

Believer's Boot Camp – Part 6

The Lord Jesus Christ has already defeated our Enemy hands down.

However, He has left it up to us to enforce every day in earth's trenches the victory He has won in the Heavens.

The book of Ephesians serves as a Believers Boot Camp, *teaching us that the church is equipped with vast spiritual weaponry* to accomplish this very task.

- **Victory** is ours ***if we fight*** for it!
- **Ephesians is serious training for serious Christians.**

***When people become Christians* one of the hardest things to do is to RETRAIN them not to continue to operate according to the world's system.**

It took one night to get Israel out of Egypt, but forty years to get Egypt out of them.

There is always a battle between the NEW MAN and the OLD MAN. And that is why we need teaching like Paul gives to us in Ephesians.

Part 4 - Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ - *God often calls you to do things YOU cannot do!*

The book of Ephesians is the NT equivalent of the OT book of Joshua –

- We are people on the verge of **an entirely new experience**.
- **Ready to fight** for the territory that God has promised us.
- This is the book where the **Apostle Paul commands**,
- **“Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might!”**
- And that is just what **God commanded Joshua** –
- **“Be strong and of a good courage!”**

We are truly the JOSHUA GENERATION...

- Serving the generation that came before us **with submission**.
- Not murmuring against God or **His appointed leadership**
- Knowing that God could have fulfilled His promise before now.

Are you ready to take God at His word and fight for new territory?

In chapter six, Paul is going to teach us about wearing the armor of God, but before he gets us ready to WAR, he teaches us to SUBMIT.

That is what Believer's Boot Camp is about anyway –

- **Bringing a civilian's will into line** with military standards, codes, rules, regulations, and ways of thinking.
- **Our relationship with God** *is the only relationship* in which we know that the other party is right ALL THE TIME. ☺

But God puts us in human relationships, where there are times that **the authorities we are submitted to is not right**.

- **Why? So, we can learn submission to HIM (not them!).**

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Eph. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

The best time to learn obedience and submission *is as a young child – parents, don't neglect to teach respect for authority* to your children!

- **God doesn't expect children** to **UNDERSTAND** everything their parents tell them to do.
- He just expects them to **OBEY** –
- This principle applies to His own (spiritual) children!

Eph. 6:2-3 “Honor your father and mother” —which is the first commandment with a promise— **3** “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Compare the lives of those having respect for authority with the lives of those who don't –

- **All behavior has consequences – what a difference!**
- If you can learn a principle on any level (or at any age)
- You can learn it on every level (i.e. tithe on your first dollar!).

Eph6:4 Fathers, (***Or Parents***) do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

God's plan for His people is filled with **CHECKS and BALANCES** – submission must occur in an environment of **MUTUAL submission**.

- The command is given to the **FATHER**.
- **Our society** leaves nurturing to the MOTHER.
- Children learn their values from the authority figure at home.

Eph. 6:5-6 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. **6** Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.

Your work ethic on your secular job is **a concern to God** because it concerns your character (how you act when no one is looking)

“eyeservice” - you only do what is right when someone is looking!

Eph 6:7-8 **Serve wholeheartedly**, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, **8** because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

We are rewarded BY THE LORD

- **Not necessarily** by the person or place we invest in His Kingdom –
- **WE DO ALL OF OUR WORK FOR HIM!**
- Stop looking to others to compensate you for what you do for them!

God simplified **NT church structure** by giving only **ONE job opening** to every member – **SLAVE** (Jesus washed His disciples' feet).

The term means a servant so devoted that, even if they were offered their freedom, **they would refuse it because** of their lifelong commitment to their beloved master!

AS SLAVES TO CHRIST, WE ARE TRULY FREE!

Exodus 21:5-6 ⁵ But suppose the slave loves his wife and children and his owner so much that he won't leave them. ⁶ Then he must stand beside

either the door or the doorpost at the place of worship, (***at the place of worship: The Hebrew text has “in the presence of God,” which probably refers to the place where God was worshiped.***) while his owner punches a small hole through one of his ears with a sharp metal rod. **This makes him a slave for life.**

None of us has any justifiable excuse forever saying, “That job is beneath me”!

- **Sorry if you think you’re too good for the job, but **no other openings are available in God’s kingdom!****
- **None of us ever has a justifiable reason forever saying,**
- ***“They were using me at that church” –***
- **That’s why we got into God’s Kingdom, to be USED by the Lord!**

Eph. 6:9 ⁹ And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Acts 10:34 ³⁴ Then Peter began to speak: ***“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism.***

GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS, BUT HE IS A RESPECTER OF PRINCIPLES ... AND OF PASSION!

When you are in a position of leadership, don't take advantage of others!

- **No one should lead who has never followed!**
- **Joshua was a great leader because he had submitted to a flawed leader like Moses.**

Why has Paul spent so much time talking about submission?

Because - When soldiers are submitted, they will not break rank, and they will win!

- There are things that **God will SHOW you** (and even let you TASTE),
- But then **He will expect you to FIGHT for it** (*the spies in Jericho*).

The Armor of God

Eph. 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Members of the NT church must be STRONG

- That is a mandate from God –
- **Not** weak, not passive, not indifferent, not whining, **but STRONG**.

The strength of God is not proven by how much you can AVOID, it is proven by how much you can ENDURE!!! (Jesus on the cross).

Christians in North America have never really had to SUFFER anything.

- Yet we complain about our *"light afflictions"*.
- Wouldn't a *"testimony service"* in Heaven be a bit embarrassing?

