

In The Training

Camp

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A Study of Ephesians 6:10-20

Becoming the Soldier God Wants

Facing Our Enemy Victoriously

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Preface

In Ephesians, chapters four and five, the main burden of Paul's message was the believer's walk. Now he will deal with the Christian's warfare. It is a subject largely neglected in the pulpit ministry today, and a subject rarely studied by the average child of God.

The silence concerning the continual conflict in the Christian's life is responsible for a passive acceptance of the depressions and defeats which are so prevalent in the majority of professing believers. There are those who confess Christ and yet have little knowledge of the continual spiritual battle that is relentlessly being pressed against the child of God.

It may be that this is the reason why Christians are so defeated and so few know how to truly intercede and do prayer battle against the forces of evil in behalf of the missionaries and pastors around the world. How about you? I trust this study will aid you in your personal battle with Satanic powers in your daily life and for the sake of the kingdom of God.

-- Edward Watke

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In the Training Camp

Ephesians 6:10-18

Introduction:

This section of the Word of God could be called "A *Call to Arms*." Paul states in I Timothy 6:12, "*Fight the good fight of faith*." We as Christians are in a warfare, but this is something we seldom think about. That the Christian is involved in warfare is the consistent teaching of the Scriptures. Paul, in evaluating his life, said, "*I have fought a good fight*" (II Tim. 4:7).

It is wise for us to consider some earlier truths in Ephesians.

1. We see in Ephesians the tremendous benefits given to the Christian because of the grace of God. (Ephesians 1:1-10) We are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Our "**wealth**" is in Christ, chapters 1 - 3.
2. Paul laid doctrinal groundwork for his practical instructions for Christian living with his admonition about our "**walk**" in this world. The Christian's walk is clearly set forth in chapters 4 and 5.
3. Paul deals with the church as the mystery now revealed, for God is making one new thing -- a church made up of saved Jews and Gentiles who are now one in Christ. (Eph. 2:11-22)
4. And Paul shared some powerful, meaningful prayers for the saints. (Eph. 1:16-21; 3:14-21)
5. Paul taught them about God's love and the fulness that belongs to God's people. (Eph. 3:16-21)

Note:

Certainly Paul was familiar with the language of war. As a Roman citizen of the first century A. D., he would have witnessed a great deal of military activity. Moreover, he himself was often victim to the whim of the Roman authorities.

Paul led through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit carefully choose the words he used in describing our daily battleground. When Paul used words like "warfare," "weapons," and "soldier," there can be no doubt that he understood that all of us are in the middle of a great war, not of the flesh, but of the spirit. This may shock some new believers.

God has given us many allusions of warfare in Scriptures.

1). We read of our warfare -- (II Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12; I Tim. 6:12); 2). of being a soldier-- (II Tim. 2:3-4), 3). of the armor for the saint-- (Eph. 6:10-17; 4). and of running a race -- (Heb. 12:1,2; I Cor. 9:24-27)

If you are going to win the battle, you must know the enemy, possess power and equipment to attack him, and also have protection against him. Our power is the Holy Spirit, and we have discovered the spiritual equipment God has given us to attack Satan.

Our Lord commanded us to "*occupy till I come*." (Luke 19:13). Thus God wants us to be about His business until He comes again. This involves our putting on the armor of God and fighting this good fight of faith.

As we engage in this study of the whole armor of God, you are urged
to be engaged in this conflict for righteousness!

A Directive That Equips Us!

*“Finally, my brethren, be **strong** in the Lord, and in the **power of His might.**”* (Eph. 6:10)

There are many reasons why we must be strong in the Lord. The believer is not called to take his place among the fearful, the negative, or the murmuring and complaining, but among the strong. The child of God is strong because his Lord is strong and he is **IN** Him. We are to walk in the power of His might. (Consider Ephesians 1:3,4, 2:6; I John 2:14)

I. We Must Be Strong Because of Our Enemy.

A. Our enemy contests us constantly.

1. We have a complete, perfect inheritance in Christ which we have received here and now (Acts 20:32; Heb. 9:15; Col. 3:24; I Pet. 1:4). But Satan contests all this means to us.
2. Satan does not want to see the Christian possessing his possessions.
3. Soon as we begin to appropriate our blessings in Christ, we discover at once how hostile Satan is toward Christ's own. As Satan hates Christ, so he hates us.
4. Similarly, when Israel entered Canaan, they discovered the enemy in the land and before they could possess the land, they had to conquer it. There is a counterpart in the spiritual experience of every saint of God.

B. Consider Satan's state and viewpoint

1. Having no hope for salvation themselves, Satan and his fallen angels seek to render man's redemption ineffective in individuals. When men are saved, he then intensifies his warfare against the newly-born again child of God.
2. Satan has shaped his present program to include a furious onslaught against all true believers.
3. He carries on an uninterrupted warfare of spoiling men and women by seducing them to neglect the necessary spiritual exercises of prayer, Bible study, and fellowship with other believers. While at the same time he spreads the table of life with the world's "*dainties*" to attract and appeal to the children of God (I John 2:15-17; James 1:13-16).
4. Satan knows he can never remove a child of God from the nail-pierced hands of Jesus Christ (John 10:28-30), but he continues to wage his warfare against God's own.

C. Consider our precious position

1. Positionally we are **IN** Him. This is the great mystery Paul informed us of in Ephesians 2:6. "*. . . made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*"
2. Realizing that we have been placed in Christ, we are commanded to appropriate His power in our lives (Eph. 1:19; 3:16, 20).
3. We need more than human strength for we must stand against the wiles of the devil.

II. Our Life IS and Will Be a Warfare.

A. Warfare is our experience whether we recognize it or not!

1. It is so; for we struggle with the common calamities of human life.
2. It is so; for we struggle with the opposition of the powers of darkness, and with many enemies who would keep us from the victorious life.
3. We have enemies to fight against, a captain to fight for, a banner to fight under, and certain rules of war by which we are to govern ourselves.

B. Our encounter with Satan is inevitable.

1. **“Finally, my brethren”** (v. 10), after all Paul had written to them, he now brings them face to face with the reality of daily life.
 - a. **“Finally”**-- This word suggests both a conclusion and a commencement.
 - b. While the word itself means *“the remainder, the rest,”* it introduces something new in the epistle. The struggle is certain, none can escape it. All are enlisted against a common foe.
 - c. Walking, working, witnessing do not make up the sum total of the Christian life. We must battle; we are warriors.
2. All brethren are involved in the battle and we must recognize our deficiency and His sufficiency.

III. It Is a Prerequisite That a Soldier Be Stouthearted.

A. It is prescribed here: “Be strong in the Lord, etc.”

We have many battles to fight, and must dispute many things that Satan would put in the way. We battle with the world, the flesh and the devil and therefore **have need of a great deal of courage.**

1. *Be strong therefore* -- strong for service, strong for suffering, strong for fighting. (II Tim. 2:1) *“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”*
2. Though a soldier be ever so well armed *without*, if he have not **within him** the power available to him (the strength of the Lord) his armor will be ineffective.

B. God’s desire is for you to be strong “in” the Lord.

1. *“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong”* (I Cor. 16:13). Paul knew his weakness as he wrote, *“I was with you in weakness”* (I Cor. 2:3). But he also added, *“when I am weak, then am I strong”* (II Cor. 12:10).
2. *“Abraham staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God”* (Rom. 4:20).
3. To Daniel the words were spoken, *“And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not; peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened. . .”* (Dan. 10:19). Wonderful words spoken by the angel to Daniel.
4. *“Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not. . .”* (Isa. 35:4a).
5. About the great heroes of the faith, God gave us this witness, *“. . . out of weakness, were made strong, waxed valiant in fight. . .”* (Heb. 11:34)

IV. All Our Power or Strength Must Come From God Alone.

A. He is the source:

1. *"God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that **power** belongeth unto God"* (Psa. 62:11).
2. *"Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty **power** to be known"* (Psa. 106:8).
3. *"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the **power** of God"* (I Cor. 2:5).
4. *". . . the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and **power** unto his own"* (Psa. 68:35b).

B. His power is available for us

1. *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of **power**, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (II Tim. 1:7).
2. *"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with **power**"* (II Thess. 1:11).
3. *"Now also when I am old and gray headed, O God, forsake me not: until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy **power** to every one that is to come"* (Psa. 71:18).
4. *"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious **power**. . ."* (Col. 1:11)
5. *"And what is the exceeding greatness of his **power** to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty **power** which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. . ."* (Eph. 1:19).

V. Courage Is Very Necessary For Our Spiritual Warfare.

A. Be strong in the Lord -- in his cause and for his sake and in his strength.

1. We have no sufficient courage of our own.
2. Our natural courage is as perfect cowardice, and our natural strength as perfect weakness; but all our sufficiency is of God. In his strength we must go forth and go on (II Cor. 12:9-11).
3. By the **actions** of faith, we must expect victory *"by and in"* grace. The heroes of faith (Hebrews chapter 11) are a great testimony of courage, determination, persistence and especially a life by faith.
4. We need to walk, to trust by faith, consider Hebrews 11:32-39.
5. We must expect help from heaven to enable us to do that which of ourselves we cannot do in our Christian work and warfare.
6. We should stir up ourselves to resist temptations and enter into the warfare in a reliance upon God's all-sufficiency and the omnipotence of his might.

Conclusion:

1. Every Christian **who finishes well** will also have to confess his weakness -- because to stand against the spiritual forces that surround us is a fight, a conflict.
2. The natural tendency of the world around us is to succumb daily to great forces of darkness and temptation.
3. But the Christian is commanded not to succumb, but to resist these forces. The term Paul uses here is to **wrestle**. ***But how will we wrestle?***

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

1. How does this section (6:10-20) related to Ephesians 5:17- 6:9?
(Or how does 6:10-20 related to the various relations of life which Paul presented earlier)?
2. How do we become strong in the Lord, and the power of His might in practical daily living?
3. Why was Paul so burdened about their having a conquering life? How does this relate to you?

Part Two:
A Duty To Engage Us!

“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God. . .”(Eph. 6:11, 13).

The spiritual warfare is so important that we cannot leave off any of the array of spiritual protection and weaponry provided for us. We are commanded to avail ourselves of the ***whole armor of God***. The word Paul used in verse 11 “***panoplia, or “full armor”*** was the word the Greeks used to describe the “complete equipment used by their most heavily armed infantry.” We dare not be less prepared for battle.

I. The Whole Armor For Warfare Is Necessary:

A. Maybe we reject the idea of a warfare?

1. Many well-meaning Christians hear the word “warfare” and object, saying, “Well, this whole idea of weapons and warfare just seems so ungodly. I believe in peace and so I don’t believe the Bible really talks about all of these things.” Or we say, “Christ has won the battle for me, I have no need!”
2. Recognizing that we are called to be peacemakers (James 3:18), let us take an honest look at what Scripture says about spiritual warfare.
 - a. In writing to his apprentice Timothy, Paul declares that they are, in fact, “***soldiers of Christ Jesus***” (2 Timothy 2:3-4).
 - b. Also, in 2 Corinthians 10:4, Paul refers to the “***weapons of our warfare***” which are to be used in the spiritual battle that we face constantly.
 - c. Paul knew the necessity of the armor. He was in enemy territory -- a disaster area at times. A place of danger and potential death.
 - d. He knew the world was in the lap of the wicked one.
 - e. He also knew ***what*** was in the armor.

