

Preparation for War (Thoughts on the armor provided for us)

We begin our lives with God as newborn babies, but we are designed to grow and mature and to eventually take up our posts in God's army in the cosmic war going on all around us.

Our Divine General tells us to be fully prepared to “. . . stand firm against all strategies of the devil” (Eph. 6:11), and he tells us how to do it in the first part of this verse, “Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to . . .”

God's armor that he provides for us is as follows:

1. **Truth.**

a. Truth originates from outside ourselves. It is our responsibility to search for it and learn it (Prov. 2:2-11). It then needs to be internalized, to go deep within us until it becomes “understanding” – a genuine part of who we are and how we perceive life in all its complications.

b. Truth is fixed, objective. It proves itself over and over again whether you believe it or not. Like the law of gravity. Like evolution!

c. Truth is external and comes from God. We will never have it all learned, we will forever find our brains and hearts gladly stretched by the indescribability of who God is and the awesomeness of all he does and says.

2. **Righteousness.**

a. Righteousness is a type of character built on a long, deliberate series of right choices.

b. The old, evil nature may still hang around like a pest, but as we walk day-by-day with Jesus, as we are yoked with Him, we become more and more like him, more and more righteous.

c. At some point, we should re-assess ourselves and give God credit for the good work he is doing in our lives. We can find, as we grow along, that it gets easier, more natural to do right, harder, rather foreign to commit sin. “But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong.” Rom. 16:19.

3. **Gospel.**

a. All that was said about “truth” above also applies here.

b. The Gospel is not only our entrance into Christianity, it is the core of our existence, it gives identity, it permeates relationships, it inspires motivation, ambition, and hope.

c. The Gospel provides “Shalom,” God's wonderful peace, wellbeing, wholeness.

d. Shalom is at the heart of what every man, woman, and child desires. It is the hunger of our soul and spirit. Shalom is the environment of right relationship with God and his people. It is a powerful, victorious thing. “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.” Rom. 16:20.

4. **Faith.**

a. Faith is “acting on knowledge (internalized truth) rather than feelings.”

b. Faith is “acting on the big picture of life rather than just immediate circumstances.”

c. Faith is the deliberate application of Truth.

d. Faith diverts the fire-arrows of Satan. It is a shield, not a 360° force field, We have to be alert, we need to develop skill in its use. But it will do the job and keep us safe when used properly.

5. **Salvation.**

a. Salvation is a gift from God, something totally wonderful that could never be earned or

deserved. We should be so grateful and proud to possess such a gift.

b. Salvation needs to be internalized and personalized. Helmets are made to protect vital organs but they don't come off an assembly line, they must be custom fit. If they cover or obscure eyes, ears, or mouth they can do more harm than good.

c. Helmets are made of stronger material than we are, inflexible, solid. Salvation is an identity changer that will alter, adjust, and correct our perspectives, how we experience life.

6. **Word of God.**

a. The phrase "Word of God" can refer to the Bible (Heb. 4:12) and the Greek word "word" in these cases is "logos." In this verse, the sword of the Spirit is the "Rhema" of God. Rhema refers to individual statements and messages from God.

b. There is a learning curve to becoming a good swordsman. It requires teaching and much, much hands-on practice. We need experience in specifically and accurately applying the statements of God to particular situations.

c. The perfect example of this is Jesus when Satan came out in the open and tried his very best to mess Jesus up. Jesus, out of the whole of the Old Testament, chose the most appropriate statements of God and spoke them in verbal rebuttal of Satan, and there was nothing the evil one could do about it (Mat. 4:1-11).

7. **Prayer.**

a. Prayer is not listed as a specific piece of armor, rather, it is the communication network that is absolutely essential in battle. "Pray . . . at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent . . ." Eph. 6:18.

b. Prayer should be your most demanding intellectual exercise of the day, thinking through WHO it is you are talking to and figuring out what in the world you might say to such a One.

c. Prayer is not designed to be a monologue (a one way conversation). We are told to "Pray **in the Spirit** at all times . . ." (Eph. 6:18 again). The Spirit of God is an active partner in prayer and helps us as we struggle through this monumental task (Rom. 8:26-27). Prayer in its most advanced form is a conversation.

d. Prayer is not primarily about yourself and God. Now let's finish Eph. 6:18, "Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent **in your prayers for all believers everywhere.**" In this communication network, we reverently come into God's presence, learn of Him, converse with Him, and present requests for the benefit of others.

e. Prayer is hard work, but it is work that carries with it eternal impact (Exo. 32:14; Est. 4:15-17; Dan. 9:20-23; Luk. 22:31-32; Col. 4:12-13).

f. Effective networks of prayer are a necessary ingredient for successful ministry. With how successful and experienced Paul was in evangelism and church planting, he always needed the prayer assistance from others to continue on. "And pray for me, too. Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan that the Good News is for Jews and Gentiles alike. ²⁰ I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should." Eph. 6:19-20.

War is going on. You may not know it, but you were born in a war zone and the war has been raging every day of your life. Arrows are flying. People are getting hurt and dying. The Lord protects his innocent ones, the little babes, but he doesn't want any of his children to remain babes. He wants you and me to grow-up, put on the armor, and show everyone who's side we are on.

God has much more for you to learn about spiritual warfare and Ephesians 6. Hopefully this paper is adds a little to your understanding.

Happy fighting,
Reggie H.