

Five Questions that Must be Answered

Lesson 5—Are You Ready for Spiritual Warfare?

OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: Ephesians 6:10-18

Key Verse: 1 Peter 5:8

BEFORE CLASS

Preparation: *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- How ready are you for spiritual warfare?
- What have you intentionally done to prepare yourself to stand for Christ?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed on Sunday morning.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Get to Know You

- *What school do you attend?*
- *What do you enjoy doing?*
- *What's your favorite thing about church?*
- *How long have you attended our church?*
- *What do you want to get out of our small group this year?*

CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.

CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.

CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.

THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, "It really doesn't matter if you're here or not." Small things communicate great messages. Let the three "small" things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.

SAY: This year I'm looking forward to getting to know you better and I'm looking forward to what God is going to do. Today we're going to talk about being ready...

- *How ready were you on the first day of school? Were you ready for school to begin? What did you do to get ready?*
- *Let's pretend for a minute that you have to give a speech in front of your whole school...How would you get ready?*
- *Let's pretend that you have a test and this test will determine your grade for the semester...How would you get ready?*
- *Let's pretend that you are about to have a competition against someone and you get to choose one of the following ways to compete, which would you choose: To play a game of chess, to wrestle, to have a spelling competition, or to play "slaps" (a game of speed where you slap the other person's hands if you're quick enough—most of your students will probably recognize this game but they may know it by a different name.)... Which would you choose? Why?*

SAY: Most people would choose the game that they feel best at to give them the best opportunity to win. Now let's talk about being spiritually ready. This semester you will face numerous spiritual conflicts and the questions is, are you ready for spiritual warfare? Are you ready to stand against temptation or persecution or peer pressure or the fears that might come from a Christian being surrounded by the world?

- *On a scale of 1 to 10, one being not ready at all and 10 being totally ready, how ready do you feel you are to "fight" and "stand" spiritually?*

BIBLE LESSON

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Ephesians 6:10-13

SAY: Let's take a look at some verses where God talks about spiritual warfare.

- *In the battles of this life, what do these verses say is God's plan for you? (To stand.)*
- *Who do these verses say your enemy is? (Not flesh and blood, but spiritual rulers, authorities, powers of darkness and spiritual forces of evil.)*

SAY: Sometimes we think that a person who teases us for being a Christian or a student who is an atheist, or someone who pressures us to turn from Christ is our enemy, but this isn't true. These are lost people and they are spiritually blind to the "big picture" of what life is all about. Our true enemy is not flesh and blood and you can't oppose him with flesh and blood weapons. But God is so great that He has prepared a way for you to defend yourself by His strength and His armor.

- *What does God say to do to help you stand? (Put on the full armor of God.)*

SAY: Let's take a look at what the Apostle Paul is talking about here.

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Ephesians 6:14-18

SAY: When Paul wrote this letter to the people in Ephesus, he was in prison for the cause of Christ, guarded by Roman soldiers. As he wrote it, it is possible that he was describing the protective armor of a soldier in front of him and putting spiritual applications to each piece of the armor. The overall picture in these verses is how God has equipped you to stand. Let's take a closer look at the armor.

- *What keeps you from tripping?* (The belt of truth. In these days, when people were in a hurry, they would pull up the hem of their robe and tuck it into their belt. Otherwise they might trip over it as they ran.)

● *How does the truth keep you from spiritually falling?* (Lying and deception always seem minor at first, but if you allow anything but truth into your mind or mouth, you've taken the first step towards a spiritual fall. Also, you must cling to God's truth to be guarded from the lies of the world.)

- *What guards your chest?* (The breastplate of righteousness.)

SAY: In Paul's day if a soldier suffered a wound to the torso, it was rare that he would survive. Chest and stomach wounds were almost always fatal, and as such we understand the importance of a soldier protecting his chest. The same emphasis carries over to the importance that Paul is putting on us living in righteousness. A breastplate was essential for a soldier to survive. Righteousness is essential for a Christian to stand. Guard your heart by living God's way.

- *How do you think living righteously will guard your heart?*
- *What does Paul say about your feet?* (To prepare them with readiness for the gospel of peace.)

SAY: Soldiers didn't fight barefoot. They wore the sandals that were most appropriate for the type of warfare they would be fighting. Foot soldiers would put nails and small spikes through their sandals to give them more traction, like modern day cleats. This would also help them to plant their feet and stand their ground. But Paul, in these verses, is not just talking about standing. He's also talking about going.

ILLUSTRATION: There's a reason that track runners don't wear flip flops. If they did, it would be obvious that they weren't ready for the race. The question is: *How ready are your feet to go and share the gospel? How have you prepared yourself?*

- *What does Paul say is your shield?* (Faith.)
- *Why do you think shields were so important?*

SAY: The shield was probably the most important piece of equipment for the Roman soldier and the soldiers were trained to work together with their shields. In other words, a soldier's shield, when marching in formation, not only protected him but those behind and around him as well. The reason it was so important was that it guarded against blows before they even reached the body. It was the frontline of defense.

- *What does Paul say your helmet is? (The helmet of salvation.)*
- *Why would he call the helmet salvation? What's the importance here?*

SAY: The helmet guarded the head. Similarly, the Christian life will be won or lost in a person's life depending on the decisions that person makes. It is won or lost in the mind. This is the reason that Paul throughout his writings puts such an emphasis on "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5) or being renewed in the spirit of the mind (i.e., Eph. 4:17-24).

● *If your thoughts were examined, what would they show? Would they show that they belong to Christ? Why or why not?*

- *Finally, in these verses one weapon is mentioned. What is it? ? (The sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.)*
- *What do you think is significant about this?*

SAY: There are a few things you should notice about the sword:

(1) Whose sword is it? The sword *of the Spirit*. This isn't just a weapon to be used by you, but a spiritual weapon that belongs to and is used by the Holy Spirit who resides within the believer.

(2) A sword is both an offensive and defensive weapon. It is meant for both powerful attacks as well as powerful defense.

- *In what ways does God's Word defend you? In what ways is it an offensive weapon?*
- *Overall, how do you feel about the armor that God has given you?*
- *Have you put on this armor? Do you live in it? Or, are there areas of weakness in your life?*

SAY: Satan will always attack you in your weakest spots, so if there's a weak area in your life (i.e., lust, greed, anger, etc.), make a specific effort to guard against it.

- *Finally, the armor of God covers the whole body but one area? What area is exposed? (The back. Soldiers didn't have any protection on their backs because they were taught to face the enemy, to stand and not to run away.)*

SAY: You too can stand your ground this school year because God has strengthened you and equipped you to stand. You just have to make the choice to be ready and willing.

KEY VERSE

Listen to what the Bible says:

*Choose a volunteer to read—***Read 1 Peter 5:8**

SAY: You are in a real conflict and if you're not ready and you don't prepare yourself to stand, you will fall. Your enemy can't be seen but can be overcome through Christ. Surrender to Him and live and stand for Him every day.

● *To be effective this year in your walk with Christ is there anything you need to do to get ready? Is there anything that might need to change in your life? (i.e., focus on your relationship with God, spend more time with Jesus, get rid of any sin, etc.)*

WRAP IT UP

Prayer Time

Pray specifically today that your students will put on the full armor of God and be ready to stand against all forms of evil.

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

Prayer Requests