



Meeting Notes: Shield of Faith – What it Does (July 24, 2013)

These notes capture our July 24, 2013 meeting. We opened our meeting in prayer and then began our evening. Topic notes may not be in the order discussed during group, and they are not intended to cover everything discussed. They are intended as highlights to capture the essence of our evening. General notes follow each topic that was discussed. Documents used or created during this meeting are attached.

TOPICS DISCUSSED:

Closing the Loop on Last Week:

- **Spirit Check.** One of our sisters shared her testimony of how, through prayer, God is bringing down the wall of anger she has been facing. When she first described her anger, the wall God revealed to her was so high she couldn't see the top. After she'd completed her first 21 days of prayer, there came a time when she could see the top of the wall. Had she tried, she could have climbed to the top or even gone over it, but God told her not to; otherwise, she would be getting ahead of Him. She is now in her fourth 21 days of prayer, and she can reach up and touch the wall. The beautiful thing about her testimony is that God is giving her a visual representation to show her the progress she is making through the time she spends with Him in prayer. As she continues to press into God, He shows her the wall as it crumbles down. **Takeaway.** God's Word can change our lives!
- **Other discussion.** We discussed some of the challenges others are facing with their prayer or even in completing their prayer. Unfortunately, I don't remember the specifics from that night, but I do remember specifics we have encountered since we began this journey. For instance, the closer we get to the 21 days (especially the first one), the more resistance we have encountered in our thoughts. In addition, there's been some concern about the prayer changing. As we spend time with God, He may reveal things to add to or remove from the prayer, so follow where He leads! Another concern has been feeling like the prayer isn't working. We've encountered a few reasons for that: we're not spending the full 7-10 minutes focused on the prayer, it's not the right prayer for the season that person is in, guilt and condemnation is creeping in, we're not meditating on what the prayer says during the day, or the prayer only addresses what we shouldn't do without giving us guidance for what we should do. Regardless of the reason, the most important thing is to seek God's guidance on why the prayer is not renewing your mind. The second most important thing is to talk to someone who is having success with their prayer, as they may be able to help shed light on what you're going through. **Takeaway.** Do not try to go through this process alone, especially if you are not experiencing breakthrough!

Memory verse:

- **Hebrews 11:1,6:** “¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ... ⁶But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (NKJV).

Discussion Topic: Shield of Faith – What it Does

- **Ephesians 6:16.** “Above all, taking the shield of faith; wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked (KJV).
- **Examining the study verse.** During this study, we will look at three different aspects of faith: what it does, what it is, and what it protects us from. In addition to what we discussed in the Teaching Notes, here are some of the additional topics I was able to capture:
 - **Characteristics of the shield in relationship to our faith.**
 - **Measure of faith.** In looking at the shield, we noted the Roman soldier’s shield was large enough to cover him. In addition, the foundation was made of wood and was covered by six layers of tanned leather tightly woven together. This physical example is a visual representation of how God has given each of us a measure of faith (Romans 12:3), and that measure of faith is enough to cover us (just like the Roman soldier’s shield covered him). However, do we have the six layers of tanned leather covering our shield to protect us? **Takeaway.** God has given us enough faith to cover us, but we have a role to play in accessing that faith and putting it into action.
 - **Humanity and faith:** In the Teaching Notes, we looked at how the wood foundation of the shield might represent the humanity of Jesus and the leather our humanity. Thus, the wood would be the measure of faith God gives, and the leather represents us putting our faith into action. Therefore, we also noted we can have faith and not use it! For example, there are times when we leave home, but our shield of faith remains at home propped up against the wall. The question was asked, “How do we leave our faith at home.” The simplest answer is what we call the “pity party pit” can cause us to leave our shield behind. Rather than walk in faith, we choose to believe what we see, which causes us to feel sorry for ourselves. Thus, we challenged ourselves to meditate on where are we in our faith: Are we more inclined to believe what we see or are we more inclined to believe what God says? **Takeaway.** Faith is a cooperative work between God and man! He gives it, but we have to walk in it!
 - **Caring for our shield.** As we learned, the Roman soldier had two times when he cared for his soldier: first thing in the morning and before going

to battle. The details can be found in the Teaching Notes. However, for convenience sake, from a spiritual perspective, we care for our spiritual shield through prayer, study, and time with God, which keeps us ready for battle. However, what we noted is there are times when we're not engaged in a battle (in other words, things are going well), and we forget to care for our shield (we don't pray, study, or spend time with God), so when the battle does come, our shield is dry, brittle, and easily broken!

