

Ephesians 6:16-17 Answers
Our Battle Dress: The Whole Armor of God – Part 2

Introduction: Trotsky supposedly said, “You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you” (this is actually a mistranslation of what he said). Be warned: there is an invisible war raging, right now, all around us, between the forces of darkness and the forces of light. There is battle. Everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus has been called up for duty, drafted, to join in the fight. The devil does not want people to believe in him or the war so they will fail to appreciate the seriousness of the fight and be unprepared. We must not be like the Americans at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

ESV 1 Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

Satan has been deceiving and tricking people for over 5000 years. We are all novices against him. However, we have a book that tells us all about him and his schemes!

Review:

****** According to Ephesians 6:10-20, why should we put on the full armor of God?** It is so that we can take our stand against the devil’s schemes and so that when the day of evil comes, we can stand our ground, 6:11,13.

According to 6:10, who is the source of our strength and might? The Lord is the source of our strength. The rest of this paragraph is an explanation of how we can remain strong in the Lord despite the devil’s attacks.

ESV James 4:7 . . . Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

— The Belt of Truth —

What is the first piece of armor mentioned in 6:14? We are to fasten on the belt of truth.

Read between the lines. If we need a belt of truth (6:14), what does this tell us about one of Satan’s schemes? He is a liar and deceiver who will try to mislead us.

Application: We need to be people of truth and integrity. We are to know, believe and practice the truth. We are to live it and tell it. What keeps us going is not what we feel (Satan will lie to us) but what we know to be the truth.

— Breastplate of Righteousness —

What is the next piece of equipment we are to put on (6:14)? We are to put on the breastplate of righteousness.

Application: If there is a chink in the armor, an arrow can get through. If there is a chink in your righteousness, Satan can get through to you. Impurity is a crack in the armor; any small sin or lack of righteousness can make you vulnerable to Satan.

— Shoes of the Gospel —

14. According to 6:15, what is supposed to be on our feet? Roman soldiers wore hobnailed shoes (sort of like football shoes that have cleats) to give them sure footing. Our feet are to be shod with Gospel readiness. If we are to “stand” it is important to have the right shoes. One of Satan’s schemes is to fight us on ground that is rocky and sharp with thorns

Application: The Gospel is like shoes that fit us for service.

Negative Example: The New Testament recounts how seven Jewish men, who did not believe the Gospel, attempted to wage spiritual warfare and were soundly beaten by demons:

ESV **Acts 19:15-16** . . . the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

— Shield of Faith —

**** **1. According to 6:16, why is it important that we take up the shield of faith?** (*Reread aloud*). It is needed to extinguish the flaming arrows of the evil one, arrows lit from the fires of hell.

Word Study: Shield (6:16), from *thureos* had reference to a large rectangular shield, 2.5' x 4', made of wood and covered with metal or wet leather. For protection from arrows, Roman soldiers in battle often stood side by side behind these huge shields that formed a wall. Enemy arrow tips were wrapped in cloth, soaked in pitch, lit and shot at the soldiers. The wet leather on the shield could extinguish flaming arrows that embedded themselves in the shield (McArthur, p. 358-359).

2. Since only faith can extinguish these fiery darts, what must the darts consist of? See *Habakkuk 2:4, 1 John 5:4*. Doubt and discouragement are his weapons of choice.

Adolph Hitler: “The present teaching in schools permits the following absurdity: At 10 a.m. the pupils attend a lesson in the catechism, at which the creation of the world is presented to them in accordance with the teachings of the Bible; and at 11 a.m. they attend a lesson in natural science, at which they are taught the theory of evolution. Yet the two doctrines are in complete contradiction. As a child, I suffered from this contradiction, and ran my head against a wall. Often I complained to one or another of my teachers against what I had been taught an hour before — and I remember I drove them to despair” (*Hitler’s Secret Conversations*, October 24, 1941, quoted in *Home School Digest*, Volume 18, Number 2, p. 59).

Joseph Stalin: Speaking to an associate, Stalin said, “You know, they are fooling us, there is no God . . . I’ll lend you a book to read; it will show you that the world and all living things are quite different from what you imagine, and all this talk about God is sheer nonsense.” When asked what book he meant, Stalin said, “Darwin. You must read it” (*The Life of Joseph Stalin*, G. Glurdjidze, 1940, p. 8-9).

