

SERIES: DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE  
PART 16A: I AM VICTORIOUS

His entire life, Wesley felt he didn't measure up to his father's expectation. "I find that to this day his influences echo through my soul," he says, "fighting my efforts to find my identity in Jesus alone at every turn." Wesley's father is a self-made man. Wesley said that his father came from very little and accomplished great things by the world's standards, both in terms of business and the ministry. In contrast to his father, Wesley was raised with great resources available to him and investment in him. Undermining these investments was a continual feeling that Wesley could never measure up to his father's expected return on those investments, stemming from constant criticism. Since I respected my dad and have always seen him as a godly man I could go to for counsel, guidance, and wisdom, I struggled as I wondered if he was right and I should be ashamed of myself. This created a deep-rooted self-hatred and insecurity in me as I constantly questioned if I was being a good steward or if I was fooling myself and wasting my talents in a way that I should be ashamed of. This created an incredible degree of frustration and a cycle of failure and shame."

This resulted in Wesley building his life around trying to please his earthly father through his accomplishments, always feeling that he came up short. "In an effort to challenge me he would say things like, 'Aren't you ashamed of yourself? I know I would be! You should be accomplishing so such

more. Does your character mean anything to you?””

Inevitably, Wesley became incapacitated by the overwhelming sense of inadequacy in the face of his father’s expectations. Wesley describes these feelings of inadequacy that he faces as a constant war raging with his heart and mind. “I have to constantly battle lies. I constantly have to bathe my experiences in prayer—asking God to give me eyes to see things clearly and rightly so I can rest in Him and not be discouraged by lies, a false perspective, and a distorted identity.” He rightly identifies his struggles and hardships in life and with his father as a spiritual battle led by an enemy who hates him. “I am aware that the enemy of my soul wants me to attach my identity to my accomplishments and my failures instead of Jesus alone. The enemy tries to seduce me to put my focus on my accomplishments, which fill me with pride when things go well, and discouragement and shame when things don’t go well. I know that these are all pitfalls and lies that I have to be on guard against.”

It is a great thing that Wesley realizes he doesn’t have to fight this battle alone. He is in a church that preaches the gospel, and he belongs to a group of men who are alongside him against the attacks of the enemy seeking to destroy him in a constantly raging war. Wesley knows that satan hates him, but he finds his life and strength in knowing that Jesus Christ and his brothers and sisters in Jesus love him, and that ultimately, he will be victorious against his enemy because Jesus is victorious. In Jesus, Wesley is victorious, and so are you. Our study of Ephesians 6:10-24 will take us this week and next week to make sure we learn all that God wants us to

learn that we are victorious and how to walk in that victory on a daily basis. Please follow along as I read Ephesians 6:10-24: **“<sup>10</sup>A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. <sup>11</sup>Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. <sup>14</sup>Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness. <sup>15</sup>For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. <sup>16</sup>In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. <sup>17</sup>Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. <sup>18</sup>Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. <sup>19</sup>And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God’s mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. <sup>20</sup>I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God’s ambassador. So, pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for Him, as I should. <sup>21</sup>To bring you up to date, Tychicus will give you a full report about what I am doing and how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper in the Lord’s work. <sup>22</sup>I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to**

let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.

<sup>23</sup>Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. <sup>24</sup>May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ." Ephesians 6:10-24

Let's look at action steps you can take to maintain the victory Jesus has obtained for you. We will take two weeks to look at in depth in this most important passage and subject.

## **I. Prepare for the warfare through Jesus' strength**

Ephesians 6:10 says, "A final word: **Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.**" One of the keys to a successful and fruitful life is preparation. The unprepared Christian becomes the defeated believer who ends up trying to serve Jesus in their own wisdom and power. As we have seen in this marvelous series the strength of the Christian life is all based upon your dependence upon God, being strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Any other strength, especially when we're talking about spiritual warfare, is impotent. The overriding truth and reality in the book of Ephesians is that as Christians, **we are in Christ and we are one with Him. His life is our life, His power is our power, His truth is our truth, His way is our way, and, as Paul starts this marvelous section, His strength is our strength.**

Too many Christians flail in their relationship with Jesus for at least two basic reasons. They are not aware of the spiritual conflict they're in. Secondly, they are not aware of the

strength of Jesus they have in themselves, and they don't know how to apply His strength. Our strength is never enough to confront satan, but when we are strong in the Lord, even a little strength is enough to win the battle. Jesus said to the church in Philadelphia, Turkey, in Revelation 3:8, **"I know all the things you do, and I have opened a door for you that no one can close. You have little strength, yet you obeyed My word and did not deny Me."** I love this.

Obedience to God's Word, will and ways is the key to operating in the strength of the Lord. You grow in God's strength as you commit yourself to reading God's word with your CVCHURCH family as we read through the Bible every year and the N.T. twice as we utilize our Bible bookmark. As you develop your prayer life by turning to Jesus in prayer all through the day. As you stay connected to other brothers and sisters, like being in a small group. I am so thrilled with the growth I see in the members of our small group. In every area they are growing, especially in exercising Jesus' strength.

