

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

The easiest way to lose a fight is to not realize that you're even in one. In fact, you can do all the training and preparation necessary to fight, but if you don't actually show up and fight, you'll lose. As we begin this brand new series "Battle Ready," we need to allow this one truth to sink deep down into our souls: **we are in a fight**. The sooner we accept that the struggle is real because our enemy is real, the sooner we can find the victory that comes from fighting the right battle.

1. **We are CONFIDENT in victory:** Paul begins this passage in Ephesians with the word, "finally," and it is a phrase full of implications: "don't forget what I'm about to say OR what I've already said." What has Paul said over and over again in Ephesians? That we win! That Jesus has overcome our enemy. It means that we can now stand confident in victory, and we can fight from victory. We don't fight to secure victory; we fight secure in victory.
2. **We are CLOTHED in armor:** Why can we fight with confidence? Because our good Father has clothed us in protective armor and given us powerful weapons. Paul said that we can (we have the ability and access to) put on the FULL armor of God. Not a partial protection, but a total protection! And why would God use Paul to explain in great length and detail about our victory and our armor? Because of the third truth that we learn in this passage...
3. **We are CALLED to fight:** There is only one reason why God would give us full armor: we are to fight! Too many of us admire the weapons and the armor; we show it off or hang it up in the closet and shut it up. But the purpose of the armor is to advance against the enemy. But we'll never do that unless we experience the full release of His power and might, because like the Big Idea says, we need His might to stand and fight!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What takeaway – if any – did you have from the message this week?
- Have you ever lost a fight because you weren't ready for it? Or won a fight because you were? Explain.
- Read Ephesians 1:3. Do you think victory in spiritual battle would fit in the category of "every spiritual blessing?" How does it change the battle when you and I know that Jesus has secured the victory?
- Discuss the difference between fighting FOR victory and fighting FROM victory.
- Read John 16:33; 1 Corinthians 15:57; and 2 Corinthians 2:14. How does winning in the end change the warring in the middle? After you discuss this, read 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 to see Paul's perspective on the battles we fight in this life.
- 2 Corinthians 4:18 says to fix our eyes on what is unseen. This means that many times what we can't see is more real than what we can. Give some examples of this from your own life.