

## Overview

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**Biblical Passage** Ephesians 6:10-18

**Supporting Passages** Joshua 1:6-9, John 16:33

**Memory Verse** Ephesians 6:10

**Biblical Truth** There are forces of spiritual evil at work around us, but God has equipped us to withstand that evil.

**Context** Evil is a reality, existing both externally and internally. It is part of sin that inhabits this life. Paul wanted to reassure the Christians at Ephesus that although there were strong evil forces at work in the world, Christ's followers would not be defenseless. We have been equipped with everything that we need to more than withstand the attacks of Satanic forces. The third lesson in the Squeeze series teaches students that they have the strong armor of God that will never be overcome by evil when it is applied and used. We just need to know that it's always available to us and that we never have to be caught off guard.

**Learning Goals**

- **Explore:** Students will understand that they are not defenseless against the forces of evil but rather that they have been given a defense that comes only from God.
- **Transform:** Students will apply their understanding by identifying ways in which each of the parts of the armor of God can be appropriately used.

**Prayer Suggestions**

As you prepare to teach this lesson, pray for your students.

- Pray that your students will understand that every day they will fight spiritual battles.
- Pray that your students will be prepared to fight against the evil forces in the world.
- Pray that your students will put on the armor of God in order to fight spiritual battles.

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## Biblical Commentary

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### Investigation

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The letter to the Ephesians may not have been written exclusively to the church at Ephesus, but rather it may have circulated amongst other churches as well. The apostle **Paul**, who wrote the letter around A.D. 61 while in prison in Rome, stayed in **Ephesus** longer than in any other city during his various missionary travels. He spent almost three years in Ephesus on his third missionary journey. He knew the Ephesian Christians well and understood the challenges that they faced from living in a large city of 300,000 people, many of whom worshipped the pagan goddess **Diana**. The temple of Diana was one of the ancient wonders of the world. In this very wealthy yet pagan capital city of the Roman province of Asia, the Christians faced great challenges. Many of the Gentile Christians apparently failed to understand that the call to follow Christ involved living according to a high moral code. They faced temptations to live according to their old pagan ways. The Ephesian Christians also faced hostility from their fellow citizens who believed that the prosperity of the city was tied to the worship of Diana. When followers of Christ failed to venerate Diana, they were viewed negatively.

Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesian Christians, who were mostly Gentile believers, in order to encourage them to live moral lives and to pursue unity with their fellow believers whether they were Gentile or Jewish. In this particular passage, Paul explained to his readers that when they faced temptation, hostility, or whatever Satanic forces, they had the spiritual equipment to fight against and overcome those evil forces.

### Importance

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This passage teaches the Essential Truth that **Jesus is God and Savior**.

Jesus taught His followers in John 16:33 that He had “overcome the world.” By making this bold claim, Jesus wanted all who followed Him to know that they too could look to Him and be enabled to overcome the world (meaning all that exists in the form of evil). The great theme of today’s biblical passage is that Christians need not fear spiritual attacks from evil forces. Paul addressed this topic in Romans 8:35-39 as well as he reminded the Roman Christians that although they fought against principalities and powers, they would overwhelmingly conquer them all.

Without a doubt we will face obstacles, opposition, heartache, disappointment, and temptation. But like Jesus, we have been given the ability to overcome. The Lord has provided His children with offensive and defensive weapons to conquer the attacks of the enemy. Having spent much time in prison, Paul had become quite familiar with the gear worn by a Roman soldier. It is quite possible that as Paul penned his letter to Ephesus, he saw a Roman soldier, and the Lord impressed upon Paul to inform Ephesian believers that they possessed spiritual armor that protected them just as the metal armor protected the soldier. He likely had seen soldiers attack their enemies with swords and realized that Christ’s followers too had a spiritual sword, the Word of God. Paul’s

message should encourage us to face the future with confidence—not with anxiety.

This passage also teaches the Essential Truth that **People are God's Treasure**.