And, as we will see next week, you grow and exercise Jesus' strength as you learn to use the armor Jesus has provided for you. Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:7, **"For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-discipline."** God says to Joshua in 1:6-7 & 9, **"Be strong and very courageous."** Then God says you are to "be careful to obey all the instructions I gave to Moses and study this book of instruction continually by meditating on it day and night." If you have surrendered your life to Jesus, you have His strength flowing through you. You access it as you exercise it through the ways I just mentioned. God's Word. Prayer. Relationship in Jesus' family. Putting on His

armor. Paul writes in Ephesians 1:19-20, “I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe Him. This is the same mighty power<sup>20</sup> that raised Christ from the dead and seated Him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.”

## II. Put on all the armor of God

“Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm....” Ephesians 6:11a Clinton Arnold writes, “Paul now explains how believers are to gain strength and spiritual power from the Lord. In addition to drawing on their present dynamic relationship to the risen Christ, they are all called to appropriate a set of divine gifts and cultivate some important virtues that will assist them in their conflict with the hostile spiritual forces.” The verb for “put on” is a common word for putting on clothing but is also used in the context of putting on armor for battle. Paul often uses this verb metaphorically for appropriating the essential virtues associated with the new identity that is ours in Jesus Christ. Colossians 3:10 & 12, “Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like Him....<sup>12</sup> Since God chose you to be the holy people He loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” Arnold writes, “As we consider the nature of the ‘armor’ that believers are to appropriate and use—truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation,

**the word of God and prayer—we can conclude that there is a significant correspondence between Ephesians 4:24 and 6:10-17. Ephesians 4:24 says, ‘Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.’”** Obrien in his commentary writes, **“Essentially, then, to put on the new self is the same as donning the armor of God.”** In other words, church, as we have been learning in this series, knowing the truth of who we are in union with Jesus, cultivating the virtues of this new identity and putting into practice all of the resources Jesus gives us through His Holy Spirit who lives on the inside are at the heart of what it means to put on the armor of God. The tense of this verb means that this is not a one-time deal. We are to put on God’s armor daily and to actively be developing His virtues of His character. You prepare for the spiritual battles you will engage by being strong in Jesus and in His mighty power. You will maintain the victory that Jesus has won for you by learning to put on the armor of God daily. We will look at what the armor is and how to put it on next week.

### **III. Push back against the strategies of the devil**

**“...against all strategies of the devil.”** <sup>12</sup>For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, *against mighty powers in the dark world, and against evil spirits, in the heavenly places.*” The truth is, church, that Jesus has won the war with the devil, but he is still allowed to lie, deceive and afflict people until the final judgment, and he and all his minions will be cast into hell. Revelation 20:10 says, **“Then**

**the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”** The goal of being strong in the Lord and in His mighty power and to put on the full armor of God is so each one of us, and together, have the ability to stand against the strategies of the devil. There are several truths here that are important to know. The battle is won, but you will still be attacked by satan and his demons. Your job is to resist him and stand against his evil plans for your life, your family, your church family, and your culture. The term refers both to a defensive stance but also an offensive assertion. The word for strategies is the word *methodia*. We get the word *methods*. It has to do with following a plan; it also can be used with negative overtones for cunning and scheming. One of the best examples I know to demonstrate this term is the playbook and methods that those on the left use, the likes of antifa and anarchists who want to destroy what America stands for. The left is following the fundamental plan to change America, and if you haven't kept up with what is going on there is a book written by Saul Alinsky, which Dinesh DeSousa chronicles in two of his docudramas, called, **Rules for Radicals**. Here is one of the three epigraphs that Alinsky put in the beginning of his book to get his point across about how to foment anarchy, disorder and chaos. **“Lest we forget at least an over-the-shoulder acknowledgment to the very first radical: from all our legends, mythology, and history (and who is to know where mythology leaves off and history begins—or which is which), the first radical known to humanity who**

**rebelled against the establishment and did it so effectively that he at least won his own kingdom—Lucifer.”** What is a radical? **One who favors and effects fundamental or revolutionary changes in current practices, conditions, or institutions.** Loved ones, because of this original radical in the Bible, sin was unleashed on God’s planet, and he is the reason for the destruction, disintegration and death that is eating at the core of our planet and humanity. I want to give you a few examples from the 12 rules of radicals before I give nine ways that satan, the original radical, uses to oppose, resist and attack you and God’s purposes and plans for you and this planet and our community. **Rule 5. “Ridicule is man’s most potent weapon.”** There is no defense. It’s irrational. It’s infuriating. It also works as a key pressure point to force the enemy into concessions. (Pretty crude, rude and mean, huh? They want to create anger and fear. **Rule 8: “Keep the pressure on. Never let up.”** Keep trying new things to keep the opposition off balance. As the opposition masters one approach, hit them from the flank with something else. Attack, attack, attack from all sides, never giving the reeling organization a chance to rest, regroup, recover, and re-strategize. **Rule 12: “Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, and polarize it.”** Cut off the support network and isolate the target from sympathy. Go after people and not institutions; people hurt faster than institutions. This is cruel, but very effective. **Direct, personalized criticism and ridicule works.**

