

We are Never Alone in the Fight As Connected, Communicating & Caring Believers

Ephesians 6:16; Hebrews 10:24-25

Please open with me to Ephesians 6:10-17.

As we turn there, we will see a truth that just jumps off the pages of the Scriptures once you see it: every verb & pronoun (all 14 of them) in this armor passage is plural.

Ephesians 6:10-17 (NKJV) Finally, my brethren, **be strong** in the Lord and in the power of His might. **¹¹ Put on** the whole armor of God, that **you** may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **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*. **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**.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, **having girded your** waist with truth, **having put on** the breastplate of righteousness, **¹⁵ and having shod your** feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **¹⁶ above all, taking the shield** of faith with which **you will be able** to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. **¹⁷ And take the helmet** of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; [168 words]

What does that mean?

We All Share the Same Struggle

It means we all share in this struggle against the evil one.

Ephesians 6:10-17 (NKJV) ...**be strong...** **¹¹ Put on ... you may be able to stand ...** **¹² ... we do not wrestle against** **¹³ ... take up ... you may be able to withstand ... having done all, to stand.** **¹⁴ Stand ... having girded ... having put on ...** **¹⁵ having shod your ...** **¹⁶ ... taking the shield ... you will be able ...** **¹⁷ take the helmet ...**[65 or 39%]

It means we are never alone as connected, communicating & caring believers, facing the flaming arrows.

It's Supposed to be Us, and Not Me

When God describes us as believers we are always sheep of a larger flock.

We are members of a connected Body.

We are stones of a built up temple, and so on.

The amazing truth is that though we are each individually and uniquely designed for Him, we are also always seen as connected to a group larger than our self.

Remember how Jesus starts the Lord's Prayer? Look back at Matthew 6:9-13:

Matthew 6:9-13 (NKJV) ⁹In this manner, therefore, **pray: Our** Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as *it is* in heaven. ¹¹Give **us** this day **our** daily bread. ¹²And forgive **us our** debts, As **we forgive our** debtors. ¹³And do not lead **us** into temptation, But deliver **us** from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. [75 words, 11 plural or 15% of prayer, but 100% of how it relates to us is plural]

The Lord's Prayer (Mt. 6:9-13) is presented in the plural: we are never alone.
Spiritual Warfare (Eph. 6:10-17) is presented in the plural: we are never alone.
Resisting the devil (James 4:7) is presented in the plural: we are never alone.
Resisting the devil (1 Peter 5:9) is presented in the plural: we are never alone.

We were never designed to be alone.

It is not even good for us to be alone, is God's declaration way back in Genesis.

The Church that Jesus bought, and what Christ is building is a Church of connected individuals, and not un-connected islands.

Are you connected to His Flock, a functioning member of His Body, and a living stone in His Temple? That is something that we all need to consider as we look again at spiritual warfare and our duty to stand.

We stand, but as we look into Ephesians 6, we do not do so alone. Did you notice that every reference to us as believers in in Ephesians 6:10-17 is in the plural?

We Do Not Face the Battle Alone

The verbs and pronouns point to us together. We all face the same battles; but we all face them together.

The Lord is saying through Paul that we are not to look on spiritual warfare as something we face alone.

We can only win in community with other believers.

When we gather with believers we are to talk about God's Word, His promises, and His work in us. Why? Because of the combination of:

Our Voices & Jesus' Power

We were designed to operate best inside a Christ-shaped community of believers.

The description of spiritual warfare is a shared, personal battle.

This is most pronounced as we look at the Shield of Faith.

We must carry and use our own shield, but others around us can hold us our arms.

Just like Moses needed his arms held up by Aaron and Hur, so that Joshua could lead Israel to win the battle (Exodus 17:8-16). So we need one another.

How do other believers help us?

By speaking faith-stirring, and hope-building words that feed our souls.

In two of the clearest passages in Hebrews, God calls each of us as believers to encourage those around us.

Hebrews 3:12-13 (NKJV) Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 **but exhort one another daily**, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Sin is deceitful. Sin hardens us. We need others to exhort us God says. Are you close enough to any godly believer to get exhortation?

Look at what we are all supposed to be doing as we turn onward to Hebrews 10.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NKJV) And let us **consider one another in order to stir up love and good works**, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, **but exhorting one another, and so much the more** as you see the Day approaching.

Did you catch that?

As members of Christ's Body we are to be:

Connected, Communicating & Caring

The Body of Christ is designed to be connected, communicating, and caring.

We are to speak the truth to each other empowered by the Spirit of God.

Our words can exhort, our words can encourage, and our words can correct.

As John Piper likes to say—

"and the Holy Spirit breathes upon what is otherwise babbling to effect real devil-defying faith in our lives. This kind of speaking is a glorious staple of gospel-shaped community. And Satan wants you to have no part in it".

The spiritual battle raging around us is designed to isolate us.

Satan wants the swirl of battle to separate us from other believers who can challenge and encourage us with God's Word.

Then, we can get swallowed-up in the storms of our own soul.

Like a wolf picking off the weakest in the flock, Satan's plan is to separate us from the flock so he can devour us.

What has always been God's plan for us?

Believers are to:

Use the Shield of Faith

Each of us are infected with lusts that can be ignited instantly by Satan.

