

Why is it important to protect yourself with the "Full Armor of God"?

The following article was written by the late Bro. Carl Kitzmiller it appeared in the "Locust Street Laborer" back in the early 1990's. *"You would not think it, to see some Christians, that there is much of a battle going on. There seems to be an idea abroad that when we are born again we are put in a bandbox, and labeled for Heaven, and marked, This side up, handle with care." But the Christian experience is not a mere picnic. There is a war going on, and the world, the flesh, and the devil, and all the forces of darkness are against us when we take our stand in this world to please Him! And therefore, it is well that we should face up to this battle."*

Christians today are taking the ideas and practices of our culture and forming their Christian beliefs around them. We are being taught by society to be "tolerant" of anti-Bible actions and practices. We must hold firm to Christ's teachings and commandments. Be sure your "**Belt of Truth**" is firmly buckled around your waist. Read in the book of Colossians how easy it is for the culture of the day to infiltrate the Churches teaching and water down the truth. In this day of moral and philosophical relativism, when many people hold to the idea that "what's true for you may not be true for me", we need to remember that there is only One Truth. The **Word of God** is our only standard for the Truth. Take your stand on The Truth!

Ephesians 6:10-17

- . 10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.□
- . 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.□
- . 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.□
- . 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.□
- . 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist,

- with the breastplate of righteousness in place, □
- . 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. □
 - . 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. □
 - . 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. □

When Paul was writing this particular passage he was thinking of a Roman soldier dressed in armor. If anyone had first hand knowledge of Roman weaponry it was Paul because of his frequent imprisonments. He had viewed many Roman soldiers fully equipped from head to toe. For those persons who lived in that time, they would understand the image of that soldier preparing for battle. The rise of the Roman Empire was due to the well-equipped Roman Soldier who was trained in strategy, weaponry, defense, and understanding the enemy. Using the Roman Soldier's armor as a visual example, the Apostle Paul describes the Armor of God in the Book of Ephesians as both a defense and an offensive weapon.

He describes six pieces of armor (combat gear):

Two were considered offensive weapons: shoes and sword □ Three were considered defensive weapons: breastplate, shield, and helmet □ One was considered neutral: loin belt (girdle)

Belt of Truth **Practical Military Purpose**

This was a very important piece to the Roman Soldier's armor. The Roman soldier put around his waist a very wide belt which was the holder for a lot of equipment. There was a loop, for example, for the different swords. Other loops held ropes and a rations sack. When the legions conquered a city, the soldiers would empty out the ration sack to make room for gold, jewelry, and other loot they picked up. There were loops on the belt for darts. The belt was tied in several places to stay in place, so that no matter how the soldier moved about, fell down, climbed hills, etc., the belt was always in place with weapons at the ready. If the belt were not on straight, then everything would be out of place for the soldier. This would cut down his efficiency in battle and may even cost him his life.

Spiritual Warfare Application

Just as the soldier had his loin belt to put on every day to keep his armor together, we must apply the Word of God to our lives on a daily basis or we will not be able to maintain our defenses. The belt was the first thing that the soldier put on. Just as this is the first thing a Christian must put on. Much of the weaponry and protection depended on the belt being in place properly. If we do not use the word of God as our belt of truth, we have no foundation on which to base our warfare with the enemy. The belt held things in place where they needed to be. The truth of God's word does the same for us.

Breastplate of Righteousness **Practical Military Purpose**

The Romans had the ideas for armor design which provided light weight combined with ease of movement and protection from blows. This breastplate was attached to the belt by leather thongs passed through rings on the bottom to keep it solidly attached. It was anchored to the belt, and it was above the belt. Note: the belt had to be put on first, then the breastplate. One key area the Soldier's breastplate protected was the heart. While the heart is the one key organ responsible for sending blood through our circulatory system to keep us alive, our spiritual lives can deaden if our hearts are not right with God!

Spiritual Warfare Application

When you walk in the righteousness of God, it is a weapon of defense against all those slanderous accusations, and outrageous strategies of the devil. The Bible declares that the heart of man is prone to be tempted according to Matthew 26:41. We are righteous in God's sight because of what Jesus has done for us. Right thinking and doing right are the part righteousness that we are to protect ourselves with.

Feet Fitted with Readiness **Practical Military Purpose**

Some historians credit footwear as one of the greatest reasons why the Roman Army was so victorious over its enemies. The Roman Soldier was equipped with footwear that had spikes on the soles

which provided them a strong enough stance and balance that gave them a superior posture in battle on hills and uneven terrain. In martial arts, the stance is the most important move and is what is practiced first, for from the basic stance are all manners of kicks and punches launched!

Spiritual Warfare Application

Offensively this peace will help you to stand with your feet planted firmly on the Word of God and stay there, unmoved by the devil's threats and lies. It will protect us when we walk through the rough places and keep us steady in the heat of a battle. It will keep our spiritual foes where they belong...under our feet.

