

Believer's Boot Camp – Part 1

The book of Ephesians is the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament book of Joshua.

These believers are people who have ceased from aimless wandering and have started warring.

- **God has given them a promise** but has declared that they will have to fight some battles to lay claim to it.
- **Victory is assured because God's army is well equipped!**
- This is why *Paul begins Ephesians by* talking about ***the resources of God***.

Ephesians 1:1-23 - 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ - 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9 he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Thanksgiving and Prayer - 15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

The reason God can bless us is that **He is a blessed God**.

- He is **not** frail or impoverished.
- He has **every resource** at His disposal.
- The **devil doesn't** own anything!

God is a good parent. He is not only good TO us He is good FOR us.

- Sometimes **He doesn't** give us everything all at once for His own reasons.
- (When the blessing comes, we need to be mature enough to handle it).

God **HAS** blessed us – **past tense** – we have access to the resources of Heaven.

The blessings of God are a **FINISHED WORK**.

From God's viewpoint, we possess our **"promised land"** right now.

All the blessings we can ever receive from God have already been created!

The steps to possessing them is:

- **BELIEVING** that God has what we need.
- **TAKING** what has been promised to us.

Most believers spend their entire lives reading **the “will”** and shouting over **the “contract”** but **never living in the promises** that God has decreed.

Why?

- Because they **aren’t willing to fight** **the necessary spiritual battles**.
- You are **RICH** beyond measure **in Christ**.

Do you believe that?

Our blessings are first and foremost **SPIRITUAL blessings**, but when we focus on them, spiritual blessings have a way of working into the other realms of everyday living and producing abundant life.

2 Corinthians 4:18 - So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

All spiritual blessings are eternal.

They existed before we did, and **when we became God’s children**, **He deposited them** into **our spiritual “bank account.”**

Everything you need to live for God is already in you **by His Spirit!**

Natural blessings are **only temporary**, but **spiritual blessings last forever**.

- That’s why **God never goes into “emergency mode”**.
- **He has ALREADY done everything He needs to do to deliver you!**

You are **not WAITING** on your deliverance until God chooses to give it – you already **POSSESS it**, but you just need to **FIGHT for it!**

Ephesus was an incredibly powerful and wealthy city in the ancient world of Paul’s time.

- It had marble streets, mosaic sidewalks, and a massive temple to Diana that was considered one of the wonders of the Greek world.
- It had a busy port, a popular athletic arena, one of the finest libraries of the first century, and villas filled with artwork, tapestries, silks, and exotic birds and animals.

- Even today, ***the restored coliseum at Ephesus*** is considered one of the finest performing arts centers in the world.

It was into **this influential city of a half-million people** that the Apostle Paul brought the gospel and planted a church.

- He worked longer here than anywhere else, staying for nearly three years.
- Later in his ministry, **he called the elders of the Ephesian church** to meet him in Miletus.
- **He exhorted them to be vigilant against the inevitable opposition –**
- from within and without –
- **that would come against the church after his death.**

Acts 20:28-32 - 28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

32 “Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

PAUL IS TRYING TO **“WOLF-PROOF” THESE BELIEVERS** – AND THAT IS THE REASON FOR HIS TEACHING IN THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS!

Contrary to the experience of many religious people today,

- **Becoming a Christian *is not* like joining a social club,**
- where you simply pay your dues once in a while,
- **hang out occasionally with casual friends at the group’s facilities,**
- and ***sit back to reap* the prestigious benefits of “membership”.**

Becoming a Christian in the biblical sense of the word is more like enlisting in the army.

We find out immediately that a conflict is raging with eternal consequences for us and for others, and that every experience of our new life with God is **actually training for this intense spiritual warfare.**

The good news is that **our Commander** *is a brilliant military strategist*, and **He has already defeated our Enemy** hands down.

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.

All that remains is for us to unseal our marching orders, take up our weapons, and storm the gates of Hell.

Victory is ours if we fight for it! This is serious training for serious Christians.

Jesus didn't "heal" *the woman bowed over for eighteen years* as much as **He just made known unto her** what she already possessed in the covenant!

Luke 13:12 - When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity."

Luke 13:16 - Then ***should not*** this woman, a daughter of Abraham, *whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years*, **be set free** on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

The process of maturing in Christ Jesus is simply learning how to work out what God has already placed in us.

Spiritual maturity is *living from the spiritual reality resident in us through the Holy Spirit*, instead of living according to our outward circumstances.

A baby in its mother's womb has every gene, every chromosome, every trait of an adult **already** built into it *from the moment of conception*.

