

WINNING THE BATTLE OF PARENTHOOD

Ephesians 6:10-18

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1) Parenthood is a fierce battle for the souls of your children.
 - i. Satan wants your children to live in sin, to deny the Bible, to live for themselves rather than the glory of God, and to suffer in hell for all eternity.
 - ii. Satan is smarter and stronger than you.
 1. This is why the church is losing more children to the world than it is reaching.
 2. Most kids who grow up in Christian homes in America today will leave the faith when they grow up.
 - iii. Is there any way for us to win this battle?

II. TEXT:

- 1) **Ephesians 6:10-18** “10 Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. 13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, 15 and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. 16 In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God. 18 Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.”
- 2) (Text is called “the Armor of God.”)
- 3) **8 observations:**
 - i. **The six pieces of armor:**

1. The first three were worn continually on the battlefield: Belt, breastplate, sandals.
2. The last three were kept ready for use when the actual fighting began: shield, helmet, sword.

ii. The four commands in this passage:

1. Be strengthened by the Lord. 10
2. Stand against the schemes of the devil. 11, 13, 14
3. Put on the full armor of God. 11, 13
4. Pray at all times. 18

iii. The inadequacy of our own strength. V. 10 “Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength.”

1. We need the Lord’s strength to win the battle of parenthood. V. 10. This is not a battle that we can win on our own.
2. How do we get the Lord’s strength?

iv. The solution to our inadequacy. V. 11 “Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil.”

1. Put on the full armor of God.
2. Full armor. Greek *panoplia*. The complete equipment of a soldier, including body armor, shields, and weapons.

v. The Christian Parent’s Assignment. V. 11 “Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil.”

1. To stand against the enemy (used three times in 11-14): 11 – stand against the schemes of the devil; 13 – take your stand; 14 – stand, therefore.
 - a. “Stand” in classical Greek meant to resist the enemy and hold a critical position in battle.
 - b. To keep the enemy from destroying our children.

vi. The fight in which we are engaged.

1. Parenthood is a “struggle.” V. 12 “For our *struggle* is not against flesh and blood”
2. The Greek word means face to face, hand to hand combat to the death.
3. “Serving God is not a playground, but a battleground.”

vii. The nature of the enemy (the devil, v. 11). Note...

1. His titles:
 - a. The father of those who do evil. Jn 8:44
 - b. The father of lies. Jn 8:44
 - c. The evil one. 1 Jn 5:18-19
 - d. The great dragon. Rev 12:9
 - e. The ancient serpent. Rev 12:9
 - f. The devil. Rev 12:9
 - g. Satan. Rev 12:9
2. His character:
 - a. A murderer. Jn 8:44
 - b. A liar. Jn 8:44
 - c. He has sinned since the beginning. 1 Jn 3:8
3. His power:
 - a. He is the prince of demons. Lk 11:15
 - b. He is called "the god of this age." 2 Cor 4:4
 - c. The prince of the power of the air. Eph 2:2
 - d. The whole world is under the sway of the evil one. 1 Jn 5:19
 - e. He can appear as an angel of light. 2 Cor 11:14
 - f. Not greater than God:
 - i. Jesus had the authority to expel demons with a simple command. Mk 1:23-26
 - ii. Christ is far (in both power and authority) above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, in this age and in the one to come. Eph 1:19-21
 - iii. Christ disarmed, disgraced, and triumphed over the devil. Col 2:15
 - iv. As we submit to God and resist the devil, he will flee from us. James 4:7
 - v. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil. 1 Jn 3:8
 - vi. The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 1 Jn 4:4

