

TITLE: Full Armour of God

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Book 18

FULL ARMOUR OF GOD

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PREFACE

Welcome to the discipleship / leadership series. These little booklets were designed to give basic information concerning various topics about our Christian faith in Christ Jesus.

The purpose of this series is to stimulate thought and to foster a clearer understanding of discipleship and servant leadership. These booklets can be used as a discussion tool for personal study, family devotion, youth meetings or in cell groups. Our hope is that this information will stir the readers and encourage them to go deeper into personal research and study.

Our desire is that these booklets will be a blessing to the reader and a tool that can be shared with others as a gift of encouragement.

Please feel free to mail or e-mail us for more copies or to just write to us with any feedback concerning the content of these studies. We hope you enjoy this offering of knowledge and experience. We pray that Christ will draw you into an ever deeper personal relationship with Himself as you study.

Your servants in Christ,

Rev. Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

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"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil".

Ephesians 6:10-11

Introduction:

When Christ walked on this earth He proclaimed and talked a lot about the “Kingdom of God”. The Gospel books of the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John use this phrase and title over 40 times. When we become a disciple of Christ, at that moment we also became a member of Christ's Kingdom. We are not of this world but are pilgrims passing through. We have a call and purpose and that is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and His righteousness. But Paul tells the Ephesian believers that because they are now in Christ and Christ is in them they need to be prepared for spiritual warfare.

God is calling His people to war. **We fight not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers** (Ephesians 6:12). The biggest battleground that the disciple face is the one between his head / mind and his heart / spirit. This is where so much anxiety, tension and stress come from. We have at least two internal voices trying to direct our thoughts and actions and throughout the day they do battle with one another. We as humans are made up of three different parts called, body, soul and spirit or to put it another way, the physical, mental / emotional and the spiritual, which is the heart or centre of man. These three areas are where the enemy attacks us.

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We are battling as individual but we forget that as a body, our local churches are also in a spiritual warfare as well. The goal of the enemy is always to divide and conquer, to get the soldiers of the church to turn on each other and to destroy from within and if he cannot do that, he will try to separate us away from others and then attack. Or he may just get us to turn on ourselves to the place where we want to give up, give in and die.

There are some key words that the Scriptures and this little booklet uses that are important to our everyday life if we hope to succeed. It will be helpful if we take a moment to define them a little more in depth so we can see the bigger picture of what the disciple of Christ is involved in.

The word:

Soldier: warrior, fighter, combatant

Battle: action, attack, combat, encounter, engagement, fight, war, warfare, campaign, clash, conflict, contest, struggle, crusade.

Power: ability, capability, capacity, competence, potential, energy, might, strength, vigour, authority, command, control, dominion, influence, rule, authorization, privilege.

Stand: be upright, position, rise, be in force, belong, be valid, hold, obtain, prevail, remain, stay, abide, endure, experience, support, take, weather, withstand, attitude, determination.

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Prayer: communication, devotion, invocation, litany, supplication, appeal, petition, plea, request.

Ambassador: agent, consul, deputy, diplomat, emissary, envoy, minister, representative.

Schemes: system, plan, method, idea, plot, conspiracy.

Now that you have a better understand of these words let's look at the Scriptures from Ephesians 6:10-20.

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

*¹³Therefore, take up the **full armor of God**, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ¹⁵and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; ¹⁶in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with*

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this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, ¹⁹and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

From this text there are two important phrases that I would like us to keep in the back of our minds as we work our way through these verse texts concerning being a disciple / soldier of Christ.

First:

“be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might”

Second:

“that you may be able to stand”

One could say that the theme for this section of Scripture could be, “The disciple / soldiers are in battle for Christ's Kingdom and it is critical that we stand firm not in our ability or strength but in the ability and strength of Jesus Christ”. In some ways it is the same type of wording that God gives to Joshua, where He commands him to be strong and very courageous. (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9 and 18) Joshua was going to cross over into the promise land with all the people. This land had been promised to them when they left

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Egypt by God, but now they would have to go in and conquer it. God gives many promises but they are not ours until we are willing to go and fight for them.

As we begin to study this text let us first look at some background information to what Paul was saying before he wrote these verses and to whom he was writing it to.

The church of Ephesus is located in Asia Minor (now the country of Turkey) close to Laodicea and Colossae. It was an important seaport for the Roman Empire on the Mediterranean Sea coast. It also boasted a large pagan temple to the Roman goddess Diana (Acts 19:10). Paul also made it as his center for evangelism for about three years. The book is thought to have been written around the same time as the book of Colossians AD 60 while Paul was in prison in Rome.

