

COMMUNITY GROUP WEEKLY DISCUSSION GUIDE
WEEK OF AUGUST 24, 2009

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Spiritual Warfare: The Battle

"The Church in the West today presents too easy a target for Satan. We do not believe we are at war. We do not know where the battleground is located, and, in spite of our weapons, they are neither loaded nor aimed at the right target. We are unaware of how vulnerable we are. We are better fitted for a parade than for an amphibious landing."

-Ed Siloso

"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 6:14-17

RELATED TEXTS TO EXPLORE

2 Tim 2:1; 1 John 2:14; Job 29:14; Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 2, 4:3-4, 10:4, 11:14; 2 Thes 2; John 13:27; Luke 22:53; Col 1:13; Acts 19; Mark 4; Revelation 12; Gal 1

STUDY GUIDE

- **What observations can be made about:**
 - The virtue associated with each piece of armor
 - The status endowed by the "gospel of peace"
 - The description of Satan's weapons
 - The description of the Word of God
 - The timing of taking up the "shield of faith"

- **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?
- JR said that "idle time flows to your area of weakness". What is your idle time like?
- The sermon mentioned some "false gospels" (e.g. gospel of works, gospel of spirituality) that Satan uses to oppose the truth. What false gospels have you encountered and how have you responded to them?
- The quote from Thomas Brooks gave us the picture of temptation to sin as Satan presenting a bait but hiding the hook. What baits are you most prone to bite at?
- Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Rev 12) and thus accuses our consciences. What accusations do you experience and how do you distinguish them from conviction (see 2 Cor 7: 10-13 for additional insight)

Theoden: "I will not risk open war!"
Aragorn: "Open war is upon you whether you risk it or not."
–J.R.R Tolkien, *Lord of the Rings*

MEMORY VERSES

Last Week: Eph 6:12-13

This Week: Eph 6:16

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 6:18-20