

Icebreaker: What is your favorite war movie?

Key Verse: *Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*
Ephesians 6:13-17

War movies follow a familiar pattern. We see an opening battle or a scene that introduces us to the reality of the war. Then we move to a scene where we see the soldiers being trained. We get a sense of who is fighting the war. Finally, these troops are given the chance to put their skills to the test in battle. In a lot of ways, the Christian life is similar to a war movie.

All Christians have entered a battle against darkness. They have taken a side because of their allegiance to Jesus. Our enemy is strong, and he does not play fair. However, because of Jesus we already know that the victory is God's. The Bible refers to God as a fortress and shield. God will protect us, but He has also given us protection for the war ahead in many ways.

Paul wrote about this in the last section of his letter to the Ephesians, where he described the armor God has given us to engage in spiritual battle. Most of these weapons are defensive weapons: We have truth and righteousness to cover us. We have the gospel of peace as marching orders. We embody a living faith. Lastly, we have one offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit, the holy Word of God. The Bible informs us on our quest and promises the success of our mission.

THINK IT OVER >>>

Thinking back on Dwight's message, what stood out to you?

Dwight said good soldiers in God's army . . .

- Endure suffering and hardship in carrying out the assignment God gives.
- Have special relationships.
- Learn how to become single-minded soldiers in advancing the cause of Christ.
- Submit to the commanding officer.

What is our view of suffering?

What keeps us from being single-minded?

What area of life is the hardest to submit to God?

Do you see yourself as being enlisted by God? Why or why not?

LOOK IT OVER >>>

Where do you see spiritual warfare going on around you?

How is God calling you to engage in the spiritual battle you see?

How do we build up our faith to withstand the attacks of the devil?

What role does the community of faith play in engaging spiritual warfare?

When have you experienced the battle against faith? How did the battle increase and build up your faith?

NEXT STEPS

This week, consider taking some next steps together, as a group:

1. Pray that God would strengthen your faith as you walk into battle every day. Praise God for supplying you with all you need in the battle. Confess your willingness to walk into battle for the Lord and commit to give yourself to following Him every day.
2. Think of as many concrete ways as you can to support one another, fight together, and cheer one another on in the battle against darkness. Check up on one another, pray for one another, and find ways to build up each other's faith.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Giving my all to the assignment God gives.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

FURTHER STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out these verses:

- Romans 8:5-10,13
- Ephesians 6:12
- Isaiah 54:17
- Galatians 5:17
- 2 Timothy 3:12
- Matthew 16:24-26

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.
(Don't forget to bring this paper to the next small group meeting)