book as it is intended, you will get into the Word of God so that you personally learn truth and experience it.

You can use this book as it is designed by doing one day's study at a time, or you may find it more convenient to do a week's study in one day. However you choose to use it, begin each study with prayer. Ask God to open the eyes of your understanding and to lead you into truth. Stand firm against the enemy and all his strategies to keep you from this study. Victory is assured to those who know how victory is won and who war accordingly.

Just know, my friend, your study will not go unchallenged. Satan would love to keep you ignorant, misinformed, or fearful of the subject of spiritual warfare. However, in this case the old adage "ignorance is bliss" has to be the enemy's adage, not God's. Remember, Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Truth is always liberating!

— D A Y T W O —

Have you ever felt like quitting because the hassle of Christianity was too much?

Do you ever doubt the truth of God's Word or the reality of Christianity? Have you ever been tormented by blasphemous thoughts against God?

Have you ever felt captivately drawn, almost magnetized, to the things of the world?

Is there anything you feel compelled to do or to believe, and yet you know it's not of God?

Are you bombarded with doubts about God's goodness—His love toward you?

Have you ever been plagued by feelings of worthlessness and/or inadequacy?

Even though you've confessed past sins, do you live under a cloud of condemnation?

Have you felt overwhelmed with depression?

Have you ever thought about suicide?

Have you ever been haunted by some derogatory remark, thought, memory, desire that you couldn't shake?

Or have you heard voices in your mind? Is your mind filled with incessant noise? Are you afraid to tell anyone?

Are you filled with anger, bitterness, or unforgiveness? Even though you realize you are wrong to harbor these feelings, do you feel powerless to deal with them?

Are you physically sick—yet the doctor cannot find the cause?

Have you ever been joyfully serving the Lord and been suddenly attacked unjustly?

Have you remembered that the Christian life is warfare?

I believe many Christians live in defeat because they don't understand that when they become children of God they enter into war with the devil himself.

Not realizing that there is a war raging, they don't know victory is theirs for the taking. They simply need to find out what God's Word says and live in the light of it!

Ephesians 6:11 tells us to "put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." The English transliteration for the Greek word translated *schemes* in the New American Standard and New International versions, and *wiles* in the King James Version, is the word *methodia*.¹ According to Vine's *Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, *wiles* denotes "craft, deceit" (*meta*, "after," *hodos*, "a way"), "a cunning device, a wile."²

The same word is also used in Ephesians 4:14 where the literal translation of "they lie in wait [to deceive]" would be "[with a view to] the craft [*methodia*] of deceit."³

If you take God at His Word, it is clear from Ephesians 6 that our enemy is cunning and crafty—out to deceive you, me, and every other child of God. You're not alone!

1. Go back and read the questions I asked you at the beginning of today's study. Has the enemy deceived you in any of these areas? If so, next to the question write out how.

Doesn't it make sense that Satan would want to keep you blind to the fact that you are in a war? After all, you won't take up arms if you don't believe there's a war.

2. Read through Ephesians 6:10-20 again, using the printed copy of Ephesians provided for you. As you read, mark any key words or phrases that are repeated.* A key word is an important word that is used by the author repeatedly in order to convey his message to his reader. For instance, the phrase “the full armor of God” is repeated. You could color or underline each occurrence of this phrase in blue, or you could draw a box around it like this: the full armor of God. Color coding, along with diagrams, gives you a wide variety of markings.

I’d suggest you buy some colored pencils and/or a Pentel pen with the four-color heads so you can mark your Bible as you study. These do not bleed through the pages of your Bible, but magic markers will. I’ll tell you more about marking key words later.

3. According to this passage, what is the child of God to do? List below the specific instructions given in these verses.

At this point in our study you may not understand the full impact of the truths you are seeing. But by the end of our time together you’ll not only understand these truths, you’ll know how to apply them to your life!

Now that you are beginning to see that our study will be a process, be patient. You must lay a solid foundation of truth. You must understand God’s Word so you can adhere to it, or you’ll lose. So be patient with me

* See page 343 for section on marking your Bible.

as I lead you through truth. Our study time may be a little like boot camp in that it is not fun and games. But when you come face to face with the enemy, you'll be very glad you endured it because you'll know your weapons and how to use them. You'll also have learned to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ!

As I tell my Precept upon Precept Bible study students, "Hangeth thou in there." It is warfare, but victory is assured.

By the way, if you're thinking, *Hey, this is an awful lot of work*, you're right. Our "Lord" series books do not allow you simply to sit back and read. They wouldn't be as effective if that's all there was to it.

