

PUTTING ON THE WHOLE ARMOR

GREATER NEW ZION MISSIONARY
BAPTIST CHURCH, ELBA, ALABAMA





EPHESIANS 6:10

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

EPHESIANS 6:10

- Finally – Paul is saying although it is last, do not think it is the least important. It is almost as if Paul is saying I have been itching to get to this point to you, so take heed.
- My brethren – Believers stand as siblings in God’s family. Big brother Paul is writing to his little brothers and sisters to encourage them, empower them and to share some knowledge of what he personally learned from life and from being with God. There is a spiritual brotherhood; siblings look out for one another through love.
- Be strong – (Imperative, Verb, Present) To be enabled for some task. This verb in this sentence is emphatic and directed to the whole church.
- Power – Strength that comes from God, His mighty power; Effective, superior power when compared to our own. Divine power

WOBBLY CHRISTIANS

"So let us discard the deeds of the darkness and put on the armor of light.—[ROMANS 13:12](#)

The armor of God will not do us any good unless it is worn in its entirety. We must put on the whole armor of God, not just a few of the pieces we think are most suitable for us.

This again is something of crucial importance. If we are to be steadfast soldiers in the Lord's army, if we are to avoid becoming what John Stott calls "wobbly Christians who have no firm foothold in Christ," then we must put on the entire equipment which God provides for us. We cannot—we dare not—select parts of the armor and say: "I don't really like the helmet of salvation, but I don't mind wearing the breastplate of righteousness." You can do that, of course, but if you do, then you must know exactly what will happen to you—you will be overcome by Satan. The moment you say: "I need the breastplate, but I don't need the helmet," you are defeated. You need it all—the whole armor of God.

You see, our understanding of what is involved in spiritual defense against Satan is extremely inadequate. We just don't have sufficient knowledge of what is involved. It is God alone who knows our enemy, and it is God alone who knows exactly how to protect us so that we remain firm and steadfast when Satan and his forces hurl themselves against us. So learn this lesson now before going any further—every single piece of God's armor is essential, and to select some and leave out the others is to take the route to failure and defeat.

OPERATING IN GOD'S STRENGTH

A believer must heed what God says in this passage; he must do exactly what God says in order to conquer the great enemies of life. The charge is twofold.

The believer must be strong *in the Lord* and in the power of His might. Note the stress upon power and strength. Three different words are used:

⇒ be *strong*

⇒ in the Lord's *power*

⇒ in the Lord's *might*

Each of these words is used to stress the utter necessity of the believer being strong and possessing power.

⇒ The word "strong" means power, might, strength. The believer must possess power, might, and strength as he walks through the course of this life.

⇒ The Lord's "power" means His sovereign unlimited power and dominion over all.

⇒ The Lord's "might" means strength, force, ability. It means His ability to use His strength and force wisely, that is, in perfection.

The believer is to be strong in the sovereign unlimited power of the Lord—in the power of His might—in His ability to use His power exactly as it should be used.

But note the critical point: the believer's strength is not human, fleshly strength; it is not the strength of anything within this world. The believer's strength is found *in the Lord*—in a living, dynamic relationship with Him. The Lord is the source of the believer's strength. There is no other source that can give man the strength to overcome this world with all its trials and temptations and death.

OPERATING IN GOD'S STRENGTH

To walk worthy of our great calling in Christ, we must rely on God's strength and protection.

God does not intend for us to do this in our own strength; in fact, we can not do it in our own strength. From the beginning Paul prays that they will operate in God's immeasurable power and strength (cf, Eph 1:19), which we have access in Christ. In Ephesians 3:20 before he transitions into statements about walking worthy Paul lets us know that we need God's strength.

God is "able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think" ([3:20](#)). However, when Paul concluded this wonderful treatise, he reminded all believers of their responsibility. In order to receive God's "vast strength" ([6:10](#)), it is our task to take and use the spiritual equipment God provides ([v. 11](#)). He is driving home the point to the Ephesian church know that they cannot do it by themselves!

When we operate in His strength, God will take our Human weakness, to array us with His Divine might.

OPERATING IN GOD'S STRENGTH

There is good reason for our being so often advised in the Scriptures to "be strong." We must be strong because the forces of evil are many and mighty. Unless we are strong we effect nothing.

The meaning of the text is—Be strong as those may be who are bound to God in Christ.

We must be strong in our faith – and have a defense for it. We must also be strong in fighting on the battlefield of life. We must also be strong in our prayer life (*how many hours do we pray?*), for without prayer – invoking the presence and the power of God – we are weak and will fail! This should be not just in moments of doubt and difficulty, trial and temptation.

We need to be strong in prayer because we will face the world, the flesh (Matthew 4; 1 John 2:15-17; inherited from Adam, a nature opposed to God and can do nothing spiritual to please God) and Satan.

Our strength is to be hid in the Lord and to be had from Him, for His power is most mighty! His power is infinite, incomprehensible and inconceivable.

