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This message will focus on Ephesians 6:17-18 to urge individuals to engage the one and only enemy, doing battle with spiritual weapons.  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Good morning, Church! A hearty welcome to everyone here on site as well as to those joining with us online. And my thanks to our pastor for the invitation to bring the Word of God these three weeks. We'll wrap up our series *Battle Lines* this morning. For these three weeks, we've come to understand that we live in a world at war, not only in terms of conventional warfare, but one of spiritual warfare.

Navy seals are highly trained military personnel who can fight on both land and sea. They are amphibious warriors. We are "amphibious Christians" who must be able to engage spiritual warfare in two realms, one that is seen and one that is unseen. The Apostle Paul wrote of these two realms to Christians living in Corinth:

Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

There are two realms, and one of those realms is the spiritual realm where spiritual beings exist.

Christian author and astrophysicist Dr. Hugh Ross was recently interviewed about UFOs, and this is what he said.

I was able to explain about 99% of the reports with natural phenomena. For example, what someone reported as a UFO might have been some kind of defect with their camera lens. Or maybe there was some secret military activity that the government didn't want to reveal. But there was 1% that we call "residual." Those residual cases defied any natural explanation. What was interesting is that you could prove that what had happened was a *real* phenomenon, but there were also indicators that it wasn't a *physical* phenomenon.

When you look at the Bible, you learn that God created two distinct species of intelligent life—human beings that are subject to the laws of physics of the universe, and angels who are not. God seems to have granted angels the power to come into and leave our realm anytime they want. We don't have the power to go into their realm, but God has granted them the power to come into our realm.

And that raises another question. Are we dealing with the righteous angels, or are we dealing with the evil angels? And this too is where I find agreement among astronomers

who have devoted a minimum of a decade to studying UFO phenomena. They conclude that we're dealing with entities that, when they meet us, mean us harm and not good.

Involvement in the occult is giving permission for fallen angels to invade your life. They can't bother you unless you give them permission. But you give them permission by seeking occult powers. The occult is where you're trying to gain supernatural power outside of God's help that we see in the Bible. And the demons are more than willing to give you power in exchange for control of your life.

As "amphibious" Christians, we acknowledge there are two realms, and in the spiritual realm we have an enemy whose one of many names is Satan. His singular purpose is to keep every man, woman, and child from God; "he leads the whole world astray" (Revelation 12:9). Individuals who have committed their lives to Jesus Christ, and who are serious about that relationship, are ground zero to Satan. Those individuals pose the greatest threat to the chaos and conflict he spreads around the globe. The individuals, the churches, the ministries that are fully committed to Jesus Christ are in the crosshairs of the devil and his angels.

For these three weeks, we have anchored ourselves in Ephesians 6:10-18, the single longest and most detailed passage in the Bible on spiritual warfare. Many have told me that they've memorized these nine short verses of Scripture and doing so has been of great strength to them.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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. 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. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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 saints. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

These three weeks have been dubbed "Ready. Aim. Fire." When our military approaches a battle line to engage the enemy, soldiers have been made READY in that they know all about the enemy. In week one of this series, we were made READY by becoming aware that we are at war with a formidable enemy who has rank and file, as well as a battle plan to destroy us with three primary weapons: deception, distraction, and division. When our military is positioned on the front line and ready to take AIM, every soldier has been thoroughly equipped with armor and weaponry that intimidates the enemy. God has equipped us with five pieces of armor, that when we wear them, we threaten and intimidate the devil and his angels. Ready. Aim. Fire. This final message is focused on the two weapons that Paul describes in verses 17-18 of our text. The five pieces of armor are for our defense, and we now are given two weapons for our offense. The best defense is a strong offense.

“...and take with you the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. 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 saints” (Ephesians 6:17-18). To best remember and encounter this text, we will think [www.fire](http://www.fire). W for Why is it necessary to open “fire” or engage the devil and his angels? W for Weapons as Paul describes two specific weapons with which to engage the enemy. And W for Work as there is a dynamic and definitive way these two weapons work—and at the end of the message we will actually “open fire” using these two spiritual weapons.

## **W for WHY**

Why is it necessary to “open fire” upon and engage the devil and his angels?

Pastor and author GK Chesterton answered that question most powerfully. “The true soldier fights not because of what is in front of him but because he loves what is behind him.” Soldiers on the front line are aware of a much larger battle elsewhere. We need to understand spiritual warfare on a much larger scale. We must be greatly concerned for the safety and wellbeing of those who are coming behind us. Jesus told His disciples...

