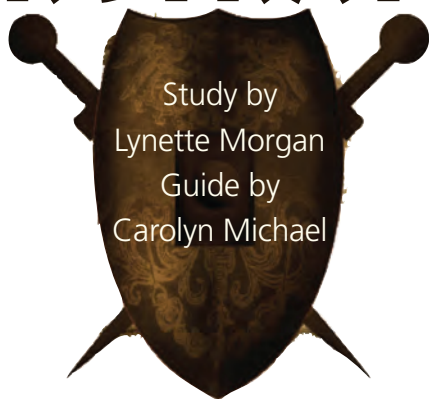


FACILITATOR'S GUIDE MAY 2013

WAR STRATEGY



Getting Started...

We all want to be happy, happy, happy. Let's face it, though, happy is not the world we live in. Disasters, heartaches, and tragic events fill the nightly news. If we dwell on these things, our emotions and feelings can get the best of us. That is exactly what Satan wants. His goal is to stir up trouble, produce discouragement, cause confusion and inflict pain. He wants people to ultimately waste their lives and live defeatedly. Our attacks may not involve literal people coming at us with guns or knives, but the battlefield can be just as harmful and dangerous with attacks in the form of failed marriages, financial worries, health or emotional problems or a number of other things. If we let our guard down, the enemy will creep in.

Thankfully, this study presents God's defense strategy against the wiles of the devil. That defense is to put on His armor. Each piece is designed to protect and fortify against specific attacks. We must first know God has delivered us and set us free. Then we are able to understand how this armor can defend us when attacked and make it possible for us to stand. This armor is designed especially for Christians.

One of the sweetest word pictures in all the Bible is when Jesus laments over Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37, crying that He would have gathered her children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings. If you've ever seen a mother hen with her children, you know she would fight anything or anyone who tried to harm her little biddies. Jesus has compassion. He will protect, be our shield, our shelter, and our safety. The problem is, so often we tend to forget that Christ is our defense against the opposition. We need to gear up, with every piece of armor in the exact order and place it goes. Only then will we feel that our shield of defense is unpenetrable.



WAR STRATEGY

Our Armor

HANDPRINT: Understanding and utilizing each piece of the armor of God will help protect us from the Enemy's attacks.

HANDWRITING ON THE HEART (*to be memorized*): "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" (Ephesians 6:13) Challenge: memorize through verse 17.

- ✦ Write the **Handwriting on the Heart** verse on a 3x5 card and verses 13-17 in your journal. Then Go over p. 35, *Treasure*, together.
- ✦ Are you in "The Lord's Army"? Have you put on the armor that can protect you?
- ✦ Which of the three pieces mentioned in *Treasure*, p. 34, do you struggle with? Why doesn't it fit or why does it rub you raw?
- ✦ Could it be you think you are safe enough without armor? Are you indifferent, cynical, confused, uncertain, uncaring? (*If so, the devil has hit his mark.*)
- ✦ Look at what the Apostle Paul tells us to do in Ephesians 6:10. Read aloud. (...*"be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."*)
- ✦ Why did Paul use actual armor pieces to describe "armor of God"? (*Roman soldiers wore armor and terrorized the Jews. Paul knew they would understand his figurative language.*)
- ✦ To be strong in the Lord and in the power/strength of his might we must put on the armor. What is this a symbol of? (*Christ—Romans 13:14; 2 Timothy 2:1*)
- ✦ Note the tenses of the verbs used in our key verse. "Having" indicates that you possess something already. If you are a Christian, you have the truth, righteousness and peace.
- ✦ What truth is this speaking of? (*The truth of the Gospel of Christ—John 8:32; 14:6; 16:13; 2 Peter 1:12*)
- ✦ Do you feel "righteous"? Who is the ground of our righteousness? (*Christ—Romans 3:21-24, 10:9-10; Jeremiah 51:10; Psalm 146:8; Romans 3:21-24.*)
- ✦ The armor of peace makes us able to fight. How? (*It provides courage and calmness that makes our hearts at peace—Romans 5:1.*)
- ✦ Do you know Christians who are constantly defeated, unhappy and miserable? (*Share these verses with them: Romans 8:1, 33, 35; Ephesians 1:6.*)
- ✦ In your own battles recognize that: (1) you believe Christ—act on truth; (2) you shouldn't be discouraged—stand on the merits of Christ; and (3) you have God on your side—the God of strength and peace.

