

Ephesians 6:13 Commentary

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EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH
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Ephesians 6:13 **Therefore** *, **take up** the **full armor** of **God**, **so** that you will be **able** to **resist** in the **evil day**, and having **done everything**, to **stand firm**. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [dia touto analabete \(2PAAM\) ten panoplian tou theou. hina dunethete \(2PAPS\) antistenai \(AAN\) en te hemera te ponera kai apanta katargasamenoi \(AMPMPN\) stenai. \(AAN\)](#)

Amplified: Therefore put on God's complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day [of danger], and, having done all [the crisis demands], to stand [firmly in your place]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

NLT: Use every piece of God's armor to resist the enemy in the time of evil, so that after the battle you will still be standing firm. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Therefore you must wear the whole armour of God that you may be able to resist evil in its day of power, and that even when you have fought to a standstill you may still stand your ground. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: On this account, take to yourself, at once and once for all, the complete armor of God in order that you may be able to resist in the day, the pernicious day, and having achieved all things, to stand. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: because of this take ye up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to resist in the day of the evil, and all things having done -- to stand.

THEREFORE, **TAKE UP** THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD: [dia touto analabete \(2PAAM\) ten panoplian tou theou](#)

- Ep 6:11-17; 2Cor 10:4
- [Ephesians 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 6:12-13 Spiritual Warfare - 6](#) - Wayne Barber
- [Ephesians 6:12-13 Why Christians Must be Fighters](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Believer's Warfare, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Believer's Warfare, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

Therefore **take up** ([analambano](#)) the full armor ([panoplia](#)) of God - Therefore ([dia](#)) (term of conclusion - Always ask what is the author concluding which forces re-reading the context, slowing you down and facilitating meditation). In this passage **therefore** serves as a marker indicating on account of or because of the fierce struggle with the invisible pernicious [panoply](#) of spiritual foes just described (Eph 6:12). Paul, like a military general addressing his troops before a crucial battle, **commands** the believers to **take up** their armor.

THOUGHT - Every battle is crucial! If David had gone to battle with his army (2Sa 11:1), he would have missed the battle with the strong lusts of his flesh (2Sa 11:2-5). Who would have thought one indiscretion, one "small defeat" would have resulted in such serious and lifelong consequences (2Sa 12:10). None of us know when that "crucial battle" might occur in our life and thus we must daily by the power of the Spirit (Ro 8:13+) seek to "deny ungodliness and worldly desires and live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present world." (Titus 2:12+)

Take up is in the **aoist imperative** is a command and conveys a sense of urgency, calling for decisive action. Paul is telling the saints not to procrastinate or [prevaricate](#), but do this now! Don't delay! And remember as with all God's commands, we need to continually [depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)! When we obey in His strength, even though the battle is fierce, we are supernaturally strengthened to hold our position. The sense of the aorist tense is that the Christian soldier is to **take up** and put on all the armor of God as a once-for-all act and keep that armor on during the entire life. Fortunately, it is spiritual armor and not literal heavy, cumbersome metal armor or otherwise sleep would be noisy and difficult. The point is that we don't disrobe from our armor when we take our robe off to go to bed. The enemy is still awake and actively prowling around. It strikes me that it might be a good habit for soldiers of the Lord to speak with their Commander before falling asleep, asking for His protection and peace during the night (I'M JUST THINKING OUT LOUD).

Note this **armor** is not something we have to purchase or manufacture, but is **armor** supplied by God (**of God**). God does not hold anything back but provides **full armor** (GOD'S PROVISION), which speaks of divine sufficiency. However, God does expect His good soldiers to take it up and put it on (MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY). But we are not to do this [piecemeal](#)! We need to be fully attired in the divine equipment, and cannot forget even one component, lest we expose ourselves to our wily adversary. If we take up the **full armor**, we can be assured that we will enter battle with everything we need for spiritual victory over our mortal enemy (cf 2Pe 1:3). There is one caveat -- there is no armor for the back as God expects us to face our foe!

Paul echoes this charge in Ro 13:12+ declaring "The night is almost gone, and the day is near (DO YOU SENSE THE URGENCY IN THESE "TIME PHRASES"?). Therefore (BECAUSE TIME IS SHORT AND ETERNITY IS LONG) let us lay aside the deeds of darkness (THROW OFF THE DIRTY ROTTEN STINKING CLOTHES OF THE OLD MAN, THE OLD "ADAMIC WARDROBE") and put on the armor of light." In Romans 13:14+ he adds "**put on** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision** ([present imperative with a negative](#) - STOP DOING THIS! - see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for the flesh in regard to its lusts." The flesh continually is setting its lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are in continual opposition to one another! (cf Gal 5:17+) And since the flesh is continually lusting, Peter exhorts the saints "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain (not a command but present tense calling for continual vigilance and dependence on the Holy Spirit) from fleshly lusts which (present tense - continually) wage war ([strateuomai](#) - used in Jas 4:1+) against the soul." (1Pe 2:11+)

Fight, though thy foes increase; fight, till the dawn of peace;
 Fight, till the war shall cease, then shout and sing.
 Shout, then triumphantly, shout, shout the victory;
 Shout, "Glory be to Thee, O Lord, our King! ([Play](#))

Ray Stedman illustrates the importance of **full armor** in warfare - BRITISH ADMIRAL LORD DAVID BEATTY commanded a flotilla at the Battle of Jutland during World War I. As the battle began, British and German ships engaged each other in a long-range artillery battle. It quickly became apparent that there was a major flaw in the British ships. First, a heavy cruiser, the Lion, was hit by an artillery barrage and quickly sunk. Next the Indefatigable was hit in the powder magazine, and was blown to pieces. Then the Queen Mary was sunk, taking a crew of 1,200 sailors straight to the bottom. Watching this destruction among the proud ships of his fleet, Admiral Beatty turned to his bridge officer and said with characteristic British restraint, "There seems to be something wrong with our ships today, Chatfield." Though the British ships eventually turned back the German fleet, it was later discovered that there was a fatal flaw in the design of the British ships. Though they had heavily armored hulls, their wooden decks offered almost no protection against enemy long-range artillery shells that dropped almost straight down out of the sky. Only after the British began to armor their ships on top as well as on the sides did they stop losing ships to German long-range artillery. Effective armor is a crucial element of victory in any war including spiritual warfare...If you leave anything unprotected, the enemy will find a way to exploit that chink in your armor and he will destroy you. In Ephesians 6, Paul calls us to "be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power." How do we do this? How do we become strong in the Lord as Paul exhorts us to? By putting on "the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." And note that word **full**. We cannot merely put on this or that piece of God's armor in some random or incomplete fashion. We cannot leave any part of ourselves uncovered and unprotected. We cannot give our enemy any little opening, or he will exploit that opening to his advantage. ([Spiritual Warfare](#) - recommended!) (Bolding added)

Take up (353) ([analambano](#) from **ana** = up + **lambano** = take) means literally to take up, to assume, to take up in order to use, to take to one's self. Depending on the context **analambano** can mean to cause to go up, to lift up and carry away as in the Ascension of Christ (Acts 1:2, 11, 22), to take up in order to carry (Acts 7:43, Eph 6:13, 16), to pick up (someone to take along on a journey - 2Ti 4:11+), to take aboard a ship (Acts 20:13, 14).