The book itself seem to have the purpose of helping the disciple to better understand the bigger picture of God's eternal purpose and grace, and see the importance of the church in its relationships with God and with each other. Paul starts off by telling the reader about the great blessing that we have because of being "in Christ." Paul prays that the church would have understanding of who they are in Christ and what their purpose is here on earth. He tell the believers that they must first **sit** with God, then **walk** with God and the result will be that they will be able to **stand** firm in Christ Jesus. He also teaches in the middle of the book on how we should react and live with other believers and how we should minister to our partner and children.

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One other point to add to our thinking comes from another book that Paul wrote. He shares with a fellow student, friend and co-labourer name Timothy about this whole area of being a good soldier of Christ. He tells him,

¹You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ²The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

II Timothy 2:1-4

The soldier of the church is to be prepared and equipped for Spiritual Warfare. We face daily battle and we face a war that has a life and death result to it. We will see from this section of Scripture, six important truths that can have a tremendous affect on how we live out each day of our lives. The purpose and goal is to ready you in, “**BEING A SOLDIER IN GOD’S ARMY.**”

I The Soldier’s Strength: vs. 10

One may ask, where does the soldier strength come from? How is he able to go out and fight a battle that seems to have so many enemies that are coming at us from all directions? The key comes from the one who lives inside our hearts. When we accept the call of Christ and invite Him into our hearts as our personal

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Savior, He then places within us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who is able to teach, guide, comfort but most of all empower us for this great battle that we all face. There are two kingdoms at war with one another and in the last days when Christ returns for His Church at that point the enemy will be bound and destroyed forever but until that time, Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit is here to empower us for service. He tells the Ephesians church that this empowerment can only come by us asking each day to fill our hearts (Ephesians 5:18).

Christ still calls people today to follow Him and become fishers of men. There is a need for labourers to go out into the highway and byway and compel people to come in but the enemy desires to oppose this and to bring rather destruction and death into peoples' lives. When Christ calls us, we can be sure He will also empowers us for service and give to us what we need to be overcomers. He tells us that greater is He that lives in us than he that lives in the world. (I John 4:4) Yes we do have an enemy but he has been defeated already by the work that Christ did on the Cross. His shed blood redeems us from our sins. When we call upon His name and confess our sins, we become His child.

The picture here is a lot like a policeman. He has strength and power not in himself but it comes through those that have sent him out. He is first trained in the various areas of what it means to be a policeman. As he goes out to work he knows that he will be backed up by those who are over him plus that he carries the authority of the state and country that he serves under. We as soldiers of Christ have our authority because of who Christ is. He

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told the disciples that as the Father have given Him authority, He now gives it to us (Matthew 10:1).

Paul tells us in verse 10 to be strong in the Lord and to walk and serve in His might. We as a believers carry within us the authority of Christ. When we speak things in His name and when we do this, the enemy has to leave. We need to realize that we serve a commander and chief whose name is Jesus Christ. Joshua had a mighty encounter with His leader and captain on the eve before entering into battle for the city of Jericho. We read, “

Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, “are you for us or for our adversaries?” He said, no; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, what has my lord to say to his servant? The captain of the Lord’s host said to Joshua, Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy. And Joshua did so.

Joshua 5:13-15

What a beautiful picture for the disciple of Christ. It shows to us that we are not alone in our warfare but the heavenly host is there to walk with us. The key is to be willing to join forces with Christ our King and fight.

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The book of Revelation pictures for us the final battle for our hearts at the end of times. The battle will be over whom shall we worship and serve. Satan has been trying to steal the hearts of men into believing that his way is true and right. But the Bible teaches that his way is a way of division, destruction and death. He wants you to sell your soul to him and tries to convince you through lies and deception. What God desires is that you give and entrust your life to Him and to know that He will care and look after you for all eternity. The church, Jesus' bride will have also undergone a lot of challenges because it chooses to follow sometimes after its own doctrines and teaching instead of staying firm to the truth of the Word of God. Everything will be shaken to see what foundations we have built upon. Only that which is built upon the rock of Jesus Christ will stand. There is no other foundation and there is no other way to have this personal relationship with God. The battle will cause all kinds of anxieties and fears but we must trust in Him who has overcome everything. (1 John 4:4, John 16:33)

II The Soldier's Battle

vv 11 – 13

Often the disciple focuses on the challenges of everyday life not realizing that each day he is also involved in spiritual warfare. There is a real enemy who is out to divide, conquer and destroy all who he can. He wants you to live a defeated life.

