



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V25 N47 November 26, 2023

"Fighting with My Family" Ephesians 6:10-20

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Disciple-Making

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues, and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

2 Timothy 2:2



Where should the practice of Disciple-making begin?

God reveals his purpose for every believer in Christ in Romans 8:29, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brother and sisters." On this passage, one commentator writes: "'Predestined' (or foreordained) means that God determined the destiny of the elect previously, specifically, before Creation (Eph. 1:3-4). That destiny is conformity to Jesus Christ's image, which is much more than just deliverance from sin and death. God accomplished this goal partially through believers' justification. He is presently accomplishing it partially through our *progressive sanctification*, and He will accomplish it completely through our glorification" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Romans," 2023 ed., 191, plano-biblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/romans.pdf).

This commentator relates conformity to the likeness of Christ to *sanctification*, which is, simply stated, the process believers go through to become like Jesus. When this process is viewed from the perspective of *holiness*, it is called "sanctification." When it is viewed from the perspective of *personal development*, it is called "formation." When it is viewed from the perspective of *training*, it is called "discipleship." Sanctification, spiritual formation, and discipleship all refer to the same process—the process believers go through to become like Jesus.

This process is both *intentional* and *incidental*. The *intentional* aspect of the process pertains to those things that believers do *on purpose* to be used by the Holy Spirit to conform them to the likeness of Christ. The Central Practices are examples of spiritual disciplines that Christians do intentionally to be transformed by the Holy Spirit. They include the following: Bible Study, Biblical Community, Compassion, Disciple-Making, Evangelism, Generosity, Prayer, Single-Mindedness, Spiritual Gifts, and Worship. Of course, there are other spiritual disciplines, but these are some key ones.

The *incidental* aspect of the process pertains to the unscripted circumstances in life that come the believers' way that the Holy Spirit uses to transform them. The patience of Christ is a simple example. Patience isn't developed by reading about patience or listening to a sermon about patience. Information about patience, e.g., the need for it or its benefits, may be acquired in this way, but patience (i.e., patient endurance) is acquired through experience—often the experience of suffering. Consider what the New Testament writers have to say: in Romans 5:3, "We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience" (KJV); cf. "We also rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance" (NET); and in James 5:10, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (KJV); cf. "As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord's name" (NET). Experience is a good teacher. Sometimes an encounter can be an example of both aspects, *intentional* and *incidental*. An unscripted edifying conversation regarding spiritual things that takes place in a deliberately attended small group meeting might serve as an example.

Like so many things, *sanctification*, *formation*, and *discipleship* need to begin in the Christian home. Family members have both the responsibility and the opportunity to both *intentionally* and *incidentally* transform one another into the likeness of Christ. For example, given what Paul has to say about the armor of God, family members can foster the development of those elements that protect them from "the devil's schemes" (Eph 6:11). These include the following six things: 1) truth; 2) righteousness; 3) the gospel of peace; 4) faith; 5) salvation; and 6) the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, accompanied by an attitude of prayer.



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Ephesians 6:10-20

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. 19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Box "Finally" in v. 10.
- Circle "be strong" in v. 10.
- Circle "put on" in vv. 10, 13.
- Circle "full armor" in v. 11
- Circle "stand" in vv. 11, 13 (2x), 14.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 12.
- Circle "dark" in v. 12.
- Underline "rulers," "authorities," "powers," and "spiritual forces" in v. 12.
- Box "Therefore" indicating *result* in v. 13.
- Box "so that" indicating *purpose/result* in v. 13.
- Bracket "day of evil" in v. 13.
- Highlight "truth" v. 14, "righteousness" v. 14, "gospel" v. 15, "faith" v. 16, "salvation" v. 17, "Spirit/Word" in v. 17.
- Circle "flaming arrows" in v. 16.
- Bracket "in the Spirit" in v. 18.
- Underline "be alert" and "keep on praying" in v. 18.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Explain what the *command* in verse 11 has to do with the *command* in verse 10.
2. Explain the *purpose* behind putting on the “full armor” of God.
3. What do you infer about the devil’s *schemes* (v. 11) from what you know about the devil (see Jn 8:44)?
4. Explain the *contrast* in verse 12.
5. To whom do “rulers,” “authorities,” “powers,” and “spiritual forces” refer?
6. Paul mentions “the day of evil” (v. 13). What *day* is that?
7. List the six weapons in the believers’ arsenal enabling them to “stand firm” (see vv. 14-17).
8. If “prayer” isn’t another piece of armor, what is it doing here in verse 18?
9. Contemporary readers can’t pray for Paul, so what’s the point of verses 19-20? What do you think?
10. **Discussion:** Interestingly, the commands throughout this passage are *plural*, not *singular*, suggesting they are directed at the church. What do you make of that?

