



Who is Our Enemy? Understanding Spiritual Warfare (Ephesians 6:12 Study Guide)

On July 13th, we talked about putting on God's armor to help us in our spiritual battles. In this study, we're going to learn a little more about *who* we are battling against. It's important to remember that our real enemy isn't other people, but some invisible (but very real!) forces that try to cause trouble.

The Bible tells us in Ephesians 6:12: "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."

Let's break that down!

1. Our Enemy is NOT People!

Sometimes, it might feel like our friends, family, or even people we don't know are our enemies. But the Bible says our fight is **not against flesh and blood**. This means our real enemy isn't other humans. Instead, it's against invisible forces that are behind some of the big problems in the world.

2. Who ARE These Invisible Enemies?

The Bible uses some big words to describe these invisible enemies:

- **Rulers, Authorities, Powers of this Dark World, Spiritual Forces of Evil:** These are all different ways to talk about bad spirits or demons that are led by Satan. They are not just bad ideas or feelings, but real, personal beings. These forces are organized, like an army, and they try to go against God's plan.
- **The Slanderer / The Devil:** This is another name for Satan. Satan is a very smart planner who tries to trick us and make us fall. He wants to cause division and make us doubt God.

3. What Do They Do?

These spiritual forces try to mess things up in the world and in our lives. They work to cause:

- **Division:** They want to break up friendships, families, and even churches.
- **Unbelief:** They want us to stop believing God's promises.
- **Temptation:** They try to make us do wrong things.

- **Discouragement and Fear:** They want us to feel sad, hopeless, or scared.
- **Bad Ideas and Systems:** Sometimes, these forces can even influence big things in the world, like unfair social, economic, or political systems. Examples of these could be:
 - People only thinking about themselves (rampant individualism).
 - Unfair treatment of people because of their race (racism).
 - Fighting between different groups of people (political factionalism).
 - Systems that keep people dependent
 - Beliefs like those that suggest there are no limits to what a person can do with their body and go against God's design for love, sex, marriage and family.

4. How Do We Stand Against Them?

The good news is that we don't have to be afraid! Jesus has already won the biggest battle against these forces! Our job is to "stand firm". Here are some Bible verses that help us know how:

- **James 4:7 (NIV):** "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - This means if we listen to and obey God, and say "no" to the devil, he will run away!
- **Romans 8:38-39 (NIV):** "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - Nothing, not even these spiritual forces, can separate us from God's love!
- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV):** "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."
 - This means our "weapons" are spiritual, not like real swords or guns. We use God's power to fight against wrong ideas and make our thoughts honor Jesus!

Remember, we are called to be like good soldiers of Christ, fighting against evil with spiritual weapons. When we put on the full armor of God, we are ready to stand strong against the devil's plans!