

Finishing Well

Lesson #15

Preparing For Warfare

April 27, 2022

Eph. 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

As Hitler's appetite for power and territory grew, his army began to march across Europe. The German army advanced, with its tanks and with technologically advanced weapons. In some of the underdeveloped nations, their armies made a futile effort to resist Hitler's aggression, fighting back with spears and even rocks.

- It was no contest at all because these nations were Not Equipped For The Battle.

Incorrect Assumption: Once I am born again, my struggles are over.

Truth: You will face new struggles. Living for the Lord is a battleground, not a playground.

Wiersbe: This comes as a shock to the new believer. I could always tell when a new Christian was starting to mature, because he found himself fighting battles.

This was a good sign because "Satan never kicks a dead horse!"

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The devil is a real and powerful enemy. Any doctrine of sanctification that does not take a stand against him into account will fall short of Biblical teaching.

Any teaching about the Christian life that depicts it as sentimental and not as a battle not only misrepresents the Christian message, but it is often a sign of a cult.

Satan and his demonic forces are waging war against born-again believers.

However, many of his victims do not know there is a war going on so they make easy prey.

KNOW TRUTH: We are in the midst of a great spiritual struggle.

Many who consider themselves "in the war" do not understand the nature of Satan's schemes, the weapons he employs, or the weapons which God has provided for our defense.

PREPARE FOR TRIALS BEFORE THEY HIT, NOT AFTER.

Proverbs 24:10 "If you are slack in the day of distress, your strength is limited."

If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

If you show yourself lacking courage on the day of distress, Your strength is meager.

The day of distress reveals your strength, not a day of calm.

- Prepare now for the day of distress. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail. [Wooden]

Ephesians 6:10-20 Paul clearly defines the spiritual war in which we are engaged. He warns us that apart from utilizing the weapons God has provided for us, we are hopelessly underpowered.

- These weapons are designed to repel the attacks of Satan.

Eph. 6:10 **FINALLY**, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Eph. 1-3 Paul gives the doctrine we must believe.

Believer's wealth in Christ

Eph. 4:1 - 6:9 Paul gives the duty we must fulfill

Believers' walk in Christ

Eph. 6:10-20 Paul gives the difficulty we must overcome

Believers' warfare in Christ

Eph. 1-3 Believer is seated with Christ in heavenly places

Eph. 4:1-6:9 Those seated in Christ are commanded to walk in faith

Eph. 6:10-20 Believer must stand in victory

Paul has carefully established our place in Jesus, and the basics of the Christian walk. Finally,

- In light of all that God has done for you.
- In light of the glorious standing you have as a child of God.
- In light of His great plan of the ages that God has made you part of.
- In light of the plan for Christian maturity and growth He gives to you.
- In light of the conduct God calls every believer to live.
- In light of the filling of the Spirit and our walk in the Spirit.
- In light of all this, there is a battle to fight in the Christian life.

If I study Eph. 6:10-18 in the absence of the truths in the preceding chapters, I am apt to be frustrated and even confused. Paul gives a number of warfare commands which are based upon the foundation he has established in the preceding passages.

Remember the "practical section" begins with:

- Eph. 4:1 A call to walk worthy
- Eph. 4:23 Be renewed in the spirit of your mind
- Eph. 4:24a Put on the new man
- Eph. 4:30 Grieve not the holy Spirit of God,
- Eph. 5:2 A call to walk in love
- Eph. 5:8 A call to walk in the light; to walk in the Spirit
- Eph. 5:15 Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
- Eph. 5:16 Redeeming the time because the days are evil
- Eph. 5:17 Understand what the will of the Lord is
- Eph. 5:18b Be filled with the Spirit
- Eph. 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.
- Eph. 6:1-9 All living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ

Eph. 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

Context: All intimately connected with our waging of spiritual warfare

Truth: Spiritual warfare is the inevitable consequence of a life lived in Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit and walking as a stranger and alien in a world under the domination of the one whose very name is Evil.

I John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

MacDonald The hosts of Satan are committed to hinder and obstruct the work of Christ and to knock the individual soldier out of combat. The more effective a believer is for the Lord, the more he will experience the savage attacks of the enemy:

- The devil does not waste his ammunition on nominal Christians.

Be ready for the enemy to strike back! IF you are living for Jesus, don't expect the enemy to pat you on the back and encourage you in your journey.