Commentary On The Text

On Ephesians 6:10-20, one commentator writes: “From Eph 4:1 to 6:9 Paul gives practical applications for the believers concerning how to live out their new position in Christ before both believers and unbelievers. Now, in his final section (6:10-20), he describes the continual warfare of wicked forces against believers and accordingly exhorts them to be strengthened in the Lord in order to be able to stand against the wicked schemes of the devil. The struggle of believers ultimately is not a human conflict but is a battle against wicked spiritual forces” (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 820).

The passage unfolds in five movements: 1) Verse 10 functions as a heading for the whole passage; 2) Verse 11 explains the *means* to the end in verse 10; 3) And verse 12 explains why strength is needed; 4) The command to put on God’s armor is then repeated in verse 13; and 5) explained in verses 14-20.

In verse 10, Paul commands believers to be strong, not in themselves, but “in the Lord and in his mighty power.” Evidently, believers are not able to stand against the devil’s schemes in their own strength. Consequently, they are to “put on the *full* armor of God,” which will protect them from head to toe. Paul’s emphasis appears to be on taking advantage of each and every piece of armor. Since their struggle isn’t against people, that is, *physical*, but against powerful forces of evil, that is, *spiritual*, every piece is essential. The image is one of hand-to-hand combat that is up close and personal. On the four spiritual forces listed (v. 12), one author explains: “Some commentators believe that Paul described four different orders of angelic beings here. Probably the four terms used of our spiritual enemies in this verse do not identify four separate kinds of adversaries as much as they point out four characteristics of all of them. ‘Rulers’ stresses their authority, and ‘powers’ their strength. ‘World forces of this darkness’ point to their wide influence in the world, and ‘forces of wickedness’ relate to their evil character” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Ephesians,” 2023 ed., 140, planobiblechap.el.org/tcon/notes/pdf/ephesians.pdf).

In verses 14-17, Paul describes the defensive and offensive parts of the armor of a Roman foot soldier. One commentator speculates: “It is quite possible that Paul’s vivid description of the armor may stem from the fact that, while writing this letter, he was in prison being guarded by Roman soldiers (cf. Acts 28:16, 20)” (Hoehner, 822-23). Paul mentions six pieces: 1) belt, “a breech-like ‘apron which hung under the armour, which was made of loose or sewn thongs of

leather’ for protecting the thighs” (Hoehner, 839); 2) breastplate, “a metal plate worn over a leather jerkin or a coat of mail to protect the chest and back” (840); 3) foot gear, “heavy sandals (*caliga*, a low half-boot) with soles made of several layers of leather averaging 2 centimeters (3/4 inch) thick, studded with hollow-headed hobnails. They were tied by leather thongs half-way up the shin and were stuffed with wool or fur in the cold weather” (842); 4) shield, “measuring three-quarters by one and a quarter meters (2 ½ by 4 feet). It was made of two wood planks glued together with the outer surface covered first with canvas and then with calf skin” (846). When soaked in water, it would extinguish any flaming darts fired at it; 5) helmet, “generally made of bronze fitted over an iron skull cap lined with leather or cloth” (850); and 6) sword, “its blade was ‘two inches [5 centimeters] wide and two feet long [60 centimeter] and was admirably suitable as a cut-and-thrust weapon for close work.’ It was placed in a sheath attached to the girdle high on the right side of the body so it would be clear of his shield-bearing left arm and not become entangled with his legs” (851-52).

