

THE BATTLE FOR REST

The Brides' Armor
Ephesians 6



by
Thomas M. Mitchell

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We may be tempted to think that our enemies are human and then to seek to fight with worldly weapons. But our real enemies are the spiritual forces that stand behind all institutions and seek to control the lives of persons and nations.

Maxie D. Dunnam

INTRODUCTION: IT'S A WAR

ARE WE REALLY IN A WAR?

Spiritual warfare is a war between the forces of God and the forces of rebellion, led by Satan. In Hebrew he is called the opponent and in Greek he's the accuser or slanderer. But no matter what name he's called, the only thing of importance is the fact that the bride is engaged in this spiritual war with him, along with a host of unseen angelic and celestial enemies whose power vastly exceeds her own. It's a war between light and darkness, good and evil, Heaven and Hell, and Christ and Satan.

We're in a grim conflict and not on a worldly cruise ship or a showboat; it's a battleship. It is a fight to the finish with no holds barred. We can't be neutral and we can't call a truce, but the majority of Christians in America, having never experienced the kind of persecution that goes on in other parts of the world, are not even aware of the fact that they're in a spiritual battle.

When you were born again, you were born to win, and you became a spiritual freedom fighter, a commando in God's invasion army. And just as a soldier wouldn't step onto the battlefield without advanced "intel" on the enemy, there is Intel you need if you're going to exercise authority in warfare.

The biggest problem, however, is that much of this spiritual warfare is beyond our ability to see and influence it except through prayer but, even then, only as God's Spirit gives revelation into the spiritual world. There are casualties on both sides but the bride has a very special protection from her bridegroom.

*Cor 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For **the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;**) 5 **Casting down imaginations,** and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;***

An interesting passage of scripture shows us how God protects His people and how a great spiritual army rides with those who do God's will.

*Ps 34:7 The angel of the Lord **encampeth round about them that fear him,** and **delivereth them.***

With a few exceptions our enemies remain invisible to our eyes, but they nevertheless are real and so is their opposition that follows Satan's warfare pattern: He tempts, man sins and God punishes.

Angelic beings have great power with Satan possessing the greatest power and one dare not underestimate this power. To do so is to underestimate the sheer size of the spiritual struggle and the corresponding need which we have for divine enablement. But

there are those who fail to heed this advice and they jump into spiritual warfare in the heavenlies without any thought to the consequences. Even Michael understood that:

Jude 9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

But we can't just ignore Satan because he is constantly attacking the church, the home and the personal lives of Christians.

Therefore we must be:

- Equipped
- Armed
- Informed
- Led into battle

Spiritual War in the Old Testament

In *2 Kings 6:15-19* the king of Syria was waging war against Israel. God informed Elisha of all the king's battle plans in advance and the prophet conveyed them to the king of Israel, nullifying the attacks. When the king of Syria learned that Elisha was the source of his troubles, he sent out his army to seize him. In the morning, the Syrian troops surrounded the city of Dothan where Elisha was staying. And when Elisha's servant arose early and went out, perhaps to draw water, he saw the Syrian army as it was surrounding the city. Panic-stricken he rushed to his master and told him what he had seen.

While the servant was terrified by what he had seen, Elisha remained calm. He knew something that his servant did not. He

knew that earthly armies were no threat when the, to see the “invisible army,” which was on duty to protect the people of God

This heavenly army descended to Elisha who prayed that they might strike the enemy with blindness. As a result, Elisha was single-handedly able to lead the entire Syrian army into the hands of the Israel. He would not allow them to be killed, but instead sent them all home after giving them food and water. The bride of Christ needs to remember that His heavenly army is ever-present, and it responds to the prayers of the saints.

Spiritual War in the Gospels

The Lords temptation—*Matt 4:1-11* and *Luke 4:1-13*—in the wilderness is a perfect example of the battles we need to be fighting every day. When He exorcised the Gerasene demoniac He once again displayed the one-on-one nature of this war we find ourselves in. Here are some important revelations this encounter reveals:

- Matthew—The demons, which possessed this man *knew that their days were numbered*. They expected the Lord Jesus to come and to engage them in war but what they didn’t understand was why He had come at that time. He had arrived early by their way of thinking. They, like all others, were not looking for two comings of the Messiah, but only one.
- Mark—The demons begged Jesus not to be sent *out of the country*. To be sent out of the country meant the demon was no longer free to oppose God and His people on the earth and would thereafter be confined in chains in the abyss.
- Luke—They entreated Jesus not to send them *into the abyss*.

Here are several other examples of the spiritual war we're engaged in:

- *Matt 6:23*— The “gates” of hell shall not prevail against the church.
- *Luke 22:31*— Satan had the audacity to demand that our Lord allow him to “sift Peter like wheat.”
- *John 13:27*— It was Satan who entered into Judas, using him to betray his Lord and to hand Him over to those who would arrest Him.
- *John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11*—But in spite of his efforts to the contrary, the ruler of this world was soon to be defeated on the cross of Calvary.

The Spiritual War and the Bride

Satan is found opposing the people and the purposes of God. Consider Ananias and his wife Sapphira, who had given a certain amount of money to the work of the Lord, but who had lied about the amount. When Peter rebuked Ananias for his deception, he attributed the source of the lie to Satan.

Acts 5:3 Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?

Here are some other examples:

Acts 13:10—Paul rebuked Elymas the magician for opposing the gospel, calling him a “son of the devil.”

2 Cor 2:10-11— Paul spoke of the church's reticence to forgive a repentant brother as giving Satan the opportunity

to take advantage, adding that we are not ignorant of his schemes.

2 Cor 4:4—Later in this same epistle, Paul spoke of Satan as the “god of this world” who has “blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.” Near the end he warned that Satan and his subordinates disguise themselves as true believers, thereby seeking to lead some astray by their authoritarian leadership.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12—Paul spoke of a future day of evil, when “the man of lawlessness” will be revealed, whose working is in accordance with the activity of Satan, and will be accompanied by power, signs and false wonders.

1 Timothy 3:6—Paul warned about laying hands too quickly on leaders, lest they become conceited and fall into the same condemnation incurred by the devil. In *4:1* he warned of those who will fall away from the faith and pay attention to “deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.”

1 Timothy 5:14-15—Paul urged younger widows to get married and not to become idle gossips and busybodies. This sounds very “human,” but Paul linked it to satanic activity: “*Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; for some have already turned aside to follow Satan.*” Imagine that; Paul referred to gossiping as turning aside to follow Satan. Now who would have ever considered gossip to be satanic? Paul did.

James 4:1-3—James condemned the quarrels and strife which were taking place among the saints. He first linked

such sins to the pursuit of fleshly pleasures. He then indicated that such sin is rebellion against God and it grieves His Holy Spirit.

Matt 16:21-23; Luke 22:31—Peter had come to learn about Satan the hard way. And so he warned others of the threat which Satan poses as our adversary. Note that Peter’s warning comes in the context of leadership and of submission (5:1-7).

Rev 2:9, 13, 24; 3:9—In the letters to the seven churches Jesus frequently mentioned Satan as the source of temptation and trials in the church.

THE SPIRITUAL BATTLE

A War and a Fight

Coming to faith in Christ is to be understood as entering into every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

*Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:***

But it’s also the commencement of a great struggle with Satan and his forces. Those who would dwell on the blessings of our faith also need to take note of the battle, which we have entered into by faith in Jesus Christ and which we must wage in His strength.

It’s a good warfare:

1 Tim 1:18-19 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on

*thee, that thou by them mightiest war a good warfare; 19 **Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:***

It's a good fight of faith:

*1 Tim 6:12 **Fight the good fight of faith,** lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

And we need to lay hold of faith by fighting for the enjoyment of it here and now with all its benefits.

A War Against the Devil

People today, and that includes some who consider themselves the bride of Christ, don't want to believe in the devil anymore, they treat him as some sort of comical figure with horns, a tail and a pitchfork. Nothing could be further from the truth:

*Gen 3:15 And I will put **enmity** between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

*2 Cor 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, **we do not war after the flesh:***

*James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. **Resist the devil,** and he will flee from you.*

*1 Peter 5:8 **Be sober, be vigilant;** because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

*Rev 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make **war** with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

Paul warns us otherwise:

*Eph 6:12 For we **wrestle** not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities**, against **powers**, against the **rulers** of the darkness of this world, against **spiritual wickedness** in high places.*

- *Wrestle*—with great intensity; using all our energy to resist.
- *Principalities*—head officers.
- *Powers*—staff officers.
- *Rulers*—divisional commanders.
- *Spiritual wickedness*—rank and file.

A War Against the Flesh

*Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, **warring against the law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

*1 Cor 9:25-27 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we are incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But **I keep under my body**, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

2 Cor 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me **a thorn in the flesh**, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

Gal 5:17 For **the flesh lusteth against the Spirit**, and the **Spirit against the flesh**; and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

In considering our spiritual war it is important to understand that our flesh is dead. The issue is the soul and the fact that it wants things the old way. It will remain that way unless and until it starts taking direction from the spirit. That's the battleground upon which we fight the majority of our spiritual battles.

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, **abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul**;

A War Against the World

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. **In the world ye shall have tribulation**; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Tribulation— *thlipsis* (*thlip-sis*)—means pressure, anguish, burden, persecution or trouble. It's the like the pressure of a heavy weight lying on your chest.

1 John 5:4-5 For **whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world**; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Overcometh—*nikao* (nik-ah-o)—means to conquer or prevail and it comes from the root word Nike (nee-kay); victory.

A War Against Death

1 Cor 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Heb 2:14-15 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

A War That Often Arises From the Opposition of Friends or Relatives

Mic 7:6 For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

Matt 10:35-36 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

A.W.Tozer wrote: *In the early days when Christianity exercised a dominant influence over American thinking, men conceived the world to be a battleground. Our fathers believed in sin, the devil and hell as constituting one force, and they believed in God, righteousness and heaven as the other. Man could not be neutral and if he chose to come out on God's side, he could expect open*

war with God's enemies. But today men think of the world not as a battleground but a playground. We are not here to fight but to frolic. We are not in a foreign land, we are home and the best we can do is rid ourselves of our inhibitions and our frustrations and live this life here to the full.

It's not that some of the bride don't want to win; it's that they don't even know they're at war

WARFARE

Two Types of Warfare

Our warfare posture only takes on one of two ways; offensively or defensively

1. *Offensive* warfare is tearing down the strongholds the enemy has formed in your mind through deception and accusations.
2. *Defensive* warfare is guarding you against the tactics or schemes of the devil.

The enemy has three primary weapons we must be aware of and defend against:

1. *Deception* is making another person believe a lie or something that is not true. When the enemy sends deception our way, it's an attempt to deceive us into believing something that isn't true so we'll fall into error. His goal is to use deception to build strongholds in our mind. A stronghold is an incorrect thinking pattern that stems from believing something that isn't true. From the very beginning Satan deceived Eve into believing that God's Word wasn't true. In *Genesis 3:4* he told her that she

would not surely die as God said she would in *Genesis 2:17*. And like many of us do, she bought into the deception and the rest is history.

2. *Temptation* often follows deception and we are enticed or encouraged to sin in one way or another. First the enemy tells us, "You won't surely die" and then he makes the fruit on the forbidden tree look good to us. We get tempted because we allow ourselves to first be deceived. A common example is that people are often drawn into sex outside of marriage because the enemy is successful in convincing them that it is all harmless and fun, when it's not harmless at all, but an open door to the devil. Temptation is "showing you the worm" and sin is "the hook." The important thing to remember, however, is that the Word of God helps you see the hook behind the worm. David said in *Psalms 119:11*: *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*
3. *Accusations* come directly from the one known as the accuser of the brethren; *Rev 12:10*. He takes some embarrassing or gross sin in our past and continues to rub it in our faces and beat us down with guilt and condemnation. However, there is some good news:

*Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for **the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.***

Dealing With the Enemy's Warfare

How do we deal with temptation?