- **The six layers.** There was a great deal of discussion trying to understand how the six layers of the Roman soldier's shield might apply to us. There was some revelation during group; additional revelation came later on. Let's see if words can paint a picture of what was shared. The wood foundation of the shield represents Jesus. There are six layers of tightly-woven leather covering the wood; the leather represent us. During group, we identified the layers as becoming a composite one (i.e. they are no longer separated, because they are so tightly woven together). However, there was some confusion in trying to understand how each of the layers disappears into that oneness. In seeking to clear up this confusion, I believe the Holy Spirit revealed each of those six layers represents an individual piece of the armor—the belt of **truth**, the breastplate of **righteousness**, the shoes of **peace**, the shield of **faith**, the helmet of **salvation**, and the sword of the **Spirit**—that must become a part of who we are in order for our faith to be strong. In other words, each of the things the armor represents (truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, Spirit) should become a part of our humanity just as they were a part of Jesus' humanity. However, Rick Renner includes prayer in *Dressed to Kill* as a part of the armor, and this explanation excludes prayer. Therefore, I asked the Lord where does prayer fit in. I believe His answer was prayer is how the six layers are "tightly woven" together! In our prayer time, if we're focused on truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and hearing from the Spirit of God, our armor becomes stronger, because we have our minds set on heavenly things, and not on earthly things! Or, as Colossians 3:1-3 says, "¹If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (NKJV).

Additional Discussion:

- **Renewing Our Mind exercise.** In discussing some of the challenges people are encountering with the prayer, we used the following example. Imagine you are living in a gated community. You think the gate around you is impenetrable. What you don't know is thieves have targeted your home. In order to reach your home, they have cut a hole in the fence that you can't see, so they can steal your "stuff"—your righteousness, your peace, your joy in the Holy Spirit. The thief is the devil and his demons, and that hole represents a lie he has somehow caused you to believe. That lie leads to an emotion; that emotion leads to a thought, and

that thought ultimately leads to a behavior that doesn't represent God. Now, imagine each lie he has caused you to believe represents another hole in your fence. Therefore, in the gate intended to protect you, there may be several holes, such as rejection, insecurity, judgment, and pride, to name a few. Those four holes are scattered around the gate, each one allowing the enemy a different path to your home so he can steal from you! However, if we allow God's Word to renew our mind and get rid of the lies, we can eliminate the holes to again secure our gate, so the devil can no longer steal from us! **Takeaway.** We're not responsible for the devil cutting holes in our gate, but we are responsible for whether or not we allow those holes to continue to exist, because we can choose to renew our minds with God's Word.

- **Being "But-Naked."** We've probably all heard the phrase "buck-naked." During our discussion, we discovered there are times we are "but-naked!" For example, if I say, "I had a good day, but my husband got on my nerves," the word "but" cancels out that I had a good day. The first part of the sentence is focused on something positive, but the second half of the statement is focused on something negative. A positive and a negative create a negative! That negativity opens our heart up to doubt, and God says when we doubt, we are unstable in all our ways and can't expect to receive anything from Him (James 1:6-8). Recognizing how doubt affects us reminded us of the belt of truth. We can either have a skimpy flimsy belt and a flap for a loincloth, or we can have a sturdy belt and a loincloth that completely covers us.¹ **Takeaway.** Whenever we hear ourselves saying "but," stop ourselves and evaluate our words, because that "but" might cause us to be "but-naked!"

Next Meeting: In our July 31, 2013 meeting, we will be praying for our school-age daughters (from elementary school up).

Homework assignments:

- **Memory Verse.** Please continue memorizing **Hebrews 11:1, 6.**
- **Learning to recognize God's faithfulness.** Between now and our August 7th meeting, spend a few moments each day thinking about ways God showed Himself faithful and then capture those thoughts in your journal! Here are a few things you can consider that might help you recognize God's faithfulness:
 - Ways He answered a prayer
 - Something He did unexpectedly that filled your heart with joy
 - Times when you were able to produce fruit on His Word
 - Times when things didn't go as you planned, but the end result turned out

¹ This principle is discussed in our May 15, 2013 notes, entitled, "The Truth About Love." These notes can be obtained from the Meeting Notes page at www.wow2women.com.

to be better than you expected.

Closing: We closed our meeting in prayer with a time of need-specific prayer for the challenges that were lifted up, for the group overall, and as the Holy Spirit led

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ATTACHMENT: TEACHING NOTES FOR JULY 24, 2013

Closing the Loop on Last Week:

- **Spirit Check:** An additional testimony

Memory Verse:

- **Hebrews 11:1,6:** “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ... But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (NKJV).