Jesus tells us that our enemy Satan is like a roaring lion, he is trying to get us to live out our lives in fear (1 Peter 5:8). Not knowing what is true or real. He is a master at deception and a liar

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of all liars. The lion that roars is not the one that kills but when an animal hears the lion he runs in the opposite direction where the female lion lie in waiting, ready to pounce on their victim and to destroy and devour it.

In a spiritual battle we need to believe and have faith in our commander and chief. He calls out and commands us to stand and to resist the enemy because Jesus knows that if we stand in faith under the covering of His blood that it is by His righteousness that we are able to overcome. We need to remind ourselves each day that, “greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world” (I John 4:4).

To stand firm is to take up a position on solid ground, to plant your feet and be ready to do battle, to meet the enemy head-on. We are not to retreat in fear but we are called to take up the full armour of God that Jesus provides and to put it on and to use all its potential to resist the enemy.

It is important to remember that we may sometimes stand alone with the enemy but Christ and the Holy Spirit is always there. We should not be afraid to call on other disciples to join in unity with us to resist the enemy together. We are told that a three strand cord is not easily broken (Ecclesiastes 4:12).

The church is the body of Christ and we are directly connected to the other members through the Holy Spirit. We come together to corporately oppose the enemy and to resist but we are also to come together to take back that which the enemy has stolen.

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The battle will have various fronts to it. The enemy will attack in various ways both spiritually and physically. Some of these descriptions of the Bible are given to us in the book of Revelation. The battle boils down to two sides and whom will we worship or follow. We see that the battle is between the Lamb of God and Satan, the antichrist and the beast.

Another front that the enemy will attack from is within the church of Christ itself. Because the disciple has not remained true to the Word of God this allows the enemy to come in, like a cancer, to destroy the body of Christ by turning the members on each other. The Bible tells us that in those days there will be much deception outside the church and within the church. The enemy will come to divide and destroy through lies and deception. Everything will be shaken both physically and spiritually. He will also bring in false teachers; they will be dressed in sheep clothing. Outside they will appear as sheep but underneath they will be ravenous wolves. They will even sometimes be pastors and shepherds of the sheep and of the church. They will do things that they thought was of Christ, but Christ will say, “I know you not”. (Matt 25:37-46, parable of the sheep & goats). Only those who stay true to the Scripture and prayer will know the different

The earth itself will also undergo many challenges. We are told that there will be earthquakes and famines and there will be plagues and disease. We will hear of wars and removals of wars. People will betray each other – family members will turn against family members. People will call out for peace at any cost and the antichrist will offer this to them through one world government.

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A ruler will rise up and become ruler of the world and for a season he will bring about peace but in time he will also bring about bondage and destruction. He will rise up to try to destroy God almighty Himself. This is how bold he will be in those last days.

III The Soldier's Equipment vv 14 – 17

The soldier outfit is not just clothing but each piece has a specific purpose both in offensive and defensive battle. Christ does not ask us to be clothed or to put on the Full armor of God without it all having a specific reason and plan for it. Each piece is to be used in battle by the soldier. This is why we must understand the purpose of each piece and to know how to use it to protect ourselves and to work together with other fellow disciples for God's glory.

What follows is a list of the various parts of the soldier's uniform and weaponry.

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| A. Belt | with truth |
| B. Breastplate | of righteousness |
| C. Shoes | preparation of the gospel of peace |
| D. Helmet | of salvation |
| E. Shield | of faith |
| F. Sword | Word of God |

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Now let look at each part in more detail.

(a) Helmet of Salvation:

The helmet is there to protect our head. Our head which contains our mind is vital to the rest of the body. It is the centre where all the commands come forth from. It controls and coordinates all the different workings of the entire body. But it is also the place where decisions are made both right and wrong. It is also part of the battle ground that the enemy wants to attack.

