

THE WAR IN OUR MINDS

PREPARATION FOR WAR

“God’s Armor and How to Use It”

(Part 1)

Ephesians 6:10-18

In our previous lessons we learned there is a war going on in our minds for control of our life.

The two main choices we have each day are to submit to God through the leading of the Holy Spirit or submit to Satan through the sinful desires of our flesh. We’ve also learned the four main characteristics that describe this war.

SPIRITUAL WAR - our enemy is not physical so we can’t fight physically.

AN INNER WAR - it takes place inside of us not out in the open where everyone can see.

A MENTAL WAR - it takes place in our mind so how we think becomes critical.

AN ETHICAL WAR - it is a battle for right and wrong. The Bible is our standard for right and wrong and that is why we use the Bible as a guide.

Now that we understand what kind of war we’re fighting, let’s learn about the resources we have to help us fight this war. Look at what Paul tells the people of Corinth about the weapons of our war:

2Corinthians 10:3 NLT

We are human, **but we don't wage war as humans do.**

2Corinthians 10:4 NLT

We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments.

The world wants to leave God and his Word out of everything. The world wants us to rely on human reasoning and intellect for our strategy, instead of what God says. When Paul tells us to use God’s weapons to knock down the enemies strongholds, he mentions two strongholds

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human reasoning and false arguments. These were an issue back then and they're still an issue today. It's called humanism where man is his own god.

So, what are the Mighty Weapons Paul is referring to? We find the answer in Ephesians 6:10-18 where Paul lists the armor of God. To help us understand what these weapons are and how they work, we are going to answer 4 questions.

QUESTION 1 - "Does it have to be God's armor?"

Can we use secular ideas or human reasoning, as Paul puts it? What about professional psychiatrists or psychologist? What about my opinion? Will these things work without God? As we have already seen, this is a spiritual war and God must be involved if we are going to win. However, quite often there is a medical issue involved as well as a psychological issue. When there is a biological or medical issue involved, such as a chemical imbalance or substance addiction, then medical doctors are necessary to bring the physical body back to level ground so we can think clearly in order to understand and make changes in our thinking that will help us win the war in our mind. Paul told Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:5:

2 Timothy 4:5 NLT

But you should **keep a clear mind** in every situation. Don't be afraid of suffering for the Lord. Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.

Once medical treatment is applied and the mind can **think clearly**, then the spiritual part of the battle can be fought in the mind. Therefore, while there is a place and a situation where professionals are needed and can be helpful, without the basic principles that God sets forth in the Bible, man's methods alone will not work. Remember, this is a spiritual war and God must be involved if we are going to win. For example, when helping someone with depression, medication can be very helpful when used properly under a doctor's supervision. However, if

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God's principles of grace, mercy, forgiveness, value, and purpose are not understood and applied as well, medication alone will not cure depression as we will see when we get to that lesson.

QUESTION 2 - "Why does it have to be **God's** armor?"

It has to be God's armor because of the type of war we fight in our mind and who the enemy is.

Our enemy is Satan, and we are fighting a spiritual war. This is not a type of warfare or an enemy that we can defeat without God! He is the only one more powerful than Satan.

Ephesians 6:10 NLT

A final word: Be **strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.**

Ephesians 6:11 NLT

Put on all of God's armor **so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.**

Ephesians 6:12 NLT

For **we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies**, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 6:13 NLT

Therefore, **put on every piece of God's armor** so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

1John 4:4 NLT

But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people because **the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.**

QUESTION 3 - "What is our responsibility?"

Our responsibility is to know what the armor of God is and then **PUT IT ON!**

Eph 6:11 NLT

Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.

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Eph 6:13 NLT

Therefore, **put on every piece** of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

Our responsibility is to know what the armor is and put it on.

QUESTION 4 - "What is God's armor and how do we put it on?"

In Ephesians 6:13-15 the Bible lists for us the first part of the armor. These are the three pieces of the armor that are put on first to protect the vital parts of the body. The Belt, The Breast Plate, and the Shoes. Let's look at each of these.

Eph 6:13 NLT

Therefore, put on **every piece** of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

Eph 6:14 NLT

Stand your ground, putting on the **belt of truth** and the body armor of God's righteousness.

BELT OF TRUTH

WHAT IS IT?

John 17:17 NLT

Make them holy by your truth; teach them **your word, which is truth**.

The Belt of Truth is the Bible. The Bible is a critical piece of the armor and must be used in our life every day. The belt is the part of the armor that holds things together and it is the Bible that holds everything together because it is our instruction manual. That is why the armor starts with the Bible. Without it, nothing else works.

HOW DO WE PUT IT ON?

