

## Greetings in Christ!

### See You At The Park on Saturday!

This Weeks Memory Verse: Ephesians 3:20-21

**<sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen.**

I hope as you meet this week for the first of 5:1 Transformation discussion, you are finding that people are spending time in the word and growing through the process. My group met Monday evening and most people were overwhelmed by the impact of S.O.A.P. journaling and reading the word of God had on them this 1st week. I think without exception, God spoke to each person in some way. I have heard the same from others groups. Some are already asking that we continue this beyond October. God is good! This coming week, we will be reading through the book of Ephesians. Again, encourage each person to read the Bible daily asking the Holy Spirit to reveal truth into their lives and let God transform them by the power of His word.

As you begin, allow people time to share what God is revealing to them through His word and how the S.O.A.P. process is working on them. Don't be surprised if this is a lengthy conversation and don't get discouraged if you can't finish the entire lesson plan. Just let the Holy Spirit be your guide.

Our specific small group text study this week focuses on the Armor of God. It is so appropriate to what we are doing in 5:1 transformation because we cannot stand against the devil's schemes if we are not prepared by the word of God. Our assurance of each of these specific weapons comes through the Holy Spirit from the Word of God.

### Ephesians 6:10-19 The Armor of God

<sup>10</sup>Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup>Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup>and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup>And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

<sup>19</sup>Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.

1. After reading these verses, do you acknowledge that we are engaged in a spiritual battle?

Everyday as we get up we see a spiritual battle waging around us. Turn on the news; in the past week alone, three school shootings remind us that the evil one is at work. But closer to home, the devil is trying to pull us from living for God. He will try to bump out our commitments to reading His Word and serving the Lord. But, we know that the one who is in us is greater than the one in the world (1 John 4:4) and we know that nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37-39). The war has been won, once for all, but the battles continue. The Word of God and prayer are the key weapons to winning that daily battle.

Recently, a pole was taken that revealed 27% of people who call themselves born-again-Christians do not believe that Satan even exists. This may be one of Satan's best lies he has ever successfully spread. Not recognizing that we have an enemy plotting against us and ready to strike, is a huge weakness for our battle plan. Can you imagine what would happen to an army, marching across an enemy land but all the soldiers believe the enemy has left the country or they are all dead. Who needs a weapon? Who needs to be prepared for battle? Why be on the look out? But the enemy is really

alive and well, hiding, and waiting to strike. Be prepared! Our weapons are far superior to those of the enemy. We just need to use them!

2. Which piece of the Armor of God have you not completely equipped yourself with?

This may be a difficult question to answer. Let people express any weaknesses and reassure them that it is the power of the Holy Spirit teaching us through the Word of God that will equip us for battle. Reinforce the importance of daily time in the word.

3. How important is prayer when you are fighting a spiritual battle?

Do you notice that prayer is a Paul's final comments in verse 18 & 19? It is though He is saying, don't go alone into battle. Be armed and equipped and ask God to lead us into battle each day. He makes the point to praying the Spirit with all kinds of prayers and requests. Pray for one another. Pray even for me.

4. How do you go about the process of preparing for battle? In other words, how do you put on the full armor of God?

Simplified: TIME WITH GOD - HIS WORD - PRAYER

5. How does the promise in our memory verse, Ephesians 3:20-21, encourage you as you go into battle?

I know that He is with me, He is able to prepare and equip me, and it is His power that will overcome anything I face.

As your group meets, consider getting them involved in outreach opportunities. A great idea might be to have a group event that allows people to invite and bring friends. My group is having a chili cook-off at the end of the month to invite some friends and relatives it is a non-bible study meeting and we will invite those we have been praying for. Begin by praying about it now and looking for God's leading in lives of individuals. Also, consider how you can minister to the needs of one another as opportunities arise. This is one of the great things about small groups, is that we are there for one another whenever we are needed in a way that can't happen in the larger church setting.