B. Certainly, Paul was familiar with the language of war.

1. If anyone knew first hand about warfare, it was Paul. When you consider all he faced: in the treachery of the enemy, the people Satan and the demons stirred up to defeat Paul’s ministry, and the ongoing physical struggle he experienced, we would say Paul truly knew all about the warfare.
2. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul clearly wrote much about spiritual warfare, as did Peter. (The Israelites in Joshua’s day, through warfare, were to be used of God to bring judgment upon seven wicked nations whose cup of iniquity was full for they were ripe for judgment.)
3. When Paul used words like “warfare,” “weapons,” and “soldier,” there can be no doubt that he understood we are all in the middle of a great personal war, not only of the flesh, but of the spirit. (Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

C. We must be properly dressed for battle.

Dr. Charles Stanley has written:

“Think about how you dress in the morning. We all dress according to what the day may hold. If

I'm going to church on Sunday, I'll put on a suit and tie. If I'm going fishing, I'll put on some old pants and a shirt I don't mind getting wet. If I'm going hunting, I'll put on the appropriate camouflage and safety gear. And, if I'm going to battle, I will absolutely have to put on my armor. We usually wake up every morning like we are going to a party. We get our clothes out, make sure they are neatly pressed and clean, and try to make ourselves look as nice as we can. The truth is, however, that we are not going to a party; but into battle. "

D. How can we be faithful, and effective soldiers if we are not dressed for battle?

1. When Paul says in Ephesians 6:11, "*put on the full armor of God,*" he means exactly what he says. We are to put on every piece of that armor intentionally, meticulously, and consistently.
2. When we step onto the battlefield unprotected, we make an easy target for the enemy's attack.

(In other lessons of this course, we will take a close look at the individual pieces of armor that Paul mentions, and we will come to understand the historical significance of Roman battle armor. Until then, I challenge you to examine your regular morning routine. Do you wake up every day knowing that you are stepping out of bed and onto a battlefield?)

II. Frequently We Are Unprepared and Unguarded.

A. Think about a few particular failures you have experienced in your Christian life. (See I Cor. 9:25-27; consider King David's life.)

1. Every morning when you and I wake up, we are at war. We may admit this point, but do not take it very seriously. Indifference and carelessness has brought all of us to defeat far too often.
2. Failure to recognize the warfare results in painful defeat, heartache, sorrows, and loss.
3. Many dedicated Christians go about "confused and downtrodden" because they simply do not understand why they continue to experience so many failures in their Christian lives. Just when they think they have something conquered, they are in defeat once again.
4. Has there been a reoccurring sin problem that you once thought you had overcome, only to have it rise back up? What were the causes of your setbacks? (See Psa. 139:23,24; Psa. 19:12-14; Rom. 6:1; consider King Saul.)

B. Putting on the "whole armor" is extremely important.

1. It is a **personal** duty -- No one else can do it for you. You can do it but only by prayerful study, purposeful action and passionate prayer.
2. It is a **primary** duty -- We must be prepared to face the battle for the Lord and our well-being.
3. It is a **paramount** duty -- It needs to be uppermost in your mind and heart.
4. It is a **perpetual** duty -- We must never stop being prepared for battle. Not to do this means defeat, humility, ruin, fruitlessness and failure. Paul wrote of those who made shipwreck of their faith. (I Tim. 1:18-20)

B. We must consider these questions personally.

1. Did the battle catch you completely unaware?

2. Do you go about your days with no thought of the war being waged in your life?
3. Have you developed a rather “callused attitude” toward the Word of God?
4. Did you ever cry out, “*God, if this Book is everything You say it is, and if the Gospel is as powerful as You have promised, then why isn’t it working in my life?*”

My friend, the problem is not that the Word is lacking in power. The real problem is that we often fail to recognize the intense spiritual battle that is taking place. We are at war, and it is a fight for our lives — not our physical lives, but our spiritual lives. The only way for us to survive this conflict is to get prepared for the battle.

C. What does the devil want?

1. His primary objective is to get us to neglect the Word of God. He desires we give but lip service to the Word of God. (see James 1: 21; 5:17; Phil. 2:5-11.)
2. He wants us to be distracted by worldly things rather than focusing on the things of God. (see Eph. 2:1-3)
3. He wants to accomplish his objectives and uses anything that will disable our witness and service to God. (snares, wiles, fiery darts)
4. When we get to that point of spiritual disability we become useless, defeated soldiers of the kingdom. (see I Tim. 1:18 - 20; I Tim. 4:15,16.)
5. We too easily forget how powerful our enemy is, or the appetite of the flesh -- the lusts of the flesh and the pull of a world orchestrated by Satan (I John 2:5-17; II Cor. 4:3,4).

In I Corinthians 9:26, 27 Paul writes of his experience in a personal battle. He speaks of running the race, another picture of the Christian life. To run the race, to fight to the finish, to win, to gain the incorruptible crown, he saw the need to keep his body under, to bring it into subjection. He knew the tremendous need of winning in the **battle** over the flesh -- keeping his body under. (see Gal. 2:20)

D. Paul writes to Timothy to prepare him for the battle.

“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. . . Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” (II Tim. 2:1, 3, 4)

Part Three: *Persistence In the Face of Evil!*

“. . . that ye may be **able to stand** against the wiles of the devil. . . Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, **that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore.** . . .“ (Eph. 6:11, 13, 14a).

The seven-month-old baby pulls itself up, trying gamely to learn to stand alone. One of the things God wants to teach His children to do is **stand alone**. That is to say, to stand when all the rest of the people of the world are against him, to stand when it costs him popularity, fame, or financial hardship. God knows that all around us there are tremendous pressures to conform, to take on the form and characteristic of the world. Just as the baby has to overcome tremendous difficulty to stand and walk, the believer has to overcome pressure and difficulty to come to the place where he can stand.

Ah, to stand, to withstand, to stand, to stand therefore!

Why did Paul continue to write these words? He says, “Be strong in the Lord, and stand firm.” In this short passage, he instructs us to “stand firm” four times. If it was that important to Paul, we must come to understand what he meant. How do we stand?

He is saying that it is not enough to simply be dressed for battle. **We must also take a stand.** That is, we have a position that we must take in our spiritual battle. And that position is revealed in the first part of verse 10, “*be strong in the Lord.*”

“Positionally, we are in Christ.” This is the great mystery Paul has informed us of in Ephesians 1:4-6; 2:6. Revealing that we have been placed “*in*” Christ, we are now commanded to **appropriate** His power in our lives (Eph. 1:19; 3:16,17). The importance of doing this is evident -- that “*ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil*”(Eph. 6:11).

One of the dangers that strikes many believers is the notion that our “standing firm” requires only passive action! My friend, there is nothing passive at all about this instruction. Standing firm does not mean that we simply stand still and let the devil have his way in and around us. Rather, standing firm means that we boldly, publicly stand for Christ in every area of our lives—in our homes, schools, communities, and workplaces.

You see, God does empower us, **but** God will never do for himself what he has called us to do for him. We each have a job to do, and my friend, if we do not do it, it will not get done. He has called every believer into service and specifically gifted each one for God’s calling and ministry. If we refuse to bend to God’s will for our lives, then part of our battle has already been lost. (see II Tim. 1:9, 13, 14)

I. The Determination We Are To Exhibit vv. 11, 13, 14a

Our conduct in this warfare must, therefore, be characterized by unyielding firmness.

A. Stand always -- It matters not what the test may be like.

1. When you study the gospels, it is evident that without the power of the Holy Spirit, the apostles (disciples) did not stand. They were often confused, unbelieving, doubting, failing, and grieving the Lord.
2. After Pentecost, the apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit. Now they were bold, unrelenting, determined in the face of every kind of opposition. (read Acts, chapters 3 - 5)
3. No saint needs to sin. Sin or failure is never God’s will. You need never yield to the enemy. God stands by to strengthen you, (I Cor. 10:12,13;

II Cor. 6:16-18). “. . . I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . I will be a father unto them. . .”

B. Stand on the Word -- Believing the promises. (see II Pet. 1:3-9)

1. You can't stand if you are not grounded in the Word. (Col. 2:6,7; II Chron. 20:17)
2. You can't stand if you are not armed. Consider David's armor be it only a sling and stones; he knew how to use his weapon. (see I Sam. 17:37, 45, 47)
3. You can't stand if you are not steadfast and perpetually safeguarded.
4. You can't stand if you are not unwavering. (James 1:5-8)
5. We can't stand if sin controls our lives, or we are not walking in the Spirit, but giving into the lusts of the flesh. (Gal. 5:16,17, 24; 2:20; Psa. 66:18; Rom. 8:5-8) ". . . *the life I now live, I live by the (faithfulness) of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*" (Gal. 2:20).

II. Standing Against Our Enemy

A. We are to withstand -- recognizing the enemy.

1. We must not yield to the devil's allurements and assaults, but oppose them. "*Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant...*"(II Cor. 1:11)
2. Satan stood up against David (I Chron. 21:1). When he stands up against us, we must stand against him. We must be fully opposed to the devil.
3. To stand against the devil -- is to stand against sin. He is the wicked one, the god of this world, his kingdom is a kingdom of sin.

B. Stand Alert -- Because of our enemy (I Peter 5:8, 9).

1. Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation. (see Matt. 26:41)
2. What are your strong points in life? Do not allow pride to enter.
3. What are your weak points of character? Guard them against the evil one. Peter failed for many reasons, but largely because he did not watch and he did not pray. (Luke 22:31, 32, 22:40, 46)

C. Stand your ground -- that position does not change.

1. *Having done all, to stand.* We must resolve, by God's grace, not to yield to Satan. Resist him, and he will flee from you. (I Pet. 5:7).
2. If we distrust our cause, or our Lord, or our armor, we give Satan a big advantage.
3. Our present business (along with all our Christian walk) is to withstand the assaults of the devil and to have a testimony of resisting as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Our warfare can be accomplished, we can be victorious.
4. Stand therefore . . . Keep your ground, do not desert the army, the church of Christ, nor his cause; continue in the station in which you are placed, keep your post, be upon your watch, stand upon your guard:

D. You don't stand alone.

1. All the promises of God are yours to draw on. (II Cor. 1:20; Heb. 10:23; Rom. 4:21)
2. All the provisions of Christ are yours. (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 4:13; I Cor. 3:21-23)

3. The presence of the Holy Spirit is there to enable you. (I Cor. 3:16; Acts 6:3, 5, 8)
4. God's powerful grace is entirely yours. (II Cor. 12:9,10; Rom. 6:14; 8:9-13)
5. Be sure to stand in every area of your life's activities. (see I Cor. 15:58)

E. Stand armed -- for the armor has been provided.

1. Describe one occasion in which you wanted to run from the spiritual battle you were facing. Why did you want to escape? Did you run away or did you stand firm? What was the outcome?
2. Many of the Psalms mean so much to us because David knew how to stand armed. He did not give up! He was armed with,
 - a. praise -- (Psalms 147, 148, 149, 150)
 - b. worship -- (Psa. 95:6; 99:5; Psa. 24; 19, 145)
 - c. expectation -- (Psa. 62:5)
 - d. simple trust -- (Psa. 62:2, 6; 63:1-3)
 - e. persistent faith -- (Psa. 34; 18:1-3)

F. Stand consistently, persistently

1. Has there been a time in your Christian life when you simply surrendered to the enemy without putting up a fight?
2. What was the situation? What was the outcome? How might this have been different if you had been standing firm, wearing the armor of God?

