

GROWING IN GRACE

“...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10 (NIV)

FIGHTING THE FIGHT OF FAITH SO WE CAN INVEST WITH SIGNIFICANCE

Series: Dressing for Success: Standing Strong in an Evil Day (Part 9)

R. Michael Oney, Ph.D.

Senior Pastor

December 4th, 2011

Ephesians 6:10-18 (NIV) 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

B. There are 3 major reasons that people succeed in their battle against evil:

1. Successful warriors are those who accept God's voice.

Mark 4:15 (NIV) Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

2. Successful warriors are those who are not easily offended.

Mark 4:16-17 (NIV) 16 Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

3. Successful warriors are those who impose limitations on their lives.

Mark 4:18-19 (NIV) 18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

4. The key quality of successful warriors is personal responsibility.

Mark 4:20 (NIV) Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown.”

C. A fundamental reason that God has invested into our lives is so that we can be His point person to invest into others.

1 Timothy 1:18 (NIV) Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight..

I. INVESTING INTO OTHERS REQUIRES NETWORKING WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Ephesians 6:10 (NIV) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

A. The writer of Hebrews warns against allowing those who are disobedient to become too influential in our values and priorities.

Hebrews 12:15-16 (NIV) 15 See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. 16 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.

II. INVESTING INTO OTHERS REQUIRES THAT WE STAY ALERT TO OPPORTUNITIES THAT ALLOW US TO SERVE

Ephesians 6:18b (NIV) With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

A. The Greek word for *alert* in this verse is *agrypneō* and carries the idea of being sleepless, keeping awake and watching.

APPLICATION:

A. God intends for our lives to be invested into others.

B. Some cannot invest because they fail to accept God’s direction, they are too easily offended, or they are simply too scattered in their lifestyle.

C. Those who do invest have lifestyles that embrace 2 fundamental qualities:

1. They stay networked with good hearted people that are highly committed servants of God.
2. They stay alert to the needs around them, knowing that they will have regular opportunities to invest into others.