vii. He does not touch the one who is born of God.
1 Jn 5:18

1. He must have God's permission to touch
you. Lk 22:31-32

4. His work:

- a. He perverts God's word. Mt 4:6
- b. He tempts people to do evil. Mt 4:6; Jn 8:44
- c. He possesses people, taking over complete control of their minds and bodies. Mark 1:23-26
- d. He sifts believers like wheat to tempt them to lose faith. Lk 22:31-32
- e. He causes great physical and mental suffering. Job 1:6-19
- f. He schemes against believers. 2 Cor 2:11; Eph 6:11
- g. He hinders the spread of the gospel by blinding the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel. 2 Cor 4:4
- h. He hinders God's servants. 1 Thess 2:18
- i. He traps believers. 1 Tim 3:7
- j. He creates and spreads false teachings. 1 Tim 4:1
- k. He is a roaring lion, prowling around, looking for anyone he can devour. 1 Pt 5:8
- l. He persecutes believers, even to the point of death. Rev 2:10
- m. He deceives the whole world. Rev 12:9

III. 7 SPIRITUAL WEAPONS FOR PARENTS

1) Truth.

- i. **Ephesians 6:14** "Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist"
- ii. Belt. A Roman soldier's belt was used for several things:
 - 1. From the belt hung strips of leather to protect the lower body.
 - 2. The soldier's long tunic could be tucked into it so that he could move around quickly.
 - 3. It held his sword.

- iii. What is the Belt of Truth? An understanding of God's truth (the Bible). A mastery of the truth.
 - 1. **Lloyd-Jones:** "We have a settled conviction with regard to the truth; there are no uncertainties, no doubts. No lack of clarity. We should know whom we have believed, and we should know what we believe. The girdle is truth, looked on, understood, appropriated, and in such a manner that it governs the whole of my outlook in every respect. "
 - 2. Why do we need the belt of truth?
 - a. To know how to live and what to believe.
 - b. To know how to parent.
 - c. To know what to teach our children.
- iv. Illustration: **Spurgeon, *The Golden Alphabet*:** "It is said of some men that the more you know them the less you admire them, but the reverse is true of God's Word. Familiarity with the Word of God breeds affection, and affection seeks still greater familiarity."
- v. Application: Learn your Bible.
 - 1. Read it daily.
 - 2. Listen closely at church when it is preached.
 - 3. Read quality Christian literature that explains it.

2) Righteousness.

- i. **Ephesians 6:14** "righteousness like armor on your chest"
- ii. Breastplate:
 - 1. A soldier's breastplate was made of hard leather or metal. It extended from the base of the neck to the upper part of the thighs. It went completely around the body, protect all sides. It protected many of the most important parts of the body, including the heart and the lungs.
- iii. What is the Breastplate of Righteousness? A morally upright life; a life conformed to God's truth; a life mastered by the truth.
- iv. The Power of Righteousness
 - 1. The example of righteousness.
 - a. You cannot pass on what you do not possess.
 - b. Your children are more likely to do what you do than listen to your words.

2. The blessings of righteousness.
 - a. Answered prayers: **Psalm 34:15** “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry for help.”
 - b. Blessings for your children: **Proverbs 20:17** “Food gained by fraud is sweet to a person, but afterward his mouth is full of gravel.”
- v. Illustration: **Charles Spurgeon**, *The Golden Alphabet*, Kindle, 3: “A blessing belongs to those who hear and read and understand the Word of the Lord; yet it is a far greater blessing to be actually obedient to it and to carry out in our daily walk and lives what we learn in our searching of the Scriptures. Purity in our way and walk is the truest blessedness.”
- vi. Application:
 1. Compare yourself to Christ, not others.
 2. Is there any part of your life that does not conform to the character and teaching of Christ?
 3. Is there any part of your life that does not exemplify the kind of Christian you want your children to become?
 4. Do not rest until you repent.

3) Gospel.