The helmet of salvation is there to spiritually protect our thoughts and attitude from destruction. We are people that need to have our thoughts saved and under the blood of Christ because wrong thoughts soon become the seeds for wrong action. There is a saying that goes like this, “what we think is what we will be”. Jesus in Matthew gave to the people teaching on how one should think. We have titled this section as, “The Beatitudes” or to translate another way, attitudes that we are to be. Each day our minds are bombarded with many thoughts and we have to make hundreds of decisions. That is why we need the helmet of salvation so that the thoughts that are coming our way will be filtered out through the Word and Spirit of Christ Jesus. Paul tells the Galatian church to be careful what they sow because in due time they will reap a harvest either of life-everlasting or of death and destruction. (Galatians 6:9)

What Christ desires for the disciple is that he walks in peace. Wealth or things will not bring us peace but what can bring

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us peace is a mind that is focused on Christ Jesus and His word. Christ wants to give us peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7). The world will not be able to understand it and this for the disciple will become a great witnessing tool to a world that is full of despair and hopelessness. Remember the helmet is there to protect our minds and thoughts so it is very important that we put it on each day through prayer.

(b) Breast plate of righteousness:

The breastplate is the piece that covers most of the vital organs. It fits just under the neck and covers down to the waist. It also only covers the front where the back is open. The major organs of the body are important that they not be exposed to the enemy because once one of these organs are penetrated, death was almost certain for the body. The key organ is the heart both physically and spiritually. It is the organ that brings the lifeblood to the rest of the body

Now the armour is to be representing something that we spiritually put on. Our heart is the center from which Christ desires to do His work in and through us. The heart is also where our sin nature that we are born with is rooted. That is why no matter what we do we are still sinners. Our righteousness or our best is still like dirty rags (Isaiah 64:6). So when God looks at us He sees an unredeemed person and God cannot have fellowship where sin abounds or exists. Christ came to die on the cross for the atonement of our sins so that when we receive Christ into our hearts as Lord and Saviour and confess to Him that we are a

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sinner and in need of His grace. At that moment Christ then covers us with His righteousness. Our hearts become covered with Christ's blood. We become a new creation in Christ Jesus (II Corinthians 5:17).

Now when God see us, He sees Christ's gracious righteousness covering us also and when the enemy tries to attack he then sees that we are a child of Christ, covered in the blood of Christ. The armour is built so that we can stand and face the enemy. The back is open so when we run we will be very exposed to the arrows of the enemy. This is why we sometimes get so hurt because the enemy can get other disciples or friends or family members to stab us in the back. These types of hurts become so damaging because we do not see it coming. Our back should be protected by fellow believers but unfortunately this is often not the case.

Christ's righteousness is what redeems us from a life of sin and death. It is what makes us different from the world. When people look at us they should see that we are not covered by the things of the world but that we are different and we now walk in the newness of life because of Christ's righteousness. (Ephesians 4:24, I Peter 2:24)

(c) Belt of truth:

The Bible tells us that we are to speak the truth in love and that everything that we do should be seasoned in truth (Ephesians 4:15). Truth has to be the foundation to all that we say and do for

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too many disciples believe in a doctrine were it is all right to speak little white lies. But remember the principle of the Word of God are not somewhere between right and wrong. Jesus spoke the truth and He told the disciples that it is the truth that will set them free (John 8:32). We need to be getting the truth of God's Word deep into our hearts so we can be guided by it as we serve others.

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness the enemy came to tempt Him with false truth. Three times Satan used Scripture to confront and to get Jesus to do something that would be contrary to the will of God. Scripture taken out of context does not make it true. We need to read the truth of God's Word in the light of all the Scripture. Jesus three times confronted Satan with true, truth, and when this took place the enemy was defeated.

The armour of God has built within it the belt of truth. In Paul's time the centre of man was not the heart but his loins. This area was where reproduction occurs. The belt of truth was to show that whatever you produced should be done in truth.

The disciple of Christ should exemplify a life of truth. Jesus was known for how He spoke the truth (Luke 20:21) and we are to follow in His steps. It should be key to the disciples' walk for Christ, in the church and on the streets where one lives. We need to be disciples of the truth, people that can be counted on, that what we speak and do is trustworthy (III John 1:4). But when the disciple starts telling lies or half truths that is when he or she becomes vulnerable to the enemies attacks. That's why James teaches that we should be quick to hear but slow to speak because

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our words can bear both positive and negative results in our lives and those around us (James 1:19).

(d) Shoes of the Gospel of Peace:

Shoes are what protect our feet both as we walk and for doing battle. Shoes on our feet help to set the rest of the body on a sure foundation. If our feet are not secure and protected the rest of the body will also be vulnerable. Our feet take us everywhere. They carry the rest of the body and within that body we carry an important message.

We are told that our feet are to be "shod" or covered with the Gospel of Peace (Ephesians 6:15). The Gospel is the Good News. Jesus came to this world as God's son to proclaim the Kingdom of God to mankind, to bring grace, hope and mercy to all who would receive Him.

