

Intro: HS Wrestler: When they started the program I was part of the first team. Remember when we had the first match, of the first season, of the first year. All nervous, never having seen any of our opponents before. Since match was at home we stationed our equipment manager outside to watch as the other team got off the bus. Came back, no problem! Heavyweight Is wearing a Bazooka Joe cartoon Tshirt! How tough can he be? If that's the best they have...cakewalk!

Go out to the match...look up...heavyweight guy was wearing a Bazooka Joe Tshirt...stretched across a chest THIS wide! Walk out to center of mat, referee blows the whistle, our guy runs over, literally picks up our guy, throws him down, jumps on top of him and puts him in a hold none of us have ever seen, pins him to mat, the referee blows the whistle, 17 seconds!!!

That is what the Apostle Paul is writing about when he tells us in Eph 6:12:
"Our struggle: Our "wrestling match" literally is not against flesh and blood..."

AT Robertson says it this way: "You have a spiritual enemy that wants to hurl you to the ground, hold you down and render you spiritually powerless!"

Eph 6:10 Page 830

3 Keys To Winning The Spiritual War

Vs 12 "our struggle"

1. Know Your Enemy

- Finally: "Not just... 'Oh, one more thought before I go...'"

This is one of, if not THE key to the entire book. It is kind of the POINT of what Paul has been saying!

>Ch 1-3: What God has Done FOR You

>Ch 4-5: How You Should LIVE in Response

>Ch 6: How To WIN The WAR You Will Fight To Live That Way

If that is what you want...to win the Spiritual War of life in such a way that you experience ALL that God has for you, Then THIS is the key to what needs to take place. Everything he has said thus far is pushing toward this conclusion

He says, Know Your Enemies (There are 4 of Them!)

#1: Yourself: Eph 4-5 He TELLS us WHAT we should do...Now he tells us HOW!
One of the greatest enemies each of us has is ourselves. The greatest battle we often fight in life is within Paul Rom 7:14-20

Illus: Saw a quote a couple of weeks ago that was right on target: Tony Romo
#2: Others: The reality is that there are some people that simply choose to hate...for what you believe
2Th 3:2 "And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men..."
Joh 15:18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."

#3: Circumstances around us:
We all know that not all days are equal! Some days are good...some are bad...some are REALLY evil
We live in a fallen world. What we have is not what God made..it is what WE made out of what God gave us!
Eph 5:16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

#4: Spiritual Beings: There are spiritual beings, demonic beings, that are out to destroy you!
Not EVERY bad thing that happens comes from the Evil One. (Within, Others, Circumstances)
BUT...some of the evil that is in our life DOES come from Him!
Jesus Joh 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

Illus: Sometime Jesus healed physically, Sometimes He healed emotionally, Sometimes He cast out demons!

Paul tell us this. KNOW YOUR ENEMY! Don't be confused, don't be uninformed, Don't be Afraid.

Greater is He that is in US than He that is in the world!

Do you want to know and experience ALL that God has for you?

Do you want to be able to LIVE out what it means to become a child of God, Beloved, Blessed, Used by Him?

2. Know What You Are Fighting For: (Stakes) Vs 11-12 "so that YOU can STAND against devil's schemes"

Not only do we need to know our enemies, we have to understand what is at stake spiritually. Many of us have a limited view
Again, there are 4 essential spiritual outcomes at stake for us spiritually. It isn't just a matter of us...our lives
The spiritual impact is much greater than that. The bible talks to us about 4 specific things that are at stake.

#1: Our own spiritual Life: God is using THIS life to prepare us for the NEXT
He has told us that he is in the process of making us like Jesus. Meets us where we are, then purifies us
What is at stake spiritually is that we end up STAYING like we are...no different than before we met him!
Phil 1:6: "He who began a good work IN you will carry it on until the day of Christ Jesus."
The danger is that when we die...we are no more patient, no more kind, no less envious...1 Cor 13 never is real!
Illus: What a tragedy, if when we die we don't look, act, talk, BE any more like Jesus than when we were saved!

