

## The Whole Armor of God (6:10–20)

Having concluded his discussion regarding respect and proper functioning within household relationships, Paul shifts his focus externally. His previous exhortations regarded how those within the church should function together as they sought to maintain unity and achieve spiritual growth. In this pericope Paul addresses the external aspect of believers' lives. While his instructions for internal relationships centered on respect and unity, his concern in these verses is based on a recognition of the hostility for which Christians must prepare. Thus he calls on them to be strong and equipped to do battle against those opposing the gospel (6:10–17). He uses military imagery to help convey the nature of the conflict. He then concludes with a personal appeal to the Ephesians to be ready for the opposition that they will face and to support him in the battle he is enduring (6:18–20).

### The Armor (6:10–17)

Paul has established the necessity of Christians to be unified and loving to one another, but these instructions have been primarily focused on the internal behavior exhibited between fellow Christians. In this section he shifts his attention to ensuring the Ephesians are properly

prepared for what they might encounter outside the church. Thus he calls on the Ephesians to be strong as they face opposition (6:10). He then uses strong military language to paint the picture of the necessary preparation. In particular he calls on them to put on the armor of God (6:11), and then delves into various elements with which they need to clothe themselves. These verses make it clear that the battle for which they are preparing is not a physical one; rather, it is spiritual in nature, with the opposing commander being Satan himself.

**6:10** To begin his discussion of the armor of God and the necessity of being prepared for Satan's attacks, Paul calls on the Ephesians to be strong in the Lord. Paul wants believers to be able to stand their ground, and this requires tremendous strength. The battle that is before the church is against spiritual forces of evil (6:12), so Christians cannot be weak in their defense. Paul does not want the Ephesians to rely on their own ability, for the forces against them are too mighty; rather, they are to be strengthened by and dependent on God's might.

**6:11** Having called on the Ephesians to be strong in the Lord, Paul now commands them to put on the armor of God. He continues by explaining that

the purpose is so that they will be able to stand firm against Satan. Paul is not calling on the believers to be ready for a physical, straightforward battle; rather, the conflict for which he is preparing them is one based on cunning deceit. This armor of God is the fulfillment of what he expects and is a sign of Christian maturity. 📖

**6:12** Paul elaborates on his statement regarding the schemes of Satan in **6:11**. He clarifies that the battle before them is not physical in nature; rather, it is against spiritual forces of evil. He uses four descriptors to explain who the enemies being faced are: rulers, powers, world/cosmic forces of darkness, and spiritual forces of evil. Paul states that the battle will be spiritual and elements of it will take place in the heavenly realm. The point of this verse is to establish that the schemes of the devil are grand and far-reaching. Thus the children of God must be aware and properly equipped to overcome the enemy. 📖

**6:13** In this verse Paul comes back to his main call to arms from **6:11**. In the previous statement Paul instructed believers to “put on” armor 📖, and in this verse he says to “take up” armor. The purpose of such preparation is again stated as having the goal of standing firm. 📖 Based on **6:11–12**, it is clear that

the opponent is the devil. In order to do this, they will need the armor of God. Paul explains that this armor will allow them to resist the evil day. 📖

**6:14** Paul begins his discussion of the armor of God, stating that believers’ ability to stand firm is rooted in these pieces of armor. The first piece he mentions is truth girding their waists in the role of a belt. Thus believers are to have truth wrapped around them, ensuring that everything is held together and in its proper place. Paul continues with the second piece of armor, the breastplate of righteousness. Righteousness was spoken of as an element of the new self, along with truth, in **4:24**. Both truth and righteousness were also previously mentioned in **5:9** as being a components of the light, which exposed the evil darkness. 📖

**6:15** Paul provides the third piece of armor in this verse. He states that the ones who will stand firm will have their feet ready, for they will be shod in the gospel of peace. The gospel is a message of reconciliation (peace) between God and all people who follow Christ, whether Jew or gentile. Likewise, it unifies all people in a bond of peace (**4:3**). Thus the believer is to be prepared for battle by being grounded in the understanding of the reconciliation brought

about through the sacrifice of Jesus. 🗣️

**6:16** The fourth piece of armor mentioned by Paul is the shield of faith. He states that this should be taken up in addition to all and that through its use the believer will be able to put out the fiery arrows of the devil. Paul has made it evident that faith in Christ is the means by which salvation is granted. Thus, in order to defend against the attacks of Satan, believers must maintain their faith in Christ's work and his power (6:10). 🗣️

**6:17** In this verse Paul provides the final two pieces of spiritual armor to be put on by believers. The first is the helmet of salvation. Saving grace is to serve as a protection for the believer. The final piece of armor to be put on is the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. Thus, through the Spirit's power, the believer is to fight back against the attacks of Satan by declaring the truths of God, especially the gospel message.