Closing thoughts:

Dr. Charles Stanley wrote the following:

Remember the long spikes that were often attached to a Roman soldier's sandals which enabled him to plant his feet firmly in the ground. Paul surely thought about that here as he instructs us to "stand firm." He is saying, "Stand firm. Don't even think about running. Don't even think about trying to escape. Don't even think about giving up. Your strength is in the Lord, and you can keep your footing in Him. When those demonic forces start to press in on you, when the enemy fires his fiery darts your way, when the pressures of the world threaten to knock you down . . . stand firm." We can do this because of the firm foundation in the Word of God which is ours!

Part Four:
The Danger We Encounter!

“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11).

Introduction:

1. Our English word “wiles” is generally used to express “*deception through trickery*” and includes all the methods that would be part of that. It has to do with cunning or skill applied to no good purpose. He creates a false impression.

2. The Bible teaches us the devil “*personifies wiles*” as he works his craft against us for he is the master of wiles. (II Cor. 2:11)

I. Wiles -- The Problems We Encounter:

A. Wiles briefly means “cunning, crafty arts, stratagems.”

1. The Greek word means properly “*that which is traced out with method;*” that which is methodized; and then that which is well laid -- art, skill, and cunning. (It only occurs here and in Eph. 4:14.) “. . . *cunning craftiness.*”
2. Satan attempts to delude and destroy us. This includes the various arts and stratagems he employs to drag souls down to perdition.
3. He lies to us, wants to trap us, discourage us and ensnare us. He will do anything he can do with cunning variety to weaken us and destroy us.
4. He goes to work daily to produce discouragement, confusion, indifference and imbalance. He is our chief enemy, and deals in wiles and stratagems.

B. His wiles present special problems to us.

1. We can more easily encounter open force than we can cunning.
2. He works to draw us into snares as he does not carry on open warfare.
3. He does not meet the Christian face to face, but advances covertly, makes his approaches in the dark, unknown by us.
4. He employs cunning rather than power, hence we need to be constantly on guard to know how to meet the attacks.
5. He does not approach us in repulsive forms, but comes to us to recommend some plausible doctrine, or lay before us some temptation that shall not immediately repel us.
6. He presents the world in an alluring way, invites us to pleasures that seem harmless. He leads us into indulgences of sin until we have gone so far that we possibly cannot retreat.

II. Wiles -- We Are Approached In Various Ways.

So here is a “*briefing*” (to borrow military intelligence terminology).

Some things to watch for:

A. The devil exaggerates the pleasures of sin -- while minimizing the true nature and outcome of sin.

1. Of Moses the Holy Spirit said: *“He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season . . . ”* (Heb. 11:24,25).
2. Observe the phrase: *“enjoy the passing pleasures of sin.”* The devil approaches us with exaggerated emphasis on the pleasure we can enjoy if we will sin.
3. He was asking Moses to invest in something with promise of immediate return, but without telling him about the risk, the outcome, the ugly side!

B. The devil wants us to act on the immediate pleasure of the tempted behavior. The bait looks good, but when you take that bite you have taken in the ugly poison of sin.

1. The devil is counting on the fact we will see the fun, the pleasure – the joy of satisfied appetite – and jump at that, acting impulsively.
2. If you stop and think; if you inquire; if you look deeply and consider consequences – you frustrate the wiles of the devil.

Therefore, Satan is annoyed when we stop to think; when we inquire about some tempted behavior; when we think in terms of long-term consequences - - when we study and pray and consider if something is right or not!

The devil is the *“master market executive.”* He knows how to package sin so that it doesn’t look like anything bad. This is part of his deceptive essence. For instance – in the lust of the eyes – the devil seeks to present sin to us IN A NEAT PRETTY PACKAGE so that our first reaction is to look, to admire, to want, to take.

C. The devil sees an open door into our lives through emotions or mood. (Eph. 4:26; compared with Elijah in II Kings. See Matt. 6:24-34, consider anxiety, fearfulness, wrath, anger, etc.)

1. This is seen in the comments of people:

People have said to me: “I knew I shouldn’t be drinking, but I was depressed.”

“I know I’m married, but this other woman made me feel so good. Surely God wants me to feel good, so it has to be right.”

“Sure it’s wrong to lie, but I was under such pressure! It was a sin to treat my brethren the way I did, but I was so mad!”

2. Seen in the openings we give him.
 - a. The wiles of the devil include this cunning ability to find openings through our moods and emotions as we so readily give into our feelings.
 - b. We must use the Word of God and prayer – to take a careful inventory of our moods, our emotions, or the grudges we carry. Are we despairing, doubtful, discouraged? See Psa. 139:23,24.
 - c. We must repel the hurt feelings we can’t seem to turn loose of; the habitual, destructive thoughts we might entertain.
 - d. The devil can use those things to slowly erode your character; to lead you into sin to gradually turn you away from God.

D. The devil is ardently watching.

1. When we fall into certain moods or various kinds of emotions, the enemy steps in to defeat us; to lead us into sin. (Eph. 4:26,27).

2. I might as well wear a bull's eye target for Satan if I am going to allow angry day after day until I also build bitterness in my life.
3. The devil will find me and seek an entrance into my heart for his evil purpose and to my downfall. *"Neither give place to the devil"* (Eph. 4:27).

E. The devil uses people to lead us astray.

Not long into His public work our Lord warned men of men. He told people to be careful about people! He warned the devil can use people to lead us astray.

1. Christ's warnings

Jesus said, *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves,"* (Matt. 7:15).

2. When He sent His disciples out He said, *"Beware of men,"* (Matt. 10:16-19). Jesus wanted us to know this: the devil may use people to lead us astray.

- a. Through words of invitation into sin,
- b. through false teaching, or
- c. through subtle influence, or
- d. the use of people to corrupt us.

3. Be warned about men who are tools of Satan. (see I Tim. 1:18-20)

- a. Read 1 Tim. 6:1-5. In a situation where there are teachers not consenting to wholesome words, the devil discovers his advantage.
- b. When men who preach and teach do not maintain loyalty to *"the doctrine which is according to godliness,"* the devil can step in through that entrance and seduce many.
- c. When we accept, endorse, consort with false teachers, that indifference to truth plays right into the hands of error and the devil's purpose.
- d. Let's observe: Paul describes the risk to Timothy then he tells Timothy: *" . . . From such withdraw yourself. . . "* (II Thess. 3:6; I Tim. 6:5c).

Too much is at risk to play around with men like this. It is one thing to be patient and kind and do what we can to work with people. But when corruption is evident; when men are at work who are destitute of the truth, we cannot just let error have its' way. *"From such withdraw yourself."*

- e. Paul warned the Colossians – *"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words."* Another translation gives: *"I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument,"* (Col. 2:4).

Concluding Thoughts:

1. The devil is the master marketing agent; he packages sin in neat, attractive bundles (Heb. 3:12,13).

2. What if someone came to you with a garbage bag -- trying to hand it to you. As soon as they hold it out you can smell the contents. You can see the leaking liquid. Are you going to take it?

3. But what if someone comes to you, neatly dressed with a pleasant smile. And they hand to you a beautiful package, like it was professionally wrapped at Dillards. It has matching bow and ribbon; perfectly wrapped and absolutely beautiful. Your reaction would not be the same – as with the garbage bag!!

4. Some garbage is neatly wrapped. Is thus not true with much we could look at on television? Isn't this one of the many battle grounds for most Christians?

How can we stand against such a wily enemy?

The Fight In Which We Are Engaged!

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (Eph. 6:12). Read Revelation 12:7-11.

Introduction:

The intelligence corps of our nation play a vital part in warfare because it enables the officers to know and understand the enemy. Unless we know who the enemy is, where he is, and what he can do, we have difficulty defeating him. Not only in Ephesians 6, but throughout the entire Bible, God instructs us about the enemy, so there is no reason for us to be unprepared.

This passage makes it clear that behind the physical confrontations we experience with our fellow human beings, there are unseen spiritual hosts of evil at work. There is an ongoing confrontation between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness.

I. The Enemy Is Real, Though Often Misunderstood.

A. The meaning of the term, “wrestle”.

1. This is not a wrestling with flesh and blood. There is no doubt an allusion here to the ancient games of Greece, in that part of the exercises which consisted of wrestling.
2. The Greek word used here denotes wrestling; meaning: “*a struggle, fight or combat.*” Here it refers to the struggle or combat which the Christian has to maintain -- the Christian Warfare.

B. The battle is not with men.

1. The apostle does not mean to say that Christians had no enemies among men that opposed them, for they were exposed often to fiery persecution. (I Pet. 4:12,13)
2. Behind people is the real enemy. The real world is the unseen world about us, an ongoing battle between the forces of God and the forces of evil.
3. We are wasting our time fighting people when we ought to be fighting the devil who seeks to control people and make them oppose the work of God.

C. The leader -- Satan, the devil, our adversary.

(We will not go into the background of where he came from.)

1. The enemy has many different names, as *Satan*, *he* is our *adversary*, because he is the enemy of God. *Devil* means *accuser*, because he accuses God’s people day and night before the throne of God (Rev. 12:7-11).
2. He is also called the *tempter* (Matt. 4:3), and the *murderer* and the *liar* in John 8:44. He is compared to a *lion* (I Peter 5:8), and a *serpent* (II Cor. 11:13-15), as well as *the god of this age* (II Cor. 4:4). He is also called the old dragon.

D. Satan’s helpers -- demons, evil spirits which are many.

Paul called them “*principalities . . . powers . . . ruler’s . . . spiritual wickedness in high places*” (v. 12).

The William's translation puts it: *For our contest is not with human foes alone, but with the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark world; that is, with the spirit forces of evil challenging us in the heavenly contest.*"

This suggests a definite army of demonic creatures that assist Satan in his attacks against believers. The fallen angels are under his command.

1. *Principalities*: There can be no doubt whatever that the apostle alludes to evil spirits. Like good angels, they are regarded as divided into ranks and orders and under control of one mighty leader.
2. *Powers*: Those who had power or to whom the name of powers was given. Milton represents Satan as addressing the fallen angels in similar language: "*Thrones, dominions, principedoms, powers*"
3. *Rulers of the darkness of this world*: The rulers that preside over the regions of ignorance, and sin with which the world abounds. Darkness is the emblem of ignorance, misery, bondage, corruption and wickedness of every kind. It is also an allusion to the darkness of the human heart! (Eph. 5)
4. *Spiritual wickedness in high places*: (see II Cor. 10:3-5) This could well refer to the aspects of the kingdom of Satan which include evil customs, laws, opinions, employment's, errors, superstitions, false doctrines, ideologies of sinful men, philosophies of men -- yes, every high thing that is exalted against God and His Truth.