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.” He replied, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:17-20)

If we saw a scorpion or a snake moving across the kitchen floor towards our toddler, I’m confident that every one of us would make a beeline to crush either of them under our foot. Jesus gave His followers authority over the demonic forces, and we have that same authority as His followers today. If we remain unaware and unconcerned, we—and our children and grandchildren—will be outwitted and overcome by the enemy. The enemy wants to keep each of us one step away from stupid.

We who are older remember that when we were in our 20s, we worried about what others thought of us, and when we were in our 40s, we couldn’t care less what others thought about us. Now in our 60s and older, nobody is thinking about us! But we need to be thinking of others.

“Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come” (Psalm 71:18). We who are older need to declare to those coming behind us that the power and authority of God are more than real to vanquish all the forces of evil wreaking chaos and havoc in their younger lives. It’s not just KNOWING something but DOING something with what we KNOW.

## **W for WEAPONS**

With great clarity, Paul identified two weapons for every believer. “...and take with you the **sword of the Spirit which is the word of God**. 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 saints” (Ephesians 6:17-18).

Notice the Word of God and prayer are our two weapons in this epic war. If the enemy were flesh and blood, we would be at the gym working out, getting a black belt in every branch of the martial arts. We would go to the gun range as often as possible, learning how to hit a bull’s eye with every shot. But our enemy is not of this world, so our weapons are not of this world, and the way we engage the enemy is not of this world.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

### **Weapon → The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God**

The focus here is not about being in another Bible study or being in another life group. We have more Bible knowledge at our disposal than at any other time in recorded history. The focus here is about having a weapon, knowing that weapon, and actually using that weapon in this spiritual war. Weapons are not to be talked about; they are to be used. Far too many Christians just talk about the Bible, and they fail to use the Bible as a weapon against the enemy.

The Old Testament mentions Satan, the devil, demons, and evil spirits less than a dozen times. Yet the New Testament mentions the devil, demons, and evil spirits over eighty times! Why is that? In the New Testament, Jesus was identified as the Son of God—the Savior of humankind—and once that was known, the enemy went after Him! Satan tempted Jesus, as recorded in both Matthew 4 and Luke 4. When Jesus was exhausted and famished from fasting for forty days, Satan went after Him. When Jesus was vulnerable, the enemy attacked, and the devil does the same with us. When we are exhausted, emotionally broken, confused and at a low point in life, we are vulnerable. The deceiver tried to get Jesus to doubt and deny His identity (i.e., “if you are the Son of God”), and each time, Jesus quoted Scripture! There are different Greek words that refer to Scripture. In Ephesians 6:17, the word *rhema* is used. Take with you the sword of the Spirit which is the *rhema* of God, and that Greek word means “spoken out loud, what a person says.” Jesus assaulted the enemy by speaking out loud the Word of God.

Think of it this way. Every soldier is given what’s called a “basic load,” seven full magazines of ammunition. A magazine has 20 bullets, meaning that every warrior has 140 bullets to fire. Do you have 140 verses of Scripture to “fire” against the enemy?

The Bible is not a book that merely lies on a shelf or a table. The Word of God is to be here, in our hearts, our souls, our minds! Jesus said that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. If we fill our lives with the Word of God, we can boldly speak it against the enemy. If we do not know the Word, we are weak and those who we love are unprotected against the kingdom of darkness. “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes

of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). Each Roman soldier had a sword that was roughly 18-20 inches long, and he knew how to use this weapon to penetrate the enemy. Imagine a wall of thousands of Roman warriors using thousands of swords to destroy their enemy. Imagine thousands of believers here at The Creek who know and use the “sword of the Spirit” to destroy and vanquish every attack of the devil and his angels on our marriages, families, friendships, and more. Experience the promise of Isaiah 55:11: “The Word of God will go out and accomplish the purpose for which it is sent. It cannot return void.”

### **Weapon → Pray in the Spirit**

There are over 650 recorded prayers in the Bible. In the Gospels, there are over twenty-five instances when we find Jesus praying. When we fight an enemy stronger than us, we must find someone stronger than him. That would be praying in the Spirit. Just as the Word of God is not another Bible study or another life group, this weapon does not mean speaking in tongues. To pray in the Spirit is to pray in His power, to be guided by Him, and to follow His will for us. After all, the Spirit is God in us!

“Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you received from God? You are not your own, you were bought with a price. Therefore, honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). When did that happen? When we were immersed (Acts 2:38). The normative way we receive the Spirit is when we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ and are immersed. God is spirit (John 4:24). God has no skin. Jesus is God with skin because Jesus “became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). The Holy Spirit is God in our skin (1 John 4:4). God is in us, so we cannot be possessed by demons. We can be under demonic *persuasion* but with God in us, we cannot experience demonic possession. The Holy Spirit is in us and we surrender to Him.

We are to 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 saints.” Notice the use of “all” four times! Paul stressed continual prayer. The word “requests” means to make a special, specific ask or plea of God. The word “occasions” is the Greek word *kairos*, meaning opportune time. There were two words in Greek for time: “*chronos*,” the measuring of time (quantitative), and “*kairos*,” meaning opportune time (qualitative). We are to pray when opportunities arise—praying in public or private, out loud or in silence, planned or impromptu, with eyes wide open or tightly shut, with hands folded or lifted up, kneeling or standing, sitting up or lying down. “Be alert” means literally “stay awake!” Do guard duty praying for all of God’s people (saints, holy ones). While in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said to His disciples, “Watch and pray so that you do not fall into temptation” (Matthew 26:41). When the enemy attacks us with temptation, our weapon of choice must be prayer. Pray whenever, wherever, and however we are led. Just pray!

These two weapons are inseparable. In the southern French town of Bayonne, the bayonet was invented as a weapon of war. When a commander ordered the troops to “fix bayonets,” short swords would be attached to the end of their rifle barrels. Two weapons became one for up close combat. Remember verse 12 states that our “struggle (i.e., wrestle) is not with flesh and blood,” but is against the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this dark world, against the spiritual forces

of evil in the heavenly realms. We wrestle; we do hand-to-hand combat with demons. We have two weapons joined into one when we pray Scripture! Jesus did, and He defeated the enemy!

## **W for WORK**

God in us—the Holy Spirit—provides each of us with power to win every battle with the kingdom of darkness. We cannot fight and defeat the enemy in our own strength. No amount of willpower, confidence, self-discipline, or mental toughness will enable us to win a battle with the enemy. He is bigger, stronger, and smarter than any of us. But with the Holy Spirit, the enemy does not stand a chance, for “greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

When we pray against the devil and his angels, we do so in the all-sufficiency of Jesus! After His death and resurrection, Jesus said: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). The cross and resurrection of Jesus, His ascension into heaven and coronation as King of kings and Lord of lords, give to us all the authority we need to pray against every form of spiritual darkness. There is no need to shout, scream, or become hyper-emotional in prayer. We pray in the name of Jesus and there is indescribable power in His name. We live under His jurisdiction. When there is a boding sense of fear, worry, anxiety, name that in prayer and come against it with Scripture. When there is conflict and chaos at home, work, or school, pray against the forces of evil bringing division. Send them authoritatively to the feet of Jesus. Resist, take your stand, and the devil WILL flee. Do not be passive about spiritual warfare! We are partnering with Jesus to advance His kingdom against the kingdom of darkness!

Now listen carefully. We have been given authority. Jesus said, “I have given you authority...to overcome all the power of the enemy, nothing will harm you” (Luke 10:19). On the last night of His life, Jesus told His disciples five times to pray “in my name” (John 14:13,14; 15:16; 16:23,24,26). There is power and authority in the name of Jesus Christ. They were given authority to act on His behalf.

If you give me Power of Attorney over your estate, you are granting me authority to act on your behalf, and specifically, to act in your name. Jesus has given us such authority against the kingdom of darkness. When a police officer is directing traffic in an intersection, the officer does not have the raw strength to stop a vehicle coming at him at full speed. All the officer has to do is hold up his hand, blow the whistle, and the vehicle will come to a stop. Why? The officer has been given the authority of command over that intersection.

On the last night of His life, Jesus was praying with His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane when people came for His arrest and He said, “Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer” (Matthew 26:46)! Jesus did not run FROM evil. He ran TOWARD evil and picked a fight. After all, “the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work” (1 John 3:8). Jesus came to pick a fight. General George S. Patton said, “Victory is always possible for the person who refuses to stop fighting.”

## **FIRE**

Now that we have become READY, and have taken AIM against the true enemy, we will FIRE Scripture-filled prayer in the Spirit against him.