Expect attacks to undermine or overthrow

- Your Biblical convictions
- Your Personal obedience
- Your Sanctification

If you aren't sinking down roots with God now, you won't be able to stand against the storm. Knowing that trials will come should motivate us to strengthen our defenses, putting on the full armor of God so that we're ready to stand in the day of trouble.

Ruth Paxson - God has no place for a spiritual pacifist. Every Christian is conscripted for both defensive and aggressive warfare. He calls every saint to arms. "Not into a religious playground or sports field, but into grim, terrible, bloody conflict are we called."

- The Wealth, Walk and Warfare of the Christian by Ruth Paxson

Truth: You must be a strong Christian to stand firm in spiritual warfare.

Eph. 6:10 Finally, my brethren, **BE STRONG IN THE LORD**, and in the power of His might.

- Key Point: It's important to understand what "be strong in the Lord" does not mean. In the original Greek language, the term is a passive voice verb meaning "to be rendered (more) capable or able for some task." To be strong in the Lord does not involve building up your own strength. Believers cannot strengthen themselves in the Lord; rather, you must *be empowered* or *be strengthened*, as the Greek voice indicates.

Note: Aorist tense = keep being strong in the Lord; Filled with power which intensifies

Wayne Barber

Ephesians 1 > the RICHES of His glory.

- Eph. 1:3 We have been given "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

Ephesians 2 > The REASONS for our salvation. We "were dead in your trespasses and sins".

- Made us alive together with Christ.

Ephesians 3 > The Revelation of our salvation

Eph. 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory,
to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,

- Power = dunamis = ability to perform; for the believer, power to achieve by applying the inherent abilities of Jesus Christ
- Power through God's ability to grow in sanctification and prepare for heaven

All the things that He has done, according to all of that,

- we are to be strengthened in the inner man with power by the Spirit of God.

Truth: God provides strength for the struggle.

Paul writes about his personal example of being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. He wrote this in the face of everyone deserting him

II Tim. 4:17a But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me,...

- The Lord stood with me [fulfilling His promise never to "leave or forsake" me]
- and strengthened me = endunamoo = to empower enable, (increase in) be (make) strong. in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth."

When Paul encourages believers to "be strong in the Lord," he is calling them to faithfulness—to abiding in Christ and trusting in the Lord's power for everything in life.

True Christian strength comes from recognizing our utter dependence on God.

Key Point: Paul's use of "IN the Lord," rather than "by the Lord" or "of the Lord."

Only when our lives are positioned in the Lord, in union with Him, do we possess the appropriate power to overcome the enemy.

John 15:4-5 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

- We must daily understand the flow of Ephesians: Be filled with the Spirit,
- Be strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of God.
- That is our classic weapon against the evil one.

God delights in demonstrating His power in situations where human strength is lacking.

Often we are strongest in the Lord when we operate in the realm of human weakness.

God allowed Satan to afflict Paul, but God's purpose was to keep Paul humble and to demonstrate His power in his life:

II Cor. 12:9-10 My grace is sufficient for you. My strength is made perfect in weakness.

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

- This strength is internal, but it is not inherent.
- A true Christian can be a weak one because he does not depend on the Lord.

God will allow the battle and the struggle to rage to show you the hard way to reveal your weakness without Him; to force us to turn to Him and depend on Him.

- His strength is to be a way of life.
- Strong Christians trust Him for strength.

Recall The Context: All commands & submission to others and to the Lord are in the context of waging spiritual warfare.

H.B. Charles: Spiritual victory is not so much about learning to fight the enemy but learning how to submit to the authority of the Lord.

- James 4:7 Submit yourself to God, resist the Devil and he will flee from you.
- Joshua 5:14 - the captain of the hosts of the army of the Lord; I came to take over.

Key Point: My obedience, my surrender, my submission is my greatest weapon in defeating the one who is the prince of darkness that lives around me.

You cannot experience Divine strength without submitting to Divine authority.

- To live in spiritual weakness is to live in spiritual rebellion. WOW!
- Self-sufficiency in spiritual struggles is spiritual suicide.

At the moment I bow and submit to Jesus Christ and commit to obey His Word, I become a fortress against the enemy. My weapon is my submission to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil. 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

The Time David Almost Gave Up

I Samuel 30 records a powerful situation faced by David and how he battled in the Lord's strength.

