

Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Worksheet Ephesians 6 (NKJV)

Ephesians 6:10–20 (Spiritual Warfare—Part 3)

“10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Righteousness

As was stated about truth, the believer has been granted righteousness. We note that the Scriptures indicate a past tense position. We read, *“having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness...”* (vs. 14) This indicates that one cannot be regenerated unless they *have* believed the truth, and that once the believer trusts Christ for salvation they *have been* granted righteousness. Paul wrote, *“But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’”* (1 Corinthians 1:30–31) *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”* (2 Corinthians 5:21) The believer is righteous! We have been given the breastplate of righteousness!

The righteousness we are granted at the point of salvation is what we refer to as “Positional Righteousness.” We are declared righteous by faith alone in Christ alone—apart from works. This is the position we hold in Christ. This is the position Paul referred to when He said, *“...I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”* (Philippians 3:8b–9)

By faith alone in Christ alone we are forever protected in the Lord. This fact should bring comfort to every believer. The spiritual armor we have been given guarantees safe arrival into the eternal condition. This we are promised! However, as is true when considering truth and error, even so

there is a practical aspect to righteous living. This is what we refer to when we use the expression “Practical Righteousness.” Practical righteousness speaks to our daily walk—our behavior. It has our human nature and shortcomings in view. It recognizes the fleshly battle and the trials we endure as we wage a spiritual war in the temporal world. Positional righteousness is a guaranteed condition/position given us in Christ. Practical righteousness is a daily process. It is a process we will endure until the day we see the Lord—face to face.

Theologians may use the terms “Positional Righteousness” and “Positional Sanctification” interchangeably. However, inasmuch as there is a very close relationship, there is a small distinction. Sanctification is granted the believer at the point of conversion just as is righteousness. However, righteousness refers to our “rightness” as declared by the Lord. Sanctification refers to our being set apart as holy to the Lord—by the Lord.

Practical Sanctification (also known as Progressive Sanctification) refers to our growth in the Lord. It refers to our growing away from the sinful and more into the image of Christ. (I prefer to call this maturity!) Practical Righteousness is similar. As we grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, we are called to live a life that reflects the person of Jesus. This process cannot be accomplished by human will or desire. It is only accomplished in and through the power of the Holy Spirit—Who dwells in us. For this reason Paul said, *“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”* (Philippians 2:12–13) God is at work in us, shaping and molding us, more and more, day by day, into the image of Christ. Paul said, *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”* (Romans 8:28–30) God has positionally given us the “breastplate of righteousness” and is practically fitting us for it.

Inasmuch as we do grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, we nonetheless fall short. In fact, more than falling short by default, there are times that believers intentionally sin. Although this should not occur, we all know too well our personal walk and history.

In the processes of our spiritual walk (and warfare), we create problems when choosing to sin. Intentional sinning gives place to the enemy. Many of the “setbacks” we experience in spiritual warfare are the fault of our own doing. We must recognize this and refrain from blaming the enemy for the trials we endure as a result. Those who blame the enemy for his so-called victories are crediting him with far too much. When we walk in the truth and live in righteousness, we live in victory. When we intentionally sin, we create problems.

If a man or woman sins and chooses to leave that sin hidden in darkness, they suffer depression, insecurity, and fear. When the sin is confessed and “turned from,” victory returns. If a man or woman sins and refuses to repent, that man or woman has by default “set aside” the spiritual armor and is thus vulnerable to the “wiles of the enemy.”

Many forms of sinning could be used to illustrate. One particular sin that lies at the root of many others is the sin of covetousness. We are called to contentment in the Lord. Paul told Timothy, *“If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.”* (1 Timothy 6:3–9)

When a believer sins, that believer is also subject to the chastening of the Lord. Many fail to recognize this loving discipline and choose to blame the Devil for the lack of peace or circumstantial activities. This too must be recognized. God works—even in our disobedience.

We cannot thwart the overall plan of God for our lives. What He has intended for us—in Christ, He will accomplish. As we grow to see this, we will more aptly surrender to the inner working of His Spirit and choose to live in righteousness.

We are the righteousness of God in Christ—live like it.

The Gospel of Peace

One of the great benefits of understanding (and believing) the true Gospel is the peace we experience in our daily walk. When we begin to grasp that we are loved, secure in the salvation God has provided us, that God cannot be disappointed by us but is working all things together for good in order to conform us into the image of His Son, and that we are predestined to that end, we can rest in God’s overarching and sovereign care of our lives. When we understand and believe the true Gospel, we grow to see that God can be trusted. We begin to see that all the problems we face and all the attacks of the enemy are insignificant in the light of His glorious and most powerful grace. We will grow to understand why King David could say—even when being threatened by his own son—*“LORD, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. Many are they who say of me, ‘There is no help for him in God.’ Selah! But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head.”* (Psalm 3:1–3) When we understand and believe the true Gospel, we will not fear a future condemnatory judgment nor fear the loss of the salvation provided us in the Lord; rather, we will grow to understand that the attacks of the enemy can (at best) be short trials God is allowing for His own purposes. When we understand and believe the true Gospel—we have peace!

The enemy will throw darts of doubt. He will throw daggers of accusation and condemnation. He will work to convince the believer that he or she is a disappointment to the Lord, that God is angry with them, or that they are in danger of being rejected by the Lord on the Day of Judgment. However, when these attacks occur, his lies will be swallowed up by the *“gospel of peace”* (vs. 15) as we take up the *“shield of faith”* and *“quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”* (vs. 16)

Notes:

Questions

- 1) **True or False:** Every believer in Christ has been granted positional righteousness.
- 2) **True or False:** Believers are declared righteous by faith alone in Christ alone—apart from works.
- 3) **True or False:** There is a practical aspect to righteous living. Practical righteousness speaks to our daily walk—our behavior.
- 4) **True or False:** As we grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord, we are called to live a life that reflects the person of Jesus.
- 5) **True or False:** God is at work in us, shaping and molding us, more and more, day by day, into the image of Christ.
- 6) **True or False:** God has positionally given us the “*breastplate of righteousness*” and is practically fitting us for it.
- 7) **True or False:** The “setbacks” we experience in spiritual warfare are always the fault of the enemy. We must recognize this and refrain from blaming ourselves for the trials we endure.
- 8) **True or False:** God disciplines those He loves. We must be careful to discern the difference between God’s discipline and the attacks of the enemy.
- 9) **True or False:** God works—even in our disobedience.
- 10) **True or False:** We cannot thwart the overall plan of God for our lives. What He has intended for us—in Christ, He will accomplish.
- 11) **True or False:** We are the righteousness of God in Christ—live like it.