



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Conflict Resolution (Eph 6:10-24)

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BIBLE STUDY

Ephesians

Location:

122 CAP

Time:

TUESDAYS @ 7:15 AM

EPHESIANS 6:10-24
"Conflict Resolution"

Introduction

The powers of "darkness" and "wickedness" oppose those who have "an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (6:12; cf. 5:5). Every believer was once spiritually dead in "trespasses and sins" (2:1). Moreover, "enmity" existed between both Jews and Gentiles (2:11-18). By God's grace and for His glory, those obstacles have been obliterated in Christ. In the present age, believers are able to know the hope of God's calling and the glorious riches of "His inheritance in the saints" (1:18).

At the beginning of the Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul indicated that believers are "in Christ" (1:3), although they were "at Ephesus" (1:1). All believers are blessed "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (1:3). The revelation in Ephesians 6:12 with regard to "the heavenly places" is alarming. The realm in which spiritual blessings are received is also the location for spiritual conflict. Although "all things" are "in subjection under His feet" (1:22), Christ has not yet bound the powers of "darkness" and "wickedness" (cf. 1 Pet 5:8; Rev 20:7-15).

Being raised from spiritual death to newness of life in Christ Jesus means that believers are no longer in bondage "to the course of this world" (2:2). The church is now the opposition (cf. Tit 2:11-12), and is the object of attack by destructive and recriminating forces. The proof that we have made spiritually alive in Christ—having been seated "with Him in the heavenly places" (2:6) and "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which [we] have been called" (4:1)—is that we are "able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (6:11).

THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

(6:10-12) "Finally" indicates the last subject to be addressed. Ephesians 1 indicated the believer's *possessions* in Christ as being "every spiritual blessing." Ephesians 2—3 indicated the believer's *position* as being "fellow citizens with the saints," who "are of God's household." Ephesians 4—6 indicated the believer's *purpose* as living "in a manner worthy of the calling with which [they] have been called." To accomplish this purpose effectively, believers must "be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might" (6:10).

The church encounters three primary enemies: the flesh, the world, and the devil. First John 2:15-16 instructs believers: "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world." To overcome love of the world, we must cultivate the love of God in our hearts and lives (cf. Eph 5:18-21; Col 3:14-17). The latter verses of Ephesians 6 instruct believers how to overcome subtle and unseen conflict.

"DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD NOR THE THINGS IN THE WORLD. IF ANYONE LOVES THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM. FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD, THE LUST OF THE FLESH AND THE LUST OF THE EYES AND THE BOASTFUL PRIDE OF LIFE, IS NOT FROM THE FATHER, BUT IS FROM THE WORLD."

The devil and his evil hosts use their powers of darkness and wickedness to destroy the life of believers. Christians are to guard themselves against deception: "the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:7-8).

"... THE ONE WHO PRACTICES RIGHTEOUSNESS IS RIGHTEOUS, JUST AS HE IS RIGHTEOUS; THE ONE WHO PRACTICES SIN IS OF THE DEVIL; FOR THE DEVIL HAS SINNED FROM THE BEGINNING. THE SON OF GOD APPEARED FOR THIS PURPOSE, TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL..."

Christ assured the defeat of the devil (Satan) by accomplishing redemption for the elect on the cross. “When he had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him” (Col 2:15). Each member of the Godhead works within our lives to overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil. God the Father desires to cultivate His love in our hearts and lives (1 John 2:15, 17). God the Son has defeated all “rulers and authorities” (Col 2:15; 1 John 3:8). God the Holy Spirit works “against the flesh” to generate true freedom (Gal 5:13-17).

“WHEN HE HAD DISARMED THE RULES AND AUTHORITIES, HE MADE A PUBLIC DISPLAY OF THEM, HAVING TRIUMPHED OVER THEM THROUGH HIM...”

Scripture identifies the devil as an accuser (Rev 12:10), angel of light (2 Cor 11:14), liar (John 8:44), lion (1 Pet 5:8), tempter (Matt 4:3), and serpent (Rev 12:9; 20:2). He is a master of deception, who is able to deceive both believers and unbelievers by his trickery. The enemy of the soul is well organized in his “schemes” (Gk. *methodeia* / μεθοδεία) through a demonic hierarchical order of principalities, powers, spiritual beings, and world rulers (Eph 6:11-12).