## Interpretation

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**Ephesians 6:10** One of the first and most important truths that Christians must embrace when it comes to spiritual warfare is that we do not have adequate strength in and of ourselves to fight against spiritual enemies. When we fight spiritual battles, it must be in the Lord's strength. Only in the mighty power of the Lord can the Christian resist the hostile forces in the world that are bent on destroying the Christian witness.

**Ephesians 6:11** From time to time Paul utilized military language to describe his ministry because he realized that he fought spiritual battles daily. Therefore, he instructed Christ's followers to don the complete collection of the armor of God. The term *panoply*, used only one other time in the New Testament (Luke 11:21-22), refers to a complete outfit of personal armor to be used for defensive and attacking purposes. Just as no part of the body of the Roman soldier should be unprotected, the Christian should be fully protected as well. When we put on the full armor of God, we are able to stand against the schemes of the **devil**. Satan's craftiness (**wiles**) is ever so subtle but always leads people astray from the truth. Followers of Christ must be forewarned about Satan's tricks so that they can be armed and ready to face them. Of course, putting on spiritual armor stands as a powerful metaphor for applying to our lives certain Scriptural instructions.

**Ephesians 6:12** Christians not only need to be on their guard against Satan's devious strategies, but the adversary also has a host of allies who do his bidding. These forces of evil and powers of the dark world represent spiritual forces that can only be withstood through spiritual power provided by Christ. These principalities and powers are hostile to the cause of Christ and seek to blind unbelievers to the truth of the gospel and devastate the lives of believers. Although these evil forces pose a constant threat, those who have the Spirit of Christ need not fear them.

**Ephesians 6:13** The spiritual armor of the Lord is available for the Christian to take up and use against all evil beings who oppose the will of God on earth. The evil day refers to the present period of history in which evil prospers. All days until Jesus comes again are potentially evil. When a person gives in to the attacks of Satan and his allies, then evil becomes a reality. The Roman centurion has been described as the kind of man who could be counted upon to stand fast and not give way when pressed. This same quality should be found in the believer who fights spiritual battles.

**Ephesians 6:14** After giving instructions to put on the full armor of God and promising believers that they would prevail in spiritual warfare if they put on this armor, Paul described the armor in detail. All of the pieces of spiritual armor mentioned by Paul were counterparts of the actual armor worn by the Roman soldier. Each piece of armor was identified with some divine gift or virtue. A Roman soldier wore a big leather belt that held some of his weapons and kept his outer garments in place. The belt was a sign that the soldier stood ready to do his duty. To put on the "belt of truth" likely means that the Christian should always be vigilant, ready to fight against evil forces with the truths of the faith. The breastplate protected the soldier's upper body. When a believer dons the "breastplate of righteousness," he or she not only commits to living according to a high moral standard personally but also agrees to do battle for the sake of social justice in a world of distorted values.

**Ephesians 6:15** Every soldier wore hobnailed shoes that kept his footing secure as he battled. Paul instructed Christians to put on the “shoes of the gospel of **Peace**.” The word *peace* denotes the wellbeing of the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. Therefore, Christians must march forth into the world to minister to all the needs that people have—physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Followers of Christ should go forth with the confidence that the Lord will guard their steps as they go into the world. Whenever Christians carry out evangelistic and social endeavors, the Lord will make their steps sure.

**Ephesians 6:16** The “shield of faith” depicts the large, quadrangular shield that the Roman soldier used to deflect arrows, spears, and swords. With the “shield of faith” the Christian can repel the dangerous fire-tipped darts of the evil one. The best defense against the schemes of Satan is faith in Christ. Faith in Jesus not only involves belief in His death and resurrection but also involves having an unshakable trust in the Lord as we live each day. Faith in Christ leads us to reject the temptations to doubt Him or to quit serving Him faithfully.

