

# Ephesians

6:10-17

## Introduction

You've heard the expression "mano-y-mano." It means *man-to-man* and is used to designate close-quarter, hand-to-hand fighting.

There's something like that in our text this morning. Only it's not mano-y-mano; it's *mano-y-diabalos*, **man-to-devil**.

Christians are engaged in a close-quarter, hand-to-hand combat with the devil and his demon hierarchy. The battleground is your home and your workplace. Anytime you take a stand for Jesus... Anytime you commit to walking with the Lord at home or at work... You are declaring Jesus Christ's victory over the devil on ground he has yet to relinquish. He and his demon hoards wrestle against you to topple you and see you fall.

If you are going to withstand their onslaught and remain standing you will need to "be strong in the Lord and the power of His might," and you will need to "put on the whole armor of God."

We'll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 Be Assured That You Are Constantly Engaged In Hand-To-Hand Combat With Supernatural Enemies, and #2 Be Reassured That You Are Completely Equipped For Combat With Supernatural Enemies.

#1 Be Assured That You Are Constantly Engaged  
In Hand-To-Hand Combat With Supernatural Enemies  
(v10-13)

We have a tendency to look upon spiritual warfare as an occasional skirmish or battle interrupted by long periods of furlough. If we go on a mission trip, or get involved in a ministry, we expect some satanic resistance. When it's over we return to normal, everyday life.

These verses put you on active duty 24/7. They put you on notice that your normal, everyday life at home and at work are themselves

the spiritual battleground. You are constantly engaged with your enemies.

Three phrases in verses ten through thirteen heighten your awareness of the combat: “Finally,” “in the evil day,” and “wrestle.”

“Finally” should be translated *from this point forward*. “In the evil day” is a description of the world ever since the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We’ll see that **every day** is “evil” because the world is currently ruled by evil forces. True, God always overrules; but the Bible calls the devil “the ruler of this world” and, though defeated, he has not yet relinquished his territory.

Then there is the word “wrestle.” Paul is not changing metaphors; he’s not talking about an athletic event in a gymnasium. He’s describing a fully armed soldier wrestling against his enemies. When a fully armed soldier is wrestling, he’s involved in close-quarter, eyeball-to-eyeball, hand-to-hand combat. In this case **you’re** the soldier and the enemy is supernatural. It’s **mano-y-diabalos**.

The verses preceding these discuss the impact that Christianity has on your home and at work. It is at home and at work – **in your everyday living** – that the battle is fought.

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

“From this point forward.” What point? Ideally, from the point at which you first become a Christian. You are born-again resulting in radical changes in your marriage and family, and at work. It’s as if Jesus were in your home, at your job... The devil and his demons take note of it and the battle is on.

“From this point forward” can also be any point at which you decide to really commit yourself to the Lord and walk in the power of a Spirit-filled life.

“Be strong” is in a verb tense that means *be continually strengthened*. You are continually strengthened “in the Lord” as you put on the armor He has provided. The armor is the “power of His might.”

1. “Power” refers to the power that was revealed by the Lord when He was on the earth. By His death, resurrection, and ascension, He was *victorious* over the devil.
2. “Might” refers to the power that resides in the Lord in heaven. By His Second Coming He will return to *vanquish* the devil.

Inbetween the victory and the vanquishing, you occupy enemy territory. You need to,

Ephesians 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Before you get a look at your armor, you need a briefing on your enemy. Paul introduces him as “the devil.” He was Lucifer, the most beautiful of all God’s angels. Although created by God, Lucifer desired to be God. In his rebellion against God he was followed by as many as one-third of the other created angels. Their rebellion was easily overcome. Lucifer is now referred to as Satan or, more commonly, the devil – although he has many other titles and designations in the Bible.

Ephesians 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

The reference to “flesh and blood” reminds you that your enemies are supernatural beings. They are fallen angels. Apart from the Lord’s strength, you have no hope in your combat with them.

It also reminds you that your battles are spiritual. You have battles at home and at work. They seem to be between husband and wife... parent and child... employer and employee. But they always have a spiritual component and can only be properly fought using spiritual tactics and weapons.

The devil has his demons organized into a complex military hierarchy. There are “principalities.” We know from the Book of Daniel that there are demons called “princes” who rule over continents and countries.

There are “powers.” “Powers” could refer to demons who devise and employ the powerful forces that hold the world in bondage. The

theory of evolution is an example of their work. So are the many vices that hold men, women, and children in their grip.

There are “rulers of the darkness of this age” and “spiritual hosts of wickedness.” These might be the local demons and those at their command.

It is not Paul’s intent to discuss this structure in depth. All **you** need to know is that your enemy is super-intelligent and highly organized. Do not get involved trying to determine his ranks. You don’t need to know the name of the local demon... You don’t need to map the activities of the spiritual hosts... These current practices being taught among Christians are part of the demonic deception!

You are to be aware of “the wiles of the devil.” The word “wiles” is the Greek word *methodeia*. We translate it *methods* but it means *deceit*.

The devil is out to *deceive* you so that you will *disobey* God and give-up the ground you stand on. Think back to the Garden of Eden. God had given Adam and Eve ground – literally and spiritually. The devil deceived them and they disobeyed God. They forfeited the ground God had given them. In their case, they forfeited the control of the world! The devil became the “ruler of the world” at that moment.

How does the devil deceive you? He attacks God’s *goodness*, God’s *government*, and God’s *goals*.