II. The Enemy Is Powerful and Unrelenting.

A. Consider Satan's power

1. The powers which are opposed to us, and against us, and making war on us are the very highest order of evil angels, those who rule over the idolatrous and sinful men in this world of darkness.
2. They are a wicked spiritual host that inhabits the heavenlies, that is, the regions of the air, from which they continually assault us and seek to get us to commit sin. This battle is unseen but real. (Rev. 12:7-12; II Cor. 10:3-5)
3. Acts 26:17, 18 tells us that Satan does possess power. It is the power of darkness (Col. 1:13).
4. It is a supernatural power (II Thess. 2:8-10), and it is a destructive power (Heb. 2:14; Rom. 6:23; I Pet. 5:8,9).
5. He is the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4). For he controls the world system and uses it for his purposes.
6. He is the evil spirit working in disobedient men (Eph. 2:2).
 - a. If we do not guard our hearts, Satan has the ability to fill them with evil thoughts (Acts 5:3).
 - b. Satan can blind our eyes and lead us astray, just as he blinds the unsaved and keeps them captive. (II Corinthians 4:4; 11:3; II Tim. 2:26).
7. The Bible warns us that through some "snare," Satan can take us captive to do "his will" (II Timothy 2:26).

B. Consider his goals, aims and purposes

1. Snares are evidently the devil's allurements (temptation) to do evil. Of course, this does not teach us that Satan can force us to do his bidding against our own free wills.
2. If we are not careful he can fool us or snare us through the “*deceitfulness of sin*” and the “*deceivableness of unrighteousness*” (Hebrews 3:13; II Thess. 2:9, 10).
3. Finally, the Bible clearly informs us that Christians, even in the 21st century, must not be ignorant of Satan's “devices” (II Corinthians 2:11).

III. This Fight Involves *Wrestling* With Evil.

A. We are involved in a close, personal struggle with the forces of evil.

1. The close, hand to hand combat of the ancient battlefield, could very well be described as **wrestling**, and is, therefore, not out of place in this verse.
2. Although we are told to put on the armor, as if to fight on a battlefield, we are told that our struggle is also a “**wrestling**.” We are not spectators in a game.
3. **Wrestling** has to do with “**straining**,” It is the picture of one man with a grip on another, pressing hard, straining every muscle for a fall to the mat.

B. We live in “*an evil day*,”

Meaning also to them, the day of temptation; the day when you are violently assaulted.

IV. We Face Satan's Many Abilities.

A. He is a wily enemy and we need to understand this enemy.

Never underestimate the power of the devil. He is not compared to a lion and a dragon just for fun (Rev. 12:7-11).

1. The Book of Job tells us what his power can do to a man's body, home, wealth, and friends, except for limitations given by God.
2. Jesus calls Satan a thief who comes to “*steal, and to kill and to destroy.*” (John 10:10a)

B. Satan is subtle, wise, and cunning.

1. Do we know his devices? (II Cor. 2:11)
2. Do we understand that often he comes as an angel of light and is a chief liar? (John 8:44)
3. Satan wants to use our external enemy, (the world), and our internal enemy (the flesh), to defeat us. His weapons and battle plans are formidable.
4. It's obvious why carnal weapons are useless in this warfare. *Who* our enemies are and *where* they are is given as the reason for needing God's armor.
5. We are not contending with mortal men, but against superhuman authorities who rule the sphere of the world's moral darkness.
6. The forces of evil have access to where we are.

V. Our Position “In” Christ Makes Us A Part of the Battle.

The believer is in the “heavenlies” where Christ and His Church are, and into this sphere Satan comes to attack the children of God.

A. We are hated as Christ is hated.

We can expect to be in a battle, but Christ our Victor gives us constant victory -- but only as we avail ourselves of His power and victory already won for us. (Col. 2:14,15; Rom. 8:37; we are to triumph in Christ.)

1. No soldier has ever entered a more difficult and dangerous way. In our selves we would fail miserably.
2. To be ignorant of the nature of the conflict and the enemy is to invite calamity in our spiritual lives.

B. Satan and his kingdom are arrayed against us.

1. Expect it, plan for it, apply truth because of the truth of it.
2. Realize we can stand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand therefore. Our day is evil, and as the age nears its end, evil will wax worse and worse. Expect it!

Fitted With Truth and Righteousness!

*“Stand therefore, having your **loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness**” (Eph. 6:14).*

Introduction:

First, in verse 14, Paul refers first to the great belt, or girdle, that soldiers wore. This was usually made of leather and metal, and was worn around the entire abdominal region. This vital piece of armor protected the “core,” or the center, of the soldier’s body.

Here Paul is using the illustration of the thick belt the Roman soldier placed around his waist. To this belt the soldier attached his dagger and sword. Furthermore, the breastplate was held in place by being attached to this belt. In addition, leather straps reaching to the knees hung from this belt and protected the soldier from sword strokes to that part of his body.

God has given us perfect, complete equipment. These parts of the armor will be dealt with in this and the following sections of this series. Since we are engaged in warfare, equipment for both defensive and offensive purposes is essential.

Paul calls the equipment “armor,” a metaphor he uses on other occasions as well. In Romans he writes, “*the night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the **armor of light***” (Rom. 13:12, see Rom. 13:14).

1. The idea here is the thought of a change of dress. The believer not only casts off the garments of darkness (including sin) but he puts on the armor of light.
2. We are engaged in both an offensive and defensive warfare against our enemy.

Elsewhere Paul writes that we approve “*ourselves as ministers of God . . . **by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left***” (II Cor. 6:4-10). There is the armor of right living and right doing, the practical life of uprightness which should be ours because of all the provisions God has given us.

1. These provisions include our justification through faith in Jesus. (Rom. 4:25; 5:1)
2. Having Christ’s righteousness imputed to us. (I Cor. 1:30, 31)
3. Having a perfect position in the Lord Jesus. (Eph. 1:4-9, 13-14)
4. Having the precious, effective working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. (Eph. 2:17, 18)
For we can walk in the Spirit having His enabling, power, guidance, and teaching. (Eph. 5:9; 5:18)

We are in God’s boot camp and such is a prerequisite to becoming a good soldier. It is a preparation which makes one fit for combat. Having our loins girt about with truth is the prerequisite of the Christian armor. The belt of truth is the foundation of all the armor in that it keeps everything in place that we might be able to battle effectively.

I. Walking In God’s Truth

Pilate asked Christ, “*What is truth?*” (John 18:38). This is a question that mankind has had for the ages. Man wants to know truth, yet looks in the wrong places.

A. Objectively, It is the Word.

1. This means the written Word (John 17:17; II Tim. 2:15; II Tim. 3:15-17) and the Living Word (John 1:1-3, 14; 14:6).
2. This is an **defensive weapon**, preparing us to **stand in the faith!**
We are to be nourished up in good doctrine. (I Tim. 4:6, 13, 15,16; 6:3; II Tim. 1:13)
3. *Peter wrote, “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind. . .”* (I Pet. 1:13).

The Christian is to have his mind girt about with the truth of God's Word.

Christ said we must live not by bread alone, but by the Word. (Matt. 4:4)

4. We are to strap on the girdle of truth and say, "*Lord, I choose to put on this belt of truth, and I ask that it keep my heart centered on your Word. I want to live in the truth, walk in the truth, and testify to the truth.*" (See Prov. 4:23 Psa. 91:4; John 16:13; James 5:19)
5. When we are diligent in the truth of God, then we cannot be deceived by Satan's lies. False teaching falls to the sides as we filter everything we hear through the truth of Scripture.
6. We must remember that the battle begins in our minds; that is Satan's battleground. It may slip into our emotions and actions later, but it always begins with our minds. Therefore, our minds must be protected from assault at all times.

God's Word is the Christian soldier's defensive and offensive weapon. It cuts through negativism, accusation, doubt, hopelessness—those favorite "wiles of the devil." While the belt of truth protects our vitals, we also draw inspiration and hope from the living scriptures, "*the sword of the Spirit*" (Ephesians 6:17). Bible study bathes our mind and spirit in hope and enthusiasm (Psalm 119:97; 119:128).

B. Subjectively, it is sincerity of truth in the Christian life.

Here is the principle of inner truthfulness. He is writing as much about personal truthfulness as he is about biblical truth (the Bible).

1. The Christian is to be sincere. He must be truthful to himself, about facts in his life, about Holy Spirit conviction, and toward people.
2. He must put away lying (Ephesians 4:25) and learn to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) as he demonstrates the fruit of the Spirit in his life (Ephesians 5:9).
3. Paul was saying that honesty and truthfulness are foundational in our fight against Satan and his evil horde. If we are not truthful about the battle -- we will succumb to Satan's wiles and fiery darts.

The apostle Peter taught this same principle when he wrote that the very first thing a person needed to **add** to his faith was *virtue or moral integrity* (II Peter 1:5). According to Peter, moral integrity must precede a further knowledge of God's Word because without it one will never apply the truth of God's Word to his life. One cannot defeat Satan and his horde without first being honest with God.

4. The mind of the Christian must be clear and discerning, unhampered by selfish, sinful thoughts, guarding against error and making wrong choices.

C. Practically, it is gained by knowing the Word of God!

This necessitates being in the Word of God -- knowing it, applying it, and living it out in daily life. "*Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls*" (James 1:21).

As the girdle on one's body lended strength to vital organs, (Consider the support many wear in places where heavy lifting takes place) so the study of the Word of God girds and strengthens the inner man.

1. By Meditation -- (Josh 1:8; Psa. 1:2,3 , 119:15, 23, 97; I Tim. 4:15-16)
Meditation is the diligent study and earnest pondering of the Word of God.
How many of us really study God's Word with diligence? (II Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11)
2. By Memorization -- (Deut. 6:6-9; 11:18; Psa. 119:9-11)
When we commit Scripture to memory, we are able to withstand one

of Satan's fiery darts -- temptation (Psa. 119:9-11). We must learn to commit truth to memory that our lives might manifest truth.

Why Do We Need the Truth? (Psa. 51:6; II John 1,2,4; III John 1-4; Psa. 91:4)
“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom” (Psa. 51:6).

1. We might understand the truth of salvation-- (Rom. 3, 6:23; 10:9-13)
2. We might understand the truth of sanctification -- (John 17:17-19; I Pet. 1:2; II Thess. 2:13; I Thess. 4:3, 5:23; I Cor. 1:30)
3. We might understand the truth of our inability and His sufficiency. (II Cor. 2:16; II Cor. 12:1-10; John 15:5, 7;
4. We might understand the need of being filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 5:18; Acts 1:1-8; Eph. 5:18; Acts 4:23-33; Luke 24:44-47)

We need a steadfast march in truth in our daily lives!

II. Clothed With God's Righteousness!

“. . . And having on the **breastplate of righteousness**; . . . “ (Ephesians 6:14b).

Introduction:

One day the great French general, Napoleon Bonaparte, ordered a bulletproof coat to be made. When the workman had completed his task he delivered the coat personally to the emperor. Napoleon took the coat from the man and then handed it back, ordering him to put it on. And then Napoleon took a gun and fired 6 shots into the coat, now worn by the workman. When he saw that the coat repelled the shots he congratulated the man and sent him on his way. I'm sure that fellow was glad he did such good work.

A. What Is This Breastplate? -- For the Roman soldier, the breastplate protected the vital organs.

The Greek word meant a “*coat of mail*,” that is, the armor that covered the body from the neck to the thighs, and consisted of two parts, one covering the front and the other covering the back. It was made of rings, or in the form of scales, or of plates, so fastened together that they would be flexible, and yet guard the body from a sword, spear, or arrow.