Shield of Faith

Practical Military Purpose

The Romans had a long, rectangular, knees-to-chin shield which protected from arrows and spears and could be knelt behind during an arrow barrage. It was quite a bit heavier and clumsier than the smaller Greek circular shield; but there was a series of exercises, a manual of arms, designed to give the soldier flexibility and strength in the use of the shield. Groups of soldiers who were besieging a town could form close together and hold their shields over their heads to make a huge circle to protect the group from fiery arrows.

Spiritual Warfare Application

In this verse, the Roman shield stands for the faith of the believer in the promises of God. The value of faith lies not in the person exercising it, but in the person whom the faith is in. Faith is something that all people possess and use every day. Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes through hearing the Word of God. Knowing the Bible and the God of the Bible gives you greater faith. Remember it is God that fights with you and that is some awesome protection.

Helmet of Salvation

Practical Military Purpose

The Romans had the best helmet of the ancient world. Many other nations used helmets of cloth wrappings, animal hides or bones, or hooves, etc. The Roman helmet had chinstrap, visor, and came down to cover the back and sides of the neck. Officers' helmets had a ridge

on top on which was mounted plumage or some sort of brush, depending on the rank.

Spiritual Warfare Application

The parts of the Roman helmet were: a lining of leather, softened for comfort and good fit; the helmet itself which was a bronze cast for the soldier, or iron alloy for officers; a metal crest for the plume; and a chinstrap. The highest ranking officers had gold and silver alloy helmets for parade dress. A well-designed helmet will protect you from various angles of attack. The greatest battlefield is in our minds. This is the area that the enemy wants to attack the most. One key area he wants to damage is our assurance of salvation. Paul gave some good advice in Philippians 4:8. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. We must be on guard on what we let run free in our minds. Satan is very subtle in these areas. He has blinded the world and he will do the same to the unsuspecting or careless Christian. We must have a clear mind to be discerning in all situations. This comes by immersing yourself in God's word and prayer.

Sword of the Spirit **Practical Military Purpose**

Paul spoke of one of five different types of Roman swords. This one was a two-edged sword with the end turned upward. It inflicted much more damage than the other swords. Not only was it intended to kill, but also it could rip the enemy's insides to shreds. It only needed to penetrate the enemy a depth of two to three inches to mortally wound him. Another advantage to this sword is that the soldier did not have to turn his sword around to inflict damage to the enemy. It cut in two directions. This was seen as a very deadly and powerful weapon. In today's world it would be the same as the difference a standard .32 caliber 6 shot revolver and 9mm semi-automatic pistol with a 15 round magazine. Paul describes the Word of God as an awesome and powerful personal weapon.

Spiritual Warfare Application

Our sword of the Spirit is the word of God. When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus quoted His Father's words and spoke them with authority. Consequently, each Word was like a sword-blow to Satan's head! God has given us the authority to use His words because we are all ambassadors of Christ. God speaks with ultimate authority in the universe. He spoke and the universe came into being from nothing. When we speak God's word according to his will, there is no power in the universe who can withstand it!

Conclusion:

Paul makes several points in the beginning of this passage, Ephesians 6:10-20 that we need to make sure we don't miss

- . 10 Finally, **be strong in the Lord** and in his mighty power.□
- . 11 **Put on the full armor of God** so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.□
- . 12 For **our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**□
- . 13 Therefore **put on the full armor of God**, so that when the day of evil comes, **you may be able to stand your ground**, and after you have done everything, to stand.□ 14 **“Stand Firm!”**

We must understand that too often we fight symptoms and/or consequences of a spiritual battle and fail to fight the real enemy. We can't win a war in which we do not engage the real enemy. Satan is a master at getting us to fight anything but the enemy. We'll fight and blame: ourselves, each other, the church, we even fight sin itself. Let me explain.

Alcohol abuse won't cost you your soul...

Pornography won't cost you your soul...

Beating your spouse won't cost you your soul...

Stealing won't cost you your soul...

Having your sexual orientation mixed up won't cost you your soul...

Now I know what the Bible says about people who live like this, Romans makes it very clear that they will be punished, excluded from

heaven, Romans 2:6, "God will give to each person according to what he has done."

So let's look at this list again:

If I bring these sins to an end in my life: Alcohol abuse, Looking at Pornography, Beating my spouse, Stealing, Having my sexual orientation mixed up, do I get to go to heaven? "NO!"

These sins are a problem in a person's life because they don't know Jesus. Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. 24, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Romans 10:17, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."

It has to begin with the truth, the belt of truth, it's the foundation by which we must build our life.

Romans 1:17, For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Again, we will lose our soul because we are not in the word and anchored to God through Jesus.

Consider the power of God's Word, He spoke the world into existence, Jesus defeated Satan simply by quoting God's Word, and many of you were lead to Christ through Bible study, it changed your life for an eternity... 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

John 8:31-32, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

I John 4:4 "greater is He. Who is in you than he who is in the world."