- The *belt* of truth *Eph 6:14*.

- The *sword* of the Spirit *Eph 6:17*.

Both of these parts of our armor are the “truth” but they have two different names. The belt is meant to be defensive; something you wear to guard against an attack and the enemy's deceptions (lies) he sends your way. The sword is meant to be offensive; something used to slaughter the enemy by tearing down existing strongholds (deception that took hold) in your mind and preventing him from establishing new ones. This means that the Word of God is both an offensive and a defensive weapon and in both cases it involves the renewing of your mind.

*Rom 12:2 be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.***

*Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and **cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.***

James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Dealing with temptation is a twofold process: 1) resist the devil and 2) draw near to God. The closer you get to God and the more you become aware of His love, the less power temptation will have over you. And that means focusing on the centerpiece of our study in *Hebrews (The Pathway to Rest)*—we must continually live in, abide in, the Holiest Place.

How do we deal with accusations?

The fiery darts of the enemy in *Eph 6:16* are the accusations he sends our way. When the devil tries to accuse us of our past sins, we are to look at Christ's work of the Cross and know that they are forgiven and not to look back. And it requires faith to put out the fiery darts of the enemy (*Eph 6:16*). We can't afford to meditate about our pasts, they have passed away (*2 Cor 5:17*) and our sins have been forgotten (*Heb 10:17*). They have been forgiven through our faith in the work on the Cross:

Ephesians 6:14 "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.

Our righteousness is as filthy rags (*Isaiah 64:6*), but because of the work of the Cross we have received the righteousness of God through Christ (*Romans 3:22, Galatians 3:6*). When the enemy tries to remind us of our past we just need to stand in faith and tell him it's been washed away (*2 Corinthians 5:17*); our sins have been forgotten (*Hebrews 10:17*).

The Real Battle—Tearing Down Strongholds

A stronghold is a deception that's taken hold in a person's mind; an incorrect thinking pattern based on a believed lie. We can get incorrect perceptions of God by listening to Satan as he tells us how God doesn't love us, etc. He can make us feel like dirty old sinners when we believe his accusations as he continually tries to remind us of our past (which has been washed away).

Strongholds can come in the form of deceptions or accusations. Accusations always lead to guilt and the feeling of unworthiness, which weighs you down and tears you apart spiritually. And since strongholds are built upon lies that we have been fed, the way we tear them down is by stop eating the lie and begin feeding on the truth (God's Word), which is the opposite of what the enemy has been feeding us.

Eph 6:17 ...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Strongholds are the devil's main assets in this war and the only way to defeat them is to take up the sword of the Spirit and start lashing out against his false accusations.

THE PLAYERS IN THIS WAR

God

God is the Commander of the Kingdom; the kingdom of light—*Josh*

5:14; *Heb. 1:8; 1 Cor 15:24-25*. He is supreme ruler of everything He has made—*1 Chr. 29:11; 2 Chr. 20:6*. The Creator of ALL things; including Satan—*Col 1:16* and He is All Powerful—*Matt 28:18; Ps 62:11; Prov 8:15; Rom 13:1; Gen 17:1* and All Knowing—*Acts 15:18; Matt. 10:30; Ps 139:1-6; 1 Jn. 3:20*.

Angels

Angels are spiritual beings (not having physical bodies) that are designed to be servants of God—*Ps 91:11; Mark 1:14; Luke 16:22*. He created them before He created earth—*Col 1:16*—to minister to (or serve) God and whomever else He directs them to assist—*Heb 1:14; Matt 13:39; Matt 4:11*.

They have different ranks, power and authority—*Dan 10:13*, a free will, are eternal beings, don't reproduce, since they are neither male nor female—*Matt 22:30 ; Mark 12:25*— can appear in human form—*Heb 13:2* and their performance will someday be judged by humans—*1 Cor 6:3; Matt 12:26; Eph 2:2*.

Satan

Satan is commander of the kingdom of darkness—*Luke 11:18*, is called Lucifer, Devil, Beelzebub, Lord of the flies, Dragon, King of Tyrus—*John 14:30; Luke 4:6; Rev 12:9; Matt 12:24*. He is of the highest rank of the angels created by God and his sin is his desire to be equal with God. Because of his sin he and the angels that were aligned with him were cast out of heaven (God's presence) into the heavenlies (between our heaven and the abode of God) where he continues his rebellion (war) against God—*Luke 10:18; Isa 14:12-14; Rev. 12:9; Ezek 28:12-19; Rev 12:9; Jude 1:9*.

He is a finite created being and operates temporarily with God's permission—*Ezek 28:13; Rev 12:12*. He is powerful but his power is limited—*Job 1:12 / Job 2:6*, his knowledge is limited (If Satan knew that crucifying Jesus would destroy his own evil kingdom he never would have done it—*1 Cor 2:8* and he is a deceiver who often comes

masquerading as an angel of light, pretending to be one of God's angels—*2 Cor 11:14 / Rev 12:9*.

His main tactic is to attempt to deceive people into following after anything except God; money, fame, lust, power, or themselves. He knows if they follow after these things they're really following him—*Mark 4:13-9; Matt 13:18-22; James 4:4*.

Satan's Angels

Satan's angels are spiritual beings (not having physical bodies) that were created by God before our earth's creation and were designed to be servants of God but now they give their allegiance to Satan—*Matt 25:41*. They are Principalities, Powers of Darkness, Powers and Dominions and their sole purpose is to assist (or serve) Satan in hindering mankind. They have different rank, power and authority—*Dan 10:13*. They have a free will (i.e. since these are the angels who rebelled against God and followed Lucifer)—*Jude 1:6* and by their choice they have already been sentenced to Hell and will be placed there after the final judgment—*Matt 25:41*. They can take on the appearance of a human or an animal—*Gen 3:1*.

Demons

Demons are disembodied spirits (evil spirits, devils or tormentors) that have an intense craving to cause evil of every kind. They were originally angels created by God before our earth's creation, at which time they were not evil—*Col 1:16*. Satan uses them to bring people into bondage to the evil appetites they propagate thereby serving his interests, and because of this are aligned with him against God—*John 10:10*. It seems that many are driven by a particular appetite and have different interests in the way they torment their victims. They also have names that it appears relate to their individual carnal cravings—*Mark 5:9; Luke 8:30*.

Everywhere that Jesus went He set free those oppressed by demons—*Matt 12:22-23; Matt 8:16*. At times He asked them to identify themselves yet at other times he didn't allow them to speak—*Mark 1:34*;

Luke 4:41. It is noteworthy that a quarter of Jesus' acts mentioned in the Bible involved Him casting out evil spirits.

Demons have different degrees of power—*Matt 17:18-21*, they are eternal beings and like Satan's angels they are already sentenced to Hell and will be placed there after the final judgment—*Matt 25:41*; *2 Pet. 2:4*; *Jude 1:6*. But in the interim they seek to in-dwell or attach themselves to humans or animals in order to influence their actions—*Matt 12:43-45*; *Matt 8:30-32*; *Luke 11:25*.

Many times a person oppressed or possessed by a demon will display unhealthy or unnatural cravings or actions and the result of demonic possession is always a destructive effect on the victim; spiritually, emotionally and physically—*Mark 9:17-29*.

YOUR REPUTATION

Eph 6:13-14a Wherefore **take unto you the whole armor of God,** that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore... having your loins girt about with truth...

Life is a battlefield; it's not a soft life of enjoyment and ease, but of hard conflict with foes within and without. The spiritual battle we're in is a personal one—it's individual and for the bride the safest place to be is on the front lines. Remember what happened to David when he left the front lines for the easy life in the castle.

Therefore, we need to go into God's armory every morning and Paul makes a point of telling us two times to why we need to "put on the whole armor of God:"

11—so we can stand against the "wiles of the devil."

13—so we will be able to stand in the evil day.

“Take Unto You the Whole Armor of God”—this isn’t a request, it’s a “demand.” The word *analambano* (*an-al-am-ban-o*) means to take or to assume and it refers to the entire suit of armor; we aren’t to choose which pieces to wear. We are to put them all on because no part of our life is to be left unprotected. We are to wear it like our clothing—don’t go out without the full set. God makes it—we are to continually “take it up.”

And like the soldier who doesn’t wait for the general to dress him, it’s our responsibility to put it on—the Holy Spirit isn’t going to dress us before we go out into battle. We are to arm ourselves every day by going into God’s armory and appropriating His resources.

“The Armor of God”

Rom 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

2 Cor 6:7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

The armor of God is nothing less than Christ Himself.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Now let’s back up a bit and find out what we are supposed to do once we have taken up the armor.

Eph 6:13-14a ... that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore ...

The word “stand” is used two times in these verses but in each case it means something different. First you are to stand when you are done:

- *Stand—stenai*— having completed everything you need to do; having finished it (your salvation) then you are to stand

as one that is already victorious in Christ's glory, honor and immortality.

Therefore you are to "stand:"

- *Stand—stete*—means to stand and watch, being ready for combat, prepared to give no ground to the enemy as we fight under Christ's banner. It means to stand in opposition and not turn the back as a coward, break from ranks disorderly or make any rash or foolish decisions.

At the critical moment in the battle of Waterloo, when everything depended on the steadiness of the soldiers, courier after courier kept up to the Duke of Wellington, announcing that unless the troops at the front were immediately relieved or withdrawn they would be forced to yield to the French. Each time the Duke sent back the same message, "Stand firm!" One of his officers responded, "But we shall perish!" "Stand firm!" again answered the Duke and another replied "You'll find us there!" as he galloped away to the front. The result proved how true he was as every man of that doomed brigade fell, bravely fighting at his post.

That's the position we are too assume as part of the Army of God. The difference for us, however, is that we know the outcome of the war. While we may be defeated in some of our battles we can rest assured that the war is already won. It was finished on the Cross.

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What Is the Girdle?

*Eph 6:14b having your loins **girt about with truth** ...*

“Girded”—*perizonnumi* (*per-id-zone-noo-mee*)—means to girt about or fasten on. It’s like the steel girder in a building’s framework; its main support. We look at it as the “belt” that was the central piece of a Roman soldier’s armor. It was made of leather or linen and fastened around the middle; outside the robe. It was the whole body of armor.

“Gird Up Your Loins” referred to the way the Roman soldiers tucked their robe into their belt when they went into battle. That insured that everything that would hinder them in battle was tucked away, which allowed them to move freely and not trip or get it caught on something. For the bride the truth that allows her the freedom of movement in battle because she is not entangled in the affairs of the world; she is “standing.”

*2 Tim 2:4 **No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life**; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

*Ex 12:11 And thus shall ye eat it; **with your loins girded**, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's Passover.*

*Luke 12:35 **Let your loins be girded about**, and your lights burning;*

*1 Peter 1:13 Wherefore **gird up the loins of your mind**, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

The belt of truth is the truth of the gospel:

*Eph 1:13 **In whom ye also trusted**, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: **in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed** with that holy Spirit of promise,*

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

It's the truth that we hold on the inside; our sincerity is the strength of our loins.

Ps 51:6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

2 Cor 1:12 For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

It's the truth that we have in Jesus.

Eph 4:21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

It's the truth that is the "fruit of the light:"

Eph 5:8-9 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: 9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

There are also different kinds of truth. The kind of truth that Paul refers to here embraces each of these truths that are foundational to our walk with Christ and the spiritual battles we are engaged in along the way:

- *Truth of judgment.* When our judgment agrees with God's Word; the standard of truth.
- *Truth of heart.* When we seek to approve ourselves to God and to acceptable of Him.
- *Truth of speech.* When our words, both in our mind in our speech, agree with what God says.