#2: Those we Love: Vs 11 God intends to use us to make a difference in the life of those we know and love
Isn't it amazing that the gospel is SO PRACTICAL!
We aren't covering Ch 5 because we just studied it all in Peter
But here is the reality, When we are living for Jesus, fighting and winning spiritual battles in our lives, OTHERS
We are better Fathers and Mothers, Sons and Daughters, Employees and Citizens
When we fail at that, we lose not just personally, but in every domain of life! What I do affects every relationship

#3. Kingdom of God: God USES us to make a difference spiritually for the Kingdom.

Sometimes our viewpoint is limited to Ourselves...and those we know. God has created us for something greater!
Paul had a greater view: Phil 1:14 tells us How he views his life in relationship to the KOG (further the kingdom!)
Mt 11:12 "From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it."

Illus: God wants to use US to advance the Kingdom! And know this...it doesn't go forward easily!

This is a spiritual battle to the death for the Word and Will of God to be known.

I have people all the time ask me and the church to "join forces" with them for some agenda...

Listen, I only have room for 1! NO more. There are a lot of good things...but there is only one BEST!

#4: Souls of the Lost: Vs 19-20 "That I will FEARLESSLY make known the mystery of the Gospel!"

I met for 3 hours last week with a great friend, don't believe as I do, probably as YOU do

Struggle with the election...wanted me to help them process some ideas about Christians and how they voted

Middle of that 3 hour discussion asked me: Do you REALLY Believe that people w/o Jesus spend eternity in Hell

I had shared my testimony...they have only known me as a Pastor. Don't know my story or my past

Asked: What would have happened to you if you had died before you came to know Jesus?

Illus: Know the Stakes: What we do is deadly serious. Not just for this life, but for the next!

Cards: Invite people to come and hear...

Christmas Eve Cards, Invitations

Next two weeks talking about Prayer: Not just God BLESS them...But God SAVE them!

Illus: Hacksaw Ridge: Desmond Doss

"Lord, help me get just one more....Just one More...Just one more"

THAT is the kind of devotion, dedication, commitment and sacrifice

Lord, help me get just ONE MORE

3. Know The Resources You Have Available To You. Vs 10-20

In this passage we see 4 different things that Paul tells us we can count on when we enter spiritual warfare

#1: Strength from the Lord Vs 10

>Strong in the Lord: *to be empowered by, strengthened by or made strong by God*

>Mighty Power: *Power, might, strength + forceful ability and/or power!*

Paul piles up there synonym's for the strength and power of God...and says...You have THAT available to you

#2: Armor from the Lord: 6 different pieces of "spiritual armor" that God provides! (next week)

#3: Prayer: vs 18ff 6 + 1 Prayer! 5 or 6 times with 2 or 3 different words Paul tells us, PRAY!!!

Illus: As you hand out the Cards...Pray....Not just a quick, God...Please touch their heart

Truly intercede...Spend time on a daily basis...Ask for God to convict, touch, send others, Give you words

4. Others to Stand w/ You: Paul asks the Phil Christians to pray for Him

Tychicus: Dear Brother Faithful servant

Who do you have...? When the battle comes...who can you call?

Illus: There is NO better rationale to be a part of a small group

I'll be sitting down in the am having coffee...

Phone will just GO OFF...Ding, Ding, Ding

Darlene will say...who is THAT? I will tell her..."It's the girls...they are gabbing..."

Really...it is usually a PRAYER request!

CONCL: Whether or not you know it YOU ARE IN A SPIRITUAL BATTLE

For yourself The ones you love The Kingdom of God Souls of People w/o Jesus

Not only that...You have Enemies that want to destroy you!

Battle within Battle w others Battle w World Battle with Evil (Personal Evil)

But, you are not alone in that battle!

Strength from God Armor from Him Prayer Others stand with you

I believe the whole point of the book of Ephesians is to lead us to THIS place...

To bring us to the place where we understand what is at stake...and commit our life to serving God

2 Amazing thing about Doss: Conscientious Objector! Never Fired a shot...Never carried a weapon

Medal of Honor winner

End of the Movie...Lord...help me get...Just One More