

BEYOND THE SERMON

A Deep-Study Workbook

Stand Your Ground

The Armor of God • Week One

Ephesians 6:10-13 | **Matthew 24:1-14**

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Scripture quotations are from the New International Version (NIV). Verse references are hyperlinked to BibleGateway.

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook goes beyond Sunday's message. It is designed for personal study, small groups, or the Wednesday afternoon Bible study. Work through it with your Bible open. Every verse reference is a live link to BibleGateway, so you can read each passage in context with a single click.

Each section includes background, word studies from the original Greek, comparison tables, and reflection questions with space to write. Don't rush. Paul's command in Ephesians 6 is not to admire the armor but to put it on.

Message Overview

Are we living in the end times? That question came up around the tables at a men's breakfast of more than a hundred men, and it is the question many of us ask when we read the headlines. Jesus answered it in [Matthew 24](#) with signs, not dates. Buried in His answer is one line that cuts to the quick: "the one who stands firm to the end will be saved" ([Matthew 24:13](#)).

That word, stand, takes us to [Ephesians 6:10-13](#). Writing from a Roman prison, Paul closes his letter with a command: be strong in the Lord and put on the full armor of God. Not a suggestion. A command. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, and the enemy has schemes prepared for each of us. But God has already issued the equipment. Our job is to wear it, and to take our stand.

Key Passages

- [Matthew 24:1-14](#) — Jesus describes the signs of the age and calls us to stand firm to the end
- [2 Corinthians 5:7](#) — We live by faith, not by sight
- [Ephesians 6:10-13](#) — Be strong in the Lord; put on the full armor of God
- [Ephesians 6:14-18](#) — The six pieces of the armor (previewed this week, studied in the weeks ahead)
- [Hebrews 10:24-25](#) — Encourage one another as you see the Day approaching

Part One: Are We in the End Times?

Jesus had just walked out of the temple with His disciples. It was the largest structure in Jerusalem, the center of the city's religious and economic life, and the disciples pointed to its buildings in admiration. Jesus' reply was staggering: not one stone would be left on another (**Matthew 24:1-2**). Within a generation, in A.D. 70, the Romans fulfilled those words. Today, at the southern end of the Temple Mount near the Hulda Gate steps, visitors can still see the massive Herodian stones lying where they cracked the Roman street below.

On the Mount of Olives the disciples asked the question we are still asking: "When will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (**Matthew 24:3**). Jesus answered with a list of signs, and with a warning.

Matthew 24:12-13 (NIV)

Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

The Signs Jesus Gave

Verse	Sign	What Jesus Said About It
Matthew 24:4-5	Deception and false messiahs	"Watch out that no one deceives you." Many will claim to be the Christ.
Matthew 24:6	Wars and rumors of wars	"See to it that you are not alarmed." The end is still to come.
Matthew 24:7	Nation against nation; famines and earthquakes	Kingdom against kingdom.
Matthew 24:8	Birth pains	These are the beginning, not the end.
Matthew 24:9-10	Persecution and falling away	Believers hated by all nations; many will turn away.
Matthew 24:11	False prophets	Many will appear and deceive many people.
Matthew 24:12	Love growing cold	Because of the increase of wickedness.
Matthew 24:13	Standing firm	The one who stands firm to the end will

Verse	Sign	What Jesus Said About It
		be saved.
<u>Matthew 24:14</u>	The gospel of the kingdom preached	To the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Notice what Jesus did not give: a date. He gave markers, things we would see, and then He told us how to live in the meantime. "For we live by faith, not by sight" (**2 Corinthians 5:7**). We will see horrific things. We do not live by what we see; we live by His Word.

Reflection

1. Read **Matthew 24:4-14**. Which of the signs in the table do you recognize in the news this week? Which have you seen in your own community?

2. Jesus' first words in answer to the disciples were "Watch out that no one deceives you" (**Matthew 24:4**). Where are you most vulnerable to deception, in the world, in the church, or in your own thinking?

3. **Matthew 24:12** says love will grow cold because of the increase of wickedness. Have you felt your own love cooling? What would it take to keep it warm?

