

The Kingdom & The Powers Part 2: Powers & Principalities (or "Taking Sunday hockey to the NHL")

Discussion Guide – May 4, 2025

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. Eph. 6:12

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth.

He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him.

He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Colossians 1:15-17

That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Eph. 1:19b-23

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3:23

Quotes:

"The New Testament is steeped in this language [of evil forces]. It refers to rulers, principalities, powers, authorities, dominions, cosmic powers, thrones, spiritual forces, elemental spirits of the universe, gods, and a number of other spiritual entities... [T]hese various titles refer to different kinds of powerful cosmic beings or forces that exercise an oppressive and destructive influence over particular aspects of creation, society and human-made institutions." Greg Boyd

Discussion Questions

1. What are some examples of "powers and principalities" in our culture today that we often overlook or accept as normal?
2. Paul says our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers and authorities in the unseen realm (Eph. 6:12). How does this change the way we view conflict—in our politics, relationships, or communities?
3. Pastor Steve described how ideologies like consumerism, individualism, or nationalism divide people. In what ways have you seen these divisions show up—in church, in the city, or in your own life? What might resistance to those divisions look like in practice?
4. The NHL metaphor suggested that the "alternate league" is where we practice a different kind of community. What's one way our home group could more intentionally "practice the new game" together? Is there a habit, person, or pattern you'd need to rethink to better live as part of that alternate kingdom?
5. Ephesians 1 says Jesus is enthroned above all powers and authorities. What does it mean to truly believe that Jesus is Lord—not just in theory, but over the ideologies and systems that govern our world? Where might you need to shift your allegiance from a cultural power to King Jesus this week?