

The Christian's Battle

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

Paul wrapped up his letter to Ephesus by reminding the brethren that they were fighting a battle. It is significant that the word translated "be strong" is in the passive voice, which indicates that Christ's followers do not strengthen themselves but receive strength from the Lord.

Winning the battle will require each Christian soldier to put on the Lord's armor since our enemy is the devil. The word for "devil" is *diabolos*, the chief of the demons who is a slanderous accuser. He is the leader of the enemy forces and seeks out any area of weakness to exploit (1 Peter 5:8). That is why we need God's armor, not some of our own making. The Almighty knows exactly what we need to defeat the enemy and to win the victory.

The apostle saw God's children in hand-to-hand combat with the forces of evil. "Wrestle" likely describes "two soldiers who in the midst of battle faced off one against the other for a very personal hand-to-hand combat" (Ray Summers, *Ephesians: Pattern for Christian Living*, 141). Paul was stressing **the very personal nature of this battle** for every Christian.

The seriousness of the battle should be seen in the nature of the opponent. Christians are fighting the devil and his whole organization of darkness. Wickedness is organized in its fight to overthrow Christ's army. The "heavenly places" describe things beyond the ordinary or natural battlegrounds.

Satan has already challenged God and lost. He has been cast down from heaven, but he now fights in every other place, including the church (2 Peter 2:4; Acts 20:29-31). **It is vital that Christians take all of this personally.** The devil is trying to capture anyone that he can, including individual Christians (2 Timothy 2:23-26, 16-18; 2 Peter 2:17-22).

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