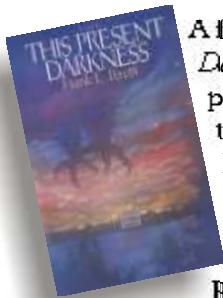




# the well equipped Christian



A few years ago Frank Peretti wrote an incredibly popular novel called *This Present Darkness*. The title is taken from Ephesians 6:12, and the book gives an imaginary picture of the kind of spiritual battle described in this last section of the letter. It paints the kind of picture a lot of people get in their minds when they read this passage... nasty looking demons with red eyes and sharp claws, skulking around in dark alleys, waiting to pounce on unsuspecting and defenseless Christians. But is that really what Paul had in mind when he wrote this passage? Let's take a look and find out.

## Read Ephesians 6:10-12

- How does Paul urge the Ephesians to live (v 10)?
- What do we already know about God's might and power (see Eph 1:19)?
- How does Paul describe a life of following Jesus? Who is the enemy?
- Have a look back at Ephesians 1:21 and 3:10. What have we already learnt about our enemies?

## Think it through

Do you normally think about living as a Christian as a struggle with Spiritual powers? Why or why not?

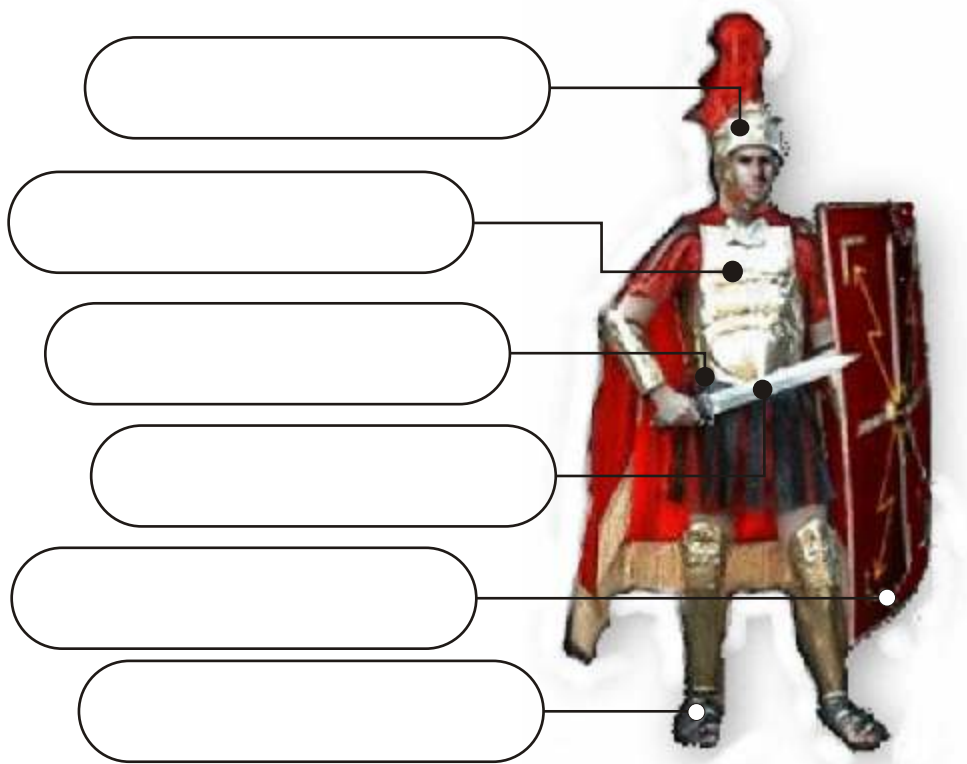
From what we've already learnt in Ephesians, how confident can we be about our struggle with the spiritual powers?



From what Paul has already told the Ephesians, Christians are in a great position when it comes to the battle with evil spiritual forces. The same power that raised Jesus to life and gave him authority over every other spiritual ruler or authority is available to help his followers stand firm in their faith. The question Paul goes on to answer next is, how can you make use of God's power in your life?

## Read Ephesians 6:13-17

- Fill in the Diagram of the spiritual armour Paul describes.



### Background Blitz

Paul didn't make up the armour he describes in v 13-17. He's picking up a lot of ideas from the Old Testament. Have a look at Isaiah 59:17

What pieces of armour do you recognise?

Whose armour is it?

Why does Paul tell Christians to put on this armour?

In the Old Testament, a lot of the armour Paul talks about is worn by God himself. The only reason Christians can put it on is because God gives it to them. Wearing God's armour is the way to be strong in the Lord. To understand more about what Paul means by each piece of armour, we need to look back at the rest of Ephesians because Paul has already explained most of the armour he talks about.

- Use the table on the next page to help you find out what Paul has already said about each piece of armour, and then explain it in your own words.

<b>Armour</b>	<b>What Paul has already said</b>	<b>Explain armour in your own words</b>
Belt of Truth	Eph 1:13	
Breastplate of Righteousness	Eph 4:24	
Shoes of the Gospel of peace	Eph 2:14-16	
Shield of faith	Eph 2:8	
Sword of the Spirit - word of God	Eph 1:13	



### **Think it Through**

Novels like *This Present Darkness* can be misleading. Spiritual warfare isn't something spooky for Christian super heroes. It's a normal part of living as a Christian. The pieces of armour Paul talks about are basic things that all Christians can do. Things like understanding the Gospel, new righteous living, faith in Jesus, and listening to God's word. Working at these basics is what will make you a strong spiritual warrior.

Are there any weak spots in your own spiritual armour? What can you do to fix them?

### **Read Ephesians 6:18-20**

- What is Paul's final instruction to the Ephesians?
- How is this final instruction relevant to the spiritual warfare he's just been talking about?
- How should the Ephesians pray?
- What things should they pray for?

### **Think it Through**

How do Paul's instructions challenge you about your praying?

We can't pray for Paul like the Ephesians - he's long gone! But what things would Paul want us to pray for today?

What have you learned about being part of God's church as we've looked at Ephesians? What has challenged you most in this series of studies?