- *Truth of action.* When we are plain, faithful and honest in dealing with all things.

The truth is our best ornament and our greatest strength for many reasons:

- Its excellence.
- It makes us like God.
- It's a kind of perfection in all Christian graces.
- It's necessity because without it no other grace can be of any use.
- The least measure of grace, seasoned with the truth, is acceptable to God and profitable to us.

The devil will try to wrestle the truth from us. The more truth is opposed, the tighter we should cling to it. One commentary put it this way:

Let us do with this and other pieces of spiritual armor, as men do with their cloaks, which cover their bodies; if the wind blow hard against them, they will so much the faster and closer hold their cloaks. Even so, the more Satan strives to deprive us of our spiritual robes, the more careful and steadfast ought we to be in keeping them. In particular, for this girdle of verity, it is so much the more highly to be accounted of by us, who are the Lord's faithful soldiers, by how much the less reckoning is made thereof by the greater number of people.

For us the belt of truth holds up our “outer covering” (our flesh). It keeps our soul fixed on one uniform and unvarying object, the truth of the Word of God and guards against a divided heart, which like the divided kingdom of Israel, hasn't any strength:

Jas 1:8 A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

The truth also protects the personal area of our life by surrounding it with the Word of God. It takes control of the “untruth” of our old nature and keeps us from tripping on it. This is critically important because once a lie gets into the life of a believer everything begins to fall apart. Once the enemy gets us to buy into his lie he immediately begins building a stronghold. David lied about Bathsheba for over a year and nothing went right—*Ps 32 and Ps 51* reveal the price he ultimately paid.

The truth is the integrating force in the life of the victorious Christian. It makes the soul sincere, firm, constant and always on guard. But it requires the unreserved surrender of ourselves to God and His service, committing our wills to obey, our hands to work, our life to glorify, our hearts to love and our lips to praise.

Why is it Used?

The “girdle of truth” has a three-fold purpose:

- First it prepares one for battle; it’s a reminder to take that first step and “prepare.”

*Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us **lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,** and **let us run** with patience the race that is set before us,*

It prepares us so we are able to “run” the race.

- Second it was a place to support the Roman soldiers’ weapons. Their quiver of arrows hung from it as well as their sword.
- Thirdly the soldiers pinned their awards on it so that those who they did battle with would know what kind of warrior they were facing; “a distinguished fighter.” Our reward is

displayed in our countenance—a reflection of the truth that we know.

*John 8:32 And ye shall **know** the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

To know is *ginosko*—resolved, understood or certain of. That’s our challenge; we are to know the truth if it is to “make us free.” Just having some “head knowledge” won’t get the job done. We need to fully understand (have revelation of) the truth and “wear it like a belt” as our foundation. Then we can walk into battle in freedom.

As the girdle was the foundation of one’s armor the “belt of truth” is the foundation of Christianity; of Christian life. When it’s tied tightly around our waist it indicates that we are prepared for action. If we loosen (slacken) our belt it means we have gone off duty. Without it our lower body, the seat of vital organs and the organs for creating life, isn’t protected. And that means that we won’t be able to sow the seed of the truth of God in the spirit. We will only be expressing our opinions and misrepresenting the truth.

*John 3:6 That which is born of the **flesh is flesh**; and that which is born of the **Spirit is spirit**.*

And it’s the truth that protects us against the enemy who is the “father of lies,” in whom there is no truth:

*John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and **abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.***

Satan always attacks as a deceiver, trying to entangle us with falsehoods and half-truths in order to confuse us. His goal is to keep us from sowing

the truth; he wants us to sow the untruth “coated with the truth.”

Wearing the belt of truth also displays the consistency of our character; the consistency that results from the truth. Satan wants our life to be like the words of world’s diplomats: “words were given to conceal our thoughts, and thoughts to conceal ourselves.”

The truth that we know will tell us who are enemies are, how they plan to attack us and where our strength lies.

How Do We Use It?

We arm ourselves with the truth by knowing the truth, the truth embodied in God’s Word; in Christ. We are to “wrap” ourselves in the truth; establishing ourselves in it. And in all cases Jesus is our example:

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

Matt 4:1-11 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.² And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.³ And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.⁴ But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.⁵ Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,⁶ And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.⁷ Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.⁸ Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;⁹ And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.¹⁰ Then saith

Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.¹¹ Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

We need to know our doctrine; the “systematized truth.” That means to reduce the Word of God to a system by organizing and categorizing it. This will help us to think clearly and walk out the issues of life from a firm foundation. In other words, to be armed with the truth means that we have taken God’s truth and organized it, systematized it and memorized it. That’s the only way we will ever “know” it. That’s how we deal with the enemy’s lies; with the truth that “we know” and that we “implement.”

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

When we are armed with the truth—with Jesus—we are ready to face the lies and the confusion that the enemy sends our way on the battlefield. Unfortunately that isn’t the case for many of the bride whose lack of understanding and teaching of doctrine has made them ignorant—especially ignorant of the enemy—and it’s the reason so many are falling by the wayside.

It’s possible to live the Christian life just on the surface; in the Holy Place. That’s the place of the carnal Christian; the nominal Christian. They know just enough to carry on an intelligent conversation in the foyer with another equally uninformed Christian. Tragically they are vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy and they don’t even realize it. That’s why it’s so important for us to listen to the Word taught, study the Word and apply the Word:

*Eph 1:17-18 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you **the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:** 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his*

calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

Paul wanted wants us armed with the Word of Truth; the Word of Growth. When we get depressed, discouraged, confused or defeated we need the truth in order to fight back. That's what it means to "gird up your loins;" pick yourself up and get back in the fight.

Knowing the truth and living the truth results in: integrity of character, courage and confidence. They are what we need to exude when we enter into battle because nothing discourages the enemy more than to face an enemy that knows his cause is just and true. On the other hand, if you attempt warfare with the enemy and you aren't armed with the truth he will find your weak spot every time. Don't leave the door open to him by harboring sin, being unfaithful or allowing him to build strongholds in your mind. Just remember, when fighting the enemy there can be "no pretenders"—there's no faking it! You have to be real on the inside and the outside. But, sadly, too many of the bride just "talk the talk" and fail to "walk the walk." They have been faking it so long it has become their reality. They mistake fantasy for reality, immaturity for maturity and carnality for spirituality. They go into battle unprepared for a fierce attack and are exposed and defeated like the unarmed soldiers they are.

Your sword hangs from the belt of truth but you won't be able to use it if your belt isn't tightly fastened and secure. If it isn't you will get tripped up just like the soldier who got tripped up because he didn't have a girdle to hold up his robe. Jesus asked—still asks—a pertinent question"

*John 8:46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if **I say the truth**, why do ye not believe me?*

No one could respond. Jesus was girded about with the Truth and the enemy had no strongholds. They can't stand up to the truth.

Here Are Some Things to Think About

You need to be true to yourself and you do that by:

- Acting out a conviction on the spot.
- Keeping the solemn engagements you have made very sacred; those between God and your own heart.
- Dealing with your own conscience tenderly.
- Not hiding from yourself, but confessing the real state of your feelings to God.
- Continually reminding yourself "whose you are," "what you are," and "where you're going."
- Cherishing the little sparks of divine feeling; those thoughts that come like threads from heaven.
- Purifying your desires.
- Always watching and tending your inner life.
- Be transparent with nothing concealed, nothing hollow and nothing false.

YOUR PURITY

*Eph 6:14b ... and having on the **breastplate of righteousness**;*

What Is Purity?

Sometimes we get so comfortable dealing with God's Word and its principals that we forget we need to apply it in our life. We can become solid pillars in the church by doing so or we can be "caterpillars" that just crawl in and out on Sunday morning; just talking about the Word. What it boils down to for the bride is—"Do I care about the spiritual battle, do I really want to fight in it?"

James Kennedy did a survey that asked the question: "Why don't you witness?" The answer he received was surprising. He anticipated I'm afraid, I don't know how or I don't know any unsaved people, but the most popular answer was: "I don't witness because of the life that I live." That answer gets right to the heart of "purity;" what it means to wear the "breastplate of righteousness:

*Prov 4:23 **Keep thy heart with all diligence**; for out of it are the issues of life.*

*Matt 15:18-19 But **those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart**; and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*

What is purity? It's our breastplate of righteousness that is like the one piece of armor that protected soldier's vital organs. It covered the body from neck to thighs with the solid part covering the front and the other part being the straps going over the shoulder to hold it in place. Our breastplate has "endued" or "clothed" us with our bridegroom's righteousness. And that is *diakaisosune* (*dik-ah-yos-oo-nay*); Jesus' equity of character, justification, uprightness and integrity; holiness. Paul uses this term some 92 times in the New Testament, 30 times in Romans

alone. It is multi-faceted in its relation to us:

- Righteousness Revealed—*Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*
- Righteousness Required—*Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Also 3:10-16.*
- Righteousness Received—*Rom 4:5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*
- Righteousness Reproduced—*Rom 6:12-23 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. 19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield*

your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Our righteousness is also protection for what “we show.” Satan tries to corrupt the hearts of believers so they will display ugly passions instead of the love of Christ that is embodied in our breastplate. That’s where our breastplate signifies both the “principle” of righteousness and the “practice of righteousness:” being justified and living a holy life. It’s our righteousness in four parts:

- Christ’s Righteousness
- Christian Righteousness
- Consistent Righteousness
- Controlled Righteousness

Christ’s Righteousness

Isa 59:17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

And when we become Christians we are immediately equipped with His righteousness that is “imputed” and “infused”—it is given to us as part of our spirit.

1 Cor 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

On the cross Jesus took our sin and imparted righteousness to us; right standing with God because we have right standing “in” Christ.

*Phil 3:9 And be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness** which is of God by faith:*

When we put on the breastplate of righteousness it means that we are protected by His Righteousness. When the devil accuses us before God, the Father looks down and only sees the righteousness of Christ—not all our faults and sins.

The Christian’s Righteousness

Far too many of the bride just accept their position in Christ but do very little about it:

- They are saved—living in the holy place.
- They are not practicing their sanctification.
- They have not become in “practice” what they have in “position.”
- They want the “inside” armor but not “outside” armor.
- They want to “live carelessly” and excuse themselves by saying: “Well, before God I’m righteous.”

If we are in fact righteous in the eyes of heaven then we should be righteous in the eyes of the world. And that means that our position should be reflected in our practice. We should live according to the pattern laid out in God’s Word.

*Eph 4:24 And that ye **put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.***

The brilliance of the gospel is that God doesn’t ask us to imitate His righteousness—we couldn’t possibly do that—He gives us His righteous

nature by means of regeneration. And at the same time He gives us His Holy Spirit to reproduce Christ's righteousness in us and through us. We are told to put it on and not expect God to put it on us. We aren't to just stand around waiting for it to come; we're to show it to the world.

Consistent Righteousness

It is impossible to be righteous in the flesh but we can wear the righteousness of Christ constantly. Our imputed righteousness is appropriated by our faithful and obedient response to God.

*2 Cor 6:3-10 3 **Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed:** 4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, 5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; 6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, 7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; 9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; 10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

The bride wearing the breastplate of righteousness has been changed by the power of God:

*1 John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: **he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.***

And as a result we are to be Godly in every situation, not a part of the world but standing apart from it. If we are our life is attractive to others and when we talk they listen because our passions are redeemed and redirected and there is a unique quality about our life. What the world should see in the bride is a "gleaming" breastplate—Christ's righteousness.

But if you're not wearing the breastplate you're just another easy target. If you are harboring sin you can't get things right with God and you can't witness because your life doesn't match your words. You can't be victorious over temptation because every time you try to enter the battle the enemy brings to mind that spot in your life and you feel defeated. You're going into war without armor.