I Sam. 30:1-3 And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; ² And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.

So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

"There were no fighting men left in Ziklag to protect the women and children.

The Amalekites had a reputation for preying on the weak and vulnerable [Deut 25:17-18].

They were not being compassionate; women and children were more useful alive than dead."

- The Amalekites = descendants of Amalek, a grandson of Esau [Gen 36:12; I Chr 1:36]
- The Amalekites were staunch enemies of Israel.
 - Amalek inherited his grandfather Esau's antagonism toward Jacob.
- Israel's first encounter with the warriors of Amalek came at Rephidim near Sinai when they blocked Israel's path. [Ex. 17:8-16]
- The Amalekites later rebuffed Israel's disobedient attempt to enter the Promised Land [Num 14:39-45].
- As a result of their enmity, Moses instructed Israel to destroy them [Deut. 25:17-19], but the Amalekites continued to inhabit the Negev
 - ❖ Judges 3:12-14; 6:33; I Sam 14:47-48; 15:1-35
- I Samuel 15 records THE pivotal event in King Saul's reign.
 - ❖ God ordered Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites.
 - ❖ Saul disobeyed and the Lord rejected Saul as king.
- Those who survived were Israel's enemies. [27:8; 30:1-20; II Sam 8:12; Ps 83:7]
- In the book of Esther, Haman [descendant of King Agag] embodied their animosity to the bitter end [Esther 3:1; I Sam 15]

The emotional state of David and his men:

I Sam. 30:4, 6a Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters:

- Imagine the horror and grief of David & his 600 men who had never lost a battle.

I Sam. 30:6b but David encouraged [strengthened] himself in the Lord his God.

- Krataioo = to become strong; Aorist tense: kept on strengthening

We need to be continually strong to fend off the "Amalekites" that seek to raid the camp of our heart, mind and soul.

- David ordered Abiathar the priest to bring the ephod to seek the will of the Lord.
- They were assured by the Lord that his pursuit of the enemy would be successful.
- David and his men traveled 16 miles to the brook where 200 men had to stop because they were exhausted, "dead tired."
- David and the 400 continued, though they weren't sure the location of the Amalekite camp.
- They came upon an Egyptian slave whose Amalekite master had left him for dead.
- God kept him alive to provide needed information for David.
- The Amalekites were found celebrating their victory when David and his men attacked them by surprise.
- They killed all the Amalekites except 400 young men who escaped, rescued all the kidnapped people and recovered all the peoples' belongings.
- It was a total and profitable victory for David and his men.

How Not to Respond to Adversity

In I Samuel 28, Saul found himself in a similar situation as David. Saul feared the army of the Philistines who were great in number and ready to fight against Israel. After not receiving a quick answer from the Lord, Saul resorted to do something forbidden:

- He consulted with a witch to find out what to do.

We often try to solve our problems or numb our pain by seeking things other than God.

Some turn to bitterness, mindless distractions, self-indulgence, or blaming others instead of turning to God, who is the only source of real strength.

The Right Choice

I Sam. 30:6 David strengthened [encouraged] himself in the Lord his God.

David knew the source of his strength was outside of himself and was in God.

If God loves us enough to sacrifice his only Son, won't he help us in our times of weakness?

Romans 8:32 *He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also freely give us all things?*

After strengthening himself in the Lord, David cried out to Him.

God led David not only to defeat the Amalekites, but he recovered all he had lost and claimed some of the Amalekites' possessions for Israel.

C H Spurgeon [Beside Still Waters] The Reality And Necessity Of Spiritual Warfare

There are no fair-weather soldiers in God's army. All must endure difficulty.

1. Our courage must be tried and proven.

II Tim. 2:3-4 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

⁴ No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

2. God's ships never go to sea without being tested.

Only when their seaworthiness is proven do they go on longer voyages.

James 1:2-7 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

³ Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

⁴ But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

⁷ For that person [doubter] ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ *being* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

3. Unless you have been through a great trial, you cannot help those who are in great difficulty.

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

- Paul made it clear: Living the Christian life was not an easy thing.
- Expect trials and sufferings before you will see the Lord in glory.