*Dismiss in a prayer of thankfulness for God who is our protection in the battle of life.



WAR STRATEGY

Our Armor (continued)

HANDPRINT: Understanding and utilizing each piece of the armor of God will help protect us from the Enemy's attacks.

HANDWRITING ON THE HEART (*to be memorized*): "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:3,4).

- ⚡ Go over questions and answers in *Treasure*, p. 37.
- ⚡ Is your definition of faith similar or identical to others' definition?
- ⚡ Is faith the same thing as "belief"? (*No, faith is more than just believing in Christ.*)
- ⚡ What, then, is faith? (*It's acting upon belief. It's knowing when Satan is the culprit in a situation, and reacting to that effect. It's knowing we use our shield.*)
- ⚡ When you doubt, do you still have faith? (*Yes, doubt is the proof of the reality of faith—Hebrews 11:7, 11, 17; James 4:7.*)
- ⚡ Do your children use helmets when riding bikes, skateboards, motorcycles, etc? What is the purpose of the helmet? (*To protect the head.*) Don't we need "the helmet of salvation" to protect our minds, intelligence and reasoning in this confusing world?
- ⚡ Our salvation is real because we have accepted Christ, but it also speaks to what future event? (*The coming of Christ—1 Thessalonians 4:16, 5:8; 1 Peter 1:3*)
- ⚡ The last piece of armor is "the sword of the spirit" or the Word of God. Where does the Word of God need to be? (*In our hearts—Colossians 3:16.*)
- ⚡ This is the "taking" part (present tense) meaning we can take certain aspects of Christ again and again whenever we face an attack. Reading Scripture, have certain words ever seemed to come alive just for you?
- ⚡ Which part of the Christian armor is used for both defense and for offense? (*The sword of the spirit—Hebrews 4:12.*)
- ⚡ Why, with all this armor, do Christians fail? (*They simply don't use it.*)
- ⚡ What does Satan want each Christian to do? (*Give in to his evil tactics and temptations. God never tempts, so any temptation or discouragement comes from Satan.*)
- ⚡ Find some Scriptures that will strengthen your faith, secure your helmet and sharpen your sword. Write these in your journal. (*Some of my favorites are: Daniel 3:17; Hebrews 11:33; John 3:15-16; Romans 10:9; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 1:16.*)
- ⚡ Dismiss in prayer asking God to help us in applying the armor He provides.



WAR STRATEGY

Praying Always, Being Watchful

HANDPRINT: The powerful weapon of prayer is an absolute necessity in spiritual warfare.

HANDWRITING ON THE HEART (*to be memorized*): "...Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all saints..." (Ephesians 6:18).

✦ Write the Handwriting on the Heart verse on a 3x5 card.

✦ Can you think of another Scripture that uses the word perseverance? (*James 1:3 in some translations*)

✦ Name some notable people who persevered in prayer. (*1. Jacob: wrestled with the angel—Genesis 32:24-26. 2. Elijah: prayed it might not rain—James 5:17. 3. Moses: interceded for his people—Deuteronomy 9:25-26. 4. Hezekiah: asked the Lord to hear him—2 Kings 20:1-6.*)

✦ Go over p. 39 in *Treasure*.