**Ephesians 6:17a** Roman soldiers wore protective metal headgear for obvious reasons. Paul charged Christians to wear a “helmet of salvation.” Paul was not referring to our salvation in Christ here. In 1 Thessalonians Paul referred to the helmet of the “hope of salvation.” The 1 Thessalonians passage seems to clarify Paul’s meaning in this passage. To put on the “helmet of salvation” then could be understood as having hope in the future that God will ultimately conquer and eradicate all sin and evil. The helmet of salvation then is really a helmet of victory, for God’s victory is our salvation.

**Ephesians 6:17b** The final weapon and the only offensive weapon that Paul mentioned is the “sword of the Spirit.” The Roman soldier carried the sword in a sheath attached to his belt. Whenever he went into battle, he unsheathed his sword so that he could attack the enemy. The “sword of the Spirit” represents the conquering Word of God. When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11), Jesus countered by quoting from Deuteronomy. When we use Scripture in situations in daily life, we not only repel the attacks from the enemy but put him to flight as well. The Word of God is such a powerful weapon that every Christian should spend time memorizing and meditating upon it.

**Ephesians 6:18** Prayer provides us with a constant means of communication with God by way of His Spirit. Prayer causes us to remain alert. It is futile to put on the armor of God, move into a battle mode, but not communicate with God constantly. Prayer means that we can move and act at His bidding because He sees what we do not see and knows what we do not know. He is our eyes and ears, and with such alertness coupled with the full armor, we are made ready to deal with the evil that threatens us. Likewise, we are to pray for others who follow and face the same evils that we face. Some are stronger, while others are weaker. All need the intercession of brothers and sisters in Christ in order to do battle. God works effectively through the prayers of the saints on behalf of the saints.

## Implications

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Spiritual warfare sounds frightening to us. Yet if our spiritual armor is in place, we have nothing to fear. According to 1 John 4:4, the one who is in us (Jesus) is greater than the one (Satan) who is in the world. The book of James states that if we submit ourselves to God and resist the devil, then he will flee from us. In 1 Peter 5:8-9 we find that although Satan is a roaring lion looking for someone to devour, we can resist him if we stand firm in our faith. Throughout the New Testament we are told that we can conquer the forces of evil through our faith in the mighty power of the Lord, who defeats all foes and wins the final victory. How does your life exemplify such

power in front of your students?

Do your students know how to stand strong when they encounter Satanic attacks? Do they even recognize when they are under attack? It takes time for students to begin to recognize these things and mature in knowing what to do. They must begin practicing putting on the full armor of God. They need to know what it looks like and how to make a stand. They need to stand strong not on their own strength but in the strength that comes only from God. They need you to begin to equip them with the understanding of what God has provided for them both in their spiritual defense and spiritual offense.

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## Teaching Plan

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### Connect Activity

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#### Drama: The Right Stuff

*(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will watch a drama about having all the armor necessary to defend against evil forces.*

*(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Download the drama script. Prior to the session, enlist two students to enact the drama. Give copies of the script to cast members ahead of time so that they will be ready to perform it.*

Prompt students to perform the drama. Afterward, ask: **Where do you think that Ethan was going to get the kind of defenses to take on Randy? Do you really think that Randy was the problem?** Allow students to respond. Then say: **God has given us defensive weaponry that only He can give. But people aren't our problem—the forces of evil are. Today we'll look at what this spiritual world looks like and discover that we are not without the armor of God.**

#### Media Option: Duck and Cover

*(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)*

*Students will watch an old video about preparing for an atomic bomb attack.*

*(3-5 minutes, Reverb Media Pass required)*

*If your church has purchased the Reverb Media Pass or the Reverb DVD, preview and arrange to show the "Duck and Cover" video. (If your church has not purchased the Reverb Media Pass, you can purchase this single video through the "Media" tab.)*

Play the "Duck and Cover" video for your students. When the video is over, ask students for their responses. Explain that this was a film played by the U.S. government to teach students what to do in the case of an atomic bomb. Say: **At the height of the Cold War, the U.S. feared an atomic attack at any time. Teaching students to "duck and cover" was an effort to help teenagers be ready in the face of the worst circumstances.** Explain to students that as much as we may choose to dismiss it, the reality is that there are forces of spiritual evil at work around us. Explain that today's lesson is all about how God has equipped us to withstand that evil . . . and it is way better than "duck and cover."