As a soldier it is true that we are to do battle against spiritual forces and the enemies of darkness. We are also here to bring to men and women a message that can redeem their lives from sin and death. Paul tells the Romans, how shall they hear and how will they know unless someone goes and tells them. Then he further states that "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News (Romans 10:15). Being Christ's soldier also makes us Christ's ambassadors. We represent His kingdom and we are to bring from that country, to this world, a message of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:17-20).

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The key for the disciple is to have his or her feet fitted with readiness that comes from the Gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15). We need to study and prepare our hearts with the Gospel truth so that when the door opens to us to proclaim and defend the Gospel, truth we will be able to stand firm.

(e) Shield of faith:

In the time of the Roman soldier's the shield was a narrow full length piece of equipment that the soldier's body could stand behind. When put together with other soldier it became a wall that was hard for the enemy to penetrate. The purpose of the shield was both for defense and offensive battle.

Defensively the soldier would use it to protect against arrows, stones from slings, spears and even against the thrust of a sword. Paul tells the disciple that this shield of faith was to protect against the enemy fiery darts. As has already been stated, this warfare that we are fighting is not a physical one but a spiritual one. And the enemies' fiery darts are the lies and deceptions that he uses against the disciple to bring about guilt and condemnation. He knows this is a true way to weaken the disciples' faith and cause doubt so that the disciple struggles with fear.

Offensively the shield is there to give the soldier encouragement to push forward. To come against the enemy and push him back. We are not only to defend God's possessions but we are to take back that which the enemy has stolen. Remember our enemy is a thief and he is out to rob us of God's blessing on

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our lives. It also shows to the enemy that we believe in Christ Jesus as our Lord. We are not afraid to do battle for the cause of Christ, no matter what the cost may be because we know that, “greater is he that is in us than he that is in this world (I John 4:4)”. The most important thing to remember is that it is a shield of “faith”, it is there to give to us a spirit of courage and strength.

(f) Sword of the Spirit:

Paul tells the Ephesians that the sword represented the Word of God. It is by the Word of God that we are able to overcome. The sword is also defined as the “sword of the spirit”. Again it is both an offensive and defensive weapon. One is protecting against the enemy, the other is going after the enemy and defeating his hold on other peoples' lives. If we know and understand the use of the sword, it is very powerful in the hands of a skilled swordsman.

The sword is only as good as the person using it. Here are some basic principles that we need to understand concerning the use of the sword:

- A. The swordsman needs to know how to use it.
- B. The swordsman needs to know its capability.
- C. The sword is an extension of the warrior.
- D. The sword implies defensive action or offensive action.

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- E. The sword is a symbol of the Word of God.
- F. The sword is to be used against the schemes of the enemy.
- G. The swordsman will face many different kinds of enemies.

The soldier must be prepared to use the sword at all times. The enemy never sleeps and that is why the disciple must become a student of the word. He needs to study and meditate and memorize it if he hopes to overcome the enemy in his own life, his family's and in the church itself.

Now that we understand a little better the pieces of the Full Armour of God it is important that we do one very critical thing, **“We need to put it on”**. It does no good knowing about the armor it is only effective if we have it on. It’s an action on our part.

IV The Soldier’s Attitude vv 18 – 20v

The way one think often determines the direction of one’s faith and the direction that one may walk each day. Our mind is a great source of information but it can also keep us from believing and trusting God. The biggest battleground that you face each day is between your mind and heart. The two seem to want to go in opposite directions.

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There are at least four things that this passage of Scripture tells us to be aware of and to be doing concerning the way we think.

We are told first of all, to be persevering. The idea here is not to be one who gives up easily. The soldier will face a lot of challenges each day but we must with Christ's help press on. Like the long distant runner we must keep focused on the finish-line and keep going whatever the cost may be and to make sure that we do not get sidetracked to other things.

Secondly, we must remain alert. Not falling asleep or letting our minds wonder off on to other things. We are called to remain alert, to be aware of what is going on around us, to be planning and thinking things through. God is a God of order, but He also tells us to be ready in season and out of season. We never know when the enemy will try to attack. We also may not be aware at times who the attack may come through. Job's counselors were friends but they seem to always want Job to fall down and curse God. Sometimes our fellow disciples can be used by the enemy to bring an attack against us, that is why we always need to be alert. We need to be keeping our eyes and heart open and aware for an attack that can come from any direction.