Analambano is used 69 times in the Septuagint (LXX) Gen. 24:61; 45:19, 27; 46:5f; 48:1; 50:13; Exod. 4:20; 10:13, 19; 12:32, 34; 19:4; 28:12; Num. 14:1; 23:7, 18; 24:3, 15, 20f, 23; Deut. 1:41; 32:11; 2 Ki. 2:9ff; 2 Chr. 25:28; Est. 5:1; Job 13:14; 17:9; 21:12; 22:22; 27:21; 36:3; 40:10; Ps. 50:16; 72:3; 78:70; 139:9; 146:9; 147:6; Isa. 40:24; 46:4; 63:9; Jer. 4:6; 7:29; 13:20; 46:3; Lam. 3:41; 5:13; Ezek. 2:2; 3:12, 14; 8:3; 10:19; 11:1, 24; 12:6f; 16:61; 43:5; Dan. 2:5; 4:34; Hos. 11:3; Amos 5:26; 7:15; Zech. 5:9

TDNT notes that **analambano** in the **LXX** has such senses as "to load," "to set on the feet," "to raise" (a song), "to lift up" (in prayer), "to receive" (instruction), and "to keep upright." It can also become a term for rapture. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

Analambano is used 13 times in the NT...

Mark 16:19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was **received up** into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

Acts 1:2 until the day when He was **taken up**, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen....11 and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been **taken up** from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."...22 beginning with the baptism of John, until the day that He was **taken up** from us-- one of these should become a witness with us of His resurrection."

Acts 7:43 'You also **took along** the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of the god Rompha, the images which you made to worship them. I also will remove you beyond Babylon.'

Acts 10:16 And this happened three times; and immediately the object was **taken up** into the sky.

Acts 20:13 But we, going ahead to the ship, set sail for Assos, intending from there to **take** Paul on **board**; for thus he had arranged it, intending himself to go by land 14 And when he met us at Assos, we **took** him on **board** and came to Mitylene.

Acts 23:31 So the soldiers, in accordance with their orders, **took** Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris.

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore, **take up** the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Ephesians 6:16 in addition to all, **taking up** the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.

1 Timothy 3:16 And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, **Taken up** in glory.

2 Timothy 4:11 Only Luke is with me. **Pick up** Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.

Full armor (3833)(**panoplia** from **pás** = all, every + **hoplon** = weapon, originally any tool or implement for preparing a thing, became used in the plural for weapons of warfare) is literally wholly armed and refers to the complete set of instruments used in offensive and defensive war. The literal meaning referred to the full preparation of a foot soldier for offense and defense - the complete suit of armor. Certainly Paul could claim knowledge of the Roman soldier's armor, being chained to one for some three years.

Vincent commenting on **full armor** writes that there is "An interesting parallel passage, evidently founded upon this, in Ignatius' Epistle to Polycarp, vi. *"Please the captain under whom ye serve, from whom also ye shall receive your wages. Let no one of you be found a deserter. Let your baptism abide as your shield; your faith as your helmets; your love as your spear; your patience as your whole armor. Let your good works be your savings (the deposits), that you may receive what is justly to your credit."* Gibbon relates how the relaxation of discipline and the disuse of exercise rendered the (Roman) soldiers less willing and less able to support the fatigues of the service. They complained of the weight of their armor, and successively obtained permission to lay aside their cuirasses and helmets (Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire - chapter 27). (Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament)

This Greek word gives us our English word, **panoply**, which refers to a full suit of armor; ceremonial attire; something forming a protective covering; a magnificent or impressive array; display of all appropriate appurtenances.

TDNT writes that...

The soldier's equipment remains much the same for centuries but with minor variations, e.g., in the size of shields or the weight of armor. The Roman legionary carries a lance or spear, a shield, javelins, helmet, and breastplate of coat of mail. In the OT we read of shields, helmets, armor, shoes, spears, bows and arrows, and slings... The word is used only figuratively in the NT. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

Puritan **Thomas Brooks** alluded to the full armor when he wrote that...

Christ, the Scripture, your own hearts, and Satan's devices, are the four prime things that should be first and most studied and searched. If any cast off the study of these, they cannot be safe here, nor happy hereafter. It is my work as a Christian, but much more as I am a Watchman, to do my best to discover the fullness of Christ, the emptiness of the creature, and the snares of the great deceiver....

Wrestling Before God Oswald Chambers

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God...praying always... — Ephesians 6:13,18

You have to wrestle against the things that prevent you from getting to God, and you wrestle in prayer for other souls; but never say that you wrestle with God in prayer, it is scripturally untrue. If you do wrestle with God, you will be crippled all the rest of your life. If, when God comes in some way you do not want, you take hold of Him as Jacob did and wrestle with Him, you compel Him to put you out of joint. Don't be a hirpler* in God's ways, but be one who wrestles before God with things, becoming more than conqueror through Him. Wrestling before God tells in His Kingdom. If you ask me to pray for you and I am not complete in Christ, I may pray but it avails nothing; but if I am complete in Christ my prayer prevails all the time. Prayer is only effective when there is

completeness — “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God.”

Always distinguish between God’s order and His permissive will, i.e., His providential purpose towards us. God’s order is unchangeable; His permissive will is that with which we must wrestle before Him. It is our reaction to the permissive will of God that enables us to get at His order. “All things work together for good to them that love God” — to those who remain true to God’s order, to His calling in Christ Jesus. God’s permissive will is the means whereby His sons and daughters are to be manifested. We are not to be like jelly-fish saying — “It’s the Lord’s will.” We have not to put up a fight before God, not to wrestle with God, but to wrestle before God with things. Beware of squatting lazily before God instead of putting up a glorious fight so that you may lay hold of His strength.

*hirpler: one who walks with a limp or hobble.

RELATED RESOURCES

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION ON EPHESIANS 6:10-18...

- Ephesians 6:10
- Ephesians 6:11
- Ephesians 6:12
- Ephesians 6:13
- Ephesians 6:14
- Ephesians 6:15
- Ephesians 6:16
- Ephesians 6:17
- Ephesians 6:18

EPHESIANS 6:10-18 BY WAYNE BARBER

- Ephesians 6:10: Spiritual Warfare, Pt 1
- Ephesians 6:11: Spiritual Warfare, Pt 2
- Ephesians 6:14: Spiritual Warfare, Pt 3
- Ephesians 6:15,16 Spiritual Warfare, Pt 4
- Ephesians 6:17: Spiritual Warfare, Pt 5
- Ephesians 6:12,13 Spiritual Warfare, Pt 6
- Ephesians 6:18: Spiritual Warfare, Pt 7

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION ON THE FALLEN FLESH

- James 1:13
- James 1:14
- James 1:15

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- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Enemy Described](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Origin of Evil](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Wiles of the Devil](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Devil and the Nations](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Spiritism](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Spiritism and the Christian](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Demon Possession](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Common and Special Grace](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Strong Man Disarmed](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Christian and the Devil](#)

- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Schism in the Church \(1\)](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Schism in the Church \(2\)](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Cults](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Counterfeits](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Watchfulness](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Philosophy and Vain Deceit](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Knowledge Puffs Up](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 God in the Flesh](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Faith and Experience](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Physical; Psychological; Spiritual](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 True and False Assurance](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Attacks on Assurance \(1\)](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Attacks on Assurance \(2\)](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Quenching The Spirit \(1\)](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Quenching The Spirit \(2\)](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Temptation and Sin](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Discouragement](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Worry and Anxiety](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Mans Greatest Problem - Self](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 True and False Zeal](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Worldliness](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Call to Battle](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 God's Battle Not Ours](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Who Does the Fighting?](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Morale](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Food and Drink](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Exercise](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Discipline](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Promises](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Trust in God and...](#)
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 Things to Avoid](#)

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION ON RESISTING THE ROARING LION

- Exposition of 1Peter 5:8
- Exposition of 1Peter 5:9

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- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 Exposition

THE METAPHOR OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

- Soldier Illustrations
- Exposition of 2 Timothy 2:3-4
- Three Kinds of Soldiers - Ten Principles of Warfare
- Roman Soldier by Edward Gibbon (Decline & Fall of Roman Empire)
- The Roman Soldier - Description from Jewish Historian Josephus
- A Few Soldier Stories and Sermons

THE AMALEKITES: A PICTURE OF PERSISTENT SPIRITUAL WARFARE

- Jehovah Nissi: Exposition of Exodus 17:8-16

SO THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RESIST IN THE EVIL DAY: hina dunethete (2PAPS) antistenai (AAN) en te hemera te ponera:

- Eph 5:6,16; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Amos 6:3; Luke 8:13; Revelation 3:10
- Ephesians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Believer's Warfare, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Believer's Warfare, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

SUPERNATURAL POWER TO STAND YOUR GROUND

So that you will be able ([dunamai](#)) **to resist** ([anthistemi](#)) **in the evil** ([poneros](#)) **day** - **So that** ([hina](#)) introduces a purpose clause, the purpose for the full armor is explained. Whenever you encounter a "so that," pause to ponder the purpose. **Able** is not "able" in your strength, but in God's (Spirit's) supernatural provision of strength (**will be able** = divine passive ~ Spirit). The only way to resist unseen evil spiritual forces is by continually relying on the unseen benevolent Spirit of God. Enabled by the Spirit, now you can resist but note that resist is not passive but active voice. You say "so what?" Here's what -- active voice means you need to make the choice of your will to resist. The Spirit will not force you to resist. In short we see the "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)". The power to resist is God's but the choice to resist is yours. But in fairness if we were left to our fallen flesh to make the choice to resist, we would not resist. It is even the Spirit Who gives us the not only the power to resist but the desire to resist (cf Php 2:13NLT+). But again even when He gives you the desire, you (I) still have to carry it out by making the right choice. Have you ever been sorely tempted and were able to resist the temptation? That was His power working in you, but it was you making the choice to resist. The next day the same temptation may come in force, but this time you fail because you did not rely wholly on the Holy Spirit. Is this dynamic somewhat mysterious? I think it is, but I think that it is Scriptural. I know from experience that my fallen flesh can at times override the Spirit enabled desire to resist and I fall into sin. Whose fault is that? Mine, not God's. Only enemy takes no furlough from the fight, which is why continual vigilance is necessary on our part. Able is [dunamai](#) used three times in this short treatise on spiritual warfare and each time it is in the passive voice (divine passive) indicating an external source of enablement to which the believer must be willing to yield and receive from the Holy Spirit! (Ep 6:11+, Ep 6:13+, Ep 6:16+) Attitudes such as self confidence, self sufficiency and self assurance, etc, have to be cast off like filthy garments of unrighteousness if we are to receive and act on the divine empowerment God graciously makes available.

Wuest adds that [anthistemi](#) means "means "to withstand, to be firm against someone else's onset" rather than "to strive against that one." The Christian would do well to remember that he cannot fight the devil. The devil was the most powerful and wise angel God created. He still retains much of that power and wisdom as a glance down the pages of history will easily show. While the Christian cannot take the offensive against Satan, yet he can stand his ground against his attacks. Cowardice never wins against Satan, only courage. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1](#), [Volume 2](#), [Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

Grant Richison makes the important observation that resist ([anthistemi](#)) "is a term of defense, not offense. The Christian must build fortifications against the Devil. The Christian is at war. We should establish bulwarks of faith against our enemy. We resist by obeying the commands of verse eight. We would do well to remember that we cannot fight the Devil in ourselves." (Today's Word)

The **Net Bible** note states that "the term **anthistemi** carries the idea of resisting or opposing something or someone. In Eph 6:13, when used in combination with stēnai ("**stand firm**") and in a context of battle imagery, it seems to have the idea of resisting, standing firm, and being able to stand your ground." (NET Bible Notes)

A Roman centurion, according to Polybius, had to be the kind of man who could be relied upon to resist or stand fast and not give way, even when hard-pressed. So too for the Christian soldier who is called to **resist** the devil, to **forsake** the world, and to **deny** the lusts of the flesh. As discussed elsewhere in these notes, the alert believer must constantly remember that Satan's desire is to tempt believers to doubt, to deny, to disregard, and to disobey God. So strengthened by the Spirit and clothed with God's full armor, resist him!

Remember also that in spiritual warfare, there is **no** middle ground and **no** neutrality (Satan, unlike Hitler, recognizes no "spiritual Switzerland"). To stand with the Lord is to stand against everything sinful and worldly that formerly was appealing, corrupting, and enslaving.

Matthew Henry adds that "We must not yield to the devil's allurements and assaults, but oppose them. Satan is said to **stand up against us**, 1 Chr. 21:1. If he **stand up against us**, we must **stand against** him; set up, and keep up, an interest in opposition to the devil. Satan is the wicked one, and his kingdom is the kingdom of sin: to stand against Satan is to strive against sin. That you may be able to withstand in the evil day, in the day of temptation, or of any sore affliction."

Believers are not to fight with one another but **stand against** their true enemy. Believers also need to guard against an unhealthy, arrogant attitude which says "we're going to whip the devil!"

Paul's call to **resist** could be paraphrased "**hold your ground**". The idea of not giving ground in spiritual battle certainly has its counterpart in literal warfare where the opposing sides are dug in, hunkered down and striving **not to give an inch**. This same idea of **not giving ground** was alluded to in Ephesians 4 where Paul wrote...

BE ANGRY, AND yet **DO NOT SIN**; **do not let** the sun **go down** on your anger, and **do not give** the devil an **opportunity (topos** - see discussion below). (In these two passages, Paul, like a commanding general in the fierceness of battle, barks out 4 **commands** all in the **present imperative** and three of these commands are with the negative, a Greek construction which forbids the continuance of an action which was already going on!) (Ep 4:26, 27+)

Paul commands the Ephesian believers to stop sinning (getting angry for the wrong reason, wrong time, wrong attitude, etc), to stop letting the sun go down on their anger and to stop giving the devil an **opportunity**. Remember that **opportunity (topos)** was used in Greek to refer to a territory, land, a defined place, an area ("District," "town," "dwelling-place"). In short **topos** can refer to an area of any size depending on the context. As used figuratively here **topos** refers to a place, opportunity or occasion. Paul is saying for these believers to stop giving the devil a foothold or base for operations which parallels his instruction here in Ephesians 6:13 to hold their ground and not give an inch of territory to the devil or his minions! Don't make a "**spot**" for the devil to come sit in your life or between you and another individual, especially your mate! He specializes in driving a wedge between husband and wife (cf Genesis 3:1, 12, 13+) and anger is one of his primary vehicles. It is interesting that **topos** is used in another passage on anger "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave **room (topos)** for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. (Ro 12:19-+) Leave room for the divine wrath - leave room for it to work. Do not get in God's way, by attempting to take vengeance into your own hands.

Even the best motivated anger can sour, and we are therefore to put it aside at the end of the day. Taken to bed, it is likely to give the devil an opportunity to use it for his purposes. Saying this all another way "**hold your ground**"!

So strengthened in the Lord, "**take up the full armor of God**" so that when the battle is at its fiercest, you as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, will be able to **hold your line** against even the most determined enemy assault. In so doing you will find that when the assault passes, it will be found that not an inch of territory has been yielded to the enemy.

Resist means to defend oneself against the devil **not** to attack him. On the other hand to cower before the devil is to invite sure defeat. Clothed with the garment of a righteous lifestyle and strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit ensures effective resistance to diabolical attacks and procures his flight. On the other hand the believer is instructed (commanded) to flee from various evils...

- **Flee immorality** 1Cor 6:18+
- **Flee from idolatry** 1Cor 10:14+
- **Flee from these things [love of money], you man of God** 1Ti 6:11+
- **Flee from youthful lusts** 2Ti 2:22+

Notice that every use of **flee** in these passages is in the present imperative and thus is a command to continuously flee. The believer is **never** instructed to **flee** from the Devil but to **resist** him!

Constable - "Whereas God commands us to forsake the world and deny the lusts of the flesh we should resist the devil. Satan's desire is to get the Christian to doubt, to deny, to disregard, and to disobey what God has said." ([Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#))

In a parallel passage **James** also uses verb **anthistemi** calling on believers to...

Submit (line up under - do it now! It is urgent! = aorist imperative) therefore (because God opposes the proud who refuse to submit but gives grace to the humble who willingly, lovingly yield to Him) to God. **Resist** (**anthistemi** - aorist imperative) = take your stand against) the devil and he will flee from you. (Jas 4:7+)

Comment: What a paradox - it is the humble man or woman that Satan will flee from, not the one who is filled with pride! People who believe that the Devil is red believe a religious fairy tale. This passage makes it very clear that the Devil is yellow! The Devil is not afraid of us but of our faith. By depending on the Lord the weakest Christian can not only check the Devil but he can vanquish him. It is amazing that God has given Christians the power to resist the greatest creature ever made! The Devil is mighty but not invincible. Some people act as if the Devil is almighty. This is a sad mistake because it defers to him too much. Furthermore, an attitude of indecision and doubt when facing the devil makes him bold and aggressive in his attacks but confronting him with a resolute will and firm confidence in God's promise (that the enemy must flee) unmasks him as a coward. The devil cannot lead a man or woman into sin

without the consent of that person's will. As long as the individual's will is submissive to the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that person can stand victorious against any deception and seduction the devil might cast his or her way.

Warren Wiersbe makes a great point (related to both the previous passages) writing that "Before we can **stand** before Satan, we must **bow** before God. Peter resisted the Lord and ended up submitting to Satan!" (See [Be Hopeful - 1 Peter](#))

Peter uses **anthistemi** calling on believers to

Humble (aorist imperative - be willing to bow down to Him) yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time 7 casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. 8 **Be of sober spirit** (aorist imperative), **be on the alert** (aorist imperative). Your adversary (see word study antidikos), the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But **resist** (**anthistemi** - aorist imperative) him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. (See **notes** 1 Peter 5:6; 5:7; 5:8; 5:9)

Comment: **Grant Richison** writes that "This lion produces a howling or roaring sound. The lion uses his roar to frighten his game. By his roar, he immobilizes his victims. His roar is a weapon. What the Devil cannot accomplish through allurements he tries to achieve through dread. Lions usually range near six hundred pounds, standing four feet high. They run at twenty feet per bound and at about a hundred yards in five seconds. They are totally unpredictable. They will attack for no apparent reason. They have extremely powerful voices. **Fear will blunt an aggressive Christian life.** A roaring lion intimidates by his roar. The Devil intimidates by fear. He casts fear into weak Christians because that will intimidate them from a life of faith. As a lion in the wild chases a herd of gazelles and runs down the weak of the herd, so the Devil usually catches weak Christians first because he freezes them in fear. Fear incapacitates us from moving ahead with our Christian walk. (Bolding added. From Today's Word)

Despite the devil's deceptions, accusations, power, hatred and ferocity, we can successfully **resist** because God commands us to do so and His commands always include His enablement. Be aware that although the devil is a defeated foe, he is also a persistent foe (**prowls** in 1 Peter 5:8 is = continually on the prowl!). For example, Luke records that

when the devil had finished every temptation (of Jesus), he departed from Him until an **opportune** time. (Lk 4:13+).

A word of caution is in order in regard to standing and resisting the devil. A believer should never "discuss" things with the Devil or his minions. Eve made this mistake, and paid for it dearly. Take your **stand** on the Word of Truth and then you will be able to **withstand** his attacks that come as lying deceptions.

In his first epistle John has several passages that reinforce the truth that the believer can resist the devil

I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and **you have overcome** (nikao - come off victorious over) **the evil one** ([poneros](#) - the devil and his evil angels). (1Jn 2:14+)

Comment: These young men know sound doctrine and so are strong against sin and error because they have His Word in them and are enable to overcome the wiles of the devil, who makes havoc of spiritual children (Ep 4:14+)

You are from God, little children, and have overcome (nikao become victorious over - perfect tense = our state) them; because **greater is He who is in you** (the Spirit of Christ) than **he who is in the world** (the spirit of the devil's minions) (1Jn 4:4+).

Comment: The context speaks especially of false doctrine, which the Spirit of God will help the believer discern as error.

We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him and **the evil one** does not touch him. (1Jn 5:18+)

Comment: The word for "touch" means to lay hold of or to grasp in order to harm. Because the believer belongs to God, Satan must operate within God's sovereignty and cannot function beyond what God allows, as taught for example in Job 2:5. God protects His children and places definite limits on Satan's influence or power.

King Solomon, apparently a little older and wiser, warned...

Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net, and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an **evil time** when it suddenly falls on them. (Eccl 9:12)

Paul had already given believers instructions on how we were to live **in the evil day**. We are to be...

making the most of (redeeming = exagorazo) your time, because **the days are evil** (poneros = actively harmful and hurtful). (Ep 5:16+)

When is the **evil day**? Although there is not complete agreement on the meaning of this term, the evil day surely began one day in the garden of Eden when the "**Evil One**" (Eph 6:16+) tempted Adam and Eve and

"through one man sin entered into the **world**, and death through sin, and so death spread to **all** men, because **all** sinned" (Ro 5:12+).

And so the "evil day" began the moment sin entered the world. And since God gives no deferments or exemptions from "military service", His people are at war and will continue to be at war until He returns and takes charge of earth. Therefore each day in a believer's life is potentially an evil day in which we face an evil enemy.

Any **day** when the **evil** one comes upon us in force is **the evil day**. Every day of temptation is an evil day in this sense for the Christian. The phrase "the evil day" at least implies that not all days are evil. Some days as we have all experienced are worse than others. There are seasons in our lives when pressures are more intense, and when problems, trials, and temptations seem to gang up on us all at once. Surely these would classify as evil days. This phrase probably does not signify a literal twenty-four-hour day, for it could be a day, a week, or even years in length. But by the mercy and grace of God, thankfully not all of life is a relentless, excruciating trial. So while every day is not an evil day, we have to agree with God's Word when it tells us that, in general, life is an unrelenting struggle. The struggle varies in intensity from time to time, but it extends from the cradle to the grave.

MacDonald adds that "**the evil day** probably refers to any time when the enemy comes against us like a flood. Satanic opposition seems to occur in waves, advancing and receding. Even after our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, the devil left Him for a season (Lk 4:13). ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

How is this evil characterized? Paul says it is "**evil**" which is Greek **poneros** which means "malignant" evil that is actively opposed to and corrupting of that which is good. Thus **poneros** is actively harmful or hurtful. The root word for poneros interestingly conveys the ideas of toil or hard work, implying accompanying pain and distress and signifies the most tense or strenuous effort, e.g., of the soldier in battle, or the exertions of messengers or manual workers.

Bratcher explains that "Here the evil day is the day of combat with the spiritual forces; it is not the last day, the final battle between the forces of God and the forces of evil, but the day, any day, when the Christian has to go into combat against the forces of evil. Beare thinks the word may reflect the language of astrology, which would claim to tell a person when that person's "evil day" would be. In a number of languages one cannot speak of the evil day, for the day itself is not evil but only the events which take place on such a day are destructive and bad. Therefore the evil day may be rendered as "the day of bad events" or "the day when evil strikes" ([The United Bible Societies' New Testament Handbook Series](#))

Expositor's explains **evil day** this way "The day of evil" is neither a particular juncture like approaching death or the last great satanic outbreak at the end of the age nor the whole of the present age (Ep 5:16). It is "**when things are at their worst**" (NEB)—because of "the devil's schemes" (Ep 6:11). ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

Calvin comments "By this expression ("evil day") he rouses them from security, bids them prepare themselves for hard, painful, and dangerous conflicts, and, at the same time, animates them with the hope of victory; for amidst the greatest dangers they will be safe."

The day is evil, and the enemy is evil, but "if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Ro 8:31+)

Will be able (1410) (**dunamai** - see study of related word **dunamis**) means to have power by virtue of inherent ability and resources. Note the **passive voice** which indicates that this is an internal enablement provided by an outside source, the Spirit of God. The tense is **aorist** so Paul is saying that we will be enabled to effectively resist.

Evil (4190) (**poneros** from **pónos** = labor, sorrow, pain) refers to evil and means active evil in opposition to good. When Satan is referred to as the "**Evil One**", the NT writers chose **poneros** rather than **kakos**, this latter word basically denoting a lack of something (it is not as it ought to be and thus is bad) but also used to refer evil in a moral sense.

Day (2250) (**hemera**) is literally the time space between dawn and dark or the whole 24 hours. In the present context, **day** refers

more to a point or period of time. **Wuest** writes that "The definite article before "day," marks it out as a particular day, probably, as Expositors says, "the day of violent temptation and assault, whenever that may come to us during the present time." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

Resist (436) (**anthistemi** from **anti** = against + **histemi** = stand) means literally to stand or set against. It means to arrange in battle against and so pictures a **face to face** confrontation. It means to set one's self against, to stand firm against someone else's onset, to oppose (place opposite or against), to resist by actively opposing pressure or power, to withstand (oppose with firm determination). It involves not only a psychological attitude but also a corresponding behavior. It was used to refer to an army arranging in battle against the enemy force and so to array against.

Anthistemi suggests vigorously opposing, bravely resisting, standing face-to-face against an adversary, holding your ground. As a medical student I learned that **antihistamines** (derived from "anthistemi") block or antagonize **histamine**, and in the same way **anthistemi** tells us that with the authority and spiritual weapons granted to us we can stand against all evil forces. Note carefully that Paul does not say for us to hunt down or to actively pursue our spiritual enemies (don't worry...they will find us!), but to remain steadfast and immovable girded in the full armor of God in the face of persistent attack.

Anthistemi is used 45 times in the Septuagint (LXX). After Moses died Jehovah Himself spoke to Moses' successor, Joshua, encouraging him with the declaration that

"No man will be able to **stand before** (LXX = anthistemi = stand against) you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you." (Joshua 1:5+)

God made the following promise to Israel if she was obedient to Moses...

"The LORD will cause your enemies who **rise up against** (LXX = anthistemi = stand against) you to be defeated before you; they shall come out against you one way and shall flee before you seven ways." (Dt 28:7+)

From Our Daily Bread - In an article for Youth Ministries magazine, a 14-year veteran of the Navy SEALs describes the color-code system they use to indicate levels of combat readiness. Each stage has a parallel in spiritual warfare.

Condition White

The soldier is relaxed and daydreaming, unaware of his surroundings. A Christian in this condition is easy prey for Satan.

Condition Yellow

The soldier is relaxed physically but alert mentally. A believer at this level may sense trouble coming, but he's not ready to confront it.

Condition Orange

The soldier is physically prepared, mentally alert, and ready to fight. A believer at this stage has on the full armor of God.

Condition Red

As in condition orange, the soldier is ready to fight. The difference is experience. A battle-seasoned Christian knows quickly what to do because of his experience and familiarity with Scripture.

Wherever we as followers of Christ happen to be--at work, in the mall, on a business trip, even among fellow believers--we need to know about Satan's methods and be prepared to resist. He always seems to attack at our most vulnerable moments. But if we stay alert and armed, we can fend off his most powerful attacks. --D C Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Thinking It Over - Which color code describes your spiritual condition?

How have you responded recently to temptation?

Are you studying and obeying God's Word?

**Spiritual victory comes only
to those who are prepared for battle.**

- Malachi 3:2; Luke 21:36; Colossians 4:12; Revelation 6:17
- [Ephesians 6 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 6:12-13 Spiritual Warfare - 6](#) - Wayne Barber
- [Ephesians 6:12-13 Why Christians Must be Fighters](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Believer's Warfare, Part 1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 6:10-13 The Believer's Warfare, Part 2](#) - John MacArthur

NEB "to complete every task"

NAB "do all that your duty requires"

TNT "when you can do no more"

Brc "you will be able to see things through to the end."

When Martin Luther was placed on trial for his views before the council in the German city of Worms, amid high drama he reportedly affirmed,

"Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me, Amen."

Having done (2716) (**katergazomai** [word study] from **katá** = intensifies meaning of verb + **ergazomai** = work or engage in an activity involving considerable expenditure of effort) means to work out fully and thoroughly, to accomplish or achieve an end, to finish or carry something to its conclusion. To work so as to bring something to fulfillment or successful completion and implies doing something with thoroughness. It means to do that from which something results. This verb always means to complete the effort and the work begun.

Puritan writer **William Gurnall** says that "In heaven we shall appear, not in armor, but in robes of glory. But here these are to be worn night and day; we must walk, work, and sleep in them, or else we are not true soldiers of Christ...We must not confide in the armor of God, but in the God of this armor, because all our weapons are only "mighty through God".

Having done all includes both dressing oneself in God's armor and resisting Satan. Having done everything that is required. Having done all these, be ready, for the Devil will attack again and again. Vincent adds having done "everything that the crisis demands" We are not called to do merely as well as our neighbors; nor even to do well on the whole, but to do **ALL** (Greek = **pas**, meaning all without exception!) — to leave nothing undone that can contribute to the success of the spiritual battle and then we shall be able to **stand firm**.

Katergazomai was used by the Romans to describe "working a mine" or "working a field" and in each case there were benefits that followed such diligence. The mine would yield precious metals...and the field would yield fruit and crops.

William Barclay says that **katergazomai** "always has the idea of bringing to completion...'carry to its perfect conclusion'".

TDNT writes that **katergazomai** is "found from the time of Sophocles, means **a**. "to bear down to the ground," "to overcome," maintaining the older local sense of **kata**; **b**. "to work at," "make." Refined by constant use, it gradually takes on the sense of the simple, so that the verb signifies working at, and finally **accomplishing a task**." (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](#))

Expositor's explains that...

When the emergency is over for the time being, it will be found that not an inch of territory has been yielded. Christians will "have done everything" not only in preparing for the conflict but also in pursuing it. The verb has to do with achievements either in war or in the games. ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#))

Everything (537) (**pas**) in context refers to everything which the crisis demands.

Bratcher and **Nida** explain that...

In this context it would seem that the writer is talking about a constant series of battles with the enemy, not the final, eschatological, once and for all battle; in this view, the participial phrase would mean that after fighting each battle to the end the Christian warrior will still be on his feet, ready for the next battle. ([The United Bible Societies' New Testament Handbook Series](#))

Stand - In Inductive Bible Study, a "key word" is one which functions like a key to unlock the truths in a passage and is often

determined to be "key" by repetition but not all words that are repeated are "key". In these passages on spiritual warfare clearly "**stand**" (Greek = **histemi**) is a key word as it occurs three times (Ep 6:11, 13, 14- notes Ep 6:11; 13; 14). In addition and even the word "**resist**" (**anthistemi**) here in Ephesians 6:13 is derived from the Greek word for "stand" (**histemi**).

Stand on truth -- The Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's. If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.... We are more than conquerors through Him...For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast. (1Sa 17:47; Ro 8:31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37-notes; 1Cor 15:57, 58; 1Jn 5:4, 5)

Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

by George Duffield

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the solemn watchword hear;
If while ye sleep He suffers, away with shame and fear;
Where'er ye meet with evil, within you or without,
Charge for the God of battles, and put the foe to rout.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict, in this His glorious day.
Ye that are brave now serve Him against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger, and strength to strength oppose.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you, ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the Gospel armor, each piece put on with prayer;
Where duty calls or danger, be never wanting there.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, each soldier to his post,
Close up the broken column, and shout through all the host:
Make good the loss so heavy, in those that still remain,
And prove to all around you that death itself is gain.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle, the next the victor's song.
To those who vanquish evil a crown of life shall be;
They with the King of Glory shall reign eternally.

Stand firm ([2476](#)) (**histemi**) means literally to support oneself on the feet in an erect position. It means to take up or maintain a specified position or posture. In context it conveys the idea of digging in (the Roman sandals had spikes for this purpose). To "**stand**" was used as a military term for holding on to a position.

Stand firm on the truth, the sound doctrines which Paul wrote about earlier in Ephesians -- e.g., the believer's access to the same source of power that brought about Christ's resurrection (Ep 1:19-note), Christ's position far above all demonic powers (Ep 1:21-note), Christ's indisputable Headship over all things (Ep 1:22, 23-notes), and our inseparable union with Christ (Ep 2:5, 6-see notes Ep 2:5; 2:6) to mention just a few of the truths Paul had taught the Ephesian saints about their position and power **in Christ**. It follows that because it is so vital for saints to know who we are in Christ before we can **stand firm**, any teaching on spiritual warfare which restricts itself to Ephesians 6:10-18 will at best provide only a partial view of truth on this crucial topic.

From a practical standpoint one **stands firm** by living the obedient, Scripture-dominated, Spirit-empowered life - the Spirit in such a state is not quenched or grieved and strengthens the obedient believer to **stand firm**. The greatest weapon we have in warfare is not what we **say** to the devil but how we **live** the "Christ life". Obedience, surrender, submission to God and His Word of Truth -- this

is the believer's greatest "weapon" in spiritual warfare. It's not **binding** but it's **bowing**, saying "**yes**" to Jesus and enabled by His Spirit committing to do His Word...at the moment He says do it...then at that moment of loving obedience to your Lord you have become a veritable "fortress" against the devil.

Believers are to face the enemy, not converse with him or turn their backs on him. The moment we face up to him that is the first step to victory. Victory is not something we have to win, but is something that has already been won for us at Calvary (Col 2:15-note). Believers do not fight as much **for** victory as **from** victory.

We must live in light of the fact that just as much as "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for our life," so it is true that "Satan hates you and has a terrible plan for our life"! The reality is that believers have an enemy who wishes nothing but evil for us and who does not rest or grow weary in seeking to accomplish his nefarious objective.

Using the metaphor of a battle, in the military sense to **stand firm** meant to hold a watch post or to stand and hold a critical position on a battlefield while under attack! The intent of Paul's exhortation is not unlike that of our Lord to the embattled church at Thyatira, whom He commanded, "**hold fast until I come**" (Rev 2:25-note). Each of us as believers need to be strengthened in the inner man, letting our mind be affected by the truth, and letting the Spirit of Christ motivate us (Ezekiel 36:27, Php 2:12-note) and live His life through us. Stand firm by being in His word, obeying His word, repenting quickly and returning to your first Love. In spiritual warfare, if you are **disobedient** you are **deceived** and a deceived person doesn't even know it! Furthermore when you are deceived you are a prime target for defeat! That is how good the Deceiver is. Remember his territory is the darkness, this **present world system** (see below), and even though believers have been transferred out of darkness and into God's marvelous light, we can still choose to place ourselves under his domain by willing disobedience.

John Piper has an insightful comment on this present "**world system**" writing that...

"We must cultivate the mindset of exiles. What this does mainly is sober us up and wake us up so that we don't drift with the world and take for granted that the way the world thinks and acts is the best way. We don't assume that what is on TV is helpful to the soul; we don't assume that the priorities of advertisers is helpful to the soul; we don't assume that the strategies and values of business and industry are helpful to the soul. We don't assume that any of this glorifies God. We stop and we think and we consult the Wisdom of our own country, heaven, and we don't assume that the conventional wisdom of this age is God's wisdom. We get our bearings from God in his word. When you see yourself as an alien and an exile with your citizenship in heaven, and God as your only Sovereign, you stop drifting with the current of the day. You ponder what is good for the soul and what honors God in everything: food, cars, videos, bathing suits, birth control, driving speeds, bed times, financial savings, education for the children, unreached peoples, famine, refugee camps, sports, death, and everything else. Aliens get their cue from God and not the world." [\(The War Against the Soul and the Glory of God -- Desiring God\)](#)

Guzik makes a wise comment noting that...

Many Christians have a wrong idea about spiritual warfare. They picture the Christian army as assaulting the kingdom of hell, and on patrol against demons and spiritual enemies. Much of this is based on a misunderstanding of Matthew 16:18: And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. It's easy to see how a first reading of this passage gives the picture of the church as an assaulting army, bombarding the gates of Hell, and plundering Hell and conquering it. The problem is that this understanding is completely inconsistent with the rest of the Scriptures. Nowhere do we read of the church assaulting or conquering Hell in this way. Instead, we should understand what is meant by the phrase "the gates of Hades." In the ancient world, the city council, judges, and city leadership gathered together at the gates of the city. It was the place where the city life was planned, organized, strategized. It's in this sense that Jesus speaks of the gates of Hades. He means that no satanic strategy, no plot from Hell will ultimately succeed against the church. Instead of picturing the army of the church seeking out and attacking some kind of demonic fortress, we are to have the idea that Jesus illustrated in His ministry. Jesus didn't patrol around, looking for demons to conquer. That would almost be allowing demons to set the agenda for His ministry. Instead, Jesus knew what God the Father wanted Him to do, He set about doing it, and He dealt with satanic opposition when it arose. When satanic opposition raised itself, Jesus stood against it and was not moved.

So the idea is that God has given us a call, a mission, a course to fulfill. Satan will do his best to stop it. When he attacks and intimidates, we are to **stand**. It is plain that this is Paul's emphasis in Ephesians 6:11 and 6:13. We love an energetic church that advances the Kingdom of God so vigorously that it shakes the councils of hell, but we don't let principalities and powers set our agenda. We do the Lord's work and stand against every hint of spiritual opposition.

God gives the Christian a glorious standing to maintain by faith and spiritual warfare:

- · We stand in grace (Ro 5:2-note)
- · We stand in the gospel (1Cor 15:1).

- · We stand in courage and strength (1Cor 16:13).
- · We stand in faith (2Cor 1:24).
- · We stand in Christian liberty (Gal 5:1).
- · We stand in Christian unity (Php 1:27-note).
- · We stand in the Lord (Php 4:1-note).
- · We should stand perfect and complete in the will of God (Col 4:12-note).

All in all, there is a lot bound up in that little word, **stand**.

- · It means that we are going to be attacked.
- · It means that we must not be frightened.
- · It means that we must not droop or slouch, being uncertain or half-hearted in the fight (no self-pity is allowed).
- · It means that we are at our position and alert.
- · It means that we do not give even a thought to retreat. [Ephesians 6](#)

John MacArthur writes that "When Martin Luther stood before the Diet of Worms he was accused of heresy. After being condemned for declaring that men are saved by faith alone in Christ alone, he declared, "My conscience is captive to the Word of God. ... **Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.**" Every believer who is faithful to God's Word cannot do otherwise than stand firm." ([MacArthur, J: Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press](#)) (Bolding added)

Craig Brian Larson gives the following illustration - Recently NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ran an article about the Alaskan bull moose. The males of the species battle for dominance during the fall breeding season, literally going head-to-head with antlers crunching together as they collide. Often the antlers, their only weapon are broken. That ensures defeat. The heftiest moose, with the largest and strongest antlers, triumphs. Therefore, the battle fought in the fall is really won during the summer, when the moose eat continually. The one that consumes the best diet for growing antlers and gaining weight will be the heavyweight in the fight. Those that eat inadequately sport weaker antlers and less bulk. There is a lesson here for us. Spiritual battles await. Satan will choose a season to attack. Will we be victorious, or will we fall? Much depends on what we do now—before the wars begin. The bull-moose principle: Enduring faith, strength, and wisdom for trials are best developed before they're needed. (Craig Brian Larson quoted in [10000 Sermon Illustrations. Dallas: Biblical Studies Press](#))

As **J. Vernon McGee** says "The Bible speaks of believers as pilgrims. As pilgrims we are to walk through the world. The Bible speaks of us as witnesses, and we are to go to the ends of the earth. As athletes we are to run. We are to run with our eyes fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ: "... and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ..." (Heb. 12:1-note, He 12:2-note). However, when the Bible speaks of us as fighters, it says we **are to stand**. Very frankly, I would rather do a great deal of old-fashioned standing than fighting...I have never been enthusiastic about a group of defeated Christians singing, "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war." I think it is more scriptural for the believer to sing, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross." Just to be able to stand in an evil day is a victory for the believer." ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

In his third short epistle the apostle **John** warned believers of the need to **"Watch"** (present imperative) yourselves that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward." (2 John 8).

Comment: Note **who** we are to be "watching"! The present imperative indicates that this is a command calling for continual vigilance as our flesh and the forces of darkness are relentlessly out to ruin us and disqualify us for a full reward at the **Bema Seat** although our salvation is secure because of our inseparable union with Christ which is based on God's immutable, binding New Covenant

Paul's one great fear was that, "that possibly after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified (see word study on adokimos)" (1Cor 9:27)

Comment: This too should be every believer's healthy fear.

John MacArthur commenting on these previous passages writes that Paul "was not afraid of losing his salvation but his reward and, even more importantly, his usefulness to the Lord. Countless men and women have faithfully taught Sunday school for years, led many people to Jesus Christ, pastored a church, led Bible studies, ministered to the sick, and done every sort of service in the Lord's name—only to one day give up, turn their backs on His work, and disappear into the world. The circumstances differ, but the underlying reason is always the same: they took God's armor off and thereby lost the courage, the power, and the desire to stand firm." ([MacArthur, J: Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

NO FURLONGHS

IN THIS SPIRITUAL WAR

In his excellent devotional **Morning and Evening**, **C H Spurgeon** encourages those of us who might be being tempted to take a short "furlough" from the war writing that...

Perseverance is the badge of true saints. The Christian life is not a beginning only in the ways of God, but also a continuance in the same as long as life lasts. It is with a Christian as it was with the great Napoleon: he said,

"Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me."

So, under God, dear brother (and sister) in the Lord, conquest has made you what you are, and conquest must sustain you. Your motto must be, "Excelsior." (**Ed note:** Excelsior is a word used in the names of hotels and products to indicate superior quality)

He only is a true conqueror, and shall be crowned at the last, who continues till war's trumpet is blown no more. **Perseverance** is, therefore, the target of all our spiritual enemies.

The **world** does not object to your being a Christian for a time, if she can but tempt you to cease your pilgrimage, and settle down to buy and sell with her in Vanity Fair.

The **flesh** will seek to ensnare you, and to prevent your pressing on to glory.

"It is weary work being a pilgrim; come, give it up. Am I always to be mortified? Am I never to be indulged? Give me at least a furlough from this constant warfare."

Satan will make many a fierce attack on your perseverance; it will be the mark for all his arrows. He will strive to hinder you in service: he will insinuate that you are doing no good; and that you want rest. He will endeavour to make you weary of suffering, he will whisper,

"Curse God, and die."

Or he will attack your steadfastness:

"What is the good of being so zealous? Be quiet like the rest; sleep as do others, and let your lamp go out as the other virgins do."

Or he will assail your doctrinal sentiments:

"Why do you hold to these denominational creeds? Sensible men are getting more liberal; they are removing the old landmarks: fall in with the times."

Wear your shield, Christian, therefore, close upon your armour, and cry mightily unto God, that by His Spirit you may endure to the end.

John MacArthur gives a personal anecdote illustrating the idea of **continuing to stand firm**. He writes "When I was in Scotland, a man approached me in Frazerborough and asked, "Is your father named Jack MacArthur? I told him yes. He said, "Your father came to Ireland at least thirty years ago with two other men to hold a revival in Belfast and all around Ireland. I went to hear your father speak, and at the meeting I received Jesus Christ and dedicated my life to the ministry. I am a pastor because the Lord used your father to minister to me. Would you tell him that when you see him?" I told him I would. Then he asked, "Where is your father now?" I told him he was ministering like he always had. He asked, "Is he still faithful to the Word?" I said, "Yes, he is still faithful—still standing." "Good," he replied. "What happened to the other men?" I said, "I'm sorry to report that one became an apostate and the other died an alcoholic." Three men went to Ireland and ministered to many people. But thirty years later, when the dust cleared, only one was left standing." ([MacArthur, J., Jr. 1992. How to Meet the Enemy. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books](#))

The greatest joys come in the greatest victories, and the greatest victories come from the greatest battles—when they are fought in the power and with the armor of the Lord. -- John MacArthur

The most deadly battles are not always the "biggest" as illustrated by the following story...

Bobby Leach, an Englishman, startled the world some years ago by his daring feat of going over Niagara Falls in a barrel. He came through the experience miraculously unscratched. Some time later, Leach was walking down the street and slipped on a small orange peel. He was rushed to the hospital with a badly fractured leg. Believers are more frequently brought down by a minor skirmish than by a major battle.

Do you ever wonder whether the Bible can be trusted? Scottish reformer John Knox confessed that he passed through a dark time when his soul was filled with "anger, wrath, and indignation, which it conceived against God, calling all His promises in doubt." Do you sometimes wonder if God exists? The staunchest of Puritans, Increase Mather, wrote in his diary that he was

"greatly molested with temptations to atheism."

Are you ever so filled with questions that you feel at times like an unbeliever? Martin Luther sadly admitted,

"For more than a week Christ was wholly lost. I was shaken by desperation and blasphemy against God."

Don't be surprised if you pass through similar struggles. As followers of Christ, we are in conflict with God's enemy, the devil, the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). We wrestle against him and "the rulers of the darkness of this age" (Eph. 6:12). Two of the pieces of armor God has provided for us when we are attacked by doubt are "truth" and "the shield of faith." They can "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one" (v14-16). As we saturate our minds with God's Word, our faith will be strengthened. Then we'll be able to stand when doubts assail us. --V C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The devil is subtle, deceptive, and sly
He's clever and tricks us to swallow his lie.
But his cunning methods we're sure to discern
By making God's warnings our daily concern. --DJD

The best protection against Satan's lies is to know God's truth.

Craig Brian Larson gives the following illustration...

Recently NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ran an article about the Alaskan bull moose. The males of the species battle for dominance during the fall breeding season, literally going head-to-head with antlers crunching together as they collide. Often the antlers, their only weapon are broken. That ensures defeat. The heftiest moose, with the largest and strongest antlers, triumphs. Therefore, the battle fought in the fall is really won during the summer, when the moose eat continually. The one that consumes the best diet for growing antlers and gaining weight will be the heavyweight in the fight. Those that eat inadequately sport weaker antlers and less bulk.

There is a lesson here for us. Spiritual battles await. Satan will choose a season to attack. Will we be victorious, or will we fall? Much depends on what we do now—before the wars begin. The bull-moose principle: Enduring faith, strength, and wisdom for trials are best developed before they're needed. (Craig Brian Larson quoted in [10000 Sermon Illustrations, Dallas: Biblical Studies Press](#))

Be Careful! - Several years ago my wife Carolyn and I were hiking on Mount Rainier in Washington when we came to a swollen, glacial stream. Someone had flattened one side of a log and dropped it across the river to form a crude bridge, but there was no handrail and the log was slippery.

The prospect of walking on the wet log was frightening, and Carolyn didn't want to cross. But she found the courage, and slowly, carefully she inched her way to the other side.

On the way back we had to walk on the same log, and she did so with the same care. "Are you afraid?" I asked. "Of course," she replied, "that's what keeps me safe." Again, fully aware of the danger, she made her way to safety.

Much of life poses moral danger for us. We should never assume in any situation that we're incapable of falling. "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12). Given the opportunity and circumstances, any of us are capable of falling into any sin. To believe otherwise is sheer folly.

We must watch and pray and arm ourselves for every occasion by putting our total trust in God (Ephesians 6:13). "God is faithful" (1 Corinthians 10:13), and He will give us the strength to keep from falling. —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The hand of God protects our way
When we would do His will;
And if through danger we must go,
We know He's with us still.

—D. De Haan

God provides the armor, but we must put it on.