## Explore Activity

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### Master Teacher Key Study: Going on the Defense

*(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will study Ephesians 6:10-18 to understand the various pieces of the armor of God.*

*(10-15 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Download the Master Teacher Key Study. Print one copy for your own use. Also download the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Print a copy for each learner. Also provide pens.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will understand that they are not defenseless against the forces of evil but rather that they have been given a defense that comes only from God.

Pass out pens and copies of the Master Teacher Student Worksheet. Then use the Master Teacher Key Study to teach Ephesians 6:10-18.a

## Transform Activity

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### Deeper Discussion

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will discuss what it means to wear the armor of God.*

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

**Learning Goal:** Students will apply their understanding by identifying ways in which each of the parts of the armor of God can be appropriately used.

Use the following questions to begin a discussion about the armor of God.

- **What does it mean to you to “be strong in the Lord?” What does this have to do with relating to God?**
- **How can you be sure that you are readily and constantly clothed with the armor of God? How does your relationship with God affect this?**
- **What are the things in your life that you’ve not battled well? How can you deal with those things now so that you are standing strong and courageous in the Lord?**
- **What will have to change in your life for you to follow the command of verse 18 and “always keep on praying”?**

## Creative Prayer

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

*Students will pray for God's help in wearing the armor of God against temptations.*

*(10 minutes, easy set-up)*

**Learning Goal:** Students will apply their understanding by identifying ways in which each of the parts of the armor of God can be appropriately used.

Lead students to say sentence-long prayers that mention a temptation and then a piece of the armor of God that can combat that temptation. (Example: "Father, when I am tempted by peer pressure, help me to stand strong with the breastplate of righteousness so that I may know what is right and what is wrong." Afterward, close by praying over your students for them to learn to wear and use the armor of God in daily life.

## Reverb Student Book Option: The Armor of God

*(10 minutes, Reverb student book required)*

*Students will complete an activity about wearing the armor of God.*

*(10 minutes, Reverb student book required)*

*If your church has purchased the Reverb student book, preview the activity on pages 294-295. If possible, provide a copy of the book to reference as you mention the activity to students.*

**Learning Goal:** Students will apply their understanding by identifying ways in which each of the parts of the armor of God can be appropriately used.

As students work through pages 290-295 in the *Reverb* student book this week, challenge them to take about 10-15 minutes and read through the activity on pages 294-295. Say: **Life is hard. Handle it with armor.** Explain that in a world of temptation and persecution, God has not left us defenseless. Instead, He has outfitted us with an armor that only He can provide. Say: **The only thing that we have to do is put it on and wear it.**

Squeeze 3, "Going on the Defense"  
Drama

## The Right Stuff

### Characters:

ETHAN  
CHUCK

**Props:** couple of chairs or a sofa, video game controller

**Costumes:** regular street clothes

**Creative Note:** If you have a couple of guys in your group known for being avid gamers, utilize them for this sketch. You could even substitute the details of the game with ones from an actual game that is currently popular.

*(ETHAN is sitting on a chair holding a video game controller. He is enthralled by whatever game he is playing. His friend CHUCK enters, visibly troubled.)*

ETHAN: *(muttering under his breath)*  
Come on, come on!

CHUCK: Hey, Ethan . . .

ETHAN: Huh? *(quickly glances over at Chuck)* Oh. Hey, Chuck.

CHUCK: You busy?

ETHAN: Umm . . . kinda. Yeah.

CHUCK: What're you doing?

ETHAN: I'm currently fighting dungeon trolls. I've almost reached the center of the Lockwood Labyrinth where the crystal goblet is.

CHUCK: You're such a nerd.

ETHAN: Oh yeah? Then you're a bigger nerd because I saw where you already got the achievement.

CHUCK: *(sheepishly)* Yeah. I did.

ETHAN: Just give me a sec. Let me get

this, and then I'll save it.

CHUCK: Okay.