1. The devil attacked God’s goodness when he suggested to Adam and Eve that God was withholding something good by not allowing them to eat from the one tree.
2. The devil attacked God’s government when he suggested that they would not really die by eating from the tree. They could govern themselves, make up their own rules for life in the Garden.
3. The devil attacked God’s goals when he told Adam and Eve they would become as god by eating from the tree. God’s goals for them would not get them to their full potential.

The deception led to their disobedience and to the disaster of sin. God, in His goodness, government, and goals for the human race,

promised to send a Savior to reclaim the title to the world. Jesus *was* and *is* that Savior. In a struggle with the devil similar to that of Adam and Eve, Jesus resisted the devil's deception and refused to disobey God. Instead He was obedient to death, even the death on the Cross, and was victorious over the devil. He went to heaven and will return from there to vanquish His foes.

In the mean time, **you live in enemy territory**. You are told,

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

You "stand" whenever you take a stand for Jesus at home or at work or wherever you find yourself. You find yourself engaged in hand-to-hand combat. You might be having a debate with your wife... Difficulty with your kids... A disagreement with your boss. But you're **not** wrestling against flesh-and-blood. There are evil forces fueling the struggles. You will "withstand" the onslaught and remain standing if you "take up the whole armor of God."

## #2 Be Reassured That You Are Completely Equipped For Hand-To-Hand Combat With Supernatural Enemies (v14-17)

Paul was all too familiar with Roman soldiers. He was probably chained to one while he was dictating the letter to the Ephesians! He looked over and said, *"I'm going to put you in the Bible."*

Putting on the whole armor of God involves both what you *believe* and how you *behave*:

1. The armor is given to me by God. Each piece involves something spiritual you believe He has given to you as a Christian.
2. You must put on the armor. You must behave in a manner consistent with what you believe in order to hold your spiritual ground in the evil day.

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth...

The soldier was "girded" with a leather belt underneath that held all the other equipment together. **Your** belt is "truth." God's Word is

truth. Think of Adam and Eve. God's Word was truth. The devil deceived them by adding to or subtracting from God's truth. Had they simply believed God's Word was truth, they would have obeyed it.

It may sound simple to say that God's Word is truth, but so many Christians don't really believe it. They don't believe it when they are in the battle at home, for example. I know they don't believe it because there are so many unbiblical divorces among Christians. They listen to the devil attack God's goodness, government, and goals. They are toppled, they fall, they give up the ground of Christian marriage upon which they stand.

Ephesians 6:14 ...having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

The "breastplate" covered both front and back protecting all the vital organs. **Your** breastplate is "righteousness." When you receive Jesus as your Savior, He takes your sin and gives you His righteousness. God declares you righteous because of what Jesus has done and you are saved for eternity.

How is God's righteousness part of your armor? It protects you to know that **nothing** can ever separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus! No matter how severe your supernatural struggle, Jesus will never, no never leave you or forsake you. The battle is truly the Lord's.

Ephesians 6:15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

The Roman soldier wore sandals which had small nails in the soles. He was thus able to dig-in and hold his ground during an assault without losing his balance. **Your** sandals are "the preparation of the gospel of peace." It's a tough phrase. "Peace" is the key concept. You have peace *with* God and, as a result, can experience the peace *of* God. The peace of God guards your heart in the midst of the fiercest of struggles. You are "prepared" to stand in any conflict because you have the "good news" that you are at peace with God.

Ephesians 6:16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

"Above all" doesn't mean it is more important. The phrase should be translated, *in addition to these*. The shield described here is the

large, oblong shield that was able to defend the entire body from flaming arrows tipped with tar or pitch. When those arrows hit they would splash fire all over. The shield deflected these and allowed the soldier to hold his ground or advance. **Your** shield is “faith.” God’s Word is truth; you have been declared righteous; you are at peace with God and can have the peace of God. You maintain this spiritual posture by faith.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation...

We have some help interpreting this in another portion of Scripture. In First Thessalonians 5:8, Paul says to put on “for a helmet, the hope of salvation.” The hope he is talking about is the sure hope of the coming of Jesus for you to complete your salvation. **Your** helmet is the blessed hope of the return of Jesus to complete the work He has begun in you.

Ephesians 6:17 ...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

We’ve already said that “truth” is the Word of God. How is it that “the sword of the Spirit” is also the “word of God?” The word for “word” here is *rhema*. *Rhema* is a precise, particular word from God’s Word that is perfect for your particular warfare. It is “the sword of the Spirit” in the sense that the Holy Spirit brings a word from God’s Word to you. **Your** sword is the *rhema* you need to stand your ground and withstand.

This is God’s armor. It is complete in the sense that you need only what God provides. Your only responsibility is to “put it on,” to “take it up.”

## Conclusion

Why wouldn’t a person put on and take up God’s armor? I can think of at least three reasons:

1. *You’re not a Christian!* If you are not a Christian the Bible describes you as a captive of the devil and doing his will.
2. You’re a Christian but don’t understand that you are constantly engaged in hand-to-hand combat. You see yourself on furlough

unless involved in some front-line mission or ministry. The battle is there, too; but it is mostly in your home or at work.

3. You're a Christian but are **not** taking a stand for Jesus. At home, at work, you're **not** walking filled with the Spirit, submitted to one another in the fear of the Lord. Instead you are walking according to the wisdom of this world.

Stand your ground... Take up God's armor... You will withstand...