

“WRESTLERS IN THE HEAVENLIES”

Ephesians 6:12

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INTRODUCTION

Look out! Satan is invading our territory! It was not enough for him to rebel and to be thrown out of heaven. Now, he seeks to keep Christians from enjoying heaven, and from getting the most out of his relationship with Christ. This battle against “rulers,” “powers,” “world-forces of this darkness,” against “spiritual forces of wickedness” is occurring **“in the heavenly places.”**

What have we learned about these heavenly places in Ephesians?

- We have seen that it is in the “heavenly places” that we have been blessed with “every spiritual blessing (1:3).
- It is in the heavenly places where Christ has been seated after being raised from the dead (1:20).
- When we were born again, we joined Him in being seated “in the heavenly places” (2:6).
- The wisdom of God’s plan for the Church has been made known to His heavenly hosts who are part of these “heavenly places” (3:10).

But, Satan does not want us to be at home in this heavenly realm. He hates it when we “mind heavenly things” and when we take advantage of the fact that our citizenship is in the heavenlies (Phil. 3:20). The point of Eph. 6:12 is **not** that Satan lives in the heavenlies! This is not what Ephesians teaches. If we say that he lives in the lower atmosphere of the Earth, as a *spiritual being*, this would give him no special advantage over us.

Ephesians 6:12 shows us the **SCENE OF THE CONFLICT**—Satan fights us over our own turf! He does not want us to go to Heaven; but if we must, he wants us to be *miserable while on the way*. He seems to have largely succeeded, for **most Christians seem to be “so earthly-minded that they are of no heavenly good.”**

In this verse Paul shows us our Activity and our Adversaries.

We are wrestlers for Christ and we need to understand and defeat our Adversaries.

I. WE ARE WRESTLERS FOR CHRIST (12a)

The word ‘struggle’ here is used only once in the NT—is means wrestling—one who grapples and sways back and forth.

A. The Sharpness of the Combat—“we wrestle”

This is not used here for a recreational sport!

1. It is a single Combat—one-on-one. (Illus.—David vs. Goliath)

Realize that Satan is fighting directly against you—against you: Phil, John, Amy, Don, Danny, Jessie, Melissa, Mike, etc.

Satan loves “hand to hand combat.”

When going to church, or in your closet, Satan is at your heels!

2. It is a close combat (armies often fight at some distance).

Satan takes hold of you—your very flesh (corrupt nature).

3. It is an Exhausting Combat.

Have you ever tried wrestling? My wrestling with my son—exhausted in 1 minute!

Satan will try to wear you out and wear you down!

Be like Jacob—wrestle all night and do not give up!

B. The Universality of the combat: “We”

All of us—not merely “you” as in v. 11 and throughout.

No one is excluded.

C. The Permanency (or duration) of the Conflict: “Is”

Not merely *past*—when we first got saved;

Nor merely *future*—when trials come, sickness, death, etc.;

It is NOW! *The Christian life is a continual Wrestling.*

Changing your circumstances won't stop the conflict. (Changing to a different family, spouse, house, job, ministry, etc. won't stop the conflict!)

No duty can be performed without wrestling—we always carry our flesh with us. Satan has a ready ally.

This can never be stopped:

- **Until the devil stops being the devil;**
- **Until sin ceases being sin;**
- **Until the saint ceases being a saint.**

II. WE ARE WRESTLING AGAINST A POWERFUL ADVERSARY (12b)

A. Who we are NOT Fighting—“flesh and blood”

This is a common Biblical expression for humanity in its weaknesses and limitations.

Far too often we get confused—thinking that we are fighting against people!

B. Who we ARE Fighting

1. Rulers

2. Authorities

3. World-rulers of this darkness

4. Spiritual forces of wickedness

CONCLUSION

Let us not be spiritual “wimps.” Satan is attacking our territory.

Let us join in the struggle—wrestling against our foes until the victory is won!

Illus. “**40 Wrestlers for Christ**”