✦ Why did Jesus, being part of the Trinity, pray? (*To communicate with the Father—Luke 18:1, 21:36; 22:44.*)

✦ Why does Ephesians 6:18 tell us to be "watchful"? (*1. To know what we are doing—1 Corinthians 10:12. 2. To guard our faith—Colossians 4:2. 3. To be ready for that hour—1 Thessalonians 5:6. 4. to not enter into temptation—Matthew 26:41.*)

✦ Why should we pray if we are protecting ourselves with the armor listed in Ephesians 6:11-17? (*God tells us to pray—Mark 11:24; Jeremiah 29:13; 2 Chronicles 7:14; 1 John 3:22; James 5:16.*)

✦ God even gives us promises in regard to prayer. (*Read Psalm 91:15; 1 Samuel 65:24; Luke 11:9; John 15:7; Ephesians 5:14.*)

✦ Why then are some prayers not answered? (*Secret sin—Psalm 66:18; Stubbornness—Zechariah 7:13; Indifference—Proverbs 1:28; Disobedience—1 Samuel 28:6, 18; Instability—James 1:6-7.*)

✦ How can we be sure that God will answer prayers even with the promises of the Word? (*Look at examples of answered prayer in Scripture: Hannah—1 Samuel 1:27; Moses—Exodus 15:25; Zacharias—Luke 1:13; Gideon—Judges 6:36-40.*)

✦ Do you know that God will hear and answer prayer? (*Remember the Belt of Truth? God is faithful to His Word—1 Corinthians 1:9; Psalm 36:5, 89:1; Deuteronomy 7:9.*)

✦ Dismiss with "The Lord's Prayer" (*Matthew 6:9-13*).



WAR STRATEGY

Our Victory

HANDPRINT: We can claim the victory Christ has promised.

HANDWRITING ON THE HEART (*to be memorized*): “For whatever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4-5).

- ✦ Write the Handwriting verse on a 3x5 card and in your journal.
- ✦ Go over the questions and answers in *Treasure*, p. 41.
- ✦ Are you troubled by things happening in our world today?
- ✦ Name some of the big issues facing us? (*Poor economy, moral issues, corrupt leaders, disintegration of family units, wars, etc.*)
- ✦ Can man solve all these problems on his own? *Who causes all of these problems? (*The devil and his angels—Ephesians 6:12.*)
- *How do you fight your daily battles? How should you? (*As David fought—“in the name of The Lord”—1 Samuel 17:45.*)
- *How was David, a shepherd boy, able to defeat Goliath, a warrior of the Philistines? (1 Samuel 17:47-51.)
- ✦ Notice the phrase in v. 47, “...the battle is the Lord’s...” David had victory *before* he had to enter into battle. Do you really believe the battle is the Lord’s?
- ✦ Can we have that same victory fighting our *giants*? (*Yes, 1 Corinthians 15:57 tells us the reasons why this is true. God gives us the victory.*)
- ✦ Read 1 Corinthians 15:58. What reward is promised? (*Our labor is not in vain.*)
- ✦ What must we do to have this victory and reward? (*Be steadfast, unmovable and always abounding in the work of the Lord.*)
- ✦ What is recorded in Revelation 15:2-3? (*John’s vision of the saints of God singing the victory song.*)
- ✦ Can we sing the victory song of the saints one day? Do you believe? (*Write Ephesians 6:5 in your journal: “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”*)
- ✦ What did Jesus promise in John 14:3? (*“I will come again.”*)
- ✦ Who is our conqueror? (*I don’t think we can say it enough. JESUS! Read aloud Revelation 6:2; 17:14.*)
- ✦ Dismiss with the “Lift Your Hands” prayer in *Treasure*, p. 41.

Wrapping Up...

"He arose! Hallelujah, Christ arose!" Our Savior is alive and sits at the right hand of the Father. He has conquered death and sin. One day He will come again and gather His children home. For now, He hides us under His wings as the mother hen hides her chicks. Just think, we can have the security, the peace, the shelter, the blessings of that wonderful hiding place by dressing in the armor He has provided. I don't know about you, but that gets me excited. We may not know what our future holds, but we can rest assured in Who holds the future. Read the "back of the book" to see about the future of Satan. He will be defeated. Don't ever let go of that fact.