Thirdly, we need to have an attitude of proclaiming, speaking forth and giving a testimony of the love and grace of Jesus Christ. We often spend our day speaking about all kinds of worldly things but we also need to work into our conversation a testimony of the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need

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to share about what God is doing in our lives with others. Again this is where we have to discipline our minds to be thinking about doing this. We are told not to worry about what to say because when we speak God will give us the words to share.(Matthew 10:17-20)

Finally we need to be keeping an attitude about who we are. We are Christ's ambassador. We no longer belong to this world but we are now part of Christ's kingdom. We are now called to be His ambassador. We represent the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

There is a saying that goes like this: “what you think is often what you are.” If you think fear you will be fearful. If you think defeat you will be defeated. The key is to keep your mind planted in the Scriptures and focused on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here are a few more principles to help us in our understanding of what our position as a soldier of Christ means:

- The disciple needs to remain focused and anchored in Christ and His words. (Hebrews 6:19)
- The disciple needs to rely and be grounded in the Holy Spirit whom dwells with him.
- No matter what may happen we have a treasure in earthen vessels that cannot be touched. (2 Cor. 4:6-11)

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- We will undergo afflictions, persecution, and even be struck down but with Christ we are more than conquerors. (Roman 8:38)

V The Soldier's Power vv 18 – 20

It is now time to move from just words to actions and this is done first by praying and studying God's Word. The full armour is put on during one's prayer time. In prayer we take off the sins of this world but it also through prayer we become clothed in Christ's righteousness. In prayer we show our commitment to Him as one of His soldiers. Paul tells us to pray with all perseverance. Not to give up but to keep pressing in. We are also to bring our petitions or request before the Lord. God wants to hear our heart's cry. We are also to pray in the spirit. Paul told the Ephesians that they were to pray to be filled with God's Spirit daily (Ephesians 5:18). When we are full of God's Spirit, then when we pray we can be assured that we are praying in accordance to His will. Finally we are to pray for boldness, to be able to stand and speak about the goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ. That He has offered His life-blood for the redemption of our lives. Prayer is a life and death part of every disciple's life and that is why Paul tells the Thessalonians church to pray without ceasing because this is the will of Christ Jesus in you (I Thessalonians 5:17).

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Here are some further thoughts concerning the area of prayer.

- Prayer is the key to all that we say and do.
- Prayer is our direct channel to God.
- Prayer is what wins the battle.
- Prayer is what builds unity and harmony.
- Prayer should be at the heart of every disciple.
- Pray in the Spirit on all occasions v18.
- Prayer keeps us alert.
- Pray for your fellow disciples (saints).
- Pray for your teachers and leaders and the things that they speak.
- Pray for fearlessness and boldness when it comes to presenting the Gospel of Christ.
- Pray that we will be good ambassadors.
- Prayer is the key to a deep and strong personal relationship in Christ Jesus.

Remember:

“Prayer changes things”.

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VI The Soldier's Message vv 19b

The soldier is one who has committed his life to service. He or she is willing to lay down their lives. The cost is not too great because they know whom they serve and because of that they are freely and willing to give all that they have for the cause of Christ and His kingdom.

Our purpose is not just to fight but we are also to proclaim and to speak to all who will listen about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ has given us a purpose and that is to share a message of hope and life to all who will receive. Our enemy desires to bring death and destruction but the soldier of Christ stands strong and courageous for his King. The word Gospel simple means Good News. We have Good News for the hurting, the weak, and the lonely. Christ came to give of Himself so that we can now have a personal relationship with God. He desires to be right in the center of our hearts.

Paul tells the church and the disciples that they should take this message and go out and speak boldly. Do not worry or be full of fear but to have faith in Christ Jesus that He is able to carry you through all challenges and difficulties that one may face. We should not worry what others may think but in love we boldly go out and speak this Gospel message both to our family and neighbours but also into our villages and towns. We should be willing to go if need be to other parts of the country and out into other parts of the world. Nothing is too difficult when we have Christ in our hearts.

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The key to be able to make something known to others is that we must first understand it ourselves. You cannot share from your heart if you do not fully see the importance of the message that you have in your own heart first. To clearly understand one must study the Word of God. Paul tells Timothy to study to show himself approved a workman that does not need to be ashamed (II Timothy 2:15). Study and prayer needs to be a daily part of the disciples' life. Without these two key pieces you will be going to battle not in the strength of Christ but in your own strength.

