



Putting on the Full Armor of God

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

THEREFORE, 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. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; in 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. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:10-17

These passages are familiar to most believers (at least at a general level). They are the culmination of several instructional passages written to the Church at Ephesus by the Apostle Paul. Note that they begin with the word “finally” indicating that this is the final instruction of this set. It is the "how" portion of the instructions.

I see two important lessons given here:

1. **THE PROBLEM:** Our **inability to follow the commands given** in the prior chapters (be imitators of God, husbands love your wives, wives respect your husband, children obey your parents, slaves – masters – etc.). If you take the time to read the prior chapters you can see how difficult it would be to follow those instructions using only our own power. Even more than the inability of our own flesh to obey, Paul is telling the Church that Satan will, for sure, do everything in his power to stop us from obeying.

2. THE SOLUTION:

(a) *be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might* – His strength, not ours

(b) *take up the full armor of God, so you will be able to resist* – that is to *stand firm*

I have found it helpful to “rehearse” the pieces of equipment given to us in these passages regularly as prayer. As I do this, I think about what the purpose of each piece might be. **Note this personal – it is simply my way of doing it.** I start at the top:

The Helmet of Salvation – I ask the Lord to **guard my mind**, to cause me to think regularly about the blessing and mercy of the Lord Jesus in providing for my salvation. We are told that all sin begins in the mind and then progresses all the way to death. So, how I think and what I think about is extremely important. I need His help to keep me thinking about the right things. (Consider: *Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. Philippians 4:8*)

The Breastplate of Righteousness – I ask the Lord to **guard my heart**, teaching me to love Him with all my heart. I think about the fact that I have no righteousness of my own. The righteousness I have is His righteousness that has been imputed to me through His finished work on the cross in my behalf. I proudly wear His crest/ His seal on the breastplate He has given to me to wear. (Consider: *Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” Matthew 22:37*)

The Belt of Truth – The purpose of the belt was to **prepare for battle by getting other things out of the way**. In their case it was that the flowing tunics they wore got in the way when they went into battle or were in the process of manual labor. Scriptures tell us that the Spirit of Truth lives in us. I ask Him to *“sanctify me by His truth.”* What I mean by this is that I am asking Him to teach, guide, direct and discipline me so that I progressively fulfill my mission to demonstrate the Father to the world around me (Ephesians 5:1-2, more on this mission in a subsequent BOB blog). I ask Him to help eliminate things in my world that “get in my way”, that is, distract me from Him and His Word. And heaven knows there are plenty of distractions available today.

The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace – The idea that would have been understood in Paul’s day were special shoes that had studs on them. These shoes helped soldiers stand firm when in battle. This helped keep them ready for the “blows” of the enemy and not fall down. The primary instruction given in these passages is to stand firm, to withstand evil. In James 4:7 we are told, *“So submit to [the authority of] God. Resist the devil [stand firm against him] and he will flee from you.”* As I understand it, we are **to resist the devil BY submitting to the authority of God**. I choose to look at this this way, if Satan cannot cause me to sin against my Lord, he has lost! His loss is our victory. I don’t need to try to “take him out!” After all he (Satan) is the most powerful created being. But *You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. 1 John 4:4* I ask the Lord to remind me that this is not my battle, I am unable to battle against Satan (check out the blog about who/what Satan is). I ask the Lord to regularly remind me of His presence and my **total dependence on Him**.

The Shield of Faith - This is a huge shield that protects the whole body. Note that the verse mentions “flaming arrows of the evil one” – these are not ordinary, run of the mill temptations. These are the serious issues that we face. **Faith is not a feeling; it is either a fact, or it doesn’t exist.** The problem is that we can’t see it. Here’s my request: **Help me recognize when my faith is waning in any area, help me to confess it and ask for Your help, depending on You only.** *“Everything is possible for him who believes.” Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, ‘I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!’” (Mark 9:23-24).*

The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God – This is a short sword used for close-in fighting. I am not to go out swinging it willy-nilly at anyone and everyone in sight. Remember at the beginning of these passages we are told that this is a spiritual battle, not a human, physical one.

The “Word” here is the Holy Spirit (Rhema). The Spirit wrote the Word, the Spirit wields the Word as I take it by faith and use it. Use it how? First **for protection: When I find myself in**

situations where I am tempted by Satan, the World and my flesh, I do well to ask the Spirit to use His Word to guide and instruct me in righteousness.

Then, **if He wants** me to use it for other (righteous) purposes, I ask Him to **provide the opportunity** (*and He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Luke 10:2 and Matthew 9:38*) **Only the Holy Spirit knows where He has prepared the hearts and minds of those ready to receive the Word of truth. I ask Him to remind me that I am His servant, not the other way around.**

Bottom line - This is a spiritual battle. To be prepared we must wear our spiritual armor at all times. **By faith, put on the armor (which is Jesus Christ) and trust God for the victory.**

Maranatha my friends!