1. In Scripture it was referred to as a *coat of mail* (I Sam. 17:4-7); an *habergeon* (Neh. 4:16); or a *breastplate*.
2. The heart, lungs, kidneys, stomach, and other organs were covered by this vital piece of armor. Paul would have often seen this breastplate on Roman soldiers who were guarding him in prison.

The breastplate was a very important part of the Roman soldier's battle gear. It protected particularly his heart, from serious injury. If we think in terms of the heart as representing the mind, as the Bible sometimes does, then we understand how the **breastplate of righteousness** protects the Christian soldier from the arrows of Satan.

B. What Is This Righteousness? “. . . and having on the *breastplate of righteousness*.”
Well, for one thing it isn't our own righteousness.

1. Our righteousness was not sufficient to save us, and our righteousness will never be sufficient to keep us. “. . . *There is none righteous, no not one.*” (Rom. 3:10) Isaiah likens our righteousness to “*filthy rags*” (Isa. 64:6).
2. The condition of mankind is very serious without Christ. (see I Tim. 1:8-10)
3. In Romans, God declares the Israelites went about to establish their own

righteousness, not submitting to Christ's righteousness. (Rom. 10:1-5)
Though they had religious zeal, they had not Christ. (See I Pet. 2:24.)

C. It is an imputed righteousness through the merit's of Christ's shed blood.

"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe..." (Rom. 3:21, 22)

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"(Rom. 3:25,26).

1. We need a righteousness which God alone can give; the righteousness of God our Savior, to make us perfectly invulnerable to all the arrows of the foe. **This also is the helmet of our salvation.** . . . " (Eph. 6:17a).
2. In 2 Corinthians 5:21 we read, *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*
 - a. Christ is the true righteous one. And He has imputed his righteousness to us.
 - b. Because of His work on Calvary's cross, we can now receive His righteousness. As He died in our place He now gives us His righteousness in exchange for our unrighteousness.
 - c. Actually, **He is our righteousness.** In 1 Corinthians 1:30 we read, *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."* When you receive Christ, you receive His righteousness. Now you can trust in Christ's finished work for you.
3. So his righteousness is given to us by faith alone. (See Rom. 4:1-8.)

The point which Paul is making is that **the breastplate of righteousness** is essential for the Christian to avoid a mortal wound. It is **righteousness** which protects us in those vital areas of our relationship with God so that the life of Christ within us is not severed.

D. It is also a personal life of righteousness. (See Proverbs, chapters 10-13.)

"For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head." (Isaiah 59:17) (This speaks of Christ, or the Lord.

"But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (I Thessalonians 5:8)

"Yield yourselves unto God, as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:13).

1. If we are not living righteously we are easy targets for the enemy's darts.
2. Sinning saints cannot stand in the day of adversity when Satan attacks. Right living is wound-proof; therefore, *"we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world"* (Titus 2:12).
3. If we fall instead of stand when Satan attacks, it is because we have not been living right. Let every one of us with unconfessed sin in his life confess it here and now, lest the devil gain an advantage over any one of us.
4. None but the righteous stand! Righteousness is Jehovah's breastplate (Isa. 59:17)
5. This is practical righteousness before mankind and Satan. Titus 2:7,8 says, *"In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works, in doctrine showing uncorruptness,*

gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."

Imparted righteousness enables us to turn away from sin and to experience fellowship with a holy God. (see II Cor. 5:21; I Tim. 2:24) We have been set free from our former manner of life. Now we can say no to unrighteous living and yes to God. And that is the call for every believer. If we would defeat the attack of the enemy, **we must put on the breastplate of righteousness.**

Your heavenly Father is not indifferent to your sin or regards it lightly. Rather, as a loving father corrects his child, so the Lord corrects you (see Hebrews 12:5-11). At times His chastening may seem stern and unfair, but He is working to mold you into the likeness of Christ. He desires that *"the peaceable fruit of righteousness"* (Hebrews 12:11) be produced in your life.

The Roman soldier wore a tough leather breastplate strengthened with metal strips. It was difficult to pierce. So with the Christian. The certain conviction that Jesus Christ's own righteousness is at work in us through the Holy Spirit wards off Satan's *"fiery darts,"* those crafty whispers that tell us: *"See, you've sinned again. You'll never make it. Why don't you give up?"* **The Christian's positional righteousness is in Christ** (Romans 3:21-26).

When it is suspected that Satan is assailing us, remember the Father sees us clothed with Christ's righteousness. Righteousness must be our breastplate. The breastplate secures the vitals, shelters the heart. The righteousness of Christ imputed to us is our answer when Satan would condemn us before God, when Satan would accuse us in our own hearts.

Consider these final thoughts:

The righteousness of Christ implanted in us is our breastplate to fortify the heart against the attacks which Satan makes against us. In our battles to put down lust, anger, fear, pride and doubt we often set ourselves up for discouragement when we don't make the progress we would like (Philippians 3:12). Even the veteran Paul faced this (Romans 7:19). But he excelled as a Christian soldier because he tapped into *"the hope of righteousness by faith"* (Galatians 5:5). God gives us righteousness through Jesus Christ living inside us by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 14:23).

Whenever the enemy tries to bring up your past to accuse you, the breastplate of righteousness is your trusty defense. The righteousness of Christ in you is what matters — not your shortcomings and failures. Satan cannot remain near one who lives right. and has on the breastplate of righteousness; an allusion to Isaiah 59:16, 17. (Read Isaiah 59:1-17)

If you are wearing that *"breastplate,"* you can rest secure that your heart, your emotions, are securely guarded and adequately protected against attack. This is perhaps the most frequent ground of attack against Christian faith.

Christians often feel they lack assurance. They feel unworthy of God. They feel they are a failure in the Christian life and that God is certain to reject them, that He is no longer interested in them. They are so aware of their failures and shortcomings. Growth has been so slow. The first joy of faith has faded, and they feel God is angry with them or that He is far off somewhere. There is a constant sense of guilt. Their conscience is always stabbing them, making them unhappy. They feel God blames them. This is simply a satanic attack.

How do you answer an attack like this? You are to remember that you have put on the breastplate of righteousness. In other words, you do not stand on your own merits. You never did. You never had anything worthwhile in yourself to offer to God. You gave all that up when you came to Christ. You quit trying to be good enough to please God. You came on His merits. You came on the ground of His imputed righteousness—that which He gives to you. You began your Christian life like that, and there is no change now. You are still standing before God on that basis.

Paul himself used this breastplate of righteousness when he was under pressure to be discouraged and defeated. Here was a man who was small of stature and unimpressive in his personal appearance. His background was anti-Christian, and he could never get away from that completely. He had been the most

hostile, brutal persecutor of the church that it had known. He must constantly have run across families with loved ones whom he had put to death. He was often reminded by many people that he was not one of the original twelve apostles, that his calling was suspect, that perhaps he really was not an apostle at all. What a ground for discouragement!

As the people hurled recriminations back into Paul's face, he could have said: "Why try anymore?" But that is not what he does. Instead, he says, "*But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain*" (1 Corinthians 15: 10a). There he is using the breastplate of righteousness. I simply say to you, "by the grace of God, I am what I am." What I am is what Christ has made me. I'm not standing on my righteousness; I'm standing on His. I am accepted by grace, and my personal situation does not make any difference at all." So his heart was kept from discouragement.

Feet Clad For Action!

“And their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,” v. 15.

And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. This is perhaps a difficult metaphor to understand. What Paul had in mind cannot be understood without some knowledge of the Roman soldier's footwear. The Roman soldier wore a thick-soled sandal with hobnails embedded on the underside for traction. The sandal was laced to the foot and lower leg with leather straps. During the winter months these straps were tied around leather leggings for warmth. Shod like this, the Roman soldier was able to quickly traverse various kinds of terrain. Shoes, (or greaves of brass, or the like), were formerly part of the military armor (1 Sam. 17:6). The use of them was to defend the feet against the gall-traps, and sharp sticks, which were laid privily in the way, to obstruct the marching of the enemy. Those who fell upon the gall-traps, and sharp sticks were then unfit to march.

The Roman legions were notorious for their ability to quick-march fifty miles in one day. Surprising their enemy by being where it was thought they could not be, the legions were prepared for battle on any kind of terrain, whether it happened to be the rough and rocky highlands or the hot and dry deserts. When the command came to stand and hold, the legionnaire was able to do so partly because of the traction he could get with his hobnailed sandals. In other words, the Roman sandal was both an offensive and defensive weapon. Likewise, the Christian soldier, having his feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, should always be ready to give an answer to every man that asks a reason for the hope that is in him (1 Peter 3:15).

Dr. Whitby thinks this may be the sense of the words: “That you may be ready for the combat, be shod with the gospel of peace, endeavour after that peaceable and quiet mind which the gospel calls for. Be not easily provoked, nor prone to quarrel: but show all gentleness and all long-suffering to all men, and this will certainly preserve you from many great temptations and persecutions, as did those shoes of brass protect the soldiers from the gall traps.”

I. The Believer Must Stand Firmly Confirmed And Committed to the Gospel.

(Rom. 1:14-16; 10:9-15) In any warfare, ancient or modern, messengers who are swift of foot, as well as soldiers who can stand firmly, are needed.

A. First, the soldier must stand firmly confirmed in the Gospel.

1. He must heartily believe every one must hear the gospel. Without embracing the truth of the lostness of the lost, we will not advance the Kingdom of God.
2. The message of the Gospel must grip the mind, heart, and will of the child of God. (see Luke 14:21-23)
3. The simplicity of the Gospel must be thoroughly understood. (see I Cor. 15:1-4)
4. It is called *the gospel of peace* because it brings peace: peace with God, the peace of God, to be at peace with ourselves, and with one another.
5. Since we are in a warfare with the devil, he is going to use every scheme he can to subdue the Christian. He will go after our weakest defenses. He will endeavor to advance the idea that there is little we can do.
6. Living uncommitted daily lives of service to Christ is probably one of the weakest parts of our Christian lives.

B. Secondly, we must carry the good news to all the world.

Remember how the Israelites ate their first passover. The hard and bitter attacks of Pharaoh had the people fearful and well-nigh exhausted. He was their enemy, bent on their destruction. But on the

night the death angel appeared over Egypt, the Israelites who were behind blood-sheltered doors were safe. They was no need for any one to be fearful or restless. God had promised protection to all who applied the blood, so that the people could enjoy eating the passover in peace. (note Exod 12:11)

The gospel shoes not only provided for our security, but they also prepare us for active service as well. They speak not only of steadfastness in warfare, but swiftness in witnessing.

1. Bringing the good news of salvation to the sinner is a vital move in the warfare against evil. Too many Christians are not in a state of preparedness to witness to the lost. They are unshod. Little wonder they become foot-sore, lame and weary.
2. Paul's feet were shod with the "*preparation of the gospel of peace!*" Are yours? Paul, giving his all, was willing to spend and be spent for the sake of the lost.
3. Some hazarded their lives for the sake of the gospel. **What about us?** (see Acts 15:26) Our shoes are to be shoes of the warrior who knows Christ and makes Him known. (see Luke 4:18)
4. Paul wrote about some who were addicted to the ministry of the saints. (I Cor. 16:15) **What about us?**
5. Are your feet beautiful to God? (Isa 52:7; Nah. 1:15; Rom. 10:15)
6. God took care of their shoes so that they lasted throughout the entire journey for the Israelites. (Deut. 29:5) The gospel has not lost its old time power. Nor will it ever! (Rom. 1:16)

II. The Believer Must Be Shod With His Peace.

A. Why do we need such protection? Satan wants to bring anxiety where there should be peace.

1. As the feet are necessary for walking so the devil has his arrows which are aimed at our feet to defeat our walk (see vs. 16). If we do not have God's peace our walk for Him will be greatly hindered. Do you live a life of turmoil, anxiety, despair, doubting, and discouragement?
2. We must have our feet shod in order to be prepared to do and suffer all that God wills, ready for marching, as a Christian soldier with peace and joy.
3. We must have our feet shod in order that we might have peace, that we might be prepared, and that we might participate in the gospel.