Discipleship is a lifestyle. We live different than that of the world. We are to be focused on Christ and his message, to be an ambassador of reconciliation. We have a purpose as a soldier and that is to go out and boldly proclaim the Gospel message of Jesus Christ and His eternal Kingdom. But this calls for dedication and commitment, to bind oneself to Christ and His truth.

Conclusion

Our goal should be setting the captives free. This is our battle plan that the Lord has given us.

We need to see that the strength of the soldier comes first, by enlisting in Jesus Christ's army, then getting prepared as a soldier through the Word of God.

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We need to have His Holy Spirit working through us. This gives the sword its power ...if the Spirit of God is not in the soldier, then the sword will be weak because it will only be used with fleshly strength, but with the Spirit, the sword is powerful enough to divide the bone and the marrow (Hebrews 4:12).

We need to remember that each one of us is the weapon of the church. We have been given peace and hope that passes all human understanding. It can only be made know by the Spirit of Christ. Yes the relationship will often undergo change as we face the challenges of becoming more like Christ but His rope and anchor will remain firm. He also gives us spiritual armor to put on so we can withstand the attacks of the enemy. We are everyday in a life and death battle for our minds and hearts.

Our relationship also brings us into conflict and opposition to the things of this world and we will face many challenges but Christ through the Holy Spirit will walk and care for us each moment of the day. Remember: that in Christ all things are possible. Matthew 19:26, Mark 9:23-24

Let us close this book off on the Full Armor of God by quoting something that Paul told Timothy.

I have fought the good fight,

I have finished the course,

I have kept the faith;

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in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. II Timothy 4:7-8

Heaven is our home and destination!!!

Memorization

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil".

Ephesians 6:10-11

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Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,

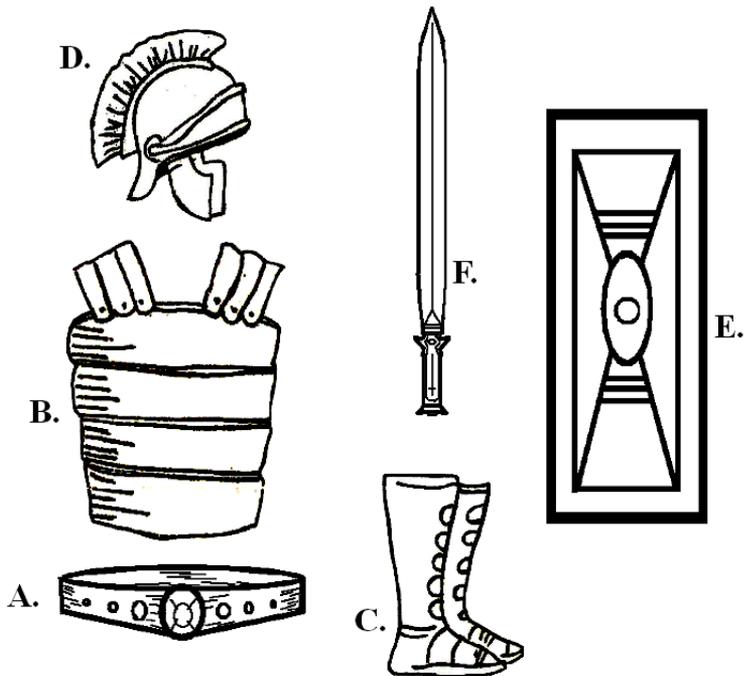
Help me to know and understand that each day that I am in a spiritual battle with a real enemy who seeks to divide and destroy my life. Lord I pray that you will cloth me in your full armour. I desire to be Your soldier and I know that I cannot go into this fight without being clothed with Your full protection. Lord I pray that I will take time to pray on each part of the armour and if throughout the day I find attacks from the enemy penetrating into my life, show me what piece of the amour that is missing. Today Lord cover my thoughts with the helmet of salvation and my heart with you breastplate of righteousness and that when I speak, I would speak forth Your truth. Lord I pray that I will be able to hold up the shield of faith and wheeled the Sword of the Spirit properly as I go through this day journey. Most of all prepare my feet that wherever I go, I will be a light of Your Good News to a lost world. Jesus I am thankful that You know my needs each day and desire for me to become Your soldier. I place myself into Your hands to serve You wherever you may lead me. Thank You for all Your help and love.

