

Ephesians 6:10–20 (NLT)

¹⁰ A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. ¹⁴ Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. ¹⁵ For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. ¹⁶ In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. ¹⁷ Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

¹⁹ And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. ²⁰ I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.

1. Be strong.

Be strong in the Lord in his mighty power.

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's **power** for us who believe him. This is the same mighty **power** that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or **power** or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. *Ephesians 1:19–21 (NLT)*

I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will **empower** you with inner **strength** through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you **strong**. And may you have the **power** to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is... Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and **power** that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty **power** at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. *Ephesians 3:16–20 (NLT)*

2. Put on Christ.

Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm.

Lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace... throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes... Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. *Ephesians 4:1–3, 22–23, 31–32 (NLT)*

3. Fight the right battle.

against all strategies of the devil...not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies.

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. Remember that your family of believers all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are. *1 Peter 5:8–9 (NLT)*

4. Pray. Always.

Pray in the Spirit at all times... for all believers everywhere. And pray for me, too.

I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. *Ephesians 6:20 (NLT)*

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.

2 Thessalonians 1:11 (NIV)

Next Steps: In your time alone with God, practice the rhythm of "reflect and write" on Ephesians 6:10-20 and the passages below. Each day of the week reflect on God's power to serve, heal, love, strengthen. How do you need God's strength today?

Day 1: Philippians 2:6-11

Day 2: John 13:1–15

Day 3: Luke 10:25-27

Day 4: Luke 8:40-56

Day 5: Isaiah 40:28-31

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at solanabeach.church for sermon video, message outline, and small group questions print version.

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Acknowledge that this last week has been hard for many of you and for many reasons. Begin your time together with each person naming a feeling that they've experienced strongly this week. Resist the temptation to reply with words to one another. Let this be a time of active listening without verbal response.

CONNECT WITH GOD (Use one of the below practices or choose a practice from a previous week.)

- **Breath Prayer**

Breath Prayer is an ancient practice that invites us to slow down and awaken ourselves—even our breath—to the presence of God. Using our breath to help us pray includes our whole selves - heart, mind and body. We will use a portion of Acts 17:28, "**in him we live and move and have our being,**" as the text of our breath prayer. Have one person in your group facilitate the practice by slowly reading the directions below.

Facilitator Reads:

- Close your eyes, taking a few deep, slow breaths to allow your mind and heart to still. (pause)
- On your inhale pray: "In Him" (pause for an inbreath)
- On your exhale pray: "we live and move and have our being" (pause for an outbreath)
- On your inhale pray: "In Him" (pause for an inbreath)
- On your exhale pray: "we live and move and have our being" (pause for an outbreath)
- Now in a comfortable breathing rhythm, repeat this breath prayer cycle 5 times (The leader can pray using their own breath for five breath cycles)
- Giving a few more moments of quiet, end by saying aloud: "**Lord, in you we live and move and have our being. Amen.**"

CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

- **Together: Pray:** Before digging into the scripture and message, ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate and enlighten scripture, and to speak to each one of you through the passage.
- **Together:** Read **Ephesians 6:10–20**.
- **Alone:** Read **Ephesians 6:10–20**. Allow for a few minutes of quiet reflection and response. **Then, consider the prompt below.**

- From N.T. Wright's Study on **Ephesians**: "Describe a time when you were engaged in some kind of spiritual battle and how you handled it."
- Is this language easy for you to understand? Where or how is it challenging for you?
- **Together:** In pairs or as a whole group, share with one another your reflections from the prompt above. Be gentle and respectful with one another.

CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

Select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the main points from the sermon outline.
- Read the other passages in the message outline. How do they connect to Ephesians 6:10-20.
- How does Paul want the church in Ephesus to be "strong in the Lord?"
- Identify the six pieces of armor and a specific way we might use it today.
- What does it mean that we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies (v. 12)?
- Reflect together on Paul's "Armor of God" as it compares to ordinary images of armor?
- How is Paul's picture of power in Ephesians 6:10-20 similar or different to the Roman Empire? What about our context?
- What does Paul ask his readers to pray about for him (v.19-20)?
- What questions or challenges remain about this passage?

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: Reflect on the below quote. Are there any ways it connects or expands your understanding of Ephesians?

"Worship exposes the distortions of personal and societal sin that undergird all injustice. Worship recasts and humbles all forms of human power, which are key to what subverts human relationships and well-being. Worship delivers us from the need to make our neighbors in our image of God. Worship searches my stake in a world of my own making and meaning; it unmasks my self-interest, pettiness and hardness of heart. Worship reminds me that we are delivered from this otherwise hopeless, stymied place by the rescue of One who sees justly." –The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor, Mark Labberton

PRAYER

Share prayer requests together. Ask for the Holy Spirit to bind you together in love, mercy, and kindness.