Part Two: Historical Background

Paul in Chains

Ephesians is one of Paul's prison letters, written from Roman custody around A.D. 60–62 (see [Ephesians 3:1](#), [Ephesians 4:1](#), and [Ephesians 6:20](#), where Paul calls himself "an ambassador in chains"). He was a well-known, even notorious, prisoner, and he was chained to Roman soldiers around the clock ([Acts 28:16](#), [Acts 28:30-31](#)). Paul had ample opportunity to study the equipment of a Roman soldier up close.

The armor of God, however, is not simply a Roman kit with Christian labels. Paul draws on Old Testament imagery of God Himself as a warrior. Compare [Isaiah 59:17](#), where the Lord puts on righteousness as a breastplate and the helmet of salvation, and [Isaiah 11:5](#), where righteousness and faithfulness are the Messiah's belt. The armor is God's own armor, given to His people.

Ephesus: A City of Spiritual Conflict

Ephesus was a unique place. It was home to the temple of Artemis, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and a center of magic and the occult. When the gospel took hold there, new believers publicly burned their magic scrolls, worth fifty thousand drachmas, and a riot broke out over the loss of idol business ([Acts 19:11-20](#), [Acts 19:23-41](#)). Paul spent about three years there ([Acts 20:31](#)). When he wrote to this church about "the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms," they knew exactly what he meant.

Paul's ministry to the Gentiles had already put him in constant controversy ([Acts 13:44-50](#), [Acts 14:19](#)). Everyone in the Jewish community was happy until he announced he was taking the good news of the Messiah to the nations. From that point forward, opposition followed him everywhere. He knew about spiritual warfare from experience, not theory.

The Structure of Ephesians

Section	Theme	Summary
Ephesians 1-3	Doctrine: What God Has Done	Chosen, redeemed, sealed, raised, seated with Christ, made one body of Jew and Gentile.
Ephesians 4:1-6:9	Duty: How We Are to Live	Walk worthy of the calling; put off the old self, put on the new; households of Christ.
Ephesians 6:10-	Defense: The Armor of	"Finally": be strong in the Lord, put on

Section	Theme	Summary
20	God	the full armor, stand, and pray.

The armor passage is the finale. After everything Paul says about who we are in Christ and how we are to walk, he ends with warfare. Good doctrine for living leads to standing firm in battle.

Part Three: The Text — Ephesians 6:10-13

Ephesians 6:10-13 (NIV)

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 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.

Verse 10: Be Strong in the Lord

Paul opens with the first thing, the same way the Ten Commandments open with God (**Exodus 20:1-3**). Before there is any armor, there is the Lord and His mighty power. If you go into the battle in your own strength, you are already going to have a tough day. The strength is His. You have to trust God first, and take your strength from what He has already done (**Ephesians 1:19-20**).

WORD STUDY κράτος τῆς ἰσχύος (*kratos tēs ischyos*)

Meaning: "the strength of His might" — the dominion-power that flows from God's inherent might.

Paul uses the same combination in **Ephesians 1:19** to describe the power that raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at the Father's right hand. The strength you stand in is resurrection strength. It is not something you generate; it is something you draw on.

Verse 11: Put On the Full Armor

Is Paul asking? "Would you please put it on? It'll be good for you." No. It is a command. In the Greek the verb is an imperative. God has issued the equipment, and the soldier is responsible to wear it.

WORD STUDY πανοπλία (*panoplia*)

Meaning: the complete armor of a heavily armed soldier; every piece, nothing missing. English: panoply.

Webster defines panoply as "a complete, impressive array" of arms and armor. Paul uses the word twice in this passage (verses 11 and 13) and again in [Luke 11:22](#), where the stronger man takes away the armor of the strong man he has overpowered.

The point is completeness. We can be selective in our closets: this shirt, not those shoes, no cleats to the restaurant. We cannot be selective about the armor. Every piece is issued because every piece will be needed. In the Marines the rule was, don't volunteer for anything, but take everything they give you.

WORD STUDY μεθοδεία (*methodeia*)

Meaning: a scheme, a stratagem, a cunning plan carried out in an orderly, methodical way. English: method.

A scheme is a serious plan made in advance. The devil is not improvising. Like a terror attack, you don't know when or where it will come, but you know it is coming, and it is likely aimed at your point of weakness. He does not slumber or sleep. See also [2 Corinthians 2:11](#) ("we are not unaware of his schemes") and [1 Peter 5:8](#).