*(CHUCK sits down next to ETHAN and watches him play for a moment. He then begins providing "helpful" commentary.)*

CHUCK: No. Don't do that. You want to be using an enchantment spell and a lightning dagger.

ETHAN: Just let me do this.

CHUCK: I'm just trying to help. If you'll just go back out to the ruins . . .

ETHAN: I'm not going back out. I'm almost there.

CHUCK: Yeah. I know, but you're about to run into a . . .

*(ETHAN'S character in the video game gets "frozen.")*

ETHAN: Arrgh!

CHUCK: . . . a wizard of winter who has eternal freeze.

ETHAN: Yeah. I see that.

CHUCK: I tried to warn you. Do you not have the armor of the dragon emperor?

ETHAN: No. Not yet.

CHUCK: Well, you really need to get that first. It makes it so that you can resist the—

ETHAN: *(interrupting)* Did you need something, Chuck?

*(CHUCK goes back to being despondent.)*

CHUCK: Yeah. Advice. I need some advice.

ETHAN: About what?

CHUCK: *(sighs)* It's Randy.

ETHAN: Oh. Yeah.

CHUCK: He won't let up on me. I mean, everyday he's on my case. He's relentless.

ETHAN: It has been pretty bad lately.

CHUCK: You don't know the worst of it. He found this video from our first-grade play . . .

ETHAN: Oh, no. The one where you had to play a fairy?

CHUCK: Yes! He uploaded it, and now it's posted all over the place.

ETHAN: Ooh. That burns.

CHUCK: Tell me about it. I know I've got to do something, but getting my face punched in isn't exactly something I'm looking forward to.

ETHAN: You know what your problem is, don't you?

CHUCK: Yeah. Randy.

ETHAN: No. I mean, your problem with Randy. You're going in unprepared.

CHUCK: What do you mean?

ETHAN: Look at you. He's already beat you, and you haven't even faced him yet. What you need to do is just equip yourself with the right stuff.

CHUCK: I don't get it.

ETHAN: Look, it's just like what you were telling me about the game. You know that the forces of disdain aren't just going to hand over the crystal goblet to you. You're going to have to fight through their labyrinth and defeat the wizard of winter.

CHUCK: Yeah. It's the hardest quest in the whole game.

ETHAN: Exactly. But you did it anyway, and you got it. And why? Because you were prepared. You researched the enchantment spells. You leveled up your lightning dagger. You even found the armor of the dragon emperor. I'm sure it still wasn't easy.

CHUCK: *(chuckles)* You got that right.

ETHAN: But you were able to do it because you had all the right stuff.

CHUCK: Yeah. Yeah! You're right. Maybe I can do this.

ETHAN: Sure you can.

CHUCK: But I do think it'd be easier if I had some actual, you know, for-real armor of my own.

ETHAN: Yeah. Speaking of which, come show me where I get that stuff.

*(ETHAN picks up his controller and resumes playing.)*

CHUCK: Okay. First, you need to go visit Adria of the Wilds.

ETHAN: Huh.

CHUCK: What?

ETHAN: You're definitely the bigger nerd.

CHUCK: Cool it.

*(The End)*

## Master Teacher Key Study GOING ON THE DEFENCE

(15–20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

**Intro:** Evil is at work in the world around us. Are we defenseless against its advances?

**Description:** A spiritual world exists that we cannot see with our eyes. But we can see the effects of the evil of that world because we're caught in the middle of it every day of our lives. God knew that in order for His people to live in a world of evil, they would need a spiritual defense in order to do battle. Paul identified it and gave it a name: the armor of God.

**Illustration:** Think about all the pieces of protection that a football player uses: helmet, shoulder pads, kneepads, thigh pads, cleats, ankle braces, etc. The way that these guys go at each other on the field, if the teams didn't wear this protection then they would have a lot of injured players. All of this football equipment serves as visible protection for visible kinds of harm and potential injuries.

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### 1. We are not strong by ourselves (Eph. 6:10).