On the other hand if you put on your breastplate of righteousness:

Charles Eerdman: *One who binds himself about with a determined loyalty to the holy law of God is secure against the deadly thrusts of the Tempter. A man who is conscious of being in the wrong is usually a coward. A man who knows that he is right can withstand a multitude and he enters the conflict without fear."*

Putting on the breastplate requires self-examination and it isn't a onetime event. It must be done and lived out every day of the week. We are to put it on in faith and love because they include all the Christian graces:

1 Thess 5:8a But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love.

We are united to Christ by faith and by our duty toward God. We are united to our brethren by love and our righteous behavior to man.

Controlled Righteousness

The significance of the breastplate of righteousness is not only what it is but what it protects: our heart, the seat of your emotions and feelings.

Instead of walking around trying to be a better Christian, we need to let our heart fall in love with Jesus again. We don't need to try to do better in our walk; we need to learn to love God more through:

- Prayer.
- Worship.

- The Word.
- Accountability with other Christians.

If we do we won't run around trying to figure out how to be righteous. Our being in love with our bridegroom results in naturally wanting to please Him; we won't be trying to control our life by our own power, we'll begin to see the love of God controlling us.

Putting on the breastplate is dealing with your heart. These questions are a good daily check regarding our breastplate:

- Where's our heart today?
- Are we concerned with the pleasures and treasures of this world?
- Are we living out God's righteousness—powerful and protected

Some Concluding Thoughts About Purity

- Righteousness means: "Doing what's right." This is sanctification practiced in the brides' life by a consistent daily walk.
- Apart from the righteousness of Christ we have no defense against Satan. We are open to his innuendos that we really aren't a Christian. They begin to wear on us and our testimony becomes ineffective.
- The reason the church is losing its battles is because too many of the bride want to cozy up to the world, live comfortably in the culture and avoid doing battle with the enemy.

- If we don't want to fight, we can't complain about losing the battle.
- If we don't put on the breastplate of Christ's Righteousness we don't have a cause for whining about our defeat and the devil's victory in our life.
- The breastplate is "righteous living" that guards against the assaults of the devil:

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

- If we will faithfully live in obedience to and communion with Christ, His own righteousness produces in us that practical, daily righteousness that is our breastplate; protecting our heart. Lack of it on the other hand leaves us open and vulnerable to the enemy:

2 Cor 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

- Barnes: *Many a man who thinks he has on the "Christian" armor is smitten in the same manner. There is some defect of character; some want of incorruptible integrity; some point that is unguarded—and that will be sure to be the point of attack by the foe.*

YOUR TRANQUILITY

Eph 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Overview

The literal translation of this verse is: “*and having shod your selves as to the feet in readiness of the gospel of peace.*” Shod means “underbound” and preparation means to be ready to go out at any moment, or prepared with a foundation or base—the gospel of peace to which the bride has already been reconciled with God

Shoes are essential to fighting as bare feet don’t hold up well in the heat of battle. Even guerilla fighters wear sandals. Roman soldiers wore hobnailed sandals. They were half boots with the part that protected the leg made of brass and the base made of wood and leather. In order to provide surefootedness there were spikes imbedded in the bottom to provide extra traction in bad weather and marching over every sort of terrain. They also prevented injury from sharp sticks planted in the ground by the enemy. Many believe that they were the secret to Rome’s success on the battlefield.

Shod means to “bind on” and that is what our sandals do for us; they bind us to the “gospel of peace.” The expression *euangeliou tes eirenes* means “the good message (of quietness, rest, set at one again, peace) we are to be “prepared with” (provided or made ready with).

We are all familiar with the term “shalom” in the Old Testament, which means peace, but it also means “completeness;” an inner, personal sense of well-being: Shalom—“grace and peace to you.”

Isa 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.

The gospel of peace is our foundation; that which supports everything else. It’s the “solid footing” on which we take our “stand.”

Our “peace” is what allows us to stand firm in the midst of the enemy’s attack:

*John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that **in me ye might have peace**. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

And it’s our peace that Satan is after by brining division and separation between man and God between man and man.

Relationship of the Shoes to the Armor

Living out the “truth” leads to “peace.” It begins with the belt of truth, which leads to the breastplate of righteousness, which leads to the sandals of peace.

We are not in a battle against people; it’s a battle against “thoughts” and “attitudes.” It’s the battle that takes place in the realm of our “outlook” on life and for that reason we need our sandals; we must have “inner peace.”

*Eph 2:14 For **he is our peace**, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

We are told to “go in peace” but we also need to “go as peacemakers.” During World War II in the midst of the bombing, Londoners tuned in to listen to the words of Churchill. It was his strong and inspiring voice that strengthened their moral again and again. That’s what Jesus does for His bride, coming with a strong and inspiring voice in the midst of our battles speaking of peace and encouragement to boost our morale.

Requirement s of the Shoes for Armor

Here in the 21st century in man and woman are finding their peace disappearing as fear, stress and violence surround us every day.

*Luke 21:26 Men's hearts **failing them for fear**, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

The bride of Christ is to have a ministry of peace to those who are afraid but that will be impossible if our hearts are filled with fear. We must first appropriate the sandals of peace and then go into our world and share it with the settled assurance that Christ is at home in our heart.

Reasons for the Shoes as Armor

It's the Gospel of Peace that prepares us for the battles we have to face every day. What we need is a prepared, settled and resolved heart that will adhere to the gospel and abide by it. It will provide us a readiness to publish the gospel and enable us to walk with a steady pace

The Gospel also prepares us for:

- Active and persevering service.
- Going to places where we are sent to save, which may contain:
 - Mountain passes of pain.
 - Deserts of fear and terror.
 - Great temptations.

Consider these challenges:

*Matt 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and **teach all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

*Isa 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that **bringeth good tidings**, that publisheth peace; that*

*bringeth good tidings of good, that **publisheth salvation**; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!*

*Rom 10:15 And how shall they preach, **except they be sent?** as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

Matthew 6 is a critical chapter for the bride—it's all about "peace:"

- We don't have to be filled with anxiety, worry and fear.
- Our mind is "steadied" and kept from fear by means of the good news of peace—"good news that we are at peace with God."

Rom 8:31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Without our shoes—without our peace:

- We are ungrateful

*Matt 6:25 Therefore I say unto you, **Take no thought** for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

We can't afford to be ungrateful for the provision we already have. If we are we don't have His peace we'll wind up going into battle "doubting" Jesus for the basics of life. We can't go into battle "not trusting" Him that He is concerned about you.

- We are unreasonable

*Matt 6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. **Are ye not much better than they?***

Why worry about what is going on in your life? Don't you think God cares more for you than the birds? To think otherwise is "unreasonable"—it's not wearing "your shoes." You think He doesn't care? Think of all the times in the past that He has cared for you. Not believing in the peace of Christ and not practicing that peace in your life is unreasonable; "it defies all logic."

- We are unproductive

Matt 6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Don't choose "worry" over "peace." When faced with a challenge you can worry all you want but it isn't going to change anything. Worry is totally unproductive and is in fact "counterproductive." Going through life fighting all your battles on your own will accomplish nothing but occasional "temporal" victories.

- We are unchristian

Matt 6:31-32 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Why get all worked up about the necessities of life? That's just like the world; it worries—"How can I get more." If you do the same you're just "spinning your wheels," you're no different than the pagans. Your sense of security and peace is in Christ; it's already yours. If you walk around worrying then no one can tell you apart from the world; you look just like them.

- We are unprepared

These are the verses that changed my life:

*Matt 6:33-34 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34 **Take therefore no thought for the morrow:** for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

Our life is to be filled with peace, not concern and worry about yesterday or tomorrow. Every hour you waste on the past or the future takes away from the 24 He has given you today to be about the business of His kingdom. The message has never changed:

David—*Ps 55:22 Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.*

Peter—*1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

When you allow yourself to be torn up with worry and fear you are totally unprepared for battle. You're standing "barefoot" on the battleground with no solid footing.

Requisitioning of Shoes for Armor

Being prepared doesn't happen overnight, we have to learn how to use the tools; we don't grasp the scope of the Scripture in a week or two. So, how do you go into the armory and requisition your shoes?

First—Meet the author and giver of peace; Jesus Christ:

*Heb 13:20 Now **the God of peace**, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.*

*2 Thess 3:16 Now **the Lord of peace** himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.*

*1 Cor 14:33 For God is not **the author** of confusion, but **of peace**, as in all churches of the saints.*

Second—Meditate on the Prince of Peace:

*Isa 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose **mind is stayed on thee**; because he trusteth in thee.*

When you meditate on Him He fills your life with peace.

Third—Manifest the spirit of peace in your life:

*Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

Peace is the result of manifesting (making visible) the Spirit in your life. When there is turmoil all around the bride of Christ, controlled by The Spirit, displays a quietness of soul. Every day we need to put on the “shoes of peace” by inviting The Holy Spirit to take control of our life; to sit on the throne of our life. When we do that continually, little by little He will get control of our life and we will get that overwhelming sense of peace that accompanies Him.

Fourth, memorize the Word of peace:

*Ps 119:165 Great peace have they **which love thy law**; and nothing shall offend them.*

When you “meditate” and “memorize” the Word of God you have a storehouse of peace to call upon when the enemy attacks. Many Christians are going down in defeat because they have nothing to rely on when the battle begins.

*John 14:27 **Peace I leave** with you, my **peace I give** unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

Jesus lived it and He was never flustered in turmoil and was never without His peace. He was only angry with “righteous anger” when evil was being done

Some Concluding Thoughts About Tranquility

Charles Spurgeon: *The sinner is barefoot and we are shod. How can the sinner “kick against the pricks? How can he hope to complete his journey? His shoes—his foundation—are either too loose or too tight; there is no peace.*

- We have a blessed boot maker who knows what we need because He has walked down the same paths; He is the only one who can make them.
- Our boots are made of excellent material—the gospel of peace:
 - Peace with God as to our past, present and future.
 - Peace of submission to His divine will.
 - Peace with the Word and its teaching.
 - Peace with our conscience, fears, desires, etc.
 - Peace with man.
- Put them on:
 - They will never wear out.
 - They provide an excellent foothold.
 - They are excellent for marching long distances in difficult terrain.
 - They protect our feet (our foundation) against trials along the way:

Ps 91:13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
 - They are pleasant to wear, giving rest to the “whole man.”
 - They are good for hard work.
 - They won’t come off.
 - They won’t cause blisters; sin.

- But behind the feet that are shod with the sandals of peace is the Spirit of Peace:

Zech 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

- Dr. Daniel Whitby (English Theologian): *That you may be ready for the combat, be shod with the gospel of peace, endeavor after that peaceable and quiet mind which the gospel calls for. Be not easily provoked, nor prone to quarrel: but show all gentleness and all long-suffering to all men, and this will certainly preserve you from many great temptations and persecutions, as did those shoes of brass the soldiers from those gall traps.*
- We are to maintain “peace” with God and “war” with Satan.

YOUR CERTAINTY

Eph 6:16 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Overview

The church was born in persecution, in martyrdom, in suffering, in imprisonment and bloodshed. Should we think it strange when we face trouble?

1 Peter 4:12-14 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

Where in the world did that ugly thought come from? They always come when least expected and least invited; in church, in prayer or just walking down the street. And these fiery darts (Satan's temptations) always center in three areas. He knows our individual weaknesses as well as our strengths and he has legions of evil spirits to tempt us, corrupt us, weaken our wills, deceive our minds, deaden our consciences and distort God's truth.

- Lust of the flesh.
- Lust of the eye.
- The pride of life.

And he always uses these darts to create doubt just like he did in the Garden of Eden. And our answer must always be the same—"take up the shield of faith;" "take up Christ."