Now I'll tell you that your homework will be a little heavy this first week. Good way to encourage you, isn't it? Sorry. But the good news is that you'll need these truths immediately, and they will be yours. Persevere. Military training is never passive!

— D A Y T H R E E —

Apart from the Gospels, no book zeroes in on the Christian's warfare like Ephesians. Therefore, it's critical to thoroughly understand this book's historical, cultural, and religious context. You will then understand why Paul wrote Ephesians, addressing warfare and emphasizing the Christian's relationship to the principalities and powers behind it.

Ephesus was the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire in Paul's day. It was the home of the magnificent temple of the goddess Artemis, who was sometimes referred to as Diana. Artemis, a fertility deity whose image supposedly fell directly from heaven, was "grotesquely represented with turreted head and many breasts."⁴ Of all the deities worshiped in Asia, none was more sought after than Artemis. Pilgrims came from all over the Mediterranean world to worship in her temple, which measured four times the size of the Parthenon in Athens.

Ephesus relied upon two important assets for its wealth and vitality.

The first asset, her position as a center of trade, was lost by the time of the apostle Paul.⁵ The second asset, the worship of Artemis, then became her primary means of economic survival. The tourist and pilgrim trade associated with the temple and cult of Artemis made many Ephesians wealthy.⁶

Innkeepers and restaurant owners grew rich from the large influx of worshipers who traveled great distances to see the temple of Artemis, which was one of the seven wonders of the world. Silversmiths made their living by selling silver shrines and images of this goddess and her temple. Even the temple treasury served as a bank, loaning massive sums of money to many, including kings. And since Artemis was the patroness of sexual instinct, prostitutes sold their bodies without condemnation in the two-story brothel on the Marble Road.⁷

Yet for all the wealth it brought to Ephesus, the worship of Artemis left a void in the hearts of men.⁸ Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:19-21 that demons lurk behind idols. Therefore, the enemy was not about to let the disenchanted worshipers go. He would entice the Asians with magic, sorcery, and witchcraft. “Ephesus became the home of all sorts of magic and superstition. Even the phrase *Ephesia grammata* became common in antiquity for documents containing spells and magical formulae (cf. Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 12.548; Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* 5.242).”⁹

In addition to the temples of Artemis and lesser gods, Ephesus had the Library of Celsus, the third largest and most important library of that time. Had this library housed a Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, and had the citizens of Ephesus read it, they could have known where such idolatrous and demonic worship would lead them. But no such copy was to be found in the Library of Celsus. It could only be found in the local synagogue.

While authors vied to get their books into this famous library¹⁰ and, thus, gain access to the minds of men, God had another plan—a living epistle. He sent Paul. And the adversary roared!

1. Read Acts 19, and then list below the main events recorded in this chapter. As you do, keep in mind what you've just read about this prominent city.

2. How long did Paul stay in Ephesus?

3. Did you notice the conflict the gospel brings? Where? How? Does this bring you any comfort?

4. What do you learn from this chapter about the way the worshipers of Artemis were handled?

5. Now, summarize what you learn from this passage about evil spirits or anything having to do with the enemy.

6. Finally, look up the following verses, and record what you learn. If you do not understand the terms used in these verses, you will find their definitions on page 339.

a. Deuteronomy 18:9-14

b. Leviticus 19:26-28,31

Now, if you have done any of these things, tell God that you realize you sinned and that you are sorry. Ask Him to cleanse and free you from any influence that has come into your life through these activities. Thank God for the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ which cleanses you from all sin. Tell Him you want to be filled with His blessed Holy Spirit and that you don't want any part in the things of darkness.

It would be good for you to write all this out in the form of a prayer to God.

Well, Beloved, you are on your way to gaining an understanding of why Paul wrote as he did to the church at Ephesus. Paul faced many of the things we will face as we live on the brink of the day of our Lord's second coming.

Remember, although our adversary, the devil, goes about "like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour," you've nothing to fear if you know where and how to stand. And you will know, if you are faithful to finish this study.

— D A Y F O U R —

After reading Acts 19, is it easier to understand the reference in Ephesians 6 to our warfare with spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places? Ephesus was a hotbed of the occult. People lived in fear of what they could feel yet couldn't see. In their fear, they turned to all sorts of magic arts, charms, and sorcery.