To these he gives spiritual associations: 1) truth, both *objective* truth and its fruit, *subjective* reliability and faithfulness; 2) righteousness, not just justifying righteousness but sanctifying righteousness as well; 3) the gospel of peace, being firmly grounded in the gospel of peace, believers are prepared to stand against the onslaught of evil forces; 4) faith, having resolute faith protects believers from spiritual harm aimed at them by the devil; 5) salvation, knowing they are saved gives believers confidence during the assaults of the evil one; and 6) the Spirit/Word of God, giving believers a ready response to the devil’s lies.

In verses 18-20, Paul reminds his readers of the importance of prayer. While not a seventh piece of equipment, prayer should not be overlooked in the putting on of God’s armor. “Whether prayer is a seventh piece of equipment is debated. Grammar suggest it is not, or else being alert, which is a parallel to paying, would have to be considered a piece of the equipment as well. But the question is irrelevant, for whether it is a piece of the equipment or the demeanor with which the equipment is worn, neither prayer nor being alert is optional for believers. By definition, to be Christ’s soldier is to pray and keep alert” (Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*, 344)

Word Studies/Notes

v. 10 **Finally** “‘Finally’ (*tou loipou*) is ‘for the rest,’ i.e., as to what remains for them to do” (A. Skevington Wood, “Ephesians,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, 85). The final exhortation section of the letter addresses the fact that life in a fallen world is a battle. It builds off of the call to walk in unity, in holiness, in love, in light and with wisdom (4:1, 17; 5:1-2, 7-8, 15). There are forces that seek to derail those aligned to God from this path” (Darrell L. Bock, *Ephesians*, TNTC, 196).

v. 10 **be strong** Or “be strengthened.” “The passive form of the verb (‘be strong’) indicates that this empowering is something done to Christians, not something they do themselves; its present tense shows the empowering is continual” (Klyne Snodgrass, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ephesians*, 338).

vv. 10, 13 **Put on** “In order to be strong in the Lord (v. 10) the Christian must put on (cf. 1 Thess. 5:8) the full armor of God. God supplies it for the believer (cf. Isa. 11:5; 59:17)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Ephesians,” 2023 ed., 136, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/ephesians.pdf). “Two exhortations stand side by side. The first is general: *Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might* (verse 10). The second is more specific: *Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil* (verse 11). Both commands are conspicuous examples of the balanced teaching of Scripture . . . Paul expresses the proper combination of divine enabling [*sic*] and human co-operation” (John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, TBST, 266). “An English translation cannot easily show it, but the imperatives throughout this section are plural. We usually interpret them as if they were addressed to individuals, but without denying their relevance for individuals, we should understand them as Paul’s instruction for the church collectively to put God’s armor and stand as one person (cf. Phil. 1:27)” (Snodgrass, 339).

v. 11 **full armor** “This accoutrement is provided by God (NEB) and modeled on what he wears himself (Isa 11:5; 59:17; Wisd Sol 5:17-20). It is a complete outfit (*panoplia*, NIV, ‘full armor,’ v. 13). The soldier must be protected from head to foot and the *panoplia* is made up of all the various *hopla* or pieces of armor both defensive and offensive” (Wood, 85-86).

vv. 11, 13, 14 **stand** “‘Stand’ (*stēte*) is a key word in this passage (cf. vv. 13, 14). The equipment enables the soldier to ward off the attacks of the enemy and make a stand against him. *Stēte* is a military term for holding on to a position” (Wood, 86). “The ground is already won, so standing firm is the position from which we battle (see v. 13 as well)” (Bock, 199).

v. 12 **dark** “Darkness” is an archetype. Whereas “light” connotes good, “dark” connotes evil and conveys an ominous sense (Jn 13:30). In this verse, “the powers of this dark world” are linked to “the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places.”

v. 12 **rulers, authorities . . .** “Some commentators believe that Paul described four different orders of angelic beings here. Probably the four terms used of our spiritual enemies in this verse do not identify four separate kinds of adversaries as much as they point out four characteristics of all of them. ‘Rulers’ stresses their authority, and ‘powers’ their strength. ‘World forces of this darkness’ point to their wide influence in the world, and ‘forces of wickedness’ relate to their evil character” (Constable, 140).