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The Priority of the Shield of Faith

We are to have our shield with us at all times because, like the Roman soldier we are always vulnerable to attack. And Paul tells us how important our shield is “above all;” *en pas (epi-pasin)*—over in priority of all others whatsoever, to cover all the rest every day and every time; through “thick and thin.” But it doesn’t mean above all in importance or value, rather it’s overall as covering. All of the rest of the armor will not be able to protect us without the shield.

Consider Ahab, who went into the battle with the Assyrians in his full armor but without his shield. A soldier shot an arrow wildly into the air and it entered into Ahab’s side; between the joints of his armor and he bled to death inside his armor. Don’t think for a moment that Satan doesn’t know what armor we’re wearing and where the empty spots between the pieces are. Without our shield we can’t turn and protect those areas and so it’s critical for us to be able to defend against attacks from all directions.

The Purpose of the Shield of Faith

Every true Christian—every member of bride—is born a warrior and their shield of faith is their primary “defensive” weapon. Its purpose is to *quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*. For the Roman soldier that meant arrows that were soaked in poison; if the arrow didn’t kill you the poison would. They were also often wrapped in cloth that was soaked in pitch and set on fire so that when they hit their target they would splatter burning pitch in all directions, which was extremely effective against the enemy’s wooden shields. To counter this Roman shields (2½ by 4 feet) were made of two layers of wood that were bound with iron and covered with leather, which was soaked in water before entering into battle to quench those flaming arrows.

Our enemy's flaming arrows are also tipped with poison. Long after the initial burning of the arrow is no longer felt the sting of depression and disappointment will linger. But God has also provided a way for us to defend against that flame and poison. We can soak our shield before going into battle with the water of the Word of God.

Faith is the “elementary” grace and without it there isn't anything else. It's our faith extinguishes those fiery, poisonous darts because above all else it honors God and allows us to forsake everything else and just trust in God. But we need to remember that the faith we're talking about here isn't “saving faith.” Our shield of faith is a “living faith” that is based on:

- God as our Father.
- Christ as our Redeemer.
- The Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier and Strengtheners.

When that faith is acted upon and applied by the Word of God and the grace of Christ it will quench the darts of temptation as the center of our victory.

1 John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

The Potential of the Shield of Faith

How often do we excuse our failure to use our shield of faith by saying: “But you don't know what I'm going through, my situation is different?” The Bible doesn't say: “So you will be able to quench most of Satan's fiery darts” or “It will quench all the darts except the ones fired at you.” It says that if you will hold fast to this truth it is sufficient to quench “all” the fiery darts; and here's how.”

The dart of doubt—questioning the “goodness of God”

Satan first used the dart of doubt in The Garden by telling Eve that God's limitation was "unkind." He wasn't letting them have something they wanted.

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Did God really say that—did God really mean that? Thorough "doubt" he questions God's integrity to us by questioning God's Word, His commands and His promises.

The dart of denial—questioning the "government of God"

Then Eve responded and fell into his trap:

Gen 3:2-3 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

To which Satan replied and denying the truth he planted the idea that disobedience to God wasn't really a serious matter:

Gen 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

He questioned the "goals of God" with the most serious challenge; suggesting that God is selfish and jealous and deliberately refused to let man attain full maturity.

Gen 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Satan doesn't come right out in the beginning and deny God, that would be too obvious and Eve would have been put on guard. So He first sowed

seeds of doubt, which he turned into denial. How many times has he done the same thing to us? How many times have we fallen for it and found ourselves in the same position Eve found herself?

Satan presented all the same temptations to Jesus. He challenged “God’s goodness” by saying that God was withholding something He was entitled to:

*Matt 4:3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, **command that these stones be made bread.***

Then he challenged “God’s government:”

*Matt 4:6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, **He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:** and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

Next he challenged “God’s goals:”

*Matt 4:8-9 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, **All these things will I give thee,** if thou wilt fall down and worship me.*

Jesus answer was simply the Word of God—the Word of Truth.

The dart of deceit

Once Eve bought into his lie he sent his most poisonous dart.

*Gen 3:4-5 And the serpent said unto the woman, **Ye shall not surely die:** 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil:*

There he set forth a “partial truth”—Eve would know “good and evil” but she surely “wouldn’t” die. And without her shield of faith (her unconditional trust in God) Eve was taken down by Satan’s lies.

Satan has not changed and he brings up doubt to each one of us. That’s why we need the Shield of Faith. It’s God’s perfect counter to Satan’s lies, His perfect protection against his fiery darts of deception.

Consider Abraham—the father of our faith—who by faith followed God. When God called him he departed not knowing where he was going. One can imagine the questions fired at him by family and friends: Why didn’t God tell you? Don’t you think you better stop and think this through before you go off half-cocked? Does God really care for you, asking you to go somewhere without telling you why?

But he went by faith, the faith God built up in him until the moment He asked Abraham to offer up Isaac. Note in his command to his servants that he planned for both himself and Isaac to return. And that meant either God would stop the sacrifice or He would raise Isaac from the dead... that’s faith in action.

*Gen 22:5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and **I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.***

Abraham saved Sodom by defeating the four kings and rescuing Lot with 318 of his servants and in the process turned down a reward. But later as he considered all that had happened he became afraid of retaliation God reminded him:

*Gen 15:1 After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: **I am thy shield,** and thy exceeding great reward.*

How about all those years after God promised him a son when Sarah was barren. Here is one place where Abraham let his faith down. He bought into the deceit of the darts of doubt and denied the truth. When he took

the shortcut and fathered Ishmael he set in motion events for which the consequences have had eternal ramifications.

Consider Noah who built the ark by faith when all he heard around him was: “Why are you building a boat? Do you believe it will rain? You’ll never finish something that big! All these were fiery darts sent by Satan to cause doubt and denial through his deceitfulness.

Consider the Jews marching around the fortified walls of Jericho with the inhabitants jeering and laughing at them. Can you imagine how much faith that took, to march in silence with all that doubt coming from the tops of the walls?

*Heb 11:30 **By faith the walls of Jericho fell down**, after they were compassed about seven days.*

How easy it is for us to excuse our weak faith by saying that in all these instances somehow God just gave them the burst of faith they needed. Well that wasn’t the case then and it isn’t now. They felt the same pressure of doubt from the enemy that we do but they decided to lift up their shield of faith:

- I will believe God—He has given me a promise.
- I will ignore the circumstances—they are subject to change.
- I will not buy into the fiery darts of doubt being sent my way—they will be quenched.
- I will stand on God’s Word—His promises are true.

The Possession of the Shield of Faith

Faith, then, is that weapon of the soul which moves at will, and, as occasion calls, defends all the parts and powers of the tried and tempted spirit. Daniel Moore

The shield of faith is like all the other pieces of the armor of God. It isn’t going to suddenly appear in your hands, it must be “appropriated.” You

have to go into the armory every day and “take it up” with the rest of the armor and you do that by becoming familiar with the Word of God. Then you are able to fend off the fiery darts with your shield of faith.

Rom 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Faith is:

- Active” but it’s not faith until it’s at work in your life.
- Faith is not “intellectual” it’s “of the heart.”
- Faith must be well handled like a shield.
- The promises of God against the attacks of the enemy must be quoted to effectively defeat the enemy.
- Faith must be supported by doctrine.
- Faith can’t be left at home.
- Faith must be used based on past experience—from glory to glory.

Here are two very important things to remember:

1. Faith doesn’t come from some teacher or preacher. It comes from the object of their teachings—Jesus Christ. The more you get to know Him the secure in His Word you become and that only comes by living in the Holiest place—not the Holy place. The more time you spend at feet and in His Word the stronger your faith will become. Remember, faith comes outwardly by the Word and inwardly by The Spirit.
2. You and only you are the one that has to get serious about strengthening your faith. It’s like a muscle that requires exercise and exertion in order to build it up. Like that muscle faith needs to be torn down and rebuilt; tear down

all those things that you put your faith in that are not Jesus Christ. You don't grow your faith by "what you know," you grow it by taking what you know and "applying it to your life;" if you don't you won't grow.

How do you build your faith, how do you take action, how do you build a strong shield of faith to defeat Satan's fiery darts? The first place to begin is to find something God has told you to do and "do it." Then do it again and again by standing on His Word.

Our shield of faith must be one piece; it's not made in multiple parts. It must be faith in the "finished" work of Christ. There must be no confidence in yourself or any other man. It must rest totally in Christ, for only then can it withstand the enemy's blows. And most importantly it must be forged in heaven. You must have faith that is based on the truth, agrees with the Word of God and is put in operation by the Holy Spirit.

Some Concluding Thoughts About Certainty

How important is the Shield of Faith? It's like the soldier's shield that protects all the other pieces of armor—it is indispensable. As long as the bride has her faith she is secure and safe. But far too many don't realize how naked they are without it and how that accounts for many of their failures.

Satan's fiery darts come suddenly from unexpected quarters and they pierce, penetrate and torment the soul. They are responsible for kindling the worst passions and set the soul on fire.

Those who trust in themselves fall into the snare of "moralistic Christianity. They take the position that consciously or unconsciously believes that with their own moral goodness, ethical responsibility and high Christian ideals they can withstand Satan's fiery darts.

Luke 8:13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

In his commentary on Ephesians Maxie Dunnham boiled it all down:

The highway of life is strewn with the wreckage of Christians who never discovered how to combat “the wicked one.” They depend on their own moral strength. Sectioned and supported by ethical wisdom, high ideals and precepts, committed to social and personal justice and righteousness, they face evil in naked encounter. And some victories are won: temptations are escaped, sin is labeled ugly and overcome, and social crime is exposed and condemned. Even the strength that comes from the fear of the consequences of our own sin often becomes a source of power in resisting evil.

But none of them are ultimately adequate. Moral strength or the driving inspiration of a high ideal at times wears down and we wear out because we are never out of range of his fiery darts and the battle never ceases.

Our faith is individual but as the corporate bride of Christ—as His army—we operate in the same manner as the Romans did. They always marched straight forward behind their general, forming a wall of iron. We form a wall of faith if we don’t turn back when the battle is engaged. We need to stand firm and form a “square” and cover collectively cover ourselves with faith as did the Romans with their shields. The enemy would often just shoot arrows up into the air to fall on whomever they needed to form together to provide protection. We need that same protection as the enemy often fires at will. We need to do what Paul told Timothy to do.

2 Tim 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Run from sin and seek shelter under the cover of faith with your brothers and sisters in worship, prayer and study of the Word.

Our faith should be so alive that we never question our circumstances, the limitations God has placed on us or His right to dictate the terms of our life:

- Don't question His goodness.
- Don't doubt His government.
- Don't question His goals.

*Prov 30:5 Every word of God is pure: **he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him.***

Remember, Satan will come again and again and again to challenge your faith. Take time to read or re-read *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis and remind yourself of the strategies the enemy uses to attack your faith. Just remember:

Eph 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith **ye shall be able** to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

We are not merely able, we are able because the shield will always intercept the fiery darts—faith will always conquer.

*1 Peter 5:9 Whom **resist Steadfast in the faith**, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.*

YOUR SANITY

Eph 6:17a And take the helmet of salvation...

Overview

Satan is in the business of waging a battle for the possession and control of your mind. That's the battleground and it's Satan's domain. He wants to corrupt and confuse us by using false teaching or the world's system. He doesn't want us to think clearly about God and His purposes; he wants us to be confused about the plan of salvation and the daily practice of Christianity. And if he is going to be successful he has to dilute God's demands that we are to be like Jesus—loving, holy, joyous, peaceful, patient, kind and self-controlled. And he is all too often successful by getting us to focus on:

- Service at the expense of worship.
- The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches so we lose sight of the world to come.
- Lowering our standards so he can pour us into his mold.

