

DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT!

By Rev. Shane C. Rowe

Ephesians 6:10-18

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. **11** Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **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. **13** Wherefore take unto you the whole armour 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, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; **15** And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; **16** Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. **17** And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: **18** Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

This month's topic deals with Spiritual Warfare. Every day, Christians around the world find themselves engaged in battles. These attacks can come from every direction, sometimes with devastating consequences. More often than we might wish to acknowledge, these battles are lost **unnecessarily**.

The Father has provided resources for us that, if properly used and understood, will turn our losses into victories and enable us to go on the offensive, instead of instead of always being on the defensive.

The resources and means for fighting our battles encompass a lot more than just what is listed in the selected scripture above. Entire books have been written on this subject, as well as thousands of tapes and videos. I have no plans to try to cover every aspect of Spiritual Warfare in this article. In fact, it would probably be impossible. Instead, I want to discuss what I believe to be the most fundamental elements of Spiritual Warfare, as presented in the scriptures above.

BE STRONG IN THE LORD

The first thing every believer needs to realize is that we cannot fight the enemy on our own. While God has indeed blessed many with great knowledge, abilities, and strength in the natural, *Ephesians 6:12* reminds us that our enemy is spiritual and not physical. To fight spiritual wars, you need spiritual weapons. **To use spiritual weapons, you need spiritual strength.**

Ephesians 6:10 shows us how to obtain the spiritual strength we need to fight our battles. We are told to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” The Greek word used here is ***endunamoo*** – “to be strengthened, to receive strength”. In other words, we need to allow Christ to strengthen us with His power!

We must learn to trust in the Lord's abilities/power and not our own.
(*Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalms 37:5,40*) Since ALL power in Heaven and Earth is given unto

Him, we can rest assured that we will have the power needed to fight and WIN the battle!
(Matthew 28:18)

SUIT UP

In our scripture passage, Paul twice commands us to “put on” or “take upon” us the “whole amour of God”. The fact that he says this twice in one passage should indicate to us that this is something he felt was of great importance. Since he was writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God must find this important as well. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

The Father has provided us with amour to protect our spiritual selves against harm during our battles with the enemy. This “whole amour of God” covers us from head to toe, protects us from the enemy’s weapons, and provides us a weapon of our own to use *against* the enemy.

It is important to note that this amour is God’s - *for us*. It is not from anything we can do or create on our own. However, while the Father provides the amour and sword, it is up to us to put it on and to learn how to use it.

REAL MEN WEAR GIRDLES

Verse 14 tells us to gird our loins (basically - from the belly button to the knees) with truth. This girding not only acts as a protection of our “private parts” but, as any weight lifter will tell you, assists us in lifting, carrying, or moving heavy weights.

Now, some may be wondering, “Exactly what is meant by truth?” Well, scholars seem to be of two minds on this. Some believe it refers to being true or sincere in our motives towards God. Others believe it refers to knowledge of the foundational truths found in scripture such as who God is, who we are in Christ, and what we have through Christ. Both of these views have biblical support.

I would tend to believe that it is a combination of both. **We need to be sincere in following after Christ and we need to be strengthened and enlightened by biblical truths.**

Probably the best explanation on this piece of amour I have ever heard was from Bishop George Bloomer while being interviewed for a Christian TV program. Basically, he stated that, since the term “loins” typically refers to “passions”, then by binding or controlling our “loins” with Truth (the Word of God), we learn to control our passions and emotions, thus making us stronger, more effective soldiers. It keeps us from being led away by our own dreams, ambitions, lusts, and desires.

Regardless of which side of the discussion you are on, it would seem apparent that, to put on this piece of amour, we need to devote ourselves to the study and

understanding of the Word of God, which reveals the real truth – Jesus Christ. (*John 14:6, John 1:1-18*)

GUARD YOUR HEART

Verse 14 also instructs us to put on “*the breastplate of righteousness.*” This piece of amour protects organs vital to your existence. Without your heart, blood would not flow. Without your lungs, oxygen could not be absorbed into your body. One good injury to the torso could bring about your demise very quickly.

God has provided a covering of righteousness to prevent the enemy from delivering fatal blows to your torso. This righteousness is Christ’s, not yours. (*Romans 5:17-21, Isaiah 64:6*) Remember that our righteousness (ability to be made approved by God) is as “*filthy rags.*” Dirty rags wouldn’t prove very effective against any sort of attack. We need the righteousness of Christ to cover us and keep us safe.

We put this amour on through our faith in Christ and His saving grace.
(*Romans 3:20-22*)

Paul also refers to this piece of amour as “*the breastplate of faith and love.*” (*1 Thessalonians 5:8*) Our faith in Christ and His grace stirs us to acts of love and obedience towards God and His children. It will keep us on track and following the orders of our Commander and Chief – Jesus.

THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR WALKIN’

Soldiers and workers have known the importance of good footwear for centuries. A good pair of work boots will not only protect your feet from harm, but also keep them comfortable. Thus, enabling the wearer to stay on their feet for long periods of time. Anyone who has ever stood all day in bad shoes will tell you that aching feet will affect every other part of your body and wears you down prematurely.