13 **day of evil** “Paul appears to refer to the present evil times and at the same time to alert believers to the devil’s extraordinary evil schemes leveled against them during these evil times. The believers should be aware that they must be prepared, not only for everyday evils but for the times of heightened and unexpected spiritual battles” (Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 834).

vv. 14-17 **truth, righteousness . . .** Each piece of armor is described using a prepositional phrase, e.g., “belt of truth,” “breastplate of righteousness,” and so on. The meaning conveyed by each is “belt consisting of truth,” “breastplate consisting of righteousness,” and so on.

v. 16 **flaming arrows** I.e., “any temptation to evil or wrong” (Snodgrass, 343). “The devil’s darts no doubt include his mischievous accusations which inflame our conscience with what (if we are sheltering in Christ) can only be called false guilt. Other darts are unsought thoughts of doubt and disobedience, rebellion, lust, malice or fear” (Stott, 281).

v. 18 **in the Spirit** “Praying in the Spirit involves praying confident of God’s help as we pray in harmony with the Spirit’s desires, with the Spirit’s enablement, and because of His grace (cf. Rom. 8:26-27; 1 Cor. 12:3; Gal. 4:6; Jude 20). To use the clause ‘We pray in the power of the Holy Spirit’ as a kind of magic password at the end of one’s prayers, with the hope that adding these words will guarantee their power and effectiveness, is not what praying in the Spirit involves” (Constable, 148).

v. 18 **be alert, keep on praying** “Both ‘pray’ and ‘be alert’ are participles in the Greek text (‘praying...being alert’). Both are probably instrumental, loosely connected with all of the preceding instructions. As such, they are not additional commands to do but instead are the means through which the prior instructions are accomplished” (*NET Bible*, 37tn on Eph 6:18).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's evil schemes.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

We're at war. It doesn't feel like it because, after all, most days feel pretty regular. But it's there - a constant battle for your time, energy, heart, and mind. The stability of our home and family is under attack via finances, screen time, extracurricular activities, work and those Joneses we have to keep up with. Our kids are experiencing attack through sexuality, anxiety, an overscheduled life, academic pressure or social demands. Our marriages are under attack. I remember hearing once that when we're dating, Satan spends all his energy trying to get us together, and after we're married, he spends all his energy trying to pull us apart. So, yeah. While one day might bleed into another and it feels like just another ho-hum day, there's an unseen and constant barrage of arrows lobbed from all directions trying to find the slightest weakness, the tiniest chink in our armor, to penetrate. But God, through his divine power, has given us all we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Might this include His armor? If He gives us what we need for character development to know Him better, wouldn't He give us what we need to be defensive against attacks? I believe we're supplied with the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of the gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, sword of the Spirit and relationship with our Savior through prayer so we can live a godly life. And when a family arms itself, they become a band of brothers and sisters, loyal and dedicated, ready to serve the Savior and spur each other on. Let's fight with our family.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Ephesians 6:10-20

1. Why should you put on the armor of God?
2. What is our struggle really with?
3. List each part of the armor of God and what it does?

What Do You Think?

What does prayer have to do with all the armor?

What Do You Do?

Build armor with things found around the house and have a family Nerf war. Talk about the importance of protecting yourself with God's armor.

CORE COMPETENCY: Disciple-Making

I multiply godly beliefs, qualities and behaviors in others to encourage them to grow in Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 41:10

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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BIBLE CHURCH**

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