When we “stand” in Him, it shows Him that we have confidence in Him. There is a great benefit to have confidence in God – it will make us bold in apparent danger from the enemy (Psalm 3:6) and it will renew our strength for the ongoing battle. We must stand in Him because without Him we can do nothing!



OPERATING IN GOD'S STRENGTH

We need strength against Temptation.

We need strength in suffering.

We must remember that His might causes mountains to tremble, caused the Jordan to stand still, caused the Red Sea to be separate, and produced the world that we know. Why would we want to take comfort in any other strength and might but His? Our might and strength is nothing compared to His!

We must be strong in the Lord because sometimes it appears that when we get done with one battle another one comes our way (from the cradle to the grave, the believer's life is a battlefield). One cannot be successful in spiritual warfare by carnal thinking and operating in his/her own strength. Whereas His strength and might are infinite, incomprehensible, and inconceivable, ours is insufficient. Thus, all our sufficiency is found in God (Acts 17:28).

We should be relieved to know that we can stand in His power and in His strength. Thank God that He did not leave us without the option to stand in Him and in His strength. Thus, our confidence should be increased! We have no reason to shrink from the combat! All we must do is be prepared, show up, and not worry about where our strength will come from (Phil. 4:13).

He exhorts them to be courageous, but at the same time reminds them to ask from God a supply of their own deficiencies, and promises that, in answer to their prayers, the power of God will be displayed.

OPERATING IN GOD'S STRENGTH

Be strong in the Lord—You must have this strength through an indwelling God, the power of His might working in you. We can only have this strength if only our fellowship with him be maintained in uninterrupted vigor. Undoubtedly, we need strength from the Lord to have any hope for victory. It is a grave danger to think that we can be successful in our own worldly, human strength. To be strong in the Lord is to ultimately know that He is our ONLY strength, and to be reliant on Him and His promises.

We must be strong spiritually because our enemy is strong! We should not put so much an emphasis on physical strength by working our daily that we forget to strengthen our inner man.

Sooner or later you will discover that the Christian life is a battleground, not a playground and that apart from the Lord we will be defeated by the enemy.

The Christian conflict is not only real, it is difficult and dangerous. It is one in which true believers are often grievously wounded. His first exhortation is to muster strength for the inevitable conflict, and to seek that strength from the right source. We are to **be strong in the Lord**. A Christian separated from Christ is like a branch separated from the vine, or like a limb severed from the body. Therefore, we must not rush into this conflict without thinking of Christ, but must put trust in him, continually looking to him for strength. The words **in the strength of his power** mean, 'in the vigour derived from his strength.' It is only as members of Christ's body that we are victorious

OPERATING IN GOD'S STRENGTH

Understand the *source* of the preparation: "be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power" (v. 10). Literally, we are to "be strengthened in the Lord." The source of our energy for spiritual warfare must and does rest outside of us. Our preparation for spiritual warfare is an appropriation of dynamic energy from beyond ourselves. In this battle we can quickly come to the end of our hoarded resources! We must enter the battle in the vigorous operative strength that is inherent in God Himself. This strength must be constant in its appropriation. There is no once-for-all donation of such resources. Daily and repeatedly we enter into that strength from beyond ourselves.

Satan is actively struggling against God. All his energies are focused on destroying the Believer.

We are reminded, as the apostle closes his letter, that we are not yet in heaven, we have not reached the rest that remains for the people of God, and therefore he says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." Perhaps it might be rendered, "My brethren, be daily. The excellency of the power is not in us but in God (2 Timothy 2:1)

We must remember that we must rely on Him (John 15:5) for we will accomplish nothing without His help.

OPERATING IN GOD'S STRENGTH

Although salvation may be free to the person who receives it, it is not culminated ultimately without great effort. No true soldier of Jesus Christ can expect to be immune from the assaults of the enemy, and no Christian can afford to be neutral in the conflict.

In the light of the seriousness of this warfare, the Christian cannot be self-reliant. "Be strong" comes from a present passive verb, indicating a command to be strong "in the Lord" or "in the sphere of the Lord" or "to participate in the strength that is inherent in Him." It is present, indicating the necessity of continuous dependence upon Him. It is also passive, showing that strength must come from outside the believer, for without God's help he would never make it.

In conclusion, strengthen yourselves always in the Lord, your one possible inexhaustible resource, to be drawn upon by obedient trust, **and in the energy of His might**, a "strength made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Only in God will they find the appropriate ability; without His enabling they will go down in defeat.

We see from the start that our victory is dependent upon our relationship with Christ. It is because of Christ's work on the cross that we can have victory over Satan. The believer's efficiency for the battle is **in the Lord**. Any victory we have is a result of His finished work on Calvary's cross. We have no strength in ourselves. All our strength and victory is in Christ. The Bible declares that through His work on the cross, Christ **spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.** (Colossians 2:15)