The pen is mightier than the sword; ideas have consequences. All it takes is a spark of doubt to start a great fire of unbelief. The defense against Satan’s fiery darts of doubt is faith, continuing to trust in God and His Word. The faith written of here is personal faith, the faith that saves us.

Who will share what it feels like to have Satan hurl his fiery darts of doubt at you? (*Allow people to testify*).

ESV **Proverbs 30:5** Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

ESV **Habakkuk 2:4** . . . the righteous shall live by his faith.

ESV **1 John 5:4** . . . this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.

— Helmet of Salvation —

3. The next piece of equipment is the helmet of salvation (6:17). Why do soldiers wear helmets (6:17)? A helmet is to protect the head from injury. A soldier knocked senseless is no good. Metaphysically, the helmet protects the mind (our thought life). The Bible elsewhere talks about having “saved thinking” (literally in the Greek). We must have our minds protected and controlled by God. The devil wants to control your thought life. It has been said, “You are not what you think you are; what you think, you are” (Adrian Rogers-ism).

4. Spiritually, why do you suppose Paul identified the helmet with salvation (6:17)? See *Acts 14:21, 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11, 1 John 5:13*. The apostles said through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. We are saved by faith, but live a life of struggle and warfare until our salvation is made complete:

ESV **Acts 14:21** When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul compared the helmet of salvation to the hope of our full, future redemption:

ESV **1 Thessalonians 5:8-11** . . . let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build one another up . . .

We need saved thinking (biblical sanity) and we need a certainty of our salvation.

ESV **1 John 5:13** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

Knowing the certain outcome of the struggle keeps us from losing heart.

Hymn: “The Church’s One Foundation”, by Samuel Stone, reads “Mid toil and tribulation, And tumult of her war, She waits the consummation Of peace forevermore; Till, with the vision glorious, Her longing eyes are blest, And the great Church victorious Shall be the Church at rest.

— Sword of the Spirit —

What is the only offensive weapon mentioned in this whole passage (6:17)? It is the sword of the Spirit. It is not enough to be purely defensive; we are also to be offensive. (Notice that there is no armor to protect your backside.)

ESV **Matthew 16:18** . . . I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Gates are defensive).

5. What is the sword of the Spirit, according to 6:17? See *Matthew 4:1-11, Hebrews 4:12* The sword that is given by the Spirit is the word of God.

NAS **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

ESV **Psalms 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Example: In *Matthew 4:1-11*, every time Satan tempted Jesus, he responded, “It is written” and quoted Scripture. Jesus ran Satan through with the sharp sword of the Spirit. Satan was impaled on that sword.

Word Study: “Word” (6:17) is from *rhéma*, not *logos*. Though many have made much of the supposed difference between the two, according to BAGD’s definition “generally the singular brings together all the divine teachings as a unified whole, with some such meaning as *gospel*, or *confession*” (p. 735).

So What?

Summary: Our armament includes truth, righteousness, readiness given by the Gospel of peace, faith, salvation and the Word of God.

6. Take stock of your armament; are any pieces of equipment missing? Are there any chinks in your armor?

Conclusion: The church is our battle station. We must never be AWOL. We must check our armor carefully, join the battle bravely, and enjoy the victory constantly.

7. According to 6:18, what important aspect of warfare must we not neglect? See Luke 18:1, Acts 2:42, 1 Timothy 2:8. We must be ever vigilant in prayer! This is probably where the greatest spiritual warfare is waged. This is our supply source.

ESV **Luke 18:1** . . . he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

ESV **Acts 2:42** . . . they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

ESV **1 Timothy 2:8** I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

The word "all" is found four times in 6:18 and helps teach us the critical importance of prayer. What aspects of prayer are preceded by the word all? We are pray at all times, with all prayer, with all perseverance and for all the saints.

Sources: Some ideas for this lesson were taken from a series on spiritual warfare preached by Adrian Rogers at Bellevue Baptist Church in 1982.

**** = ask this question before reading the text aloud. This is put people's minds in gear and them something to look for as the text is read. It causes focus.

Teacher's note: These lessons are based on the ESV and are designed for 45 minute sessions. If you send out each lesson's questions a week in advance it will encourage people to think about the passage during the week. Coving each question in class will give importance to the questions and give incentive for the class to spend time preparing for the discussion.

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11/24/13