But God has foreseen these battles and has added yet another piece of armor in His Son to protect us; Jesus is:

- The belt of truth—"He is the way the truth and the life" (*John 14:16*)
- The breastplate of righteousness—"He is our righteousness" (*2 Cor 5:21*)
- The shoes of peace—"He is our peace" (*Eph 2:14*)
- The shield of faith—"He is the author and finisher of our faith" (*Heb 12:2*)

And now He is our helmet of salvation—"He has given us his mind" (*1 Cor 2:16*)

Most helmets the Romans wore were not the shiny kind with ostrich feathers. They were hammered out of hard metal and were all the same size, so they had to use leather or linen liners or linen to make them fit along with chinstrap to keep them from twisting or falling off. Protecting the head was so important that Rome considered the helmet their most significant piece of armor. Severe penalties were handed out to those found not wearing their helmet.

“Take” (*dexasthe*) as used in this verse has a different meaning than we usually attribute to the word. It means “to receive” or “accept.” The other pieces of armor were to be taken up but the helmet and the sword were given by an armor bearer; the soldier “received” them. And likewise we receive our “salvation” and the “Holy Spirit” from Christ.

1 Thess 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

Isa 59:17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

Note that “faith” (our shield) comes before “salvation” (our helmet).

Picturing the Helmet of Salvation

We need protection for our mind because Christ wants to equip us for:

- His purposes.
- His plans.
- His thoughts.
- His concepts.
- His truth.
- His revelation.

And the devil wants to establish an outpost—a stronghold—in our mind to influence us against what God has for us:

*2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath **blinded the minds of them which believe not**, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

The helmet is more than just simply knowing that we are Christians; that we're saved. It covers our head, which is the site of our intellectual powers and it equips us with the wisdom of Christ. Our helmet will also keep us from intellectual surrender and rationalistic doubt; two of Satan's favorite darts. It protects our thoughts from the enemy's influence and interference. It is often referred to as "the hope of salvation;" the hope we have in the salvation we have:

A soldier wouldn't fight very well without the hope of victory. Going into battle believing that you have already lost is to walk in total defeat before striking the first blow. But we have that hope of a victory already won; the hope of "final" salvation. One commentator put it this way: *Without salvation man cannot come to any correct conclusion regarding psychological, social, philosophical or spiritual phenomena.* Without the mind of Christ we don't have a clue about what is going on in the spiritual realm that surrounds us.

Our helmet of salvation is personified in Jesus.

*1 Cor 1:24, 30 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God**... 30 But of him are ye in **Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom**, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

Not only are we "saved" by God's wisdom, we are "given" His wisdom."

Our helmet of salvation is the prerequisite to any kind of ministry. Not wearing a helmet when riding a motorcycle is a risky proposition as is going into spiritual battle without a helmet. It's not an optional piece of

armor because we need to constantly “think like Christ.” We can’t serve Jesus Christ without the helmet; without His wisdom.

*Acts 6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, **full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom**, whom we may appoint over this business.*

The helmet of salvation is the power of God in our life. Without it we have no power at all.

*1 Cor 2:5 That **your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God**.*

The bride doesn’t enter into battle with her own thoughts, concepts or programs—she enters with the mind and wisdom of Christ.

The helmet of salvation is produced by reading the Word of God.

*2 Tim 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee **wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**.*

Timothy became wise by spending time in the Word and we gain wisdom by spending time in the Holiest Place; studying His Word. You will never gain the wisdom of Christ without reading the Word.

The helmet of salvation is made possible through prayer.

*James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, **let him ask of God**, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.*

Wisdom is available to every believer and it is a prerequisite for ministry. But it doesn’t come without asking “and” believing:

*James 1:6 But let him **ask in faith, nothing wavering**. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

Practicing the Helmet of Salvation—the Helmet of Hope

1 Thess 5:8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

Hope only in “salvation” means nothing other than hope in Jesus; hope in all the things He has promised that we have yet to receive... eternal life.

The helmet and the shield are tied together; hope and faith. They are like the furnace and the thermostat. The thermostat represents our hope; we dial the temperature we desire. The furnace is like our faith; it brings about the temperature that we desire. Without either one the system won’t work. We just need to remember that our hope is to be placed on things “eternal” and not “temporal.”

Rom 5:3-5 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

The word “take” in 6:17—*dechomai* (*dekh-om-ahee*)— which means to receive, is imperative like “stand” in verse 14. We must know how to use (take) the helmet of salvation to test our thoughts before we translate those thoughts into action. We need to be sure that they are consistent with living a holy life and consistent with becoming more like Jesus. For far too long the church has not pursued spiritual wisdom and many have been sent out on the battlefield of missions ill-equipped in the mental arena.

Apologetics (speaking in defense of the Scripture) and education are the answer. However, too many Christians have the idea that intellect isn’t that important and they miss the vital role it plays in their spiritual growth, service, and victory. Studying the bible and doctrine keeps us from being led astray.

*Eph 4:21 If so be that ye have heard him, and **have been taught by him**, as the truth is in Jesus:*

*2 Peter 3:18 But grow in grace, **and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**. To him be glory both now and forever.
Amen.*

The power of ideas is life changing and today more than ever we need believers equipped with the mind of Christ – ready to do spiritual battle.

Defending ourselves in a hostile world requires the mind of Christ as opposed to the mind of the world. It enables us to exhibit a fearless front to the enemy:

*Matt 10:18-20 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, **take no thought how or what ye shall speak**: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For **it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you**.*

We are going to be caught at times in hostile environments with no time to prepare and we need to trust in His wisdom. And that means trusting in what we have stored up in our spirit—the Word. Remember Peter? He was an ignorant man speaking to the Sanhedrin with the authority and wisdom of Christ. He spoke to them with such power they could only think to kill him. How about Paul when he confronted the Jews in Damascus, when he debated the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem or when he argued the gospel before Felix, Festus and King Agrippa. In both men there was something beyond their natural ability that we need that today. We can't walk in the world without answers, but because we don't have them we often run from confrontation—always being on the defensive. The answer is to be equipped with the mind of Christ and to embrace the truth and communicate it to a lost world.

Our helmet of salvation demolishes the enemy's strongholds in our mind; our inner battles.

*2 Cor 10:4-6 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the **pulling down of strong holds;**) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;** 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.*

We need God's wisdom to tear down those strongholds and the Bible tells us that we have the weapons and the power of the name of Jesus to accomplish that, but we must get into the Word to appropriate them. Then the mind of Christ will begin to deliver us from bondage. But the Bible isn't a magic book... *a chapter a day doesn't keep the devil away.* We need to master the truth of God's Word.

Some Concluding Thoughts About Sanity

Satan seeks to destroy our assurance of salvation by doubt and discouragement. But though he may be successful at seriously damaging our "feelings" our salvation is sure. We can be strong in God's promises of eternal salvation because our security is a fact. Our assurance of our position "in" Christ comes from our obedience.

*1 Peter 1:3-10 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,** 5 Who are **kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, **though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:** 7 **That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth,** though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 **Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.** 10*

Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

The helmet represents salvation that is forgiveness from past sins and the strength to overcome and even conquer present and future sins. It symbolizes God's power and readiness to save others as well as our confidence in God:

*Rom 8:31-39 What shall we then say to these things? **If God be for us, who can be against us?** 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? **It is God that justifieth.** 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, **in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.** 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Without the helmet we would quickly and easily fall into the enemy's clever lies and set aside divine revelation for human reasoning. Satan's deceptions appeal to the unregenerate mind and its pride that turn the truth upside down:

- Evolution is more plausible than creation.
- Communism is more attractive than holiness.
- Works are more logical than the Cross.
- Psychology is more reasonable than salvation.

But the more we wear the helmet of salvation the more we fill our minds with the things of God and the more we are protected against Satan's lures and lies. Wearing our helmet will purify our soul, keep it from being defiled and comfort and keep it from being troubled and tormented by Satan. Without it we will become greatly distressed as we see the world and our culture collapsing around us. Unless the blessed hope of Jesus' return is constantly on our mind—the hope of our salvation fulfilled in His coming—we will constantly leave the door to our mind cracked open for the enemy to come in and set up his strongholds.

YOUR WEAPON

*Eph 6:17b and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God:*

Overview

Up to this point all the armor has been defensive, but now we go on the offense with the Sword of The Spirit.

The Roman sword (*machaira*) was a dagger-like knife used by the gladiators in one on one combat. It was short and had two sharp edges so that it could cut both going in and coming out. The machaira was unlike their enemy's swords, which were long, heavy and took a great deal of energy to swing. In its time it was the most efficient fighting instrument and nothing could compare with it. It was both offensive (attacking the enemy) and defensive (reflecting the blows of the enemy).

Our sword is the Word of God. In the New Testament “the Word of God” is never a general reference to “the Holy Scriptures,” it means “the word which God gives us to speak.” This is the *Logos*; Jesus Christ as the word, the written or spoken word. It is also the *Rhema*; the sayings of God, the wisdom of God and the revelation which God has given of Himself.

For the bride it's the "revealed" Word of God; the Word that you "know" or "understand." It's the Word that has been revealed to you and has become "living." And God has an armory full of "swords" for us to use against the enemy. All we have to do is appropriate them.

Rom 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

As you read the Word of God He will make it come alive to you (become rhema) and your faith becomes "alive." It's the Sword of the Spirit because it comes from the Holy Spirit and receives its fulfillment in the soul through the operation of the Holy Spirit. But too many Christians treat the Word like a "wish book." They don't "know" it; they just carry it under their arm as they walk into battle.

The Effect of the Sword

The words of Napoleon have been used by many generals in battle... *The best form of defense is attack.*

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

This is all about spiritual warfare but unlike the Roman sword the sword of the Spirit:

- Pierces the heart; not the body.
- Doesn't get dull; the more you use it the sharper it gets.
- Doesn't require a skilled hand; it requires nothing.
- Doesn't wound to hurt; it wounds to heal.

Consider the example of Peter when he turned the sword loose by preaching the Word concerning sin, judgment and resurrection:

*Acts 2:37 Now when they heard this, they were **pricked in their heart**, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, **what shall we do?***

The sword cuts right to the heart of the matter and sometimes the response is anger, and in this case in the face of the command to stop preaching it kept on working:

*Acts 5:29-33 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. 33 When they heard that, **they were cut to the heart**, and took counsel to slay them.*

Consider Jesus, the master swordsman. Right after God said “this is My Son in whom I am well pleased” He led Him into the wilderness and into Satan’s temptations. And the tests that Satan used are the same ones he uses on us today: the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

*Matt 4:1-11 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered. (THE FLESH) 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, **command that these stones be made bread** 4 But he answered and said, It is written, **Man shall not live by bread alone**, (SATAN WAS TRYING TO GET JESUS TO DISTRUST HIS FATHER ... MAN SHALL NOT LIVE APART FROM THE WILL OF GOD – HE IS TO WALK IN DEPENDENCE UPON GOD) but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. 5 (THE EYES) Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up,*

lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. (RABBIS SAID THAT THE MESSIAH WOULD LAND ON THE WALL OF THE TEMPLE—IF HE WERE TO DO SO HE WOULD BE IDENTIFIED AS THE MESSIAH—SATAN WAS TRYING TO GET JESUS TO TRUST GOD MORE THAN HE SHOULD) 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. (PRIDE) 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. (SATAN TRIED TO GET JESUS TO GIVE INTO HIS PERSONAL AMBITION—TAKE A SHORTCUT TO HIS GOAL—WHY SUFFER?) 10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. (JESUS WON) 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold; angels came and ministered unto him.

Consider the example of the Christian Life. How many times have you been sitting in church and the sermon has no relation to your situation and then you hear a scripture that “hits the mark?” How many times has that happened when you were reading the Bible—a revelation moment, a rhema moment?