Your servant in Christ,

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Appendix:

a. Picture of a soldier in armor, ready for battle:



- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| A. Belt | with truth |
| B. Breastplate | of righteousness |
| C. Shoes | preparation of the gospel of peace |
| D. Helmet | of salvation |
| E. Shield | of faith |
| F. Sword | Word of God |

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b. Other related Scripture for Study:

Matthew 24:1-44 = end time battle

I Corinthians 9:26 = win the prize

I Thessalonians 5:1-11 = warfare

I Timothy 1:18 = fight the good fight of faith

I Timothy 6:12 = fight the good fight of faith

II Timothy 2:3 = good soldier endures

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Project L.A.M.B.S. International

Making disciples is the call and mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus urged the disciples to follow Him. He laid down before us the teaching and the walk that we need to follow with Jesus as our supreme example. It is imperative for every believer and the church to know that disciples are not born but they are made. For the church to be strong in the last days, we must be about the business of equipping the saints (disciples) for the work of service.

Dr. James Humphries has been ministering for over 40 years, and has experience in a variety of ministries including church planting, children's ministry, street ministry, youth ministry, camp ministry, pastoral work and directing and teaching in schools all over the world. In addition, he has taken part in traveling and ministering in the USA, Mexico, Ukraine, Myanmar, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Thailand and across most of Canada. He completed his B.R.E. and his M.A. from Briercrest, and his Doctorate of Ministry from Providence Theological Seminary in the spring of 1999.

In January 1996, Dr. James Humphries resigned as pastor of a local church with a vision to reach further abroad with the Word of God and to use it to train labourers for Christ (Matthew 9:36-38). He shared this with Dr. David Smith and Dr. Chuck Nichols of Providence Theological Seminary and they greatly encouraged Dr. James Humphries and his wife Irene to develop what God was laying on their hearts.

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In March 1997, they traveled to Jamaica where they met several pastors who were very concerned about the need for training and disciplining their young people as leaders in their churches. Dr. James Humphries and Irene did not know this would be the starting point to an international ministry of discipleship training around the world known as Project L.A.M.B.S. International.

To date, Project L.A.M.B.S. has ministered in Canada, Myanmar, Ukraine, Africa, Jamaica, Mexico, Israel, Thailand, Japan, Dominican Republic, Naga Land and China. We offer over 30 different courses. Our graduates number over 1000, and are serving worldwide. Out of this group of graduates, we have equipped and trained directors, teachers and pastors who in turn are carrying out II Timothy 2:1-2 to an even larger group of people.

In 2002 it was discovered that Irene had cancer again. God gave Irene another three years and because of that she was still able to travel and teach in many different countries. Shortly after what was to be her last trip, Irene was hospitalized in February, 2005. A few weeks later she went home to be with her Lord and Saviour on March 9.

My second wife Hkaw Win was raised and trained mostly in the land of Myanmar. She has earned B.th, University Degree and a master of Divinity Degree in Myanmar. In April 2007 she finished a second Master's Degree at Providence Theological

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Seminary in Christian Education. After July 1st, 2007 she headed back to Myanmar to head up the Christian Education Department for the Myitkyina Kachin Baptist Association and oversaw various ministries to 62 churches. After her four-year term was completed, she has been traveling and working as an interpreter and doing translations concerning various kinds of discipleship books and materials.

Over the last ten years we have lived in the countries of Myanmar and Thailand preparing a variety of resources in the Burmese (Myanmar) and Kachin Languages. To date we have published over 20 different kinds of books. Our goal is to equip and establish people as Disciples of Christ. Please pray for God's leading and wisdom. Our walk with Christ has taken us down many challenging pathways but we have seen the faithfulness of our Lord and Savior in every area. His grace has been sufficient.

Founder and Director,

Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

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Discipleship / Leadership Booklets

1. My Call with Christ
2. Called to His Purpose
3. Abiding in the Vine
4. Knowledge, Wisdom and Understanding
5. Scripture: The Disciples' Anchor
6. Baptism: The Disciples' Testimony
7. The Disciples' Church
8. Servant Leadership
9. Teacher / Learner, Learner / Teacher
10. Being Wise Builders
11. Shepherds of God's Sheep
12. End Times
13. Relationship Pilgrimage
14. Christ's Disciple
15. Disciple's Prayer Life
16. Communion
17. Ambassadors for Christ
18. Full Armour of God
19. Good News for Challenging and Changing Times
20. Christ our Mediator
21. Jesus our Deliverer
22. Mission and Missionaries
23. Passing the Torch
24. Full Gospel Discipleship
25. Five Fold Ministry
26. Envisioning Change
27. Individualism VS Community
28. Igniting a Mission Fire
29. Igniting Discipleship Equipping
30. Igniting the Gospel
31. Psalm 23
32. Beatitudes

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