- i. **Ephesians 6:15** “and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace.”
- ii. Sandals:
 1. A soldier’s sandals were a leather sole with straps held firmly to the foot. This protected the foot from sharp objects on the ground.
 2. Equipped with metal studs on the bottom, sort of like football cleats, so that the soldier could firmly grip the ground.
- iii. What are the believer’s sandals? The Gospel.
 1. Gospel-driven parenting.
 2. Parent with the gospel and its implications always in view.
- iv. The Basic Truths of the Gospel:
 1. Creation

2. Corruption
 3. Christ
 4. Choice
- v. 9 Principles for Gospel-driven parenting
1. Your child will live forever, either in heaven or hell.
 2. Your child is a sinner in need of a Savior. Without Christ, your child will spend eternity in hell.
 3. Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven. You must point them to Christ.
 4. The goal is not kids who are moral, but kids who are saved. Salvation leads to morality. Morality alone leads to hell.
 5. The goal is not happy and successful kids, but heaven-bound kids. Many happy and successful people go to hell.
 6. Your children must understand and embrace the Gospel to be saved.
 7. You cannot force your children to accept Christ.
 8. Your child's behavior is an indicator of their relationship with Christ. A saved heart is God-oriented. An unsaved heart is self-oriented.
 9. The best thing you can do for your children is to lead them to Christ. Their greatest need is Christ. Getting saved will be the best thing that ever happens to them.
- vi. Illustration: **Tedd Tripp**, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*: "They [your children] can find fulfillment and happiness only as they know and serve the living God."
- vii. Application:
1. Share the gospel with your kids often.
 2. Watch them closely to determine the authenticity of their salvation.

4) Faith.

- i. **Ephesians 6:16** "In every situation take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one."
- ii. Shield:
 1. A soldier's shield was a large, door-shaped shield, typically 4 feet tall and 2.5 feet wide.

2. It was made of two wooden planks connected together, covered with leather.
 3. One of the most dangerous weapons in that time was the fiery dart; an arrow dipped in Sulphur or oil, ignited, and then hurled at the enemy.
 4. The soldier would soak his leather covered shield in water so that when it was hit with fiery darts, it extinguishes the flames.
- iii. What is the shield of faith? Confidence in God's truth.
1. Not merely know the truth; not merely obey the truth; but also have confidence in the truth.
 2. The devil attacks with lies. Our behavior flows from our beliefs.
- iv. 7 Bible truths to believe about your kids:
1. The Bible is the best source for parenting wisdom.
 2. The Bible is the best thing your kids can learn.
 3. Spiritual success is most important (more than athletics, academics, or the arts).
 4. The only opinion that matters is God's. Parenting God's way will make you odd:
 - a. Your kids will dress differently.
 - b. Your kids may not watch the same things on TV.
 - c. Your kids may not dress the same way.
 - d. Your kids may not have a smart phone.
 - e. Your kids may be homeschooled.
 - f. Your kids may not be involved in all the normal activities.
 - g. If you are on one income, you may not be able to afford Disney.
 5. Prayer really works.
 6. You reap what you sow. You cannot force your kids to accept Christ, but the more diligent your discipleship, the better chance they will.
 7. God will reward you for your efforts. You cannot control the outcome, but God will reward your investments.

v. **William Barclay**, Commentary on 2 Peter 1:3-7: "Faith is the conviction that what Jesus Christ says is true and that we can commit ourselves to his promises and launch ourselves on his demands. It is the unquestioning certainty that the way to happiness and peace and strength on earth is to accept him at his word."

vi. Application:

1. **Proverbs 3:5-6** "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight."
2. Ask God for faith.

5) Salvation.

i. **Ephesians 6:17** "Take the helmet of salvation"

ii. Helmet:

1. A leather cap with pieces of metal on it for protection.

iii. What is the helmet of Salvation?