The only adequate strength for the spiritual conflicts of life is to “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (6:10). God alone has the “might” sufficient to win the spiritual conflicts against the demonic enemy. To “be strong in the Lord” is to “put on the full armor of God,” which makes the believer able to “stand firm against the schemes of the devil.” The “armor of God” is a metaphor for obedience to certain instructions from Scripture.

THE ARMOR FOR SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

(6:13-20) The reason for the “armor of God” is due to the reality that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood” (6:12). The battle is not against a physical army; rather, it is against a spiritual army, which is the reason for spiritual weaponry. Believers are to be mature in their understanding and application of Scripture “to stand firm.”

The reason for standing “firm” is to withstand the attacks of the enemy. The devil is extremely crafty. The deceiver’s strategy is to make Christ appear foolish, blind people to the gospel of grace, separate believers from one another, and cause believers to desire darkness and wickedness (1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 4:1-7). When the “armor of God” is used in spiritual conflicts, the only thing to dread is fear itself because “greater is He [Christ] who is in you than he [Satan] who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). The armor for spiritual conflict is for

defense against close quarters battle (combat). There are six weapons.

- **Belt (truth):** the large leather belt of the Roman soldier held other weapons and kept the outer garments in place. To have the belt of truth is to hear and heed God’s Word.
- **Breastplate (righteousness):** this metal armor was in the shape of the human torso. To have the breastplate of righteousness is persevering to be Christlike, and to therefore fight with honor, integrity, and righteousness.
- **Shoes (gospel):** the hobnailed sandals of the soldiers gave sure footing in battle. To wear these shoes is to understand the gospel and to trust God’s promises.
- **Shield (faith):** the small, round shield of the Roman soldier deflected attacks and gave extra protection. To take this shield is to reject sin and temptations, and to believe the truth of God’s Word and act on the basis of it.
- **Helmet (salvation):** the helmet was the Roman soldier’s metal protective headgear. The helmet is the protection and assurance of belonging to Christ, and living according to the value system of the eternal (cf. Col 3:2; 1 Thess 5:8).
- **Sword (Scripture):** the sword of the Roman soldier was used for both offensive and defensive purposes. The sword is used to defend and overcome the enemy.

Prayer is essential prior to the battle, and to prevail in spiritual conflict. Not only do believers “petition” God personally (6:18), but also we intercede for one another (6:19-20).

THE ENCOURAGEMENT FOR SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

(6:21-24) Paul sent Tychicus with the letter to the Ephesians to make known what was occurring in his life and to encourage the believers in their faith. The epistle is worshipful, which is evident in the doxologies of praise to God. Those who live in faithfulness to God are able to bless and comfort others, and such relationships are able to have an eternal impact. Our lives are the spiritual battleground for successful and victorious living (by God’s grace and for His glory). The motivation for Capitol Commission’s service to you is to be a blessing and encouragement, and that this will have an eternal effect.

ABOUT CAPITOL COMMISSION

Capitol Commission state directors are pastors/missionaries who teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for legislators, lobbyists, and staff members. These Bible studies are hand-distributed to each legislative office, emailed, and made available throughout the Capitol community. The love and grace of God compels us to proclaim the truth of the Gospel with compassion for the Capitol community, to faithfully teach and apply the Word of God, and to build meaningful relationships that bear fruit for an eternity to come. With the Bible as our foundation and authority, the mission of Capitol Commission is obedience to the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) within the Capitol communities of the world. We are not a lobbying group attempting to garner votes or reform society. Our mandate is to see the hearts and lives of elected officials transformed with the Word of God. Capitol Commission is a ministry of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message, and to help believers mature through the verse-by-verse teaching of Scripture. In the Bible, we see God’s great love for the world, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This is the foundation for our ministry to you. The church is instructed to submit and to honor government leaders (Rom 13:1-7), and to pray for their eternal salvation (1 Tim 2:1-4). The desire of Capitol Commission is to witness God transform the hearts and lives of elected officials, lobbyists, and staff members. We apply this mandate to four major areas of making disciples: (1) *evangelize* those who have not experienced saving faith in Jesus Christ; (2) *establish* those who desire to grow in their faith and knowledge of Scripture; (3) *equip* those called to spiritual leadership; and, (4) *encourage* churches to participate with us in ministry.