B. What does it mean to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace?

(Eph. 2:13-18) "*But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*" (13). "*For he is our **peace**, who hath made both one and hath broken down the middle (dividing) wall of partition between us (hostility)*"(v. 14). "*That He might **reconcile** both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: (bringing the hostility to an end)*"(v. 16). "*And came and preached **peace** to you which were afar off, (Gentiles!) and (**peace**) to them that were nigh (Jews!)" (v.17). "*For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father*" (v. 18). God brought peace between those who had no peace! We are to bring the message of peace to those around us that they might know Christ as their Savior.*

The Bible indicates there are several areas in which we need to be prepared and ready to walk in peace, to share the message of peace, and to have personal victory ourselves.

1. Through Christ alone we can have peace **with** God. (Rom. 5:1)

2. This peace comes through our reconciliation, redemption, and justification.

For this peace is ours through the finished work of Christ. (Eph. 2:14; Isa. 9:6,7) Isaiah 53:5 describes the death of Christ as the “*chastisement of our peace.*” His chastisement in our place was designed to bring us His peace.

3. It is His peace which can be ours daily -- the peace **of** God. (John 14:27)
 - a. He wants us to know the peace of God (Phil. 4:6,7; II Thess. 3:15; Isa. 26:3)
 - b. This peace should keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, regardless of what Satan does to combat us. (Phil. 4:7)
4. It is also found in peace with our own inner spirit.
 - a. There is the peace of a clear conscience.
 - b. There is the peace of surrender to God’s providence and will.
 - c. There is peace that comes from obedience and doing right. (James 5:17)
5. There is the experience of peace with those around us.
(Rom. 12:10, 16, 18; Matt. 5:9; Rom. 14:19)

When we are at peace in our own inner spirit, then we can minister to others the knowledge and joy of God’s peace in the daily life.

One of the basic signs of having inner peace in the heart is evidenced by the love of God in our lives. There will be love for the Word of God, love for others, love for spiritual things, and above all love for the Trinity and their ministry in our lives.

III. We Must Be Shod for God’s Glory !

Those soldiers who had their feet shod, along with other parts of their armor, were ready for warfare. They were prepared to face the enemy. Having feet shod was one of the very essential preparations for marching with the warriors.

It means “preparation”:

A. Prepared to answer: (I Pet. 3:15)

The Bible indicates there are several areas in which we need to be prepared and ready if we are to please God, do offensive and defensive warfare, and defeat the enemy (the devil).

1. We must know our faith so well that we can explain what and why we believe in the Savior, the veracity of the Word of God, etc.
2. Far too many Christians are unable to defend their faith to this world.
3. Many Christians can give you the latest about various aspects of the world, and the news headlines, but can’t tell you much about the Word of God.

B. Prepared to proclaim truth. (Rom. 1:15; I Cor. 9:16)

1. It is not preaching in a church I am alluding to, but the one on one sharing of our faith, sharing the gospel of Christ (I Cor. 15:1-4; I Tim. 1:15; II Pet. 3:9)
2. We should be prepared to witness and lead someone to Christ at all times.

C. Prepared to serve. (II Tim. 2:21)

We must keep our personal lives clean so we might be used of the Lord.

D. Prepared to give an account to the Lord. (II Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12)

1. A good soldier would want to be ready to meet His Master at any moment.
2. If we really expect to meet Christ at any moment, we would certainly have a life that is prepared.

It means “participation:”

A. Participation with Him in our walk

This is a very important aspect of our Christian life. Satan will do all in his power to get us off the proper path. To have an effective walk there must be several points to keep in mind.

B. Therefore, how are we to walk?

1. We are to walk not after the flesh (Rom. 8:1, 4, 13:14; Gal. 5:16,17, 24)
We can't hope to stay in the paths of righteousness if we walk in the flesh.
2. We are to walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:22-24; Rom. 12:1,2)
 - a. Our walk before salvation is clearly set forth in Ephesians 2:1-3.
 - b. Our walk ought to be drastically changed. (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22, 24)
3. We must walk, doing good works (Eph. 2:10)
4. And we are to walk in the power of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16,17, 24)

Part Eight: *Using the Shield of Faith!*

“Above all taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” (Eph. 6:16)

Introduction:

Paul is alluding to the large shield used by the Roman foot soldier of his day. This shield was not the small round one used by the cavalry; it was, instead, four feet long, two feet wide and resembled a door. It was constructed of wood and wicker over which animal skins were stretched and the edges were studded with iron to protect the leather. The shield, in addition to providing the normal protection one would expect from a shield, was designed specifically to stop and extinguish the flaming projectiles of the enemy. The leather was stretched over the wicker so as to provide a space between it and the wood underneath.

Incredible stories survive of the massed strength of the Roman shields. Take the “tortoise” formation, for example. Squads of Roman legionnaires would align their shields over their heads while the outer ranks held their shields in front of their bodies forming an impenetrable square called the tortoise. A crack unit could form a tortoise so securely that a horse and chariot could ride on top of it.

No wonder, then, with this in mind, Paul counseled us: *“In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one”*(Ephesians 6:16). Christian soldiers are **shielded by faith**, the unshatterable conviction that our ultimate victory is assured (Romans 8:38-39).

I. We Are to Use the Shield of Faith:

Above all, taking the shield of faith,.... Which may be understood either of the grace of faith, which is like a golden shield, precious, solid, and substantial; and like a shield of mighty men, by which mighty things are done, and by which the believer not only repels, but conquers the enemy. The Jews say that repentance and good works are as a shield against divine vengeance.

“Faith is the means of our walk, consider the message of Hebrews chapter 11. Faith is the silver thread upon which the pearls of the graces are to be strung. Break that, and you have broken the string -- the pearls lie scattered on the ground; nor can you wear them for adornment. Faith is the mother of virtues. Faith is the fire which consumes sacrifice laid upon the altar.”

-- C. H. Spurgeon

Faith is the focal point of Christianity. Without faith we cannot please God (Heb. 11:6). It is the human instrument by which we are saved (Eph. 2:8,9; Gal. 3:26). By faith we overcome the world (1 John 5:4). This illustrates to us the importance and necessity of faith. **Faith could be defined as confidence or trust.** It is above all else, **“Taking God at His Word.”**

Certainly faith is the forsaking of ones self and a turning to Christ, and to all that God has given us in His Word. Let us examine this mighty weapon.

A. God is the object of our faith, and faith embraces Him as our shield.

(see Psa. 3:3; 18:7; 119:114; 144:2; 1 Sam. 17:45)

1. God himself is a shield, (Genesis 15:1; his divine perfections, as his power, faithfulness, truth, and immutability, which encompass the saints as a shield, by which we oppose the temptations of Satan by faith.)
2. Also the love and favor of God is our shield, (Psalm 5:12; and particularly God in his word, Proverbs 30:5, which is a shield against false doctrines, and the wiles of Satan.)
3. Moreover, Christ is a shield, Psalm 84:11; (and faith appropriates him as a shield -- his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; which we are to hold on to thus opposes all the charges and objections of Satan.)

B. The Source of faith:

1. from the divine side. . . (How it is provided.)
 - a. God the Father has given us the power to believe. (Phil. 1:29), according to His free grace. (Eph. 2:8, 9)
 - b. God the Son is the *“author and finisher of our faith”* (Heb. 12:2). We are to keep our eyes upon Christ in the storms and difficulties, yes, in all of life.
 - c. God the Spirit produces faith in the believer as a part of the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22,23; I Cor. 12:9)
2. from the human side. . . (How it is appropriated.)
 - a. By acceptance of the Word of God -- (Gal. 3:2-5; Rom. 10:17; Acts 4:4) We learn from the Scriptures that it is through the Word that a person comes to faith. We appropriate the Word by *“taking God at His Word.”*
 - b. by prayer -- (Mark 9:23,24; Matt. 17:19-21) We ask in faith, believing, if we want to receive this faith, and what we desire by faith. (Cf James 1:5-8; Eph. 6:18)
 - c. by daily use -- (Luke 17:5,6; Matt. 25:29) Faith grows as we act upon the Word, claim what God has said, and see Him at work in our behalf. Faith becomes strengthened and grows as we learn to walk and live by faith.

C. The Significance of faith:

There are certain aspects of the Christian life which must have faith in order to function.

1. We are to live by faith -- (Gal. 2:20)

This means that we are empowered for daily living by faith. We must have a consistent faithful life once we are saved and that comes only by a walk by faith, for the *“Just shall live by faith.”* (see Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38)
2. We are kept and stand firm only by faith -- (II Cor. 1:24; I Pet. 1:5)

Faith is the promise of the power of God which gives us assurance of salvation and a perfect standing or position in the Lord. (Eph. 1:4-7)
3. We resist the devil and overcome him by faith - (I Pet. 5:8,9; James 4:7; Eph. 6:16)

The shield here mentioned was a large four-cornered shield which provided excellent protection. A group of shields were often placed together by the Roman Legions as a protection against an archery attack. The same kind of attack we experience from Satan.
4. We are to walk by faith -- (II Cor. 5:7 *“for we walk by faith, not by sight.”*)

It is by faith that we look to our future redemption in Christ while we are here on earth. We trust Him for the future, as our Captain is also our file leader.
5. We have peace and joy by faith -- (Isa. 26:3; Phil. 4:6,7; Rom. 5:1; I Pet. 1:8)
6. We know we are saved by faith alone -- (Eph. 6:8,9)

This is the most significant aspect of faith. We cannot hope to earn our way to heaven by works in doing or giving, but only by believing by faith in what God has provided for us by His grace, through the merits of His Son’s death and resurrection.

II. Successes In Using the Shield of Faith (Chapter 11 of Hebrews, see 11:1, 6) One of the greatest chapters in the Bible deals with heroes of faith.

A. Consider Abraham -- (Heb. 11:8-19)

1. His life was a pilgrimage by faith, (11:8) He obeyed God in His call. He left behind riches, security, position in Ur to sojourn, not even knowing where he was to go. Do we have the faith to follow God's call wherever it leads?
2. His life evidenced a trust in the promises by faith, (vs. 9, 10) He trusted God to provide. (God was his Jehovah Jireh!) (Rom. 4:19, 20)
3. The power of faith, (vs. 11-12) Do we believe God when He says He will bless?
4. The practice of faith, (vs. 17, 18) Do we keep God's commands by faith?

B. Consider Joseph -- (Heb. 11:22)

1. He was faithful in adversity, (Gen. 37:4, 5, 11, 18, 20-24)
2. He was not spoiled by success, (Gen. 39:2-6)
3. He was not shaken by temptation, (Gen. 39:7-12)
4. He was not disturbed by false accusations, (Gen. 39:13-23)
5. He was faithful in looking to what God would have him do. (Gen. 50:24,25)

We are to be like Christ's disciples, who have on the shield, and fight the fight of faith: and this is "*above all*" to be taken, as being the most useful part of the Christian armor; or "*with all*," with the rest, this is to be taken, and by no means to be neglected; and it is to be used "*in all*"; in every temptation of Satan, in every conflict with that enemy, or any other.