Verse 12: Not Against Flesh and Blood

The people who oppose you are not the real enemy. Behind the flesh and blood stand rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. We don't often think of nations and cultures as shaped by dark angels with philosophies that pervade mankind, but Scripture does. The book of Daniel lifts the curtain on it: the "prince of Persia" who resisted God's messenger for twenty-one days ([Daniel 10:12-13](#), [Daniel 10:20-21](#)).

The German word Zeitgeist means "spirit of the age." Not every spirit of an age is holy. There are spiritual forces leading whole societies in directions opposed to the gospel. We live by faith, not by sight ([2 Corinthians 5:7](#)). We don't see gravity, but drop your pen and it falls every time. God's power is always working. So is evil. That is why the armor is not optional.

WORD STUDY πάλη (*palē*)

Meaning: a wrestling match; hand-to-hand struggle at close quarters.

This is the only place the word appears in the New Testament. Paul does not describe a distant artillery war but a personal, close-contact struggle. The enemy gets close. That is why the armor has to be on the body, not stored in a closet.

Verse 13: Stand Your Ground

"Therefore" gathers everything up. Because the enemy has schemes, because the struggle is spiritual, put on the full armor so that when the day of evil comes you can stand your ground. Not if. When. And if it hasn't already come to your house, your neighborhood, your community, your country, get ready, because it is on its way.

WORD STUDY ἵστημι / ἀνθίστημι (*histēmi / anthistēmi*)

Meaning: to stand; to stand against, hold one's ground, withstand.

Paul uses "stand" four times in verses 11-14. The soldier's job is not to charge and beat people with his sword. His job is to hold the ground Christ has already won. Compare **James 4:7** ("Resist the devil, and he will flee from you") and **1 Corinthians 16:13** ("stand firm in the faith"). The same word appears in **Matthew 24:13** — the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

No Armor for the Back

Look at the list in **Ephesians 6:14-17**. Belt, breastplate, footwear, shield, helmet, sword. There is no back plate. The armor of God is built for facing forward. It is for standing your ground, not for retreat. A soldier who turns and runs exposes the one part God did not cover.

Reflection

4. Paul begins with "be strong in the Lord," not with the armor. Where in your life are you trying to fight in your own strength?

5. The devil's schemes are aimed at weakness. Be honest: where is your point of weakness right now? (See **1 Corinthians 10:12-13.**)

6. Reread **Ephesians 6:12**. Think of a conflict you are facing with a person. How would it change your response to remember that the real struggle is not against flesh and blood?

7. There is no back plate. Is there a place where you are tempted to retreat rather than stand? What would standing your ground look like this week?

Part Four: The Full Armor — A Preview

Over the coming weeks we will study each piece of the armor and how it protects us. Here is the complete panoply as Paul lists it. Each piece is something you already possess in Christ. The question is whether you are wearing it.

Week	Piece of Armor	Reference	What It Guards Against
2	The Belt of Truth	<u>Ephesians 6:14</u>	Deception and the lies of the enemy (<u>John 8:44</u>)
3	The Breastplate of Righteousness	<u>Ephesians 6:14</u>	Accusation and guilt (<u>Romans 8:1</u> , <u>Romans 8:33-34</u>)
4	Feet Fitted with the Gospel of Peace	<u>Ephesians 6:15</u>	Losing your footing; being unready to move (<u>Isaiah 52:7</u>)
5	The Shield of Faith	<u>Ephesians 6:16</u>	The flaming arrows of the evil one (<u>1 John 5:4</u>)
6	The Helmet of Salvation	<u>Ephesians 6:17</u>	Doubt and despair about your standing with God (<u>1 Thessalonians 5:8</u>)
7	The Sword of the Spirit	<u>Ephesians 6:17</u>	Our one offensive weapon: the Word of God (<u>Hebrews 4:12</u> , <u>Matthew 4:1-11</u>)

Then, having put it all on, Paul adds one more thing: pray in the Spirit on all occasions ([Ephesians 6:18](#)). Prayer is not a seventh piece of armor; it is the atmosphere in which the armor is worn.