**Description:** We should never think that God has left us to live independently from Him, as though we are capable of taking on the world and all of its evils. Instead, our strength comes from God within the confines of a relationship with Him.

**Illustration:** Ever wonder how the entire United States is powered with electricity? It's set up on three individual electrical grids that run in the west, the east, and the central parts of the country. All of these are connected to a series of vast electrical power sources and are very complex in their construction. In fact, they are so complex that the power grids are not the most efficient means of distributing electricity. They are vulnerable to problems such as computer failures, viruses, and terrorist attacks that could wipe out electrical power in any one or all of these regions at one time. This problem could be easily fixed if electrical engineers knew how to easily and efficiently store the power that we know as electricity.

**Application:** Just like electrical power cannot easily be stored and has to have a constant power source, the same is true for us. God does not store up His power in us, which would make us independent from Him. We have to remain connected to Him because our source of strength and power is found in Him.

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### 2. We are strong because of God's protection (Eph. 6:11–17).

**Description:** The armor of God is His way of helping us live in and with His power and protection. It's unseen, but it is meant to be worn all the time as we stay connected to Him. We have to know what this protection is and how it works.

**Illustration:** A lot of people today have home security systems. These systems are designed to protect the home, its contents, and its occupants. When the alarm is set on the house, the homeowner doesn't see or hear the alarm. When the alarm is set while the homeowner is away from the home, he or she still doesn't see or hear the alarm. The only time that the homeowner hears the alarm is when someone breaks into the home or if the homeowner accidentally sets the alarm off himself. The security system protects the home even when the homeowner doesn't see it or hear it. In the same way, the armor of God protects us even though we don't see it and aren't constantly aware of it.

**Application:** We are armed for spiritual battle by faith from our relationship with God, the truth of His Word, His righteousness, His grace, and prayer. These are not visible weapons, but we know that they exist.

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### 3. We are **strong** because we **relate** to God (Eph. 6:18).

**Description:** We are able to access and use every spiritual strength and power of God because of our relationship with Him. Prayer is high on that list of strengths. Because of the relationship that we have with God, we can communicate with our Creator, the God of the universe. We can call on Him to provide us with His power and empower others.

**Illustration:** We live in a world of extraordinary communication tools—Internet, 3G or 4G networks, texting, etc. There is nothing more frustrating than the need to send a text message or call someone with your cell phone—only to find that you’re in a dead zone with no bars. It makes you want to switch to a different provider.

**Application:** God is His own 3G/4G network, there are no dead zones, and your internal phone always has bars. It’s fast, it’s easily accessed, and He is always accessible. God wants to talk to us about the power with which He is ready to equip us.

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**Conclusion:** The armor of God is for us to wear daily to protect ourselves from the devil’s schemes.

**Description:** Jesus told His disciples in John 16:33 that He had “overcome the world.” That meant that because He had overcome the world and its evils, He would enable them to do the same. Jesus made good on His promise through the provision of the spiritual armor of God.

**Application:** Because of this provision of the armor of God, we realize that we don’t have to take on this world and do battle alone. Putting on the armor means that we are safely working in and out of the relationship that we have with God in Christ. It is His measure of strength being worked out in and through our lives. We have only to put it on.

# REVERB::SQUEEZE::lesson three

## GOING ON THE DEFENSE

biblical passage: Ephesians 6:10–18

memory verse: Ephesians 6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

### GOING ON THE DEFENSE

1. We are not \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ (Eph. 6:10).
2. We are \_\_\_\_\_ because of God's \_\_\_\_\_ (Eph. 6:11–17).
3. We are \_\_\_\_\_ because we \_\_\_\_\_ to God (Eph. 6:18).

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to you to “be strong in the Lord?” What does this have to do with relating to God?
- How can you be sure that you are readily and constantly clothed with the armor of God? How does your relationship with God affect this?
- What are the things in your life that you’ve not battled well? How can you deal with those things now so that you are standing strong and courageous in the Lord?
- What will have to change in your life for you to follow the command of verse 18 and “always keep on praying”?