1. Assurance of salvation.

iv. If I am sure of my salvation, then I know that:

1. I have the indwelling Holy Spirit to empower me for the battle of parenting.
2. God loves me regardless of my performance as a parent. We disciple our kids because we are saved, not to earn salvation.
3. My value as a person is determined by God's love for me, not my performance as a parent.
4. Regardless of what happens to my children, I still have the Lord.
5. Regardless of what happens to my children, God will welcome me into an eternal home with Him for all eternity.

v. Illustration: **Hugh Latimer** (English Reformer): "When I sit alone and can have a settled assurance of the state of my soul, and know that God is mine, I can laugh at all troubles, and nothing can daunt me."

vi. Application:

1. Seek this assurance.

2. How:

- a. Know how salvation is received. Repentance and faith.
- b. Pursue the fruits of salvation.
 - i. **Thomas Watson:** “Sanctification is the seed; assurance is the flower which grows out of it. Assurance is an outcome of sanctification.”

6) Word of God.

- i. **Ephesians 6:17** “and the sword of the Spirit—which is the word of God.”
- ii. Sword:
 - 1. The Roman soldier’s sword was a short, two-edged sword, about 6 to 18 inches long.
- iii. What is the sword of the Spirit?
 - 1. The Word of God: A dedication to teaching the Bible to your children.
- iv. Notice how much of the armor has to do with the Bible:
 - 1. Belt of truth: An understanding of the truth.
 - 2. Breastplate of Righteousness: A life conformed to the truth.
 - 3. Shield of Faith: A confidence in the truth.
 - 4. Sword of the Spirit - Word of God: A dedication to teaching the truth.
- v. Teaching your kids the Bible is your best weapon against the enemy.
 - 1. If you teach them...
 - a. to *know* the Bible.
 - b. to *understand* the Bible.
 - c. to *read* the Bible on their own.
 - d. to *apply* the Bible.
 - e. And to *trust* the Bible.
 - 2. Then they will come to *love* the Bible.
- vi. Illustration: **Charles Spurgeon**, *The Golden Alphabet*: “We may hear the wisest teachers and yet remain fools, but if we meditate on the sacred Word, we must become wise. There is more wisdom in the testimonies of the Lord than in all the teachings of

men if they were all gathered into one vast library. The Book of books outweighs all the rest.... Instruction derived from Holy Scripture is useful in many ways, is superior from many points of view, and is unrivaled everywhere and in every way.”

vii. Application: Teach your kids the Bible.

1. Bring them to church (large group and small group).
2. Have a daily Bible Time with them when you read it to them and with them.
3. Teach them to have a daily quiet time in which they read it themselves.
4. Lead them to read Christian literature.
5. Consider Bible Drill.

7) Prayer.

i. **Ephesians 6:18** “Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.”

ii. Prayer: A prayer-saturated life.

iii. 6 Characteristics of the parent’s prayer life:

1. At all times: Constancy – every day, all day long.
2. In the Spirit: Submission, as we line up with the will of God.
3. With every prayer and request: Variety.
4. Stay alert: Consistency – fervency.
5. Perseverance: Persistence – don’t give up!
6. Intercession for all the saints: unselfish.

iv. Illustration: **JC Ryle**, Thoughts for Young Men: “No time is so well spent as that which a man spends upon his knees. Make time for this, whatever your employment may be.”

v. Application:

1. Pray for your children:
 - a. Daily set aside a time for prayer to lift up the needs and struggles of your family.
 - b. Pray also for the other families in the church.
2. Share your needs and struggles with other believers so they can know how to pray for you.
3. Pray *with* your children.

- a. Prayer with Mom every morning.
 - b. Prayer at the dinner table.
 - c. Prayer with Dad every evening during Bible time.
4. *Teach* your children to pray. Lead them to have a daily prayer time.

IV. CONCLUSION

- 1) If someone attacked your children, would you just stand there and do nothing?
 - i. Your children are under attack by the most deadly and evil force in the universe.
 - ii. Are you just standing there watching?
 - iii. Or are you engaging in battle and fighting with all the strength that God will provide?
- 2) The devil is real, and he is powerful, but we can defeat him.
 - i. **James 4:7** "Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - ii. As you submit to God by putting on the full armor of God, you will resist the devil, and he will flee from you.