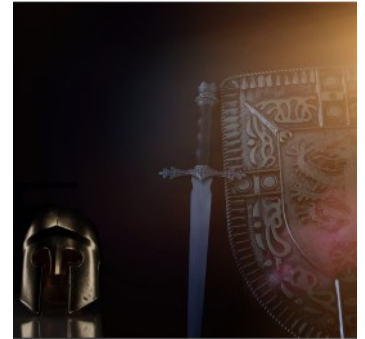


Pastor James Dale

January 11, 2026



PUT GOD'S ARMOR BACK ON



PREPARING FOR 2026

Pick Up the Sword

Ephesians 6:17–20

and take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

1. The Sword Cuts Inward

Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Galatians 6:1

2. The Sword Cuts Outward

Ephesians 6:19-20; Acts 2; Acts 4

3. The Sword Is Guided by Prayer

Ephesians 6:17-20; Acts 4:24-31

*And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and **continued to speak the word of God with boldness.***

Acts 4:31

Notes:

Habits of Grace - David Mathis

Small Group Questions

Ephesians 6:17-20

Getting Started

Pastor James emphasized that the Christian life is not just about defense, but about advancement.

- When you hear the phrase “spiritual battle,” what emotions or assumptions come up for you, curiosity, fatigue, skepticism, motivation?

- Which feels harder right now: standing firm or moving forward in your faith? Why?

Deeper

(Read Ephesians 6:10–20 together)

1. The Sword of the Spirit (The Bible)

Paul calls the Word of God the only offensive weapon in the armor.

- Why do you think Scripture is described as a sword, not just a shield or comfort?

- What are some lies, half-truths, or distorted narratives believers face today that require an active response from God’s Word? Read Hebrews 4:12. What does this tell us about the Word of God?

- How does the reality of “being at war” impact the way you think about time in Scripture?
 - Bible Engagement Practices
 - * Reading — exposure to God’s voice

 - * Study — understanding truth deeply

 - * Memorization — truth ready when pressure comes

- Which of these feels most natural to you? Which feels most intimidating—and why?

- Can you share a moment when a verse you knew (or remembered imperfectly) helped you resist fear, temptation, or discouragement?

2. Prayer

Read: Philippians 4:6-7

- Why do you think prayer is so often neglected, even by people who believe in it?
- Paul describes prayer as constant, alert, and others-focused. Which part challenges you most right now?
- How does prayer shift spiritual battles from “self-effort” to dependence on God?
- Jesus gave us the Lord’s prayer as a template for praying. Read Matthew 6:9-13. What is one take away you can apply to your prayer life?

3. Fellowship

Read: Hebrews 10:24–25. Paul never imagined believers fighting alone.

- Why is isolation one of the enemy’s most effective strategies?
- How does Christian community strengthen faith in ways private devotion cannot?
- Where have you seen encouragement, accountability, or shared prayer to help someone stand firm, or recover from spiritual drift?
- What makes authentic fellowship difficult in our current culture?
- What helps move relationships from “friendly” to spiritually meaningful?

Making It Real

- Looking at Scripture, prayer, and fellowship, which habit does God seem to be inviting you to strengthen right now? Did you start any new habits this year? If so, how’s it going so far? If not, is there a tool or encouragement that would help? (Example: a set reading plan, memorizing one verse, praying out loud daily, initiating a spiritual conversation, showing up to church consistently.)
- Who has God placed in your life that you might help arm up, through encouragement, shared Scripture, prayer, or presence?