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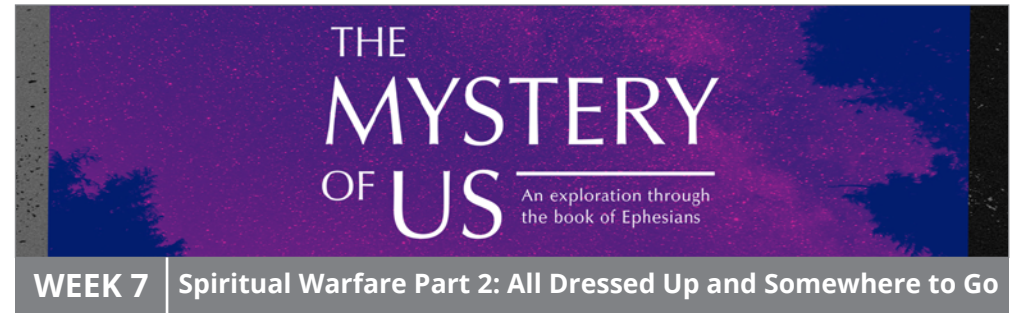
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## PRAYER

Equip me, Lord:

- With the belt of truth (Eph. 6:14), may your truth rule in my heart and be in my mind and on my lips today.
- With the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:14). Apart from you, there is no righteousness, but through Jesus, I have been “born again” and made righteous in your sight. May I live as a righteous person.
- With feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15), may I reflect the gospel in my words and actions, that through me, with my every encounter, others may be drawn one step closer to you.
- With the shield of faith (Eph. 6:16), may I take you at your word concerning promises about the present and future—promises of everlasting love, abundant life, and so much more.
- With the helmet of salvation (Eph. 6:17), remind me that nothing can separate me from your love and that I’ve been saved by grace. In your grace, help me to say “no” to all ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live a self-controlled, upright, and godly life (Titus 2:12,13).
- And with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17), may your Holy Spirit reign in my life and bring to my mind just the right Bible verses to be in my heart and on my lips. May I be “filled with the Spirit” and ready with Scripture as you were, Jesus, when the devil tempted you.
- Finally, keep me in an attitude of prayer (Eph. 6:18). Remind me to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions.” Cause me to be alert and always praying for the saints, to be joyful, and to give thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

**Navigators: Pray on the Armour of God**

## WARM UP

(OPTIONAL)

Apart from where you live now, where else would you consider to be a great place to live and why?

## WORD

<sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; <sup>17</sup> and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, <sup>18</sup> praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, <sup>19</sup> and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.

### EPHESIANS 6:14-20

"Make no mistake: forces of darkness are at work in this world. The Bible calls them (among other things) spirits, demons, or powers (Eph. 6:12). The names vary, but the reality is all throughout Scripture.

And, if we'll open up our eyes, it's all throughout our world. We talk about the "spirit" of an organization or a nation, and we think we're being metaphorical. But Scripture seems to indicate that dark spirits can work big as well as small (1 Cor. 2:6-8). They seem just as eager to animate an entire nation as they are to possess an individual (Dan. 10:13). There may be no better explanation for some of the more heinous chapters in human history. Something more than human sin was involved in the practice of chattel slavery in the United States, in the dehumanizing punishment of the Soviet gulags, and in the frighteningly efficient mass murder of Nazi death camps.

The examples don't have to be this extreme to be just as relevant. Most of us, for instance, have had the experience of encountering an institution that is rather corrupt, but noting that the individuals within the institution do not seem to be the corrupting factor. In fact, the individuals involved often sense the distortion, but feel powerless to change it. The whole is not merely the sum of its parts. Something bigger seems to be at work.

Something bigger is at work. As the apostle Paul reminds us, "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" (Eph. 6:12). The powers Paul talks about are not merely individual demons making individual people do terrible things. He is looking at something more systemic, beyond both the emperor and the empire...

But we cannot forget that the verdict on the ultimate battle has already been declared. The powers and principalities may continue to wreak havoc, but the apostle Paul reminds us that they are flailing in the death throes of defeat. The powers were put to open shame by our Savior, who triumphed over them on Calvary (Col. 2:15). So we do not fight for victory; rather, with the cross at our back, we fight from victory.

In the end, what irony could be more fitting? When facing the bleakness of death, it is the death of Christ that gives us hope. When overwhelmed at the powers of evil before us, we remember how the greatest powers of evil behind us could only unite to destroy themselves.

So bring on the darkness, the death, and the demons. Our God has seen all three before. And his bruised heel is proof that they don't stand a chance."

-Chris Pappalardo, *Don't Worry, There Are More Demons Than You Think*.

## GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale from 1-10 (1 = none at all; 10 = extreme), how would you rate your ability to stand against evil in your life? Why have you rated yourself this way?
2. When you consider your perception of evil in your life, do you find that you have a correct perspective of it, or do you have a tendency to over-estimate (i.e. live in fear or over-spiritualise), or under-estimate (i.e. forget that the enemy even exists)?
3. Considering the pieces of armour mentioned in the passage from Ephesians 6, which one do you feel you gravitate towards carrying more? Which piece do you feel like you need more in your spiritual life?
4. How is your prayer life?
5. If you are not yet a follower of God our Father, would you be willing to acknowledge him as your God, and enable him to have all authority as the one who calls the shots in your life, and as your Father who loves you? Would you like to enter into a saving relationship with God through Jesus? Ask your Life Group leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer:

*Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' name, Amen.*