Eph. 6:11 ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

PUT ON the armor of God!

- **PUT OFF** your own ideas and strategies –
- The devil is too smart for you **if you fight in your own strength**.
- **Take your stand** against the devil's schemes (*"wiles" = "trickery"*)

Eph. 6:12 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*.

Don't respond in the FLESH because you are actually being attacked in the SPIRIT!

Don't let the PROBLEM back you off from the PROMISE!

- *We have become so secular* that we think everything we are facing is natural...
- Today we "counsel" instead of "wrestle" – but it doesn't help!

Eph 6:13 ¹³ 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.

It is HIS armor, but it is YOUR stand ...

We must engage in spiritual warfare because Satan opposes every step, we take ...

- One principle governing *the receiving of God's blessings* –
- **NOT WITHOUT STRUGGLE!**

Your PROMISE is always locked up behind a PROBLEM – (Jericho)

We live simultaneously in two spheres of existence – the spiritual realm and the natural realm.

- The spiritual realm is,
- The “parent” realm from which everything natural is given birth;
- The natural realm is simply an outworking of the spiritual realm.

You cannot defeat the Enemy in the natural realm!

- You must defeat him in the spiritual realm!
- Then the natural realm will fall in line with what has been accomplished in the Spirit.

PEOPLE ARE NOT YOUR ENEMY – THE DEVIL IS YOUR ENEMY!

We are engaged in a spiritual battle – all believers find themselves subject to the devil's attacks because they are no longer on the devil's side.

Thus, Paul tells us to use every piece of God's armor to resist these attacks and to stand firm, staying true to God in the midst of them.

Eph. 6:14-17 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;

Every piece of the armor of God pertains to our identity in Christ.

Having girded your waist with truth - Base your entire life on pure motives

- Piece of armor is the Belt – Meaning TRUTH.
- The devil fights with lies, and sometimes his lies sound like the truth.
- Believers have God's truth, which can defeat the devil's lies.

Having Put On The breastplate of righteousness - Guard your heart with holiness

- Piece of armor is the Breastplate – Meaning RIGHTEOUSNESS.
- The devil often attacks our hearts –
- The seat of our emotions, identity, and trust.
- God's righteousness is the breastplate that protects our hearts and ensures his approval.
- He approves of us.
- He sent His son to die for us, because He loves us.

Having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace - Lack of peace indicates lack of balance.

- Piece of armor is the shoes – Meaning Readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.
- The devil wants us to think that telling others the gospel is a worthless and hopeless task.
- But the shoes God gives us are the motivation to continue to proclaim the true peace that is available in God.
- News everyone needs to hear.

Taking the shield of faith - "Soak your shield" in the Word of God. - So, you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

- Piece of armor is the Shield – Meaning FAITH.
- What we see are the devil's attacks in the form of insults, setbacks, and temptations.
- The shield of Faith protects us from the flaming arrows.
- With God's perspective, we can see beyond our circumstances and know that ultimate victory is ours.

Take the helmet of salvation - Keep your mind on one thing – salvation!

- Piece of armor is the Helmet, Meaning SALVATION.
- The devil wants us to doubt God and doubt our salvation.
- The Helmet protects our minds from doubting God's saving work for us.

The sword of the Spirit - To wield the sword you must know the Word.

- Piece of armor is the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT – Meaning Word of God
- The sword is the only offensive weapon in the list of armor.
- ALL the others are defensive in nature....
- There are times when we need to take the offensive against the devil.
- When we are tempted, we need to trust in the truth of God's word.

IN the Christian life we battle against rulers and authorities (*the powerful evil forces of fallen angels headed by the devi, who is a vicious fighter...*)

To withstand their attacks, we must depend on God's strength and use EVERY piece of armor!

Satan checks for weak spots; he knows them ALL.

Eph:6-18 ¹⁸ praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— *How can anyone pray on all occasions?*

- Make prayer your life and your life a prayer.
- Never stop praying, especially for others.
- Always pray by the power of the Spirit.
- Stay alert and keep praying for God's people.

This generation has done more with PRAISE than any other generation - But they still haven't learned how to PRAY (*must be a balance!*)

When the church doesn't pray, we are not even on the battleground!

Eph. 6:19-20 ¹⁹ and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel,

²⁰ for which *I am an ambassador in chains*; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- Undiscouraged and Undefeated...
- Paul wrote *powerful letters of encouragement* from prison.

Paul did not ask the Ephesians to pray that his chains would be removed but that *he would continue to speak fearlessly for Christ* in spite of them.

- God can use us in any circumstance to do His will.
- Those that carry the "mystery" are on the HIT LIST of Hell,
- But the Chains **can't stop the** *"ambassador in Chains"*!

A Gracious Greeting - Eph. 6:21-22 But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; 22 whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.

"My affairs" – pray thoroughly, and with accurate information –

PRAY ALL THE WAY THROUGH A PROBLEM – PRAY THE DETAILS!

Eph. 6:23-24 ²³ I pray that God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will give peace, love, and faith to every follower! ²⁴ May God be kind to everyone who keeps on loving our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul highlights the supremacy of Christ, gives information on both the nature of the church and on how church members should live, and stresses the unity of all believers – man, woman, parent, child, master, slave – regardless of sex, nationality, or social rank.

We can build unity in our churches through willing submission to Christ's leadership and *humble service to one another*.

PRAY THE DETAILS!