C. Consider Facing Our Enemy:

Are there fiery darts in the Christian life? Yes, plenty! Gossip, evil reports, sly innuendoes, the bitter faith-destroying attacks on doctrine. There are unwanted health reports, quarrels with neighbors, unexpected personal clashes at work. Some of the cruelest and most effective darts come from the people closest to us. But the shield of faith—knowing that God has already secured our ultimate victory — extinguishes Satan's darts every time.

The Christian soldier who steps out on the battlefield without his shield is committing spiritual suicide.

1. Darts were in common use by the ancients. Paul here refers, probably, to the temptations from the great adversary, which are his "*fiery darts*."
2. Satan is wickedness itself; and his temptations are compared to **darts**. . .
 - a. because they sometimes come suddenly and swiftly and thick and fast,
 - b. they are very numerous, and where they stick are very troublesome and grievous. (see Genesis 49:23)
 - c. And they may be said to be "*fiery*," because they serve to inflame the mind, and excite to sin, as lust, anger, revenge, and the like.

The allusion is to "the fiery darts," cast by enemies into towns, and upon houses, ships, people, forts, tents, etc., in order to burn them. Mention is also made of "fiery darts," among the Jews and of Satan's casting a dart at David: from these customs, and ways of speaking, the apostle borrows his phrases; and suggests, that the shield of faith is of use to quench the fiery darts of Satan's temptations; so that they may not have the

malignant influence they are designed for; which is chiefly done by faith's dealing by the blood of Christ. And there were ways of quenching the fiery darts alluded to; which was done by skins and hides of beasts made wet, or anointed with alum.

3. In the devil's quiver there are all types of fiery missiles.
 - a. They are blasphemous thoughts, unbelief, sudden temptation to do wrong, or wrong thoughts that wound and torment the soul.
 - b. They come from unexpected sources, like arrows and suddenly from an enemy in ambush.
 - c. They penetrate, pierce, as arrows would that are on fire.
 - d. They include -- tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, etc. All of these can start the fires of doubt, lust, greed, vanity, envy, etc.
4. But when the Christian soldier takes up his shield (by confidence in God, by relying on his gracious promises and aid) he can conquer these darts from Satan. We are able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil and his army.
5. The Christian knows that God is able to deliver him from every temptation (II Peter 2:9) and will always be faithful in that He will not allow him to be tempted beyond what he is able to endure and with every temptation will also make a way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13).

When the fiery arrows and darts passed through the leather and stuck to the wood underneath, they were extinguished. It was this very effect to which Paul was referring. (Rom. 8:37)

D. Consider the power of united endeavor.

Upon approaching the enemy's ramparts, the Romans would be pelted with every kind of missile the enemy had at his disposal.

1. In such circumstances, the soldiers were commanded to form the "*movement of the tortoise*." This was accomplished by closing ranks and locking shields in front, on the sides and over the top. The shields had hooks at the top, bottom and sides that allowed them to be locked together.
2. When in the formation of the turtle the soldiers were practically invulnerable.

**God's desire is that we face the enemy together, united,
victorious, and faithful!**

Part Nine:

Competence With the Helmet and Sword!

*“And take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.**”*
(Eph. 6:17)

Introduction:

The helmet was a cap made of thick leather, or brass, fitted to the head, and was usually crowned with a plume, or crest, as an ornament. Its use was to guard the head from a blow by a sword, or war-club, or battle-axe. The helmet defended the head, a vital part; and so the hope of salvation will defend the soul, and keep it from the blows of the enemy. A soldier would not fight well without a hope of victory. A Christian could not contend with his foes, without the hope of final salvation. . . that assurance he belongs to the Lord and is thus sustained by this truth. So what has he to dread? (Rom. 8:32-39)

I. Marching With the Helmet of Salvation -- guarding the mind

The word in the Greek for *“helmet”* literally means *“around the head.”* This piece of armor is acquired as a result of salvation and serves to protect the mind. Satan has long sought to blind men’s minds (II Cor. 3:14; 4:4). Once we are saved we must be careful that we do not allow Satan to defeat us through our minds -- by our thinking!

To find the value of this *helmet* we must ask the question, *“What does salvation provide for the mind?”* There should be a big difference when Christ sets upon the throne of the heart and controls the mind. (Phil. 4:6-8; Isa. 23:6; Cf Psalm 43:5; 42:5,11)

A. We have an assurance of position in the Lord. (Heb. 13:5,6)

1. I think Paul is here referring to the hope the believer has in the return of Christ and the assurance of eternal life. (see Psa. 39:7; Rom. 12:12; I Cor. 15:19; Eph. 1:18; Col. 1:27; I Thess. 5:8; Titus 3:7; Heb. 6:19)
2. Satan often uses discouragement and hopelessness as weapons to oppose us.
3. It is when we are discouraged that we are the most vulnerable. We will make foolish decisions and be susceptible to all kinds of temptations.
4. When the mind is protected by the blessed hope, then discouragement, despair, sorrows and heartache cannot attack and defeat us.

A. The helmet of protection should give us a great love for God -- (Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30) Satan wants us to lose our love for the Lord.

1. If the fires of love do not burn on the altars of our hearts, our Christian life will not be protected or productive. (see Rev. 2:2-7. . . remember, repent, return)
2. The believers in Ephesus had lost their first love for the Lord, and thus lost their fellowship with God as well. We must be careful to guard our minds. (Prov. 4:23)

B. Sweet fellowship with Him is known because of humility -- (I Pet. 5:5-6)

1. Some of the weakest areas in the lives of most Christians is because of pride.
2. Having a high opinion of ourselves we are the more susceptible to failure and sin. (Psa. 51:17; 34:18; James 4:6-10) Our lives ought to be gripped with brokenness before the Lord, with awe about our salvation, redemption, and reconciliation.
3. We need to have the mind of Christ and desire to think as we ought -- to think as He desires for us. (Phil. 2:5-11; Phil. 4:8).

C. Victory comes through transformed thoughts -- (Rom. 12:1,2; Eph. 4:23)

1. Many Christians have trouble with thoughts of sin and former sins in their lives.
2. Satan has defeated many a Christian with this fiery dart. Just as God has transformed the sinner into a saint, He can also transform the thought life.

Remember discouragement is a lethal weapon in the hands of the enemy. Moses and Elijah became so discouraged they asked God to kill them. The Psalms records some of the occasions when David was in the depths of despair. Should we experience the same?

When the mind and outlook are focused on our precious Savior and salvation, and on the return of Christ, it protects us against despair, despondency and discouragement (**see Jude 24, 25**).

II. Attacking the Foe With the Sword of the Spirit -- the Word of God:

The sword **was** an essential part of the armor of an ancient soldier or warrior. His other weapons were the blow, spear or the battle-axe. But without a sword, no soldier could regard himself as well armed. The ancient sword was short, and usually two-edged, and resembled very much a dagger, as may be seen in the representations below.

What God has spoken is His truth and promises. His Word is our Sword (see Heb. 4:12). It is the wonderful weapon -- His Word forever settled in Heaven and that cannot pass away.

The spiritual sword of the Word of God is different from any material sword that man may wield. A material sword gets dull with the using, but the Word of God remains sharp. A material sword must be handled with physical power, but the spiritual sword already has life and power in it -- God's power is upon His Word.

Martin Luther knew this lesson well, as he wrote about it in his great hymn, "**A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.**"

*And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us;
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,*

*We trembled not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure!
One little word shall fell him!*

We have seen how the Word is used for defensive purposes when we "*gird up our loins with truth.*" (see part six) Now we shall look at the Word of God as an offensive weapon.

Let us examine this sword in three aspects:

A. A competent Sword -- because of special inspiration. (read Psa. 19:7-11)

Men have often been inspired to write some great piece of literature, but the Bible has a special inspiration in that God ordered every word and the men who wrote the Bible were born again by the Holy Spirit. Consider these proofs of inspiration:

1. The testimony of Jesus -- (Matt. 5:18; John 10:35)
 - a. In these two statements we find that even the letters of Scripture have Divine authority.
 - b. This certainly should give us confidence in our weapon for we can and should answer Satan, sin, temptations, etc., with the truths of God's Word.
 - c. His Word embraced, as it is appropriated and obeyed will bring us to victory in the battles of life.

2. The testimony of fulfilled prophecy-- (Isa. 7:14; Micah 5:2; Gen. 49:10; Zech. 9:9; Psa. 22) These verses and dozens more reveal the perfection of the written word, we can fully trust what God has said.
3. Indestructibility of the Bible--
Men have tried to burn the Bible, removed it, killing Christians to succeed, yet the Word of God stands sure. (Deut. 8:3; Isa. 55:11; Matt. 24:35; I Thess. 2:13)
4. The claims of Scripture-- (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:20,21; 1:10-11; Acts. 1:16; 28:25; I Cor. 2:13; I Cor. 14:37; I Thess. 2:13; Matt. 10:20; Mark 13:11)
 - a. There are distinct claims the Word of God gives us, and each one should be accepted as God declared them to be.
 - b. In addition to all these verses the phrase "*thus saith the Lord*" appears over 3800 times in the Old Testament. Praise God for a competent Sword.

B. A complete Sword -- giving spiritual instruction

If the soldier of the Lord is to be mature, then he must be in the Word of God daily -- meditating, memorizing, studying, applying the Word to his life.

1. The Sword is good for doctrine-- (II Tim. 3:16,17; Rom. 6:16, 17; I Tim. 4:13-16)
We are to be nourished up in good doctrine for it is to teach us and admonish us daily.
2. The Sword is good for reproof-- (II Tim. 3:15-16)
Reproof means that we use the Word to refute error, even as it also reproves us. We are to contend for the faith and we can stand against Satan. (See Jude 3)
3. The Sword is good for correction-- (II Tim. 3:15,16; Prov. 3:11)
Faults within the soldier are to be corrected by the Scriptures. In the process of comparing Scripture with Scripture, he will know the will of God. We must desire to be corrected by the Word.
4. The Sword is good for instruction in righteousness-- (Psa. 119:9-11, 33-40)
The Word gives us training as we mature and provides the needed discipline in our lives.

C. A Comprehensive Sword -- What the Bible should be to us!

There are images the Word uses to describe what it should be to us.