If we were placed in a glass case, we would not grow. If we were never injured, there would be no forgiving grace. Without suffering, we would not have patience. We grow in grace only when the stormy winds of trials blow. It is through harsh experiences that believers grow "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

When Satan tests and tries you, hold the world loose but firmly grip the invisible things of God II Cor. 4:16-18 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

II Cor. 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight

It is possible that God might use you to scatter His seed with a hand that was never wounded, but He will not use you to minister to the brokenhearted until trials have made you tender and

sensitive. Your present, painful experience is a necessary preparation for something that will give you tenfold joy. If we are not tested, we cannot be victorious.

The rule of the kingdom is: no battle, no crowns; no conflict, no conquest.

Five Smooth Stones: The Value Of Maturity In Our Walk With God

Consider: The depth of our maturity in God prepares us to slay giants.

I Samuel 17 The Philistine stood about 10' tall, was arrayed with heavy armor, and taunted the armies of Israel for 40 days and 40 nights. He was big, skillful, and intimidating.

- Forty marks a complete period time of testing and trial. By the time David arrives on the scene, this period has reached its peak. David, filled with the Holy Spirit, is ready to move in strength and power against this insolent head of a beast.

I Samuel 17:40 Then he took his staff in his hand and

chose 5 smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch.

His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine.

- Brook = Strong's #5158 = nachal spelled nun, chet, lamed
 - ❖ A stream, brook or river
- The verbal root is nachal = Strong's #5157 = to inherit, to occupy, to possess
- Fresh water streams, rivers, and brooks are constantly moving or flowing.
- In Scripture, waters that are specifically called "Living Waters" come only from these sources.
- David retrieved his ammunition, 5 smooth stones, from the only trustworthy source: from the living waters of the promises of God.
- David took from the "inheritance" he had in God.

I Sam. 17:45-47 *Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. "This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands."*

Shepherding the flocks of his father Jesse had given David valuable experience in not only tending to the vulnerable, but also in defeating mighty beasts.

- David compared the Philistine with an uncircumcised beast.

In Hebrew, a stone or eben, is a contraction of the words father and son (av + ben).

A stone is not only strong, but a far worthier choice of ammo against the enemy.

What is stronger than the Father and the Son? Nothing!

Five is the number of strength and power as the fifth manifestation of the Holy Spirit. *Isa. 11:2*
This power is what fueled the first global migrations of the birds and fish created on the fifth day of creation.

I Sam. 17:48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came, and drew nigh to meet David, that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

The word for ran (*rutz*) is the same root word used to describe the movement of the creatures created on day five.

➤ Quick flowing movement is a trademark of those filled with God's Holy Spirit of Power.

Consider: There are 5 books of Moses or Torah. FIVE is associated with grace and the gospel. Though it only took one smooth stone to defeat Goliath, David picked up 5, a clear indication that the Torah (Word) is what defeats a beast, a giant.

Our greater King David, Jesus the Messiah, was likewise taunted or tempted for 40 days.

Like David, He overcame the adversary with one smooth stone by quoting one of the 5 books of the Torah: Deuteronomy, the fifth book. Coincidence?

Einstein: Coincidence is God's way of remaining anonymous.

Smooth Stones: These 5 smooth stones were taken from the brook where their jagged edges had been smoothed by the flow of water over a long period of time.

What does the polishing? The rocks on the banks are not being polished when they are out of the water - maybe a little by the wind and rain, but that is a much slower process.

Polishing happens in the river with the constant moving of the flowing water. Tumbling around and bumping up against the other rocks and sand in the river makes the rough edges smooth.

The water moves the rocks around causing the polishing.

I Pet. 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Smooth stones are jagged, broken rocks refined in the water and prepared by the Lord.

Consider: The constant washing of the water of the Word wears down all of one's rough and crooked edges. Like the river stones, this is a slow process, a journey down the bumpy and twisted path of life.

Note: If you find the Christian life easy, you might not be in the River getting worn and washed by the Word.

Refining is never easy, but it is necessary. God uses the bumped, bruised, and broken stones to lead armies and slay giants. When we stay yielded to the Lord and allow the River of God to smooth out the rough areas in our lives, we will be ready to partner with Him when Goliath stands in front of us.

Smooth stones are ready for battle.

Continual growth and maturity in Christ make us battle-ready.

Rejoice in your current battle, circumstance, and trial. Move fluidly in the power of the Holy Spirit and without fear as David did; for each step will only make you *smoother* when you stand before Jesus Christ at the Judgment Seat.