Discussion Topic: Shield of Faith – What it Does

- **Ephesians 6:16.** “*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*” (KJV).² (italics added)
- **Key Definitions.**³ The definitions of these words will come into play as we discuss the shield.
 - **Above all:** (G1909) a primary preposition; properly meaning superimposition (of time, place, order, etc.) ...
 - **Taking:** (G353) to take up:--receive up, take (in, unto, up).
 - **Shield:** (G2375) a large shield (as door-shaped):--shield.
 - **Faith:** (G4102) persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation ...
- **Information about the Shield.**⁴
 - **Description of the shield.** The Roman soldier had two different kinds of shields: ceremonial and battle. The ceremonial shield was small and decorative; however, the battle shield was a large, door-shaped, shield made of wood and six layers of tanned leather woven together; it was actually large enough to cover the soldier in battle.

² This week, we will only discuss the first half of the verse.

³ Strong's Concordance for the iPhone version 1.5.3, Copyright © 2009 Brian Thomas Webb

⁴ Rick Renner, *Dressed to Kill: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Warfare and Armor*, (Tulsa: Teach all Nations, 1991).

- **Important notes about the shield.** The definition of “above all” does not mean the shield was the most important piece of the armor. Rather, it indicates where our faith should be carried: “out in front of all” or “covering all.”⁵ In addition, the Roman soldier could pick up or put down his shield. Likewise, when translated, “taking the shield of faith” means “our shield of faith can be picked up or it can be laid down. The choice is ours to make.”⁶
- **Caring for the shield.** The Roman soldier had a daily and an “as-needed” routine for caring for his shield. On a daily basis, the soldier used oil on the leather “to keep it soft, supple, and durable in the middle of a fight. Failing to properly maintain one’s shield was an invitation to a fatal blow.”⁷ However, in addition to his daily routine, if the soldier was engaged in battle, he would also “dip his shield into water saturating it with water until it was soaked”⁸ which is how he quenched the fiery darts of his enemy!⁹
- **How does the physical shield relate to our spiritual shield?** The composition of the shield is quite interesting. From a spiritual perspective, it seems to imply the cooperative work between God and man when it comes to our faith. Let us consider a few Biblical points that may help us better understand our spiritual shield:
 - **The physical shield.** In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant was made of a special kind of wood (Exodus 25:10). In *The Tabernacle of Moses*, Kevin J. Conner identifies this wood represents Christ’s “incorruptible humanity, the Root, the Branch,”¹⁰ and six is the “Number of Man, Beast, Satanic.”¹¹ If we relate the wood to Christ’s humanity and the number six to our humanity, then within the context of the physical shield, Christ’s humanity is the wood that makes up the foundation of the shield, and our humanity is the leather that covers the wood.
 - **The spiritual shield.** The resulting image of our spiritual shield comes from Romans 12:3 and John 15:4. God has given each of us a measure of faith; this measure of faith represents the Christ that dwells in us. However, even though God has given us a measure of faith, we won’t have access to that faith if we don’t do our part to care for it.
 - **Pulling it all together.** As we have learned, the armor is progressive. Truth leads to righteousness, righteousness leads to peace, and all of

⁵ Ibid, p. 352

⁶ Rick Renner, *Dressed to Kill: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Warfare and Armor*, (Tulsa: Teach all Nations, 1991), p. 353.

⁷ Ibid, p. 9 of the inserts.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ We’ll discuss the significance of the fiery darts when we discuss the second half of Ephesians 6:16.

¹⁰ Kevin J. Conner, *The Tabernacle of Moses*, (Portland: City Bible Publishing, 1976), p. 114

¹¹ Ibid, p. 116

these things combine to cultivate our faith! As we spend time renewing our minds with truth, God's truth continues to operate in our lives (Psalm 33:4), which produces peace between us and God and us and man. As we begin to recognize God's faithfulness in our lives, our faith begins to grow, layer upon layer!

○ **A few Scripture references:**

- **Exodus 25:10.** "And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height.
- **John 15:4.** "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (NKJV).
- **Romans 12:3.** "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith" (NKJV). (underline added)
- **Psalm 33:4.** "For the word of the LORD *is* right, And all His work *is done* in truth" (NKJV).
- **Psalm 33:4.** "For the word of the LORD holds true, and we can trust everything he does" (NLT).

• **Other Scriptures to consider:**

- **1 Corinthians 10:11.** "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is Christ Jesus ..." (NKJV).
- **Psalm 126:1.** "Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build upon it..." (NKJV).

Highlights from *Dressed to Kill*, Chapter 13:

- "Your faith is attached to the Word of God" (p. 343).
- "...the presence or absence of faith is determined by the presence or absence of God's Word. Faith and the Word of God are inseparable" (p. 343-344).
- "Faith is a result of the importance of God's Word unto the human heart" (p. 345).
- "The practical outworking of your salvation is greatly affected by the renewing of your mind with the Word of God" (p. 345).
- "God has given us enough faith to make certain we are completely covered—just

like a battle shield completely covered a human soldier” (p. 347).

- “Without a fresh touch of the Holy Spirit’s power on your life, your faith will become hard, stiff, and brittle” (p. 350).

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