Verse 15 exhorts us to cover (shoe) our feet with “*the preparation of the Gospel of Peace.*” **We must be prepared to share the Gospel of how man can obtain Peace with God through Christ.**

I believe we accomplish this by reminding ourselves of God’s grace and mercy through the reading and studying of God’s Word and through our Praise & Worship. Once we are reminded, we can then share what we know with others. There is no better feeling than being accepted by God. There is no greater joy we can share in than seeing others receive that same acceptance. Sounds like pretty good shoes to me.

SHEILDS UP!

Paul says, in *verse 16*, that, “*above all*” (or over all), we should take or use “*shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*”

This is not some dinky little round shield like we see in the movies. The Greek word for shield here, ***Thureos***, means: *a shield, a large oblong, four-cornered shield.* This would be more like the large, door-like shield used by the Roman army in Paul's day. This shield was large enough for the soldiers to crouch down behind and avoid being hit by the fiery darts the enemy would shoot. In other words, **the shield of Faith is large enough for us hide behind completely when the enemy starts firing.**

This faith, or ability to believe in God and His Word, comes from God. *Romans 12:3* declares that God has given every man "*the measure*" of faith. In other words, we all have the ability to trust in God and His Word. The trick is to access that ability.

How do we do this? "*Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.*" (*Romans 10:17*) **The more we read, study, and listen to God's Word, the more of that "*measure*" of faith that we pull out, or tap into, and are able to use when needed.**

Our Praise and Worship also help increase our faith. When we Praise and Worship, we declare the Truths we find in the Word of God. We hear ourselves and others declare the Word and faith comes. *Ex:* When you declare or hear that God is your Healer and hear the examples of the healings He has done for others, your faith is stirred to believe that God is also your Healer!

Something else to note in this verse is that Paul states that we "shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (emphasis mine) and not that we may. The use of the word "shall" here indicates a certainty that we will *have* to. In other words, the enemy will shoot fiery darts and we will have to defend ourselves. This is why **Paul says that we should take up the shield of faith "above all" – rather, over all, to cover over all the other pieces of amour.**

WEAR YOUR HELMENT

The Helmet of Salvation in *verse 17* refers to the Truth that we now have been justified, through Christ, and have the certainty of salvation. (*Romans 8:26-39, John 6:36-58, John 10:22-30*) **This piece of amour protects our head, the container of the mind, from false teachings and temptations.**

When we realize the great gift of Salvation is ours, it encourages us to look at and think about things differently. We can further "renew" or change our minds from the sinful, worldly way of thinking by filling it with the Word of God. (*Ephesians 4:23*)

Not only will we resist temptation and false teachings, but also the Truth of Salvation causes us to be "unashamed." (*Romans 5:1-6*) When we become "unashamed", we in turn become "confident". Confidence enables us to stand (*verses 11,13-14*) and do all that is needed to be able to stand. Furthermore, confidence in our salvation and the protection of God enables us to do more than just stand. Rather, we

will begin to attack the enemy first, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and “overcome” him. (1 John 5:4,18)

GET FAMILIAR WITH YOUR WEAPON

Your only weapon is “*the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*” Since it is our only weapon, it is imperative that we understand it and how to use it. The ways to become familiar with it are simply to read, study, and practice it.

When Christ was faced with an attack from the enemy while in the desert, He didn’t call down fire from heaven or command the angels to take Satan away. He used the “*sword of the Spirit*”, the Word of God, when dealing with him. (*Matthew 4:1-11*) I believe this is included in scripture as an example for us.

When faced with the lies or attacks of the enemy, we must be ready and able to use the Word of God against him. We can’t contradict his lies or schemes if we don’t know the Truth of God’s Word.

Not only does this “sword” serve as a weapon, but it also severs as a “support” to us. *Matthew 4:1-11* shows us that we live “*by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.*” **Just like our bodies need food and water to survive, our spirits need the nourishment/sustenance that comes from the Word of God.** Jesus used the term “every word” here. I believe that this is not only referring to the written Word, but also the spoken word delivered through apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, pastors, and lay persons. I also believe this includes the words God speaks to us directly, through His Holy Spirit, when we spend time communing with Him in prayer, praise, and worship.

While all these ways are methods God uses to communicate His will and plans for us, **I am convinced that the starting and reference point should always be the written Word, the Holy Bible.** (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*) It is there we learn how God thinks, acts, responds, and talks. You get to know Him in a way similar to how we get to know people in the natural. The more time we spend around someone and the more we observe, hear, and learn about their personality and behaviors, the more we are equipped to discern between fact and fiction when someone else tells us what they have supposedly said, done, or believe. **Remember the old saying, “Knowledge is power.”**

If you are having trouble understanding or reading the Bible, God has blessed us with anointed teachers, pastors, and authors to help us in our journey to understanding. There are also several easy to read, plain language translations of the Bible available everywhere. There is even a “comic book” version available!

