

SESSION

I

BE PREPARED

Focus Scriptures: Ephesians 5:10-13

Session Goal: To help group members understand how believers can be prepared to stand against the attacks from the enemy.

OPENING OUR MINDS

Option 1

Begin by asking your group how each of the following gets prepared:

- *Football player*
- *Chef*
- *Camper*
- *Vacationer*
- *Soldier*
- *Christian*

Follow up by asking,

- **Why is preparation necessary for these people?**
- **For each of these people, is there a danger in not realizing the necessity of being prepared?**
- **What would be the result if these people did not take preparation seriously?**

Option 2

Invite your group to imagine that they are at home in the middle of winter watching the evening news. The weather forecaster comes on and says that a blizzard is heading toward your town with the potential of dumping a foot or more of snow.

- **Would it be necessary to prepare for this snow storm? If so, why?**
- **What would you do to prepare?**
- **What would happen if you chose not to take the forecast seriously, and decided not to prepare?**
- **Are there situations or circumstances where preparation is necessary?**
- **Think about the Christian life, is it necessary to be prepared? If so, why?**

Imaginative Option

Before your group time, find the equipment a football player wears and bring them to your session (i.e., helmet, shoulder pads, knee pads, and so on). Point to each piece of equipment and ask your group why that item is important for the player to wear on the field.

- **Why is it important for football players to be prepared?**
- **What would happen if a player chooses not to be prepared?**
- **Are there other areas of life where a person should be prepared?**

OPENING THE WORD

Understanding Ephesians 6:10-13

The Christian life is a battle. However, unlike the wars fought between nations, this is a battle against the “powers of this dark world” and the “spiritual forces of evil” (v. 12). In order to be ready for the enemy’s attacks, we must put on the full armor of God. Each piece is designed to help us stand and not fall when we face the enemy who is bent on destroying us.

Our opponents are not human, but unseen forces seeking to defeat us. Therefore, we do not fight this spiritual battle on our own human resources, strength and effort. God provides the equipment and power necessary to stand strong against the evil forces of this world. The armor of God will enable us to fight the devil’s attack and allow us to “resist him, standing firm in the faith.”

The assaults of the enemy may at times seem overwhelming. However, “the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Use the armor God provides and stand strong!

Option 1

Begin by asking your group to silently reflect on the evil that is in the world. Then ask,

- **In what ways is the Christian life a battle?**

Read Ephesians 6:10-13.

- **How would you define “the devil’s schemes”?**
- **Who is our battle against?**
- **How would you define “powers of this dark world” and “spiritual forces of evil”? What does this look like?**

- **Why does Paul say that we are to put on the “full” armor of God? Why is standing our ground against the enemy’s attacks crucial for us as believers?**
- **At what point in the battle do we put on the armor? Before the attacks or when the attacks begin?**

Option 2

Read Ephesians 6:10-13. Share with the group that being a Christian places us in a battle. Our opponents are not human, but unseen forces seeking to defeat us. Therefore, we do not fight this spiritual battle on our own human resources, strength and effort. God provides the equipment and power necessary to stand strong against the evil forces of this world.

Ask,

- **What does it mean that we fight against “powers of this dark world” and “spiritual forces of evil”?**
- **Why does God provide us the necessary equipment (armor) to fight the attacks of the enemy?**
- **According to these verses, when is the best time to put on the armor?**
- **Why is standing our ground against the enemy’s attacks crucial for us as believers?**
- **In what ways does our willingness to use the armor and God’s power work together to enable us to stand against the devil’s schemes?**

OPENING OUR HEARTS

Option 1

Share with the group that God gives us the power, strength, and spiritual armor to stand strong against the evil forces of this world. The armor of God will enable us to resist the devil's attack and allow us to remain firm in our walk with God. Paul says that we are to put on the "full" armor. We must be prepared at all times, this means:

- Identifying the *schemes* and *attacks* of the enemy. This is possible by staying close to the Word and praying. This helps us see things from a godly perspective.
- Putting on the *complete* armor, and not just using a few pieces now and then. We must understand what each piece is and how we can utilize it in our lives.
- Understanding that believers are in a *spiritual battle*. There are "powers of this dark world" and "spiritual forces of evil" that are focused on the defeat of the Christian. We must be ready at all times.
- Knowing that *true enemy* is the devil. Our battle is not against others (coworkers, family members, the media, and so on), it is spiritual and must therefore be fought spiritually.

Close in prayer by asking God to reveal areas in your life where you need to be better prepared for the spiritual battle.

Option 2

Share that our struggle is "not against flesh and blood, but against . . . the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). The author of *Suit Up: Putting on the Full Armor of God* says that Paul points out the keys for those entering into the spiritual battle:

- What we need is found *near* Christ. Christians do not seek security, but seek to "stand firm" with Him in the midst of life's struggles (Ephesians 6:13).

- What we need is found *with* Christ. Christians do not endure by their own strength, but “in the power of his might” (Ephesians 6:10, KJV).
- What we need is found *in only* Christ. Christians do not need protective charms and weapons, but instead, the defensive preparation of living in the Spirit as the “full armor of God” (Ephesians 6:13).

Close by inviting group members to get silent before God. Ask them to think about areas of their life where they feel the attacks of the enemy. Then, pray that God would give His power and Spirit to help group members stand firm in their faith.

Connect -----

WEEK 1

Be Prepared

THIS WEEK: We will examine what it means to be prepared for spiritual battle.

THINK ABOUT THIS: What areas of your life do you feel most attacked by the devil?

PRAYER CONCERNS: