

NOTES FOR THOSE IN SERMON SERIES

On Sunday, we begin a new series called “Armed.” Todd has prayerfully chosen this series because of our situation in our land and in our church. Please be prayerful as we ask God to help us keep our eyes on Jesus. (Colossians 3:1-2)

SHARE FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE

Can you remember a time when your community of family and friends helped you face a difficult time in life? What was helpful?

NOTES TO LEADERS: The purpose of this question is to give everyone a chance to share a time when they faced difficulty in community. It could be in family, in the military, in school, etc.

LEARN FROM THE BIBLE

This new series addresses how we stand together in spiritual battle. While this might be new to you or seem remote, the Bible is clear that we are in a war that impacts our daily lives.

What do we learn from Ephesians 6:10-12? Who is warring? Who is our enemy? What is the nature of this warfare? What is our part?

NOTES TO LEADERS: The war is spiritual, beginning at the fall when Adam and Eve entered into temptation and sinned against God. From the beginning, the enemy (devil, Satan) works to deceive (“Did God really say,” Genesis 3:1), kill and destroy (John 10:10), and slander God and His people with the aim of causing the severance of relationships.

The warfare is spiritual forces of evil against God and His people. Our only weapons are all from God (His armor). We can only “stand” with his strength as we “put on” God’s armor. (More on this in the weeks to come.)

According to Ephesians 4:3-6, 13, 25-27, 32, what is at stake? What is to be won or lost?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Relationships and unity are at stake. Throughout the Bible, God’s eternal plan has been for us to live in fellowship with Him and one another. When we live in God’s power following God’s character and His ways, the result is people who love God and each other and experience true unity.

Perhaps you might want to read John 17: 20-23 together. (This is where Jesus prayed for unity.)

While we trust in God, He empowers us to preserve unity in His family. What do we learn from each of these passages about ‘how’ we promote unity?

Ephesians 4:2

NOTES TO LEADERS: These passages are only a sampler. We promote unity by being humble, gentle, patient, forbearing.

Ephesians 4:11-13, 16

NOTES TO LEADERS: By serving and building up one another and pursuing knowing Jesus together.

Ephesians 4:25-27

NOTES TO LEADERS: By how we speak with one another and avoid anger.

Ephesians 4:30-32

NOTES TO LEADERS: By following the leading of the Holy Spirit to change how we treat one another.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

As we learned on Sunday, every command in Ephesians six is plural and addressed to community. How is this significant in our application of these verses? What is the difference between reading this as 'me' versus 'us'?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Passages throughout Scripture about unity, accomplishing God's mission, and bearing fruit in God's kingdom are addressed to us – community. (For example, John 15). American culture fosters individualism. Scripture focuses on community. Together, we abide in Christ, together, we trust in God for strength, together we learn, grow, and encourage one another to know and love God. God uniquely created and gifted us to love and serve one another.

The author (Paul) was specific about the identity of the enemy (6:11-12). How do we sometimes get this wrong? What happens when we confuse our true enemy with others? Do we see this happening in our world? Our nation? Our church?

NOTES TO LEADERS: The Scriptures clearly describe the devil, Satan, as the enemy. We are in a cancel culture. When people don't agree or support our views or efforts, we cancel them from relationships. When we see people as the enemy, we either thwart mission (to reach the lost) or unity of God's people.

How can we in our Home Group, "stand together" against the true enemy? What would that look like in these times?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Try to engage people in a conversation about how we "stand together." Specifically, how will we agree to love, support, and pray for one another?

PRAY

NOTES TO LEADERS: Please encourage people to follow Pastor Todd's request. (below) Pastor Todd spoke of a "unity crisis" at Trinity Church. He asked us to "pray that this local branch of God's spiritual army called Trinity Church would walk in unity together against our common enemy." Please join us in praying throughout the week.