

COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE  
WEEK OF AUGUST 17, 2009

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

**Spiritual Warfare: The Battle**

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."

–C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

"Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs."

2 Corinthians 2:10-11

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

Ephesians 6:10-13

RELATED TEXTS TO EXPLORE

2 Tim 2:1; 1 John 2:14; Job 29:14; Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 2, 10:4, 11:14; 2 Thes 2; John 13:27; Luke 22:53; Col 1:13;

STUDY GUIDE

- **What observations can be made about:**
  - The imagery of "standing"
  - How one is to "stand"
  - The likely result of not "standing"
  - The antagonists listed in this passage
  - The "armor of God"
  - The juxtaposition of two realities – material and spiritual
  - Evil as portrayed in this passage
  - The tactics of "the devil"
  
- **What does each of these things mean? What did they mean for the church at Ephesus then, what do they mean for us now?**

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Use any or as many of these questions as will be helpful for your discussion.

- What has God spoken to you about this week regarding the sermon or passage?
- What does this passage reveal to us about Jesus?
- How does this passage enhance our understanding of the Gospel?
- What does this text mean for us as a community? Individually? How does it free us to be the people God intends for us to be?
- How do we need to live out the meaning of this text in our city?
- How does this portrayal of spiritual reality challenge your preconceptions and presuppositions?
- Do you believe in a literal devil, literal spiritual forces, a literal good and evil?
- Would you say that you give too much recognition to the devil, or too little?
- Why is the armor of God the only adequate defense to these "spiritual forces"? In what ways are you shielding yourself in the armor of God?
- What does it mean to say that something is "demonic"? Is there anything in your life that you discern to be demonic?

"My dear brothers, never forget, when you hear the progress of enlightenment vaunted, that the devil's best trick is to persuade you that he doesn't exist!"

–Charles Pierre Baudelaire, *Le Joueur Genereux*

## MEMORY VERSES

Last Week: Eph 5: 15-17

This Week: Eph 10:12-13

## PRAYER FOCUS

**For the Vision and Direction of the church (August):**

Apostles Church wants to be a people who serve and shape the emerging culture. We will seek to follow Jesus in our public lives and influence the domains in which God has placed us.

**In Response to the Text:**

- Praising God for the strength of his might
- Praising God his preeminence over everything, including the devil
- Confessing our weakness and failure to stand
- Confessing our refusal to don the armor of God
- Thanking Jesus for defeating sin, death and the power of the enemy on the cross
- Thanking God for being our protection
- Asking for power in the Holy Spirit to stand against the schemes of the devil
- Asking for hearts of faith that not only recognize the reality of spiritual darkness, but that detest it

## FURTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDY AND PREPARATION

- *Spiritual Warfare* – John C. Miller (Audio – available through Westminster bookstore)
- *The Christian in Complete Armour* – William Gurnall
- *What is Spiritual Warfare?* – Stanley D. Gale
- *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* – Thomas Brooks
- *3 Crucial Questions About Spiritual Warfare* – Clinton Arnold
- *The Screwtape Letters* – C.S. Lewis
- *Biblical Demonology: A Study of Spiritual Forces at Work Today* – Merrill Unger
- <http://www.marshallchurch.org/media/spiritual-warfare>

## NEXT WEEK'S TEXT

Ephesians 6:14-17