The Marine's Basic Issue

When a Marine is issued his load-bearing equipment, he does not decide whether he likes it. Helmet, body armor, boots, ammo, water, first-aid kit: it is standard issue, and he wears it. Believers have basic issue too. One day it will be exchanged for a white robe ([Revelation 7:9](#), [Revelation 19:8](#)). Until then, we wear the armor.

Part Five: Standing Together

Individual Armor, Corporate Strength

The armor is for you individually. No one can put it on for you. All Paul can do is command it; all a pastor can do is exhort you to it; Jesus provided it; but you must put it on. Yet we do not stand alone. Roman soldiers locked their shields together into a formation called the testudo, the tortoise, so that every man was protected by the shields around him. A congregation is like that.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NIV)

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

One strand of wire bends and snaps. Three strands twisted together do not break or cut easily. That is what a church is: our power and unity are together. When ten men gather to pray, things happen. When eighty thousand men sing together, it usually means a city is about to be invaded, and it was, by Jesus.

As You See the Day Approaching

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The writer of Hebrews connects gathering together with the approach of the Day. The closer we get, the more we need each other. Evil is all over the globe, in our communities and across the world, but we are prepared by Christ, and we are called to encourage one another. Turn to your neighbor and say it: "Be encouraged. God has not left us as orphans" (**John 14:18**).

Sticks of Dynamite

The kingdom message comes with power. The Greek word is dunamis (**Acts 1:8**, **Romans 1:16**), the root of our word dynamite. Every time you go out, you carry that power. When you put on the armor and wield the sword, it is an amazing combination, and it is not just for pastors, elders, and deacons. It is for you as a person. You are armed. You are armored. You are an army of one, standing in the strength of the King.

A Parachute, Not a Bunker

We are people on an airplane with parachutes. We hope we never have to use them, but we know the plane is going down, and we know Jesus is going to catch it. Jesus is our parachute. He is the one who saves us, and He does so continually. Knowing the plane is going down is not a reason for fear. It is a reason to put on the armor and take your stand.

Reflection

8. Who is standing shield-to-shield with you right now? Who is depending on your shield?

9. Hebrews 10:25 warns against giving up meeting together. As you see the Day approaching, what one change would strengthen your commitment to the body?

10. Who in your life needs to hear "Be encouraged, God has not left us as orphans" this week? Write their name and how you will reach them.

Part Six: Put It On

Paul's command is a daily one. Make it a mental exercise each morning: name each piece of the armor and consciously put it on before you walk out the door. Use the checklist below this week.

Piece	Reference	This week, I put it on by...
Belt of Truth	<u>Ephesians 6:14</u>	
Breastplate of Righteousness	<u>Ephesians 6:14</u>	
Feet Fitted with the Gospel of Peace	<u>Ephesians 6:15</u>	
Shield of Faith	<u>Ephesians 6:16</u>	
Helmet of Salvation	<u>Ephesians 6:17</u>	
Sword of the Spirit	<u>Ephesians 6:17</u>	
Prayer in the Spirit	<u>Ephesians 6:18</u>	

Stand Firm

Stand firm in what you have. Stand firm on the Word of God. Stand firm on the power of His truth. Stand firm on the resurrection. Stand firm in the fact that in our hour of need He will come and not only rescue us but save us and save the planet. Stand firm in your knowledge of God and in the tools He provides for you, right now, today.

Yeshua said when you see these things, know that it is true. Know the events; no one knows the dates. The evil one is busy setting up a rival kingdom to sidetrack you from the kingdom Yeshua brings at the end of the age. He will try to trick you. But Jesus left us His words, He left us armor, He left us an offensive weapon, and He left us in His power.

Memory Verse

Ephesians 6:13 (NIV)

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.

Further Study

- **Isaiah 59:15-21** — God as the divine warrior who puts on righteousness and salvation
- **Romans 13:11-14** — "Put on the armor of light"; clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ
- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-11** — The Day of the Lord, and faith, love, and hope as armor
- **2 Corinthians 10:3-5** — Our weapons are not the weapons of the world
- **Daniel 10:10-21** — A glimpse behind the curtain of spiritual warfare over nations
- **Colossians 2:13-15** — Christ disarmed the powers and authorities at the cross
- **Revelation 12:7-12** — The accuser overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony
- **Matthew 24:36-44** — No one knows the day or hour; keep watch

Next week: The Belt of Truth • Ephesians 6:14

Notes