- **That's the way it is with us when we receive the Holy Spirit.**
- If we will allow it, **God's Spirit in us** –
- Will continually lead us into **new capabilities and possibilities!**

You don't yet know *everything God has planned* for you, but **it will be awesome!**

No other believer possesses more of God than YOU possess right now, but some believers have **learned how to walk in their inheritance** much better!

When the devil comes against you, **you need to recognize** that he is not only challenging where you ARE, but also **troubled over what has been deposited in you for the FUTURE**.

He is intimidated by your DESTINY and is fighting to keep you from possessing it!

1 Corinthians 2:9-10 - 9 However, **as it is written**: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived” — the things God has prepared for those who love him— 10 these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

GOD HAS CHOSEN YOU – so if not one person on the face of the earth showed any love toward you or valued you in the slightest way, this verse shatters all that rejection by telling you **that GOD chose you even BEFORE He created the Heavens and the earth – you are LOVED and WANTED!**

Eph. 1:4-5 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will

Eph. 1:4 – “*He chose*” (**PAST**) and “*we should*” (**FUTURE**) – that’s why we want to please God – because of the wonderful things He has done for us!

1:4 – “**holy**” (inner relationship) and “**without blame**” (outer relationship) – **both lived “before him.”**

1:4 – “**according**” – no believer can live a holy and blameless life **without God’s Spirit!**

1:5 – “**predestinated**” – we had no influence on God choosing us, because we didn’t exist yet and *had no access to Him* – **but God planned a “script” for our Christian lives!**

- **God is not** making up His plan as He goes along!
- **He doesn’t get hysterical** about the things you get hysterical about.

This is a FIXED FIGHT – God knows He is going to win in the end!

Satan created a dilemma when he seduced Adam into sin, because he was trying to get God to work against Himself.

As long as what God loved (man) was separated from what God hated (sin) there was no conflict, because God could love what He loved and hate what He hated.

- But when what He hated got into what He loved, it created a conflict.
- If He killed what He hated, He would kill what He loved.

And if He loved what He loved, He would have to love what He hated because what He loved now had what He hated inside.

This was the dilemma...but Satan has never been able to create a dilemma that God has not been able to out-strategize.

In fact, there was ALREADY a lamb "slain from the foundation of the world"!

Revelation 13:8 - All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.

We don't serve a God who REACTS; we serve a God who **sovereignly ACTS**.

- He is never on the defensive, but always on the offensive.
- Nothing that the enemy ever does can abort what God has already done.

There is no way Satan can out-maneuver God!

- God is not a CONTRACTOR He is an ARCHITECT.
- We are building, in TIME, what He has designed in ETERNITY –
- so just give up on your own little plan and
- build His plan in your life!

CLOSE:

Say YES to His design for you!

1:5 – “adopted” – GOD ADOPTED US KNOWING FULLY WHO WE WERE!

- people give birth to children they don't want,
- but no one ever adopts anyone they don't want –

1:6 – “accepted in the beloved” – Talk about self-esteem!

- This is exactly why Christians don't need to be “accepted in the crowd”!
- Be more concerned about the needs of OTHERS, God meets our need!

1:7 – Quit worrying about your CURRENT CONDITION and start focusing on your ETERNAL POSITION

1:7 – “redemption” – You Are the Redeemed of the Lord!

- **You do not have to be dominated by sin.**
- **Christ has already redeemed you!**

Any time **the devil** says to you *“that’s just normal human behavior,”* remember two things:

- **Normal for the believer *is not the same as* normal for the sinner.**
- **The devil cannot tell the truth!**

1:8 - "abounded" = You need abundance ("more than enough") so that your blessing can "overflow" on others and MINISTER to them

1:11 – “worketh” – God is constantly manipulating, moving, maneuvering, and arranging all things ACCORDING to His purposes – things don’t happen at random or by coincidence for Christians!

1:13 - "sealed" - it is incontestable! The Holy Spirit is already in You!

1:14 - "earnest" = "down payment" ("I'm coming back to claim my possession!")

1:17 – Many believers are quick to see more of God’s power and mercy, but few are hungry to seek for His wisdom and revelation.

Paul’s revelation on the road to Damascus made him a powerhouse for God!

1:18 – “in the saints” – You don't need to know what you have in God, you need to know what God has in YOU.

1:19 – “his power to us-ward” – this is INHERENT power, and it works ACCORDING to God’s DOMINION power or authority.

1:20 – in the OT the defining event of God’s delivering power was the crossing of the Red Sea

- *Israel and the Lord continually referred to it.*
- The NT the defining event of **God's delivering power is the resurrection!**

1:20 – “right hand” – figurative language for the PLACE OF POWER

Eph. 1:22-23 - And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

If it is under His feet, and you are in His body – it is under YOU!

GOD’S ARMY IS THE BEST-EQUIPPED ARMY IN THE WORLD!