

## Ephesians Study 9

**Prayer: Help us Stand Firm – in you and your methods of grace.**

### **Reading and Reflection**

Read Ephesians 6:10-17

In light of all that Paul has emphasized before this, what can we know, in your view, about the nature of God's power? What can we know about the "devil's schemes"?

God's power is all that reconnects us, all that makes us and his creation whole. This is the nature of his power that Paul has been writing about. The devil's schemes or the works of the powers of darkness, would be any force, motivation and method that seeks to divide us, our personal selves, our communal selves, and to dismiss one another and God as unnecessary .

"The evil isn't in the thing. Its in the way the thing is done, the method. We often miss the evil because we like the good result. The evil is in the means, not the end. The first tip-off about the devil's methods is that they are abstract. Whereas God's methods are relational, personal, the devil's are abstract. This is why institutions are breeding grounds for evil. Institutions are adept at focusing on lofty goals and steamrolling people to get there. But because they are effective in achieving their goals, the evil either is unnoticed or tolerated." Eugene Peterson Practice Resurrection Study Guide

How do you respond to this vision of Good and Evil, God and the devil, offered in Ephesians?

Paul is writing about how to stay firm in God's gift of reconciliation, of unity, of wholeness. How do you stand firm in this gift—to yourself, to others (even those very different from you), to God and his Holy Presence in the world and in you. Paul lists ways to stand firm and they are all gifts: Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Faith, Salvation/Reconciliation, the Word of God which is all of God's revelation to his people, in Jesus.

Pick one of these gifts that is standing out to you today. Pray about it, hold it in your hands and ask God your questions around it. Be attentive to where in your heart you need that gift to gird you, to stand you firm.

### **Read Ephesians 6:18-24**

Prayer is all the ways we can be attentive to the reality of God and us, all the ways we can know God within us.

How do you pray for all of God's family? Who are you praying for specifically?  
How can you today pray into reconciliation and wholeness.

Who is praying for you? How can you reach out?

### **Responding to the Text**

Paul ends the letter with pronouncements of Peace, Love with Trust and Grace. These are our goal and these are the methods of living into God's vision. Be encouraged with them today.

### **Prayer from Ephesians 6:10-24 (The Message)**

"Strong God, keep us strong. Help us to stand up to everything throun our way in thief-or-death fight to the finish against the devil and all his angels.

Lord you know that we're up against far more than we can handle on our own. We need all the help we can get, every weapon you have issued, so that when its all over but the shouting we will still be on our feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Work them into the substance of our lives. Your word is an indispensible weapon Prayer, too. Keep us praying hard and long. Praying for our brothers and sisters. Praying with our eyes open. Lord, we don't want anyone to fall behind or drop out.

God the Father and our Master, Jesus Christ, you have mixed love with faith and poured it out on us. We live in a world of pure grace and nothing but grace because of you, our Master, Jesus Christ. We love you. Amen."