**Nine ways that satan opposes, resists and attacks you:**

## A. Attacks God's character and credibility

Satan does to you and me just what he did with Adam and Eve. He misquoted what God said to Adam to Eve. He lies to Eve about who God is, what God said and His intentions that were only good for Adam and Eve. That is exactly what Satan continues to do with you. He lies to you about God's love for you. God's forgiveness for you. God's mercy, compassion, kindness, purpose, and plans. He lies that God doesn't want to heal you. He doesn't want to prosper you. Ridicule, pressure, stress, lies are his weapons. He picks you as his target, then he freezes you, he makes it incredibly personal, then he polarizes and isolates you. He gets you to believe that God doesn't love you, and then he cuts you off from others. He does this by getting you to doubt the character, integrity and faithfulness of God your Father. John 8:44 says in the ESV, **"You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in Him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."**

## B. Stirs up trouble to undermine your victory

Have you noticed whenever you experience a victory often trouble follows it? He tries to get us to be disobedient to God's standards and purposes for our lives. His most extreme tactic is persecution. You're seeing this right now in our culture against Christians, and it is getting worse. As we

move towards the election, I believe it will get worse.  
Remember the rules for radicals.

### **C. Deceives you through doctrinal confusion**

He is constantly trying to confuse you concerning important truths concerning God, salvation, morality, living a holy life, heaven and hell, the inerrancy and truth of the Bible, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus Christ. You must be a man and a woman of the Bible. I am bearing down on these issues more. As long as God has us here, I want to make sure you know these truths and what the Bible says about them. Ephesians 4:14 says, **“Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth.”**

### **D. Tries to hinder your loving service to Jesus, His church and the world**

Satan opposes every faithful life and every effective ministry. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 16:9, **“There is a wide-open door for a great work here, although many oppose me.”** In 1 Thessalonians 2:18 Paul writes, **“We wanted very much to come to you, and I, Paul, tried again and again, but satan prevented us.”** When you get your feelings hurt and you withdraw and stop serving in a ministry in the church, satan wins.

### **E. Sabotages believers by creating division**

One of satan's lead tools is to create hurt, disharmony and division in marriages, families, friendships, churches, and all relationships. One of the leading values in hell is division and chaos. This stops people from being unified. Jesus says in John 17:11, **“Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to You. Holy Father, You have given Me Your name, now protect them by the power of Your name so that they will be united just as We are.”** Unity is a key value for Jesus, the Godhead and must be for us, the church. Ephesians 4:3 says, **“Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.”**

**F. Seduces believers by persuading them to trust in themselves**

Loved ones, to serve Jesus and do His work in your own power is not to do His work at all. In 1 Chronicles 21:1-8, satan entices David to order a census of his military, and it was prompted by his own military ambition and pride, not because God told him to do it. His arrogance brings judgment on all of Israel. Again, a great lesson that my sin never just impacts me, but it impacts those I love and influence.

Proverbs 3:5 says, **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.”**

**G. Assaults believers by leading them into hypocrisy**

This is a leading strategy of the enemy to lead people into hypocrisy because of their self-centered and narcissistic need to please people. The need to be the center of attention will entice you to act like you're something that you're not. One of the greatest examples we have is Peter, who played such a major role in seeing the church get its start. Jesus used Peter to lay the foundation of the early church. Galatians 2:11-13 says, **“But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. <sup>12</sup>When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. <sup>13</sup>As a result, other Jewish Christians followed Peter's hypocrisy and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.”**

#### **H. Influences believers to copy the behaviors and customs of the world**

Satan attacks believers by enticing them to imitate the values, behaviors and actions of this evil culture. In times of prosperity, John MacArthur writes, **“Satan finds it particularly easy to lead God's people into materialism, self-satisfaction, self-indulgence, hedonism, and contentedness with the things of this world.”** This is one of the ways that satan discredits the church and ruins their testimony before the world. This is a major tool the enemy of our souls uses against us. See 1 John 2:15-17.

## **I. Attacks believers by leading them to disobey God's word**

This demonic method encompasses all of the others I have already mentioned. God wants us to act faithfully, and the enemy wants us to act unfaithfully. God has created us to live morally, and satan tempts us to live immorally. God wants us to speak the truth, and the enemy tempts us to lie. God desires us to love, and the enemy wants us to hate. God has created us to live a life of contentment, and the enemy entices us to covet and envy.

This is why we must learn what the armor of God is and that we commit to putting the armor on every day so that all can be successful in resisting the enemy and remain standing in the love, truth and grace of God.

Prayer.