Even Jewish exorcists were active. They knew there was a war that was not with flesh and blood, as evidenced in this statement from *Pseudepigrapha* (extrabiblical writings studied by the Jews): "The earth is full of demons. Humanity is plagued by them. Almost all misfortunes are because of the demons: sickness, drought, death, and especially humanity's weakness about remaining faithful to the covenant. The region between heaven and earth seems to be almost cluttered by demons and angels; humanity is often seen as a pawn, helpless in the face of such cosmic force."¹¹

How similar our western culture is becoming to the Ephesus and Asia of Paul's day! There's an increased fascination with the occult. The New Age movement offers to put people in touch with the god within. People from all walks of life, including children and teens, take on new identities as they enter the world of Dungeons and Dragons. Witches and covens abound.

Films, TV, and recorded music evidence increasing control from the “dark side.” Occult images fill even children’s films, cartoons, and video games.

More than fifty “black metal” and “death metal” rock/rap groups preach satanic messages and even call for worship of the prince of darkness.

O Beloved, do not be spiritually naive. The war for the souls of people is escalating, and you and I have been commissioned by God to introduce them to Jesus Christ so He can “turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:18, KJV). Let’s be about our Father’s business even as Paul was!

Your assignment for today is to read through the first two chapters of Ephesians. Remember Ephesians is printed out at the end of this book. As you read, think about how the message applies to what we have discussed these past four days.

Mark the phrases *in Him*, *in Christ*, and *in Christ Jesus* in a distinctive way. Also mark the following words or phrases so you can easily spot them: *rule* and *rulers*, *power(s)*, *authority* or *authorities*, *dominion*, *world*, *spirit*, *wickedness*, *darkness*, and *name*.

As you finish each week’s study, take the truths you learned about your relationship to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and turn them into an affirmational prayer of faith. As you pray, take a statement of truth from the Word of God, and make it your own by thanking God for it and applying it to your life. Paul prays this way for the Ephesians in 1:15-23.

Let me give you an example of what I’m suggesting, but don’t let it limit you. Ephesians 1:3 says God has blessed you with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. A prayer of affirmation might go something like this: “Father, I thank You that because I am Your child You have already blessed me with all the spiritual blessings I will ever need. (Then you would name those blessings which you gleaned from Ephesians 1 and 2.) Oh, Father, if I forget this, please remind me so I

don't live like a spiritual pauper when I have everything I need in Christ Jesus."

Or your prayer of affirmation can be a commitment to believe a certain truth or to walk in obedience to something God has shown you is needed in your life.

Use a notebook or composition book to record these "Prayers of Affirmation." You should make this a weekly practice! Or you can do these daily if you desire. Make your prayers as brief or as long as you desire. They are for your benefit—and will help you greatly in warfare.

— D A Y F I V E —

Ruth Paxson, in *The Wealth, Walk, and Warfare of the Christian*, says of Ephesians:

One step over its threshold brings one into an atmosphere of unbounded spiritual affluence that creates within one's heart deepest peace and assurance. It is impossible to live habitually in Ephesians and be depressed.

A vast deposit of riches has been made for the Christian in the bank of heaven. It is the oldest bank in existence. It dates way back to B.W.—before the world was. It does not belong to time and earth, but to eternity and heaven. Unlike the banks of earth, it is as unshakable and steadfast as the triune God who founded it. Its doors are never closed day or night to a child of God, and as for a run on it, nothing would please the heavenly Father more than to have a daily, hourly, moment-by-moment demand for its treasures.¹²

How different from the temple of Artemis! Let's study Ephesians and see the treasures stored there in our name.

Read through Ephesians 3 today, marking the same words you marked yesterday. When you finish, list everything God tells you that belongs to those who are "in Him" in chapters 1 through 3. Look back at

the phrases “in Him,” “in Christ,” and “in Christ Jesus” that you marked to help you make the list.

O Beloved, do you see that *in Him* you have everything you need? How wealthy are you? Meditate on what you have been given! When I say meditate, I mean to think it through, to chew it up and digest it—don’t swallow it whole!

Now would be a good time to record a prayer of affirmation. Take one of these truths and lay hold of it in prayer.

— D A Y S I X —

In the first three chapters of Ephesians, we learn of our wealth in Christ Jesus. In the last three chapters, we learn how to walk in the light of what we have. Your assignment today is to read chapters 4 and 5, marking the text as you have done previously.

Listen to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit as He tells you how to walk. Every time you see *walk*, mark it in a distinctive way, and then list below what you learn about your walk. Glean your insights only from Ephesians!

Now then, let the Word of God examine your heart. What must you change? Confess? Continue in? Write it out.