ADD-ONS

Over the years, I have become aware that 3 important things are missing in the above passages. While Paul may not have included them here, 2 of them are found elsewhere in scripture while 1 is missing entirely, but with good reason.

NEW CLOTHES

The first thing I noticed that was missing was clothing under the amour. **In Isaiah 61:3, we are told that the Messiah (Jesus) will give unto us “the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”** I believe this “garment of praise” is the clothing we should already have on when we put on the whole amour of God.

The spirit of heaviness (rather – the weight of our sin and shame) is just what it sounds like, something heavy. It ways us down and restricts our movement. Roman soldiers wore light clothing under their amour so they could move freely and to offset the weight of their amour. Christ, through salvation, brings us the garment of praise that we can wear instead of the spirit of heaviness.

The spirit of heaviness weighs us down. Since Christ is giving us something else instead of it, logic tells us that the garment of praise is light, easy to wear, and actually helps us. *Ex:* We've already learned that praise stirs our faith. Faith aids us in overcoming the enemy. Overcoming brings joy. Joy is light, happy, and can make us feel like we're floating on air! You can't get much lighter than that!

Even though Christ has provided the garment of praise to us through salvation, many believers have grown accustomed to their old spirit of heaviness. They're used to feeling fearful, ashamed, and down. They wore that robe for years, just like everyone else in the world. They make the fight even harder by trying to carry all that excess weight. **If only they would freely accept the abundant life Christ brings, it would make the fight so much easier.** (*Ephesians 4:20-24*)

NO MORE SKINNED KNEES

The second thing I noticed missing was protection for the knees. Now while the knees are pretty tough and aren't usually a big target in warfare, nonetheless, they can be injured. And when they are, it will affect our ability to stand and to walk properly.

One day, during my prayer time, I was going through “putting on” or receiving the whole amour of God. As I was dressing myself from head to toe, I came to the knees and realized that God had also provided coverage for them. **I like to call this piece of amour the “kneepads of Grace”.**

While I don't have enough room to fully explain the concept of Grace, it is an assurance that, even when we fall or sin, we still land safely in the salvation and unmerited favor of the Father. (*Ephesians 4:30*) **Instead of being cut, torn apart, or crippled, we are cushioned by His love and are able to quickly get up and keep moving forward.** (*Ephesians 1:3-14*) Amazing grace indeed!

DO YOU FEEL A DRAFT?

The third thing I noticed missing was any form of amour for the backside. This seems weird at first, but, if you think about it, it makes perfect sense. The point of fighting a battle is to hold your ground, move forward, and to eventually conquer or overcome the enemy. **The only time your back is exposed is if you turn and retreat!**

We are called to overcome, not retreat! When we turn tail and run from a battle we become exposed to the enemy's weapons and therefore, become vulnerable to attack! I believe the fact that there is no amour for the back implies that we must never turn our back to the foe. (*Luke 9:62, Ephesians 4:27*) Our only safety is in resisting ceaselessly! (*James 4:7*)

LASTLY – PRAY, PRAY, PRAY!

The final things Paul instructs us to do in our passages (*verse 18*) are to pray “*always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit*” and watch “*thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.*” Let’s look at these one at a time.

We are to pray “always” (Greek word: *kairos*), or at every opportune time or season, with all “prayer” (Greek word: *proseuche*) and “supplication” (Greek word: *deesis*), or asking god to supply our needs. **The Lord’s Prayer (*Matthew 6:9-13*), or the method of prayer He taught us, shows us that prayer involves more than just asking God for things. It includes praise, worship, repentance, requests, surrender, and acknowledgement.** After this manner, should we pray “always.”

Notice that Paul instructs us to pray “in the Spirit”. Some may believe that Paul is telling us to only pray in tongues. I don’t see that here at all. While I do believe that we can and will pray in tongues, I believe Paul is encouraging us to surrender our will and allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit of God in our prayers. (*Romans 8:26, 1 Corinthians 14:15*) This would include praying both in tongues and our native language, as well as acts of obedience to the leading of the Spirit of God.

We are instructed to not only pray for ourselves, but also to recognize the needs of and pray for “all saints.” **We need to not only be concerned for our own well being, but also for the well being of our fellow believers. We must remember that we are not “lone wolfs” on the battlefield.** Rather, we are a part of a great army made up of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We should strive to help on another during our times of struggle. The time may come when you are hit unprepared and one of your fellow soldiers may have to help you through. The best way to ensure you will have help, if needed, is to help someone else in need! (*Luke 6:31, Galatians 6:1-10*)

FINAL THOUGHTS

In closing, let me remind you to forsake not “*the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*” (*Hebrews 10:24-25*) **We need one another now, more than ever.** If you aren’t a part of a local church or assembly of believers, let me

encourage you to do so. You will find love, support, and sound teaching of the Word that will help you to “stand.” **God uses His children as vessels to bring His Word, blessings, and healing to one another.** Without this, you will be missing out on a great deal of blessings and will find your battles even harder to fight.

I hope this article has helped you gain a better understanding of the fundamentals of Spiritual Warfare. I hope to be exploring other aspects of this subject in future articles, as the Lord directs.

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