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We study it and use it daily in our decision making. Then live, every aspect of our life, by its principles.

Joshua 1:8 NLT

Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.

Psalms 1:1 NLT

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.

Psalms 1:2 NLT

But **they delight in the law of the LORD, meditating on it day and night.**

Psalms 1:3 NLT

They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season. Their leaves never wither, and **they prosper in all they do.**

BODY ARMOR OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

Eph 6:14 NLT

Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and **the body armor of God's righteousness.**

WHAT IS IT?

This is the biblical truth that we are accepted by God because of the righteousness of Jesus not our own righteousness.

2Corinthians 5:21 NLT

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, **so that we could be made right with God through Christ.**

This piece of armor protected the soldier's heart and all the vital organs. One shot to any of these organs could be fatal. This piece of God's armor helps protect us from discouragement, low self-esteem, guilt, anxiety, and other mind damaging ideas that Satan tries to use to get us

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to quit living for God. We have to remember, our standing with God is totally dependent on the work of Jesus not our works.

HOW DO WE PUT IT ON?

We remind ourselves every day that we are not accepted by God because of anything we have done to earn it. We are accepted because of Jesus. When God looks at us, He sees Jesus. This is very important as the devil tries to convince us that we are not worthy of God's goodness or that He does not love us when we do wrong. Satan will actually make accusations about us to God.

Rev 12:10 NLT

Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, "It has come at last--salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For **the accuser** of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth--**the one who accuses them before our God day and night.**

Job 1:6 NLT

One day the members of the heavenly court came to present themselves before the LORD, **and the Accuser, Satan,** came with them.

Job 1:7 NLT

"Where have you come from?" the LORD asked Satan. Satan answered the LORD, "I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on."

Job 1:8 NLT

Then the LORD asked Satan, "Have you noticed my servant, Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless--a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil."

Job 1:9 NLT

Satan replied to the LORD, "Yes, but Job has good reason to fear God.

Job 1:10 NLT

You have always put a wall of protection around him and his home and his property. You have made him prosper in everything he does. Look how rich he is!

Job 1:11 NLT

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But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face!"

Job 1:12 NLT

"All right, you may test him," the LORD said to Satan. "Do whatever you want with everything he possesses, but don't harm him physically." So, Satan left the LORD's presence.

The Body Armor Of God's Righteousness means we know God loves us and accepts us no matter what we do because of the work of Jesus. He will never stop loving us.

Rom 8:38 NLT

And I am convinced **that nothing can ever separate us from God's love**. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow--not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.

Rom 8:39 NLT

No power in the sky above or in the earth below--indeed, **nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God** that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PEACE OF THE GOOD NEWS

Eph 6:15 NLT

For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.

WHAT IS IT?

The good news is salvation. This news brings hope to everyone, and it gives us confidence that our heavenly father loves us and is there for us at all times. This piece of armor is described as the shoes. They were well made and sturdy so as to help the soldier stand firm. A warrior must have firm footing so they do not slip in times of war. This PEACE should control our minds, so we are not living in turmoil. The peace of God is very important to living a stable life and overcoming the battles in our mind that can cause instability.

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Colossians 3:15 NLT

And let the **peace that comes from Christ** rule in your hearts. For as members of one body, **you are called to live in peace**. And always be thankful.

Paul explains this peace to the people of Ephesus like this:

Eph 2:14 NLT

For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us.

Eph 2:15 NLT

He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups.

Eph 2:16 NLT

Together as one body, **Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross**, and our hostility toward each other was put to death.

Eph 2:17 NLT

He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near.

Eph 2:18 NLT

Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.

Notice Paul says in verse 18 that we can all come to the same father (GOD) through the same Holy Spirit because of what Jesus has done. This is prayer. Talking to God. Prayer is the key to the application of God's peace and how we experience it. So, how do we put on these shoes of the Peace of the Good News?

HOW DO WE PUT IT ON?

When we are worried and full of anxiety, remember who our heavenly father is and pray. Then trust that God will take care of our situation according to his plan. This will bring the peace we need to stand firm and not let Satan trick us into doing something rash and foolish in a time of anxiety.

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Philippians 4:6 NLT

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done.

Philippians 4:7 NLT

Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. **His peace will guard your hearts and minds** as you live in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 26:3 NLT

You will keep in perfect peace **all who trust in you**, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

Understanding how to have this peace is critical in overcoming anxiety, depression, guilt, grief, etc.

We now have the Belt of Truth (The Bible), The Body Armor of God's Righteousness (Our right standing with God), and the Shoes of God's Peace that comes from the good news of salvation (a peaceful mind through prayer and trust). In part 2 of "Preparation for Battle" we will look at the remaining pieces of the armor.