



## **Ephesians 6**

### **Children, parents and armour! – Leader's version**

**For a one hour study, either do q1-7 or q8-17, then the \* 'How can I live...?' questions**

**Check in** – with the group sitting in a semi-circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

1. What do you remember from the last study (Ephesians 5:21-33)?

*Christians are called to submit to one another, the pattern for Christian marriage, caring for our bodies.*

### **What does the passage say and mean?**

60 minutes

Read Ephesians 6:1-9

2. Read 6:1-3. What commands are given to children and why?

*To obey and honour their parents in the Lord (i.e. only if it's in line with the Bible's teaching, since God's authority over-rides our parents'). Because it is 'right' – morally, ethically and spiritually ('in the Lord' and Exodus 20:12).*

3. What do you think this means in today's society?

4. Do you think there comes a time when we are too old and independent for these commands to still apply?

*The command to honour our parents is permanent, but the command to obey is overtaken by our independence (the legal age of majority in the UK is 18 years), and this is appropriate.*

5. We are all somebody's child. If you are in contact with your parents, how can you honour them?

6. Read v4. What commands are given to fathers?

*Not to exasperate (provoke) their children. To bring them up in the Lord i.e. teach them about Jesus.*

7. Read v5-9. What principle relating to work does v7 give us?

*To work as if for God, not for men – to 'give it our all', i.e. to work hard.*

*(Slavery was normal practice in NT times. Paul is not condoning slavery, rather, telling slaves and slave owners how to act in a God-honouring way. The general principles relating to work-ethic still stand).*

Read Ephesians 6:10-23

8. What does it mean to 'stand against the devil'?

*Not to underestimate him. It involves resisting temptation. It does not mean to attempt exorcism, seek Satan out for a battle, etc.*

9. Where do we get the strength and protection to stand against the devil? (v10)

*'Be strong... in his mighty power'. We can only stand against the devil in the power of Jesus – we can't do this in our own strength. Look back to 1:19 to see how much power God has!*

Questions 10-12 are **SELF-DIRECTED QUESTIONS**. You need to write them on flip-chart sheets for the group to work on in pairs.

10. Paul describes armour, relating it to the 'armour of God'. What is the result of putting on the full armour of God? (v13)

*You might like to explain that Paul is describing a Roman soldier's armour, not 21<sup>st</sup> Century armour. Putting on the full armour of God means we can stand our ground – i.e. stand firm for Jesus, whatever is flung at us.*

11. What is the belt of truth and how does it protect you? (v14)

*Probably both the truth of Scripture and truth of heart (honesty, integrity). We know that God's word is unchanging and is solid ground to stand on. We can fight Satan's temptation by replying with Scripture – as Jesus did in Luke 4. It is interesting to note that the belt held the soldiers sword and Paul compares the sword to the word of God. (nb the sword of the Spirit is the word of God too, but a sword is used in attack as well as in defence. The sword refers to using the word in resisting temptation and in evangelism).*

12. What is the breast-plate of righteousness and how does it protect you? (v14)

*The confidence that your righteousness is in Christ, and that nothing you can do can add to what Jesus did for you on the cross. If you have been made right with God through Jesus' death, you are guaranteed eternal life (heaven). It may also refer to righteous living – resisting temptation, living a godly life.*

### 13. What does v15 mean?

*Two possibilities – firstly, the gospel giving us a firm foothold from which to fight evil. Secondly, a readiness to share the gospel with others.*

### 14. Read v16. How should a Christian respond to temptation and trouble from the devil?

*By keeping his faith in Jesus – our faith shields us, not from the attack, but from getting hurt by the attack. The attack may be false guilt, self-condemnation, doubt, disobedience, lust, etc. The analogy of the shield reminds us that our faith only protects us if we employ it – as soon as we back down, Satan has a clear target. (Nb the shield that Paul referred to was the scutum which covered the whole person).*

### 15. After reading v13-17, whose strength do we need in order to stay strong in our faith and how do we receive that strength?

*God's – we are so helpless, we can't even stay strong in our faith in our own strength! We need to pray for that strength (which keeps us dependent on God).*

### 16. What does Paul tell us about praying in v18?

*To pray on all occasions, to be alert, to pray for other Christians. Having been equipped with all the armour of God, Paul says, 'And pray...' – the armour isn't a prayer substitute! (Praying in the Spirit doesn't necessarily refer to praying in tongues – it refers to praying with God's help).*

### 17. Paul calls himself an ambassador in chains. What is an ambassador, and what does this mean Paul's role is?

*An ambassador represents his country in a foreign land. An ambassador can only give the message to the foreign country that he has been given by his own country – he can't alter the message. Paul has the message of Jesus to give to unbelievers – he can't alter the message, he just has to pass it on, and represent Jesus wherever he is (i.e. in prison).*

## **How can I live according to these truths in my life?**

### 20 minutes

\*1. Have you been challenged at all with respect to your relationship with your parents or your children? What are you going to try to change?

*Be careful – there may be restraining orders preventing contact with family, or parents / children may be their victims – do not get involved in facilitating contact. Refer the individual to a chaplain to deal with this.*

\*2. Do you have a job in the prison system? If you do, do you work as if it were for the Lord? If you don't, do you think a job might be a way you could honour God in prison?

3. In what ways are you, or could you be, be an ambassador for Christ in prison?

*Think of SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and with a Time-frame).*

**Check out** – with the group sitting in a semi-circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



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10. Paul describes armour, relating it to the 'armour of God'. What is the result of putting on the full armour of God? (v13)
11. What is the belt of truth and how does it protect you? (v14)
12. What is the breast-plate of righteousness and how does it protect you? (v14)
13. What does v15 mean?
14. Read v16. How should a Christian respond to temptation and trouble from the devil?
15. After reading v13-17, whose strength do we need in order to stay strong in our faith and how do we receive that strength?
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17. Paul calls himself an ambassador in chains. What is an ambassador, and what does this mean Paul's role is?

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