More importantly, how many times has it come on the inside in a “real world” moment? It’s then that your spirit can only call upon what’s in “your” armory. And what’s in there for you to draw upon got there by reading and meditating on the Bible systematically; the “whole” Bible. If you just stay in the gospels or epistles of the New Testament you leave yourself without a lot of swords. How many times has it come from the Old Testament? All three of Jesus’ swords came from the Old Testament.

- Lust of the flesh—*Deut 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only,*

but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

- Lusts of the eyes—*Ps 91:12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.*
- Pride of life—*Deut 6:16 Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.*

The bottom line is that you won't be able to pull out a sword that you haven't memorized. Jesus didn't ask Satan to "wait a minute."

Temptations always come when your Bible isn't handy. We have to "store up" the Word of God for those moments.

Ps 119:11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwelt in you richly in all wisdom...

Some Concluding Thoughts About Your Weapon

- The best answer to secular humanism, dialectical materialism, behavioral psychology, liberal theology, cults and false religions is the Word of God.
- The Word of God cuts through Satan's ranks, deceptions and devices and we need to wield it when we pray, preach or teach or when facing our problems, circumstances, needs and temptations.
- The Word spoke the world into existence and that very same Word—Jesus—cast out demons, healed the sick and raised the dead and it's the same Word that meets all of our needs.

- Are you downhearted—*Jer 5:16 Thy words were found and I did eat them; and **thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.***
- Are you perplexed—*Ps 119:105 Thy word is a **lamp unto my feet** and a **light unto my path.***
- Are you tempted—*Ps 119:9 Wherewithal shall a young man **cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.***
- Are you in trying circumstances—*Matt 4:4 **Man shall not live by bread alone,** but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*

We need to depend upon the Word of God and not our own opinion or wisdom. It is the completion of our armor — a picture of Jesus Christ:

- He is our truth.
- He is our righteousness.
- He is our peace.
- He is our faith.
- He is our salvation.
- He is the Word of God.

We have our sword today in the Word of God, which cuts sharply and penetrates quickly. It is efficient and cuts to the heart of the matter without effort on our part. It only needs to be guided by the Holy Spirit in a willing, obedient and well armored soldier. In our hands the revealed Word of God becomes the Sword of the Spirit and when we use it in the right place (*trials*) at the right time (*temptations*) it will cut the snares of the enemy into pieces. This is a sword in which we can have total confidence for it will never

dull or break no matter how often it is used. In fact, the more it is used the sharper it becomes!

I believe the sword (*Word*) and shield (*faith*) are the principal pieces of our armor. When employed together they defend us from anything the enemy can throw our way. When we have faith in our sword we will use it but without faith we are open to defeat. A sharp sword hanging at our side because we let our shield down is useless; it's still sharp and ready to perform but we can't use it. And when faith is gone fear is present and we begin to take a beating from the enemy. No Roman soldier would go into battle without first being well trained in the use of his sword and his shield. Yet how many of the bride move into battle without as much as a rudimentary understanding of how to use either one?

PRAYING ALWAYS

Eph 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Overview

Prayer—*proseuche*—is a word that is only used in the New Testament where it recognizes God’s power and sufficiency. We understand the dominance of prayer in our Christian walk and that it is vital to our relationship with God, but it so often becomes just an obligation, a chore or a burden. We forget that a key ingredient of prayer is our memory, which God uses to inspire us to speak with Him; simply sharing our thoughts and feelings.

Prayer is our spiritual fuel and as such, yesterday’s fuel won’t work in today’s spiritual battles. Works never got the job done in the past and they won’t today; spiritual fuel made from prayer is the only answer. Without it we will never “put on all” the armor; we won’t even get into the armory.

“Praying Always With All Prayer” means at every stage of life and in all conditions. We need to be in constant preparation for the battle as well in the engagement itself. We can’t fight the battle on our own; in our own power. We have to be in constant contact with the “commander in chief” in the throne room in heaven if we hope to have victory in our spiritual battles.

- *Moses prayed* on the mountain and God gave Joshua the victory the Amalekites.
- *Joshua prayed* and the walls of Jericho fell.
- *Gideon prayed* and his 300 routed the Midianites.

That the message of *Eph 6:18*. When Israel fought in her own strength

she lost but when she prayed beforehand she gained the victory over her enemies; God fought her battles.

The Persistence of the Warriors' Prayer

Praying always involves praying with “all” prayer and supplication in the Spirit and with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

1 Thess 5:17 Pray without ceasing:

That doesn't mean walking around all day just mumbling prayers. It's maintaining a constant attitude of trust and communication with God—listening for His voice in all things. I like to call it being “mutually available.” God is always available for us but we aren't always available for Him.

Satan doesn't fear our perseverance or our understanding of how prayer works. His goal is simply to block that attitude and keep us occupied with other matters: fatigue, doubt, discouragement, depression, etc. But he does fear the simple fact that a needy child of God is at the mighty throne of God. Therefore we need to remember that the antidote is constant prayer that comes from a mindset that is focused keeping our lines of communication open with the Commander in Chief, because as soldiers in God's army we are constantly in danger.

The Possibilities of the Warriors' Prayer

“With All Prayer”—means with all kinds of prayer.

- Pray on all occasions—public, group, private.
- Pray in all places—car, classroom, office, family table.
- Pray for all things—personal needs, family needs, business needs, church needs.
- Pray at anytime without long preparation.

The possibilities are endless.

The Petition of the Warriors' Prayer

“With Supplication”—*deesis* (*deh-ay-sis*)—means to request or ask; continued prayer continued with strong incessant pleadings (intercession). It’s all about asking because asking is the rule of the kingdom.

*James 4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, **yet ye have not, because ye ask not.***

Why do we keep on striving when it is so simple to “ask” and just do what we are told to do. Asking in prayer is the only way that is going to get God to work on our behalf. Charles Spurgeon said: *Asking is the rule of the kingdom. It is a rule that will never be altered... God blessed Elijah’s prayer and sent rain... God delivered but Daniel had to pray for it.*

We are to “pray” and “ask” God for the things we need; the things that pertain to His Kingdom. Take a moment here and review those thing and God’s promises to provide them in *Matthew 6*.

The Power of the Warriors; Prayer

“In the Spirit”—The power of our prayer is the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us and therefore we are commanded to pray in communion with the Spirit. If we do it will:

- Stop us from making speeches to God by just going down our usual laundry list.
- Keep us from offering up selfish prayers that are out of the will of God.
- Begins our fellowship and His understanding will open up to us.
- Turn mourning and moaning into rejoicing.
- Turn fear into faith.

- Turn bewilderment into blessing.

Our prayer is coming to the Father and the Son through the Spirit. He never dictates, He always directs, leaving the direction and action up to us. His direction will overcome all distractions as He brings to mind passages of Scripture to pray that are appropriate to our situation. Therefore it's critical that we have "implanted" plenty of them. And His presence reminds and assures us that our prayers are heard because it is His power that allows us to "pray the will of God."

*Rom 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also **helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought**: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And **he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit**, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

Being controlled by The Spirit makes His power available to us and there are times when it's appropriate to just let Him pray for us. This brings up the subject of praying in tongues.

There are many times when I just can't pray with "my understanding"—with my mind. I can't get my mind focused and I don't know what to pray. I have learned that the Spirit knows the perfect prayer at those times. Those are times when I need to get above the present depressing feelings or physical limitations that are preventing me from knowing what to pray.

*1 Cor 14:14 For if **I pray in an unknown tongue**, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

*Jude 20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Ghost**,*

Praying in The Spirit is the most purely spiritual exercise in which we can engage. If we will just spend time with God in prayer the Spirit will

make clear what is God's perfect will, then we just need to "come into agreement" with it.

The Precision of the Warriors' Prayer

"And Watching Thereunto"—*agrupneo* (*ag-roop-neh-o*)—means to be awake, sleepless or always aware. We need to be "watchful" of our prayer life:

- Be spiritually awake.
- Be diligent and vigilant.
- Permit no disruptions.
- Don't become "formal."

Peter fell asleep when he was supposed to be watching and David failed to watch as did Sampson in Delilah. We need to be like Nehemiah rebuilding the wall; working with tools in one hand and watching with a weapon in the other.

Neh 4:9 Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

We will do well to be mindful of Paul's admonition to the Colossians:

Col 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

Good prayer life begins before you pray and that means guarding your time and planning your schedule. And watch for what feeds your prayer life and guard against what hinders it and don't just watch for evil but also those opportunities to do good as well as to receive it.

Mark 13:33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

Mark 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

It's our watching that helps us to "sight" the enemy and our praying that "fights" the enemy. They are both critical elements in our spiritual battle plan. And we can't forget to be watchful for "the answer" to our prayer. How many times have we quit praying for something when the answer was at our doorstep? Keep on praying until the Spirit tells you to stop.

The Perseverance of the Warriors' Prayer

"With All Perseverance"—*proskarteresis* (*pros-kar-ter-ay-sis*)—means persistency.

We need to "continue" praying and be persistent, because when we stop we're headed for trouble. It's important that we don't cut our prayers short.

Rom 12:12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

What Paul is saying is to hold on; don't quit and don't yield to discouragement. Prayer isn't automatic; it's a matter of discipline. It takes time to be holy and that means taking time in exercising our prayer. Remember, Satan's favorite ploy is to convince you that "you've blown it to try and get you to quit praying. He wants you to cancel your prayer time for other priorities/pressures and that needs to be countered by becoming a "prayer warrior."

The Purpose of the Warriors' Prayer

"And Supplication for All Saints"

One of the most important purposes of prayer is to pray for others; for all saints. It's interesting to note that the word saints in is never found in the singular in the Bible. We are not "solitary soldiers" we are a member of "God's army" and He is "our" Father just as much as he is "my" Father. And the call to intercession for our fellow warriors also requires that we be watchful and resolute because:

- They are our brothers.
- They have hearts prone to evil just as we do.
- Prayer for others tends to lead us to love others.
- The church always needs it.
- Our prayers benefit others that are prone to temptation even if we don't know about it.
- Every day Christians die and we should remember them before God.
- Some day we too shall die and will be comforted that others have prayed for us.

Paul is a great example for us because he always prayed for his friends:

- For wisdom.
- For power.
- For love.
- For comfort.
- For the knowledge of God's will.

And that's our challenge, to pray like a warrior, asking God to grant each other wisdom, power and strength. Asking Him to help each warrior take up the whole armor and be ready for battle. Yes we are built as warriors but we need to "run on prayer." Our spiritual engine won't run on anything else. But when we don't get the answer we tend to try and look elsewhere because of our impatience. Rather we need to consider that the lack of an answer may have something to do with us:

- God's Word is clear: *Ps 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*
- When we lack faith: *Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*
- When we have the wrong motive: *James 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*
- When we are asking as a show of pride: *Luke 18:11-14 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

But if we abide in Christ, ask in His name and pray in the Spirit He promises to answer our prayers. But even then He doesn't always and that's when it takes "trust."

Some Concluding Thoughts About Prayer

Prayer entails entering into three realms:

1. *The Hidden Place*—This is anywhere that we can be alone with God. It's the place where everything else is shut out

and we are shut in with God. *Matt 6:6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*

2. *The Heavenly Place*—This is where our battles with evil are as well as our blessings; in the heavenlies. It's the realm of "wandering and wicked thoughts;" the book I shouldn't have read, the TV program or movie I shouldn't have watched or my voice of the past that has uttered a host of unclean words. The enemy will dredge up a lot of filth from our subconscious. It's also the realm of worry and fear about thing present. This is where we need once again focus on *Matt 6... give us this day our daily bread*. That is one time the Lord specifically tells us to pray for our material needs.
3. *The Holiest Place*—This is where we need to spend our every waking moment. We can be here and still carry on our daily walk through this world. It's the place where we are constantly in tune with the voice of the Spirit and are ready to be obedient to His slightest command. This is where we "pray without ceasing," maintaining an ongoing communion with our bridegroom.