Even the smallest spark can start a roaring fire.

We can get ignited by filthy arrows of degraded passions, or polished arrows of

rationalizations. Both work so well.

If the arrow infected with adultery won't work, then Satan tries the rationalizing arrow. Kent Hughes reminds us:

“If God didn't want me to have this, then why did he make me with such a desire for this thing, this person, this pleasure? My neighbor has it. He does it. And he is doing so well ...”

But in that moment of temptation we can grab our shield of faith. God's Word speaks to our hearts:

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things” (Philippians 4:8).

The moment we believe God, and agree with His Word, our Shield of Faith rises, the flaming dart crumbles, extinguished into ashes.

Just like C.S. Lewis used to say:

“We must pray for the gift of Faith, for the power to go on believing not in the teeth of reason but in the teeth of lust.”⁷

When God Says ALL, He means All

How do we resist the Devil?

Paul said the shield of faith extinguishes all the fiery darts.

Paul had experienced those flaming arrows extinguished.

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

Jesus saw him flee.

Matthew 4:11 (NKJV) **Then the devil left Him**, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

James assures us he will flee.

James 4:7 (NKJV) Therefore submit to God. **Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

John the final Scripture writer affirms even more of the same when he said we are overcomers in Christ.

1 John 4:4 (NKJV) You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because **He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**

Jesus saw the devil flee.

James saw the devil flee.

Paul saw his fiery attacks extinguished.

Peter affirms we can resist the Devil.

John attests that God is greater than anything the Devil shoots at us.

It always works, just try it is God's promise.

⁷ 7. C. S. Lewis, *Christian Reflections*, “Religion: Reality or Substitute” (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941), p. 43.Loss

Satan Knows Where to Shoot

Satan also like to shoot us when we are down with all of the hard times life will send.

When we face illness, when we enter tragedy, and when we face persecution a whole new set of darts are used.

When facing trials, the Kingdom of Darkness shoots arrows that ignite doubts about God's Goodness. Or arrows that enflame fears about God's existence, or the reliability of His Word, or even whether He is even right or just.

We can see this up close in the Garden with Eve.

Satan shot her with the "Has God really said not to do that?" arrow.

Then he shot the "Is God really good if He keeps you from enjoying that?" arrow.

Then he shot the "God wouldn't really punish someone for that would He?" arrow.

We know the result.

We all were plunged into sin.

Every temptation always comes down to believing God's Word or believing Satan's lies.

Which will you choose today?

We Face	God Says	Satan Says
Pain	Trust My Wisdom	God isn't really Good
Sorrow	Trust My Love	God doesn't really Care
Temptation	Trust My Timing	God doesn't understand your Needs
Loss	Trust My Presence	God's not strong enough to Protect you
Sickness	Trust My Power	God's not really in Control
Lust	Trust My Plans	God doesn't really want me Happy

As believers we are to:

Stay Connected, Keep Communicating & Never Stop Caring

Resist the temptation to isolation.

Break into someone's life with words from God's Word.

Reach out and see the wiles of the devil frustrated in their life, and yours.

When we speak God's Word there is power, not from us but from Him who is the Word.

Jesus has destroyed the power of the Devil (Heb. 2:14).

Jesus destroys every work of the Devil He is confronted with (1 John 3:8).

When we love Jesus, we love His family.

Church is the gathering of Christ's family.

Come to the gathering of Christ's family.

Speak the truths of the Gospel of Christ to others.

Remind yourself and all around you that:

Nothing and no one can snatch you or them (John 10:28-29), from Christ's love.

Nothing and no one can separate you or then (Rom. 8:35-39), from Christ's love.

As believers, we walk in the Spirit as Paul said we are to do.

We walk through life clothed in the protective gear God designed just for us.

We walk through life in community with those around us making sure they too are making it through the battle.

We are not alone.

We are part of a family.

We help each other through the battles of life.

Here is a simple set of the big seven sins we face all through life.

Extinguishing Satan's Lies

When Faced with...	Believe God's Word:
1. Besetting sins & habits	Romans 6:11-13 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin , but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.; Colossians 3:5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.; Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts , we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,
2. Fear & Depression	Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed , for the LORD your God <i>is</i> with you wherever you go.; Psalm 71:14 (NIV) As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.
3. Words that hurt	Ps. 141:3 (NKJV) Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth ; Keep watch over the door of my lips; Col. 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace , seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.; James 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath ;
4. Sexual Lusts	Job 31:1 (NIV) "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman ; Gen 39:9b How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? "
5. Pride	Jer. 9:23-24 (NKJV) Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise <i>man</i> glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty <i>man</i> glory in his might, Nor let the rich <i>man</i> glory in his riches; ²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this , That he understands and knows Me, That I <i>am</i> the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.
6. Wasting Time	Ps 119:37 (NKJV) Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things , And revive me in Your way.
7. Materialism	Mt 6:19-20 (NKJV) Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth , where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven , where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.; 1 Cor. 3:14-15 If anyone's work which he has built on <i>it</i> endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss ; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire; 2 Cor. 5:10 (NKJV) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body , according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

The Shield works best as we Stay Connected, Keep Communicating & Never Stop Caring

Resist the temptation to isolation.

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