— D A Y S E V E N —

Christians in the West often remind me of ostriches because the minute they see something they'd rather not know, they bury their heads. Have you ever looked at an ostrich that has buried its head? It's quite comical. The ostrich can no longer see what he fears, but what he fears can see him! How could anyone miss those long skinny legs and that great big, feathery bottom?

The poor ostrich doesn't realize that burying his head will not remove him from danger. Do you think God made ostriches that way just to teach us a lesson?

Ignorance of the enemy and of warfare will not keep you out of the battle. Instead, it makes you extremely vulnerable. That's why God has been careful to let us know that there's an enemy who wants to wrestle us to the ground.

The word translated *struggle* or *wrestle* in Ephesians 6:12 speaks of "a 'hand-to-hand fight'—a fight characterized by trickery, cunningness, and strategy."¹³ God doesn't tell us all this to scare us but to prepare us. We need to know why there's a struggle, why there's a conflict, and then we need to know how we're to live in the light of it.

So don't bury your head and leave your feathery bottom exposed!

Remember, if you'll believe what He says and live as He tells you to live, you'll know the sweet taste of conquest!

Now read Ephesians 6 and mark the text as you have done these past few days.

When you finish, go back through the book of Ephesians and note where you have marked these words: *power, dominion, ruler, authority, world, darkness, and wickedness*. Then list everything Ephesians teaches you about these words and your relationship to them as a child of God.

Does the child of God need to bury his or her head? Answer that and give your reason.

What do you need to remember this week? Satan would love nothing more than to keep you ignorant of truth, which sets you free. So determine

that God's Word will have priority in your life. Look at what God did in Ephesus! He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. Record your affirmation of faith in your notebook.

And remember, you are beloved to Him—and to me.

MEMORY VERSE

To prepare for memorizing Ephesians 6:10-18, your assignment this week is simply to read aloud through this entire passage at least once each day this week.

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, AND HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If you are a child of God, what can you know about warfare? Whom is the warfare with? Why can you be certain that it will come? What must you know in order to stand and not be deceived?

1. The book of Ephesians focuses on the Christian's warfare like no other book. What are some of the significant historical facts about the city of Ephesus in Paul's day that help in understanding this book?
 - a. What was the religious environment like? Whom did they worship? What kind of a goddess was she? Where did they believe she came from?
 - b. In 1 Corinthians 10:19-21, what power does Paul say an idol has?
 - c. What was the temple like? What were some of the activities that went on in the temple? Why was the temple so important to the commerce of the day?
 - d. What were some of the other evil practices that were common in Ephesus?
2. The events in Acts 19 took place in Ephesus. How do these events further explain the historical and religious background of Ephesus?
 - a. How long did Paul stay in Ephesus? How and to whom did he proclaim the gospel?
 - b. How was the power of God specifically manifested? What did you learn about evil spirits and the Jewish exorcists? What were these exorcists attempting to do?
 - c. How did many in Ephesus respond to the preaching of the gospel? What did those who believed do with their magic books? How does this event reveal the work of the enemy in Ephesus? What does it show about the power of God?
 - d. What was the conflict the gospel brought? Who was involved? Why?
3. When the children of Israel entered the land, what were God's warnings concerning these same evil practices that were taking place in Ephesus (Deuteronomy 18:9-14 and Leviticus 19:26-28)?

- a. What did God specifically tell them not to do? Why? What did He tell them to do?
- b. How do you see these kinds of things in our Western culture today? Have you ever been involved in any of these? If you have, what do you need to do?
4. According to the book of Ephesians, what is true of you if you are in Him? What has happened to you?
 - a. What has God blessed you with? What do you have through His blood? What have you obtained in Him? With whom have you been sealed?
 - b. Where is Christ now seated? Specifically, what is He seated above? Why is this significant in spiritual warfare?
 - c. Who were you? What were you like? What did God do?
 - d. As a believer, where are you now seated? Where does this place you? Why is this significant in the light of warfare? What is your position?
 - e. What did Jesus do for both Jew and Gentile?
5. In Ephesians 4–6, what specific instructions does Paul give concerning your walk?
6. The Christian's struggle is explained in Ephesians 6:10–20. According to these verses the struggle is with whom?
 - a. What does the Greek word translated *struggle* or *wrestle* mean? What does that tell you?
 - b. What does the Greek word for *schemes* mean?
 - c. What specific instructions are given in these verses?
 - d. Describe the Christian's armor that is to be put on for this struggle. What are the weapons?
7. Do you understand your position in Christ? Are you walking as you ought?
 - a. What will have to change in your life as a result of this study?
 - b. Will you determine that the Word of God will have priority in your life so that you can know how to stand firm against the enemy?



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