No matter how complete our armor is, no matter how skilled we may be and no matter how courageous we may be, without prayer we are going to be defeated.

*Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that **men** ought always to pray, and not to faint;*

THE REAL HOLY WAR

Gal 5:16-26 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Overview

We have more than one enemy; in fact Paul tells us that we have three: the World, the Flesh and the Devil. Let's look at each one.

Our flesh is dead, it died on the Cross but our soul still craves what the flesh used to demand before we were born again. That power over our soul is gone and we are no longer slaves to it. The problem though is that our soul was previously attached to and controlled by the flesh and it wants what it used to get. As we move through this world our soul is on "fleshly" withdrawal, and just like the alcoholic or the junkie we need help through the process. Enter the Holy Spirit and "our" spirit that want to take control of our soul. Therefore we have this battle going on constantly between the desires of our spirit to renew our soul and our soul's lust for its old nature.

The World and the Devil attack from the outside but our old nature attacks from the inside and with this battle we also need every piece of the armor. We need to learn what it means to “walk in the Spirit” and to be victorious over Satan we have to fight to be victorious over our old nature. We have to flee the lust of the flesh and forsake the influence of the world by faith.

The Inner War

Gal 5:17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

The flesh is a synonym for the body—our humanity. It is also what we refer to as our old nature:

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The flesh has a spiritual context, man apart from God is flesh and the term is always used in the context of “evil.” The earthly nature of man apart from divine influence results in him being prone to sin and is opposed to God. This is where our soul learned all its sinful desires. The desires of our old nature—pursued by our unchanged soul—are the avenue used by Satan to tempt us. It gives him opportunities to attack us and the power to establish strongholds.

“The Flesh Is Weak”

Rom 6:19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

As noted above, the flesh has no power—it’s dead. John Bunyan from *Pilgrim’s Progress*: “Run and do the Law demands, yet gives me neither

feet nor hands. But better news the gospel brings. It bids me fly and gives me wings.”

“The Flesh is Worthless”

Rom 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

There is nothing good in the flesh apart from God. The world thinks that we can “improve” with effort that we can get better; the humanistic approach.

John 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

“The Flesh is Warring”

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

The flesh can’t follow the Law, it’s at war with the Law; we are in a constant “personal” battle because of it. The old man (our old nature) is without hope—the new man has all hope.

“The Flesh is Without Righteousness”

In our flesh we can’t produce any form of righteousness. Sadly, many of the bride try but they wind up leading frustrating and unfulfilled lives.

Gal 3:3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

These are Christians who have been saved but think they can add to it with their own effort in their own power. For the Jewish Christian it was still trying to fulfill the Law. We can do nothing in our flesh – by our works – to make ourselves perfect. The flesh was without the ability to

produce righteousness in any form and our soul still struggles with that issue; an issue that the enemy takes full advantage of.

“The Flesh is Mortally Wounded”

Rom 6:6-10 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Death of the flesh makes it possible for us to have peace with God. Some believe that our flesh wasn't killed, it was just mortally wounded. They believe that it will die eventually; when we get to heaven. No—the flesh is dead, it was crucified. It's our soulish nature that wants a “fix” of whatever the flesh gave it previously.

This is why, as a Christian, we have a much harder time with inner struggles than the unbeliever. We have both natures at work and they only have one.

Rom 7:18-25 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Even though the desire of our heart is to please God, our soul still struggles with submission to the source of that desire; our spirit under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. This is the battle for which we need our Spiritual armor. And God has given us the battle plan.

Winning the Inner War

“Crucify the Flesh”

The flesh was crucified with Christ but for each of us that is only true if we apply the “truth” in our daily life. A man was watching a chicken run around with its head cut off—“It’s dead but it just doesn’t know it.” That’s the problem with many of the bride of Christ; their flesh is dead but they don’t believe it and they continue to allow their soul to pursue their former lusts.

John Stott, in his book on Ephesians, had this to say about crucifixion: *It was a brutal ugly death handed out by the Romans. It was incredibly painful and it’s always painful when we crucify the flesh. It was permanent—no one lived through it; no one climbed down off the cross.*

“Walk in the Spirit”

In Galatians 5 the Spirit is mentioned 3 times:

- 5:16— Walk in the Spirit.
- 5:18—If you are led by the Spirit.
- 5:25—If we live in the Spirit.

If we walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit we will live in the Spirit— and where is that accomplished? In the Holiest Place.

Some Concluding Thoughts About the Holy War

How do we gain victory over the flesh? Look at what is influencing our life and note what comes from our soul's pursuit of its former life. Deal with those influences ruthlessly and follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When we do we will find that we are replacing our character with the fruits of the Spirit as God replaces our old character with His new one.

Remember that it is not just a matter of “stopping things.” Just tearing out the weeds in your garden isn't the end of the job. You have to let God plant new seeds for a crop of “spiritual fruit.”

God tells us what to replace the weeds with:

Rom 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

And that means—“take up the full armor of God.”

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

You can resist all you want, but without “submitting” Satan isn't going to flee. If you spend all your time trying to crucify your flesh again you will never follow the Spirit and you are going to lose the battle every time by following after “dead” desires. And just the opposite will happen when you don't follow those old desires; Satan will flee.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Whether we know it or not or whether we admit it or not, we are in a war and there are battles—personal battles—every day that we can't ignore or fail to fight. There is a war raging in the spirit around us 24x7 between the forces of rebellion and the army of God. If we were to have that war revealed to us I think our entire attitude about our responsibility to be an active participant would be greatly impacted.

In this book we have tried to open up that window into the spirit world as we looked at our enemy, examined what this war is all about, reviewed what is expected of us, and what God has provided us to use in waging our battles.

I think that two of the biggest mistakes the bride of Christ can make are failing to realize that she is in a war and, if she does, failing to remember that while she is engaged in her daily battles that the war has already been won; Jesus won it on the Cross. Perhaps all this can be summed up in one very key thought that must always be front and center in our daily battle plan:

1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

We quite often focus on 4b but we forget about 4a; “them.” John identifies them for us as *the spirit of antichrist*. They are the enemy in the world around us, both in the natural and in the spiritual. These are the forces that *confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, and it's critical for us to remember—moment-by-moment—that we *have overcome them*.

Yes, we have overcome them by the blood of the Lamb because He overcame them for us. But we have the duty and obligation to overcome them every day in the process of serving our bridegroom. Every morning when we wake up we find ourselves on the frontline in this war and if we fail to *take up the full armor of God* we have just given the advantage to the enemy. We can't afford to go through life trying to do battle with the

enemy in our own power and our own strength; it's a simple recipe for failure. But thanks to our bridegroom we don't have to let that happen because He knew we were going to be fighting in this war and He provided something in addition to our spiritual armor:

*Zech 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, **Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit**, saith the Lord of hosts.*

That's our secret weapon! Our battle against the *spiritual forces of darkness* isn't supposed to be accomplished in our own *might nor power*. It was never designed to be that way because we have been overmatched since the outset. Satan and his army are so much more powerful than we can imagine, and yet he is completely helpless in the face of the Word of God, our faith in that Word and our empowerment by the Spirit of that Word. That is why Jesus, in His letters to the churches (*Rev 2-3*), refers to those who are *overcomers*. Those who overcome the enemy do so by the power of the Spirit of God, against whom the enemy has no power.

The Holy Spirit knows every strategy, trick and plan of the enemy and He will reveal them all to us if we will but submit to His leading. He knows the daily battle plan the Commander In Chief has for each one of us; the plan that leads to victory. So let's begin each day by *taking up the armor* and submitting to His leading through the Word of God and prayer. Everything we will ever need to be victorious in our life down here on earth is right there for us. With our armor in place and the Holy Spirit leading us we will not only "see" the path to victory that lies before us, we will "stay on" that path all the way to the end. We will be the "overcomers" that Jesus intended His bride to be.

That's the challenge and the path to victory the bride of Christ is to walk out during her ketubah, her sanctification. Her battle with the enemy and the desires of her old nature are what war against her during this time of preparation for her wedding day. Therefore, she needs to remember that fighting the good fight of faith can only be done God's way and in His strength and power. It is a "daily" struggle and battle that she wages and

she has to win them one at a time, one day at time, one hour at a time and one minute at a time.

That is her *Battle For Rest* and sewing her wedding dress has to be accomplished that way... *one stitch at a time*.

OTHER BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

Available At
www.WalkWithGod.org

The Doorway To Rest—The Brides’ Invitation... When we consider Solomon’s Song—the love relationship he had with one of his wives—we can easily see the relationship between Christ and His bride portrayed. And that relationship has been portrayed in many ways. Think of the “sun’s” relationship with the moon being like our relationship with the “Son.” This book is a detailed, verse by verse study of the *Song of Solomon*, revealing the true view of bride of Christ through the eyes of the bridegroom and a life changing view of the bridegroom through the eyes of the bride.

The Pathway To Rest—The Brides’ Purpose... As we looked at the message of the *Song of Solomon* we were given a clear picture of not only who our bridegroom is, but equally important how He sees us and how we should see Him. His invitation opened the doorway to His Rest and now, as we walk out the days of our *ketubah*—our betrothal—we need to find out what that means and what it entails along the pathway to His Rest. For that we turn to the book of *Hebrews*, where we learn through each verse what sewing our wedding dress means and how important it is for us to be ready and watching for His soon return as we move up the path to spiritual maturity.

The Dangers To Rest—The Brides’ Warning... We have been inundated with not the shout of triumph but the incessant worldly scream of pending disaster. The country’s economics have been turned

upside down and fear and panic have grabbed the headlines as the Middle East falls into chaos. The news is full of rampant pandemics, meteorological disasters, hopeless individuals committing tragic acts and families destroyed. And sadly, the majority of the bride of Christ is not prepared for His return. We have allowed the world and its supreme ruler to distract us from the path the lies in front of us. Now He has finally released me to write this verse-by-verse study out of the book of *Revelation* that He put on my heart 18 years ago concerning His letters that not only deal with why He is coming back but also what we, His bride, are supposed to be doing and not doing as we wait and watch.

The Battle For Rest—The Brides’ Armor... Spiritual warfare is a war between the forces of God and the forces of rebellion led by Satan. And the bride is engaged in this spiritual war between light and darkness, good and evil, Heaven and Hell and Christ and Satan. But sadly, many aren’t even aware of the fact that they are in a spiritual battle every day of their life. As believing Christians we’re in a grim conflict and not on a worldly cruise ship or a showboat; it’s a battleship. It is a fight to the finish with no holds barred and we can’t be neutral and we can’t call a truce. And this war is a personal one; very personal. In this book we have taken a detailed verse-by-verse study of the part of the book of *Ephesians* that deals with the enemy, his strategies and his goals and most importantly the battle orders we have been given from our commander-in-chief to ensure victory over those personal strongholds the enemy has established in our lives.

Walk With God—The Way Of Enoch... In this series I have attempted to open the door to a solid study of our foundation by looking at our Walk With God in eight volumes. Each volume takes a look at a key fundamental part of our walk. They were written with the goal of challenging the bride of Christ to firm up her underpinning and step into the Spirit-filled, victorious and abundant life that Jesus has for her. And to accomplish that we need to draw near to Him through the leading of the Holy Spirit. Our Christian life should be spent with Jesus where He is now, in the Holiest Place. It’s there that we will find His mercy and grace in the power of His blood. This series explores the foundation and sound

scriptural doctrine that underlies God's plan for our lives. It is a journey beginning with learning who God really is and culminating with discovering how we are to walk out a loving and obedient relationship with our Creator.

Volume 1—*Your Life In Christ*

Volume 2—*The Spirit-Filled Christian*

Volume 3—*Foundations of Faith*

Volume 4—*The Word of God*

Volume 5—*Principles of Prayer*

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