1. A Mirror-- (James 1:25) It is our inspective officer to show us whether we truly ready for battle with -- the devil, the world, and the flesh.
2. A Laver-- (Eph. 5:26) This washes away our sins and corruption. It could be compared to a military medicine kit to help the soldier when injured. (I John 1:7, 9; 2:1-2)
3. A Lamp for light -- (Psalm 119:105) The Bible is our guide for daily living. It is the chart for the soldier in a combat zone for daily strategy in battle.
4. Milk, bread, meat and honey-- (Heb. 5:12-14; Psa. 19:10) Our daily rations to keep us fit, well, marching, sustained by the Word of God.
5. A Sword to be used
We have a precious, all powerful Word (Heb. 4:12) that God magnifies above His name. It is our privilege to read, heed, and live out in daily life this wonderful book that we might indeed be warriors for His glory and honor. (Eph.. 6:10-13; Ja. 1:21)

- a. Errors and falsehood will not put back temptation; nor can we thus hope for victory.
- b. We should have texts of Scripture at command, as the Savior did, to meet the various forms of temptation. (Matt. 4: 4, 7, 10) Christ met the tempter with the Word of God, and he was foiled.
- c. We should not depend on our own reason, or rely on our own wisdom.
- d. A single text of Scripture is better to meet the "*fiery darts, snares, wiles of Satan*" or his demons than all the philosophy which the world contains.
- e. The tempter can reason and reason plausibly too, but he cannot resist a direct and positive command of the Almighty.
- f. Had Eve adhered simply to the Word of God, and obeyed its command, without attempting to *reason* about it, she would have been safe.

We must train up the young in the accurate study of the Bible. There is nothing which will furnish a better security to them in future life, when temptation comes upon them, than to have a pertinent text of Scripture at command. Temptation often assails us so suddenly that it checks all reasoning; but a text of Scripture will suffice to drive the tempter from us!

Protected By Our Secret Weapon!

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints: And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (Eph. 6:18, 19).

Introduction:

The last weapon is prayer, and takes in all sorts of prayer: mental and vocal, public and private, and every aspect of it. There is intercession, petitions for good things, and thanksgiving for mercies. A man should pray as often as he has an opportunity; and particularly, that he should make use of it in times of darkness, desertion, and temptation.

It must be *“in the Spirit”*; with the heart, soul, and spirit engaged in it; with a true heart, and a right spirit, and without hypocrisy; in a spiritual way, and with fervency, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God.

Temptation often assails us so suddenly it may be a shock to us and we wonder why . . . BUT God has given us an answer for those times of battle. Here we see the God-given means along with the armor in the midst of the battle. We truly put on the armor by prayer, intercession, and supplication.

I. Praying Always With All Prayer and Supplication In the Spirit. (v. 18a)

A. Having the power of God upon us.

Prayer is the means that enables the Christian soldier to wear the armor and wield the sword, the Word of God.

1. We can't fight the battle in our own power, our own cunning, in the flesh no matter how strong, or talented we may think we are.
2. In Exodus 17:8-16 we find the account of Moses on the mountain top in intercession as Joshua used the sword in the valley.
 - a. Prayer is the weapon that makes the armor powerful.
 - b. Not just any kind of prayer -- but Biblical praying, in God's will, for God's glory led by the Holy Spirit.

B. “Praying Always”

Paul is still using the military metaphor of the soldier's appeal to his General. The Christian soldier, unlike the Roman soldier, has at his disposal a means whereby he can continuously communicate (through Christ, of course) with his General (that is with God, the Father).

Praying always does not mean just saying prayers! We are not heard for our much speaking, but we are to *“pray without ceasing”* (1 Thess. 5:17).

1. Why is prayer so important? Because, we need . . .
 - a. to pray for victory, to pray instantly, being in a spirit of prayer.
 - b. to pray that we may be prepared for whatever we shall face,
 - c. to pray for the Lord's glory and honor in our life -- whether by life or death.
 - d. to not be carelsss, susceptible to a surprise attack and be defeated because we were not praying without ceasing.

2. Why is prayer so indispensable to the Christian soldier?
 No matter how complete the armor, no matter how skilled we may be in warfare; no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer, (having God's power on our lives), we shall be defeated.
 - a. It crowns our efforts with success, gives us a victory when nothing else would.
 - b. In every temptation, every test and trial, every spiritual conflict. (Luke 18:1)

C. "With. . . supplication"

We must pray *with all prayer and supplication*, with **all kinds of prayer**: public, private, and secret, social and solitary, solemn and sudden; with **all the parts of prayer**: confession of sin, petition for mercy, and thanksgivings for favors received.

1. There is more than one kind of prayer: praying, supplication, intercession, thanksgiving, travail, etc., are all a part of prayer. (Gal. 4:19; Phil. 4:6; I Tim. 2:1)
2. To supplicate is "*to cry out to God.*" We know so little about crying out to God which was so well practiced by the Psalmist. (See Psalm 86:7; 116:1; Psa. 50:15; 145:18; 34:15, 17; 61:1; 30:2; 28:1,2; 142:1, and Jere. 33:3)
3. Seeking God in importunate prayer makes all the difference in the world. Praying fervently, agonizing, wrestling in prayer is all taught in the Word.
4. Intercession is a very vital aspect of prayer. (See Job 42:10.)

Someone wrote these words years ago: And here is a familiar song:

*"Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
 Prayer makes the Christian armour bright,
 And Satan trembles when he sees,
 The meanest saint upon his knees."*

*"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
 Stand in His strength alone;
 The arm of flesh will fail you --
 Ye dare not trust your own,
 Put on the gospel armor,
 Each piece put on with prayer;
 Where duty calls, or danger.
 Be never wanting there."*

D. "In the Spirit."

Biblical prayer is praying to God the Father, through the merits of the Son, and in the Spirit.

1. Prayer must be with the aid of the Holy Spirit, (Rom. 8:26-27). Prayer that God hears and answers is prayer directed by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. (I John 5:14,15)
2. By the Spirit means through the influence of the Holy Spirit. Our spirits must be employed in the duty and we must do it by the grace of God's good Spirit.

II. Watching Thereunto With All Perseverance and Supplication for All Saints:

A. "Watching. . ."

1. The good soldier watches for opportunities to pray. He stays on the "alert" for watching and praying is the secret to victory. (see Mark 13:33; 14:38; 14:29-31, 67-72)
2. There must be wakefulness and watchfulness in prayer, never neglect it (Matt. 26:40, 41). Spiritual drowsiness opens the gates to the enemy, so let us attend to our praying, "*continuing instant in prayer*" (Rom. 12:12).

3. We are to watch with the spirit of prayer, watching against all those things which would hinder prayer. (I Tim. 2:1-8)
4. Nehemiah is a prime example of defeating the enemy by “*watching and praying*” (Neh. 4:9). God expects us to use our God-given senses, led by the Holy Spirit so we can detect Satan when he is beginning to work, or in the lives of other soldiers around us. Satan desires to defeat the local church as well.

B. “. . . thereunto with all perseverance. . .”

1. The word perseverance means simply “*to stick to it and not quit.*” I think this is the way the early church believers prayed. (Acts 12:1-19; 1:14; 2:42; 6:4)
2. To be fervent in prayer, or to be “*on fire*” in what God desires. (Rom. 12:11) It isn’t that we try to command God, but we are burdened, concerned, and prevail as Paul did for his countrymen. (Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1)
3. Robert Law puts it: “*Prayer is not getting man’s will done in heaven, it is getting God’s will done on earth.*” (*Tests of Life*, Baker Book House, 1968)

C. “. . . and supplication for all saints;”

Our contact with God should be as natural as our breathing. We breathe always. Physically, we could not survive without breathing; spiritually, we cannot survive without praying. And God calls upon us to supplicate for all the saints.

1. It must be supplication (***beseeching*** God) for ALL saints. All true believers in Christ, who make up His body, are Satan’s targets. The failure of other saints around us has an impact on us as well. (See Heb. 5:7-9)
2. Why pray for others? We are TO PRAY FOR ALL SAINTS --
 - a. Because they, like us, have constant needs,
 - b. Because nothing tends so much to make us love others and to forget their faults as to pray for them.
 - c. Because the Church greatly needs the power and grace of God.
 - d. Because many Christians are backslidden, cold or lukewarm, many are in error, caught by sin and the devil and are conformed to the world.
 - e. Because many are subject to particular temptations or trials and though may be unknown to us, yet our prayers mean much to them.

III. Because Prayer, Intercession and Supplication Is a Great Encouragement:

(Eph. 6:19-20) ***Specific prayer is needed!***

Paul was a prisoner in Rome when he spoke of himself as “*an ambassador in bonds*”; nevertheless he was in the thick of the fray and felt the need for the prayers of other Christians. He was in a prison cell; still he was God’s soldier and servant in Rome. He was in the forefront of the battle and desired God’s intervention in his ministry.

A. Paul did not want to fight the battle alone. (Eph. 6:20)

1. There must be the willingness to stand in the gap and make up the hedge for the sake of others. (See Ezek. 22:30.)

2. Learning to battle Satan, to plead God's power, to pray Biblically does not come about accidentally. We learn to pray, to intercede, to supplicate by the doing of it.

B. We are encouraged when we don't have to face the enemy alone.

1. Paul did not keep his affairs to himself, he wanted the prayers of others.
2. He shared with others what God was doing, and how their prayers were answered.
3. He clearly shared how Satan opposed his work, and the way the devil used others to bring defeat.

C. Paul shared the content of his prayers in the Epistles and they challenge all of us today. (See Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-11; Eph. 3:14-19)

Conclusions:

We ought to be aware that we are in God's training camp! No one is exempt from the battle or the warfare that Satan brings against the child of God. We can't claim we are not in a battle, we can't say we were ignorant of what to do. God's Word is very clear about the "*armor of God*," and we are under command to put on the whole armor of God.

God has provided for our victory and Christ has made it available for all of us.

1. We can and should triumph in Christ because of His finished work on the cross.
2. Christ rendered Satan's power and that of his co-horts broken, for he was judged by Christ, and he has no rights to rule over us.
3. While Satan tries to defeat us and considers us as his fair game, in fact he does not have "*squatters rights*;" he is no longer our master, for we have a new Master, the Lord Jesus. Satan has no legal rights to your life!
4. When we yield to sin, to the pull of the flesh, and succumb to the world, and the devil, we are yielding to a defeated foe.
5. We are covered with the blood of Christ; the power of the resurrection is ours to be accepted and appropriated, and Christ's victory is ours by faith.
6. We are to be overcomers by faith for He is our file Captain, our Victor, and our Conqueror. Amen! Praise the Lord!

Consider the Following Potential Prayer for Your Daily Life!

Dr. Warren Weirsbe has written the following: “My own experience has been that the morning devotional time is the best time to put on the armor. After I have given my body, mind, and will to the Lord, I ask the Holy Spirit to fill me; and then I, by faith, put on the pieces of the armor.”

“I pray something like this:

Father, I thank you for the provisions you have made for victory over Satan. Now, by faith, I put on the girdle of truth. May my life today be motivated by truth. Help me to maintain integrity. By faith, I put on the breastplate of righteousness. May my heart love that which is righteous and refuse what is sinful. Thank you for the imputed righteousness of Christ. By faith, I put on the shoes of peace. Help me to stand in Christ's victory today. Help me to be a peacemaker and not a troublemaker and to share the gospel message. By faith, I take the shield of faith. May I trust you and your Word today and not add fuel to any of Satan's darts. Thank you that I can go into this day without fear. By faith, I put on the helmet of salvation. May I always remember that Jesus is coming again. Help me to live in the future tense. Protect my mind from discouragement and despair. By faith, I take the sword of the Spirit. Help me to remember the Word and use it today. Father, by faith I have put on the armor. May this day be a day of victory.”

This ought not be a routine prayer, but it gives some idea of things we need to pray for as we seek to be clothed for the day in the whole armor of God. God has provided the armor, now we must be clothed with it. We are under command to **put on** the *whole armor of God*.

This is a private matter between you and the Lord. I cannot tell you how to pray but I can tell you that you had better pray!