

## **Ephesians**

### Week 18 – In the Great War

**Transition:** The past three weeks we've looked at three relationships that commonly existed in households in the apostle Paul's day (marriage, parenting, and slave/master relationships). Whereas the marriage relationship helps us understand what it means to be one with God, and the parenting relationship helps us understand our identity in Christ, the slave/master relationship helps us understand that God (as our owner) gives us our purpose in life.

**Context:** This week we are switching direction from these three household relationships to spiritual battle...both what it is and how to engage in it effectively. In our nation today, most of us have not experienced war firsthand—neither as soldiers nor as bystanders. Further, what we do know of war is significantly different than what was practiced in the first century (when Paul wrote this letter). If you would like more information about first century soldiering, check out this webpage: [Roman Soldiers of the 1st Century](http://resources.takingground.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/04/Roman-Soldiers-of-the-1st-Century-%E2%80%93-Armour-and-Tactics.pdf). For the full address see below.

#### **Opening Questions:**

- Have you ever been in a war? If so, which one(s)? What was the experience like for you? What did you learn from it? Regardless of whether you've been in a war or not, what is your view of war?
- Describe a time when you were in a spiritual battle. What happened? Were you victorious? If so, what did you do to overcome the opposing spiritual forces? What (if anything) would you do differently? What did you learn?

#### **Scripture/Storying:** 6:10-13

#### **Discipleship Questions:**

- Why does Paul use battle/war imagery to help believers understand the current relationship between God and the devil? What impact does it have on you personally?
- Paul begins by encouraging followers of Jesus to “be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might.” What people/stories in the Bible come to your mind who did this well? What made them strong in the Lord?
- What are some various “schemes of the devil?” Which ones have you experienced personally? When have you succumbed? When have you been victorious? What have you learned about battling the devil and his cohorts?
- Paul says, “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” (v12). To what is he referring, and how does this influence your perspective, thinking, and actions when “doing battle?”
- What does “standing firm” look like to you? (v13) When have you stood firm? How did you do it? Share the story.
- What battles are you facing now? Share with one another in your group, and then pray over each one.

**Prayer time:** This week we are praying for the students and leaders who are at Beach Camp.

- Pray that the Lord will do a mighty work in the hearts and minds of all students and leaders attending.
- Pray that the Lord will draw to those far from Him and near, & that lives will be transformed in His name.

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