

GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

THE WAR WE IGNORE

SERIES THEME//

Think about the way we make disciples: We teach truth to change thinking. We explain ethics to influence behavior. We provide counseling to heal hearts and mend relationships. These practices are essential to discipleship, but they are not sufficient for life transformation. Scripture tells us that there is an unseen reality that impacts everything: the spiritual world of angels, demons, principalities, and powers. What does the Bible reveal about this world? Do we influence it, and what role does it play in our lives? In our Gospel mission, we can never forget that God has included us in his plan to overthrow the Kingdom of Satan! This series will equip us to understand and take our place in this very real battle.

SERMON; IDENTIFYING THE ENEMY | EPHESIANS 6:10-12

APRIL 23, 2017

SERMON THEME// In this passage, Paul introduces us to the reality of spiritual forces aligned against us, seeking to destroy our lives. We will incorporate other passages of Scripture to help fill out the snapshots of Satan and demons Paul gives us here.

LEADER//

We are calling out the works of the Devil during this sermon series. This means we are getting his attention, and by your Growth Group participating this study, your group is also putting themselves in his crosshairs.

Understand this, acknowledge it, and be ready for his attack. Know that it will come into their lives and into your group. Pray for protection, clarity, and unity as your group moves through the weeds of this sermon series.

OPENING UP// *Start with prayer*

1. What do you think of this sermon series already? Is Peace “weird” for doing a study like this?
2. Do most people find it easier to talk about the Devil than to talk about Jesus Christ? Why is that? How comfortable are you with talking about evil and the spiritual realm?
3. When have you felt the enemy’s attack in your life?

DIGGING DEEPER//

It’s important to realize, by way of background, that the letter to the church in Ephesus was strongly motivated by Paul’s desire to provide instruction, assurance, and inspiration to new Christians who were part of a culture dominated by the occult. The city of Ephesus, in particular, was a stronghold of occultist practices. Artemis, the goddess of the city, was seen as not only the goddess of death, but also a cosmic astral power of great force. Luke not only mentions her in Acts 19, but also the fact that millions of dollars of spell-books were burned when the Gospel came to Ephesus (see Acts 19:13-20). Paul wrote to the church there to remind them that Christ is supreme. He rules and reigns over every single power. Because we are “in Christ,” we have no need to turn to demons or other spirits for safety and power. Because we are “in Christ,” we have been given powerful weapons to wield in the power of the Holy Spirit.



EPHESIANS 6:10-12 (ESV)

The Whole Armor of God

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

- Take a moment to pray over this text, asking God to use this text to continue to shape your life as you take the word *preached* and make it the word *lived*.
- Before we watch the sermon video, take a moment, and go in a circle, having each person answer this question: Do you feel it is better to avoid this issue, or take it head on?

LEADER//

- From Clinton Arnold, Three Questions: There is a tendency for people in some circles to think of spiritual warfare as a specialized form of ministry rather than as a descriptive phrase characterizing our common struggle as believers. Thus, for many people, to speak of spiritual warfare is to speak of exorcism, deliverance ministry, taking authority in the name of Jesus against the enemy, or special forms of authoritative prayer. Certainly, these are all aspects of spiritual warfare, but no single ministry exhausts our understanding of spiritual warfare.

SERMON DISCUSSION VIDEO//

- As you watch the sermon discussion video, take note of what you found intriguing or insightful as you hear Pastor Adam discuss the sermon he preached.

THE WORD PREACHED//

- In naming our enemy, what did you learn about the name, names, and titles for the Devil?
- How planned out are Satan's attacks? From the preaching of the Word - what do we know about this answer? How would your life experience confirm this?
- In the sermon, Pastor Adam said that we can't ignore this war, that we must realize it and with that realizing, after we acknowledge it, we are then living in the *real world*. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?
 - How would you articulate that notion to the secular world?
- How did your knowledge of biblical theology expand from this sermon? What did you learn or realize for the first time?



THE WORD LIVED//

- Where do we see overt signs of the occult in our day and age?
- Because we are in a culture that largely ignores the supernatural, it is hard to see the importance and implications of the text. How do you (or would you) talk about this subject with non-believers?
- Have you or someone you know ever had one of those “spooky” experiences, where it felt like something from the unseen realm was poking through into ours? How did you understand the experience?
- Do you believe that there really is a spiritual realm, where angels and demons are active? What effect does this world have on ours? How should we as Christians respond?
- What are some of the key things we should take into consideration while we’re talking about the spiritual realm? Explain your answers.

CLOSE IN PRAYER//

LEADER//

As you close in prayer, this sermon series discussion will definitely benefit from an extra measure of prayer. Pray for protection for your group and your group’s families, pray for Peace Church as we enter into a time of looking at this subject more closely, and pray for the pastors as they immerse themselves in this material to preach better sermons.

