

Ephesians 6: 9 - 24

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

2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

“Finally” – Paul is telling his readers, here comes the help you need in order to maintain and even enhance all the relationships you have: church, family, work, etc.

Again, “**in the LORD**”!!!! and “**in the power of His might**”; We know the Scriptures about our strength in Him. We know we can do all things thru Him who strengthens us! It’s not a refrigerator magnet or a billboard, it’s a **truth** that must be believed.

Paul continues with practical advice wrapped up in an analogy of a soldier.

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

The Greek says “take to yourself, that is, the armor of God is available to every believer to apprehend. And “at once and once for all” means that it doesn’t have to be put on each day.

There have been countless teachings on the armor of God. We know Paul’s analogies were taken from the Roman guards and soldiers that surrounded him in Rome and elsewhere.

Their armor protected them from physical harm, including death.

But we are not Roman soldiers; While many have been soldiers in the past, you are no longer active soldiers. You have removed the “armor” that once protected you from the enemy you were fighting.

The point is, those physical battles, (which may have their ultimate cause in the spiritual world), had a physical end – a peace treaty, withdrawal, a serious wound or even death.

But we can not make peace with our enemy; And even if we retreat or withdrawal, he continues his pursuit. Nor does a wound stop him, for when you are spiritually wounded, he doesn’t have pity on you – no - he will continue to pursue you until you are made useless. And this battle will continue as long as we draw our breath on this side of heaven.

So, our enemy, our Adversary the devil, is more powerful than we are. He can’t be fought by our sheer willpower; he can’t be fought in our flesh, with fleshly weapons like, for example, self-help books, positive thinking, and any counseling that doesn’t have Jesus and His Words as the key to recovery.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6 NKJV (3) For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. (4) For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, (5) casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, (6) and being ready to punish all disobedience when your

obedience is fulfilled.

BTW: pulling down actually means demolishing. It's a God-thing and He does the fighting because He's the Mighty One. We stand behind Him or with Him!

- **BUT:**
God is bigger than the boogey man
He's bigger than Godzilla and the monsters on T.V
Oh God is bigger than the boogie man and He's big enough for you and me

How does **God's armor** protect us? How do we think about the armor? Is there a danger in getting hyper-vigilant with respect to the devil?

Some make a ritual out of putting on the armor each day. But the simple truth is, Paul tells us to PUT it on and KEEP it on at all times.

(Ephesians 6:12 NKJV) For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

While our battle is spiritual, it is experienced here on earth.

When there is any kind of disunity, any conflict in our relationships, and antagonisms, Paul says that our battle is actually spiritual. There are spiritual forces that would love to see us fall and we come against each other by listening to their lies, especially the one that says, "you're right and they are wrong; or I'm more spiritual and therefore I know better than you" or I'm the boss of you and you will submit to me".

There are illnesses that are spiritually based. But since we live in a broken and fallen world, you must seek the gift of spiritual discernment to determine whether this is the cause or if it is just our again flesh.

But, how can we battle invisible forces? I want to look at the armor of God that answers that question... .

(Ephesians 6:13 NKJV) Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

This armor, God's armor, is singularly focused on two related things:

1. Withstand, in other words, come against evil
2. Stand, in other words, remain standing, established

(Ephesians 6:14 NKJV) Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

We CAN stand!!! Therefore, the command.

The TRUTH is central, the TRUTH is key, the TRUTH is Jesus who holds all things together like a belt around our waist.

What has been **given** to us can **protect** us! Our righteousness is a truth that goes beyond this world. Satan constantly reminds us of our sin. But God declared us righteous and regardless of the sin that sometimes entangles us, that TRUTH of His forgiveness thru the Blood of Jesus still stands.

That truth needs to abide in our hearts so that, like a breastplate it is protected.

(Ephesians 6:15 NKJV) and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

God has given us the Gospel of peace, the gospel of reconciliation through the Person and Work of Christ Jesus. We are to keep it, AND we give it away by walking in it!

(Ephesians 6:16 NKJV) above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

ABOVE ALL: Faith! This is our hope, this is our true vision of things unseen. It isn't wishful thinking. It was critical in the day of our salvation and it is critical for our day to day walk with the LORD. For many things come at us and against us: the godless **world**, our own **flesh** and **demonic** enemies. When the world, through all forms of media, bombards us with "fiery darts", our faith puts out those flames and the darts cannot penetrate our shield. The phrase "**quench all the fiery darts**" is purposeful. Paul saw how the soldiers drenched their shields with water so that they would withstand an attack of flaming arrows. **BTW:** these darts are constantly coming at us! But our faith is made strong in Jesus!

(Ephesians 6:17 NKJV) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Our assured salvation protects our thinking; we wear our salvation on our head as a helmet.

I AM SAVED! I AM A CHILD OF GOD! I HAVE A BROTHER, A FRIEND IN HEAVEN WHO INTERCEDES FOR ME, WHO FIGHTS FOR ME AND AT MY WEAKEST, HOLDS ME UP! OUR JESUS IS OUR SALVATION; PLEASE!!! Don't take this for granted! Don't say, "Oh well, I'm saved but....". That is a demonic attack!

The sword has been called the only offensive weapon in the armor. The WORD of God helps us to resist the liars, the mockers, the scoffers and to push back, to help set boundaries against those who love to fight us.

(Ephesians 6:18 NKJV) praying always with all prayer and supplication **in the Spirit, being watchful** to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

All the foregoing armor is apprehended through our communication and relationship with God. We cannot, I repeat, we cannot stand alone. Our relationship is critical and when we're not abiding in Him, we are at risk for a spiritual battle. When we don't feel like praying, or reading the Word, the lies will come; **What lies have we believed to avoid praying and reading His word?**

But also, be watchful, that is, stay alert!

1 Peter 5:6-9 NKJV Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, (7) casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. (8) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about **like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.** (9) **Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.**

We have a belt, a breastplate, a shield, shoes, helmet and a sword. How should I think of these in terms of spiritual warfare? I believe that all 6 of these are symbolic of Jesus, **I might even say “are Jesus”.**

So, how do we battle?

1 Samuel 17:45-47 NKJV Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. **But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts,** the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. (46) This day **the LORD will** deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that **all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.** (47) **Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands."**

2 Chronicles 20:14-17 NKJV (14) Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. (15) And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! **Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.** (16) Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. (17) You will not *need* to fight in this *battle*. **Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you,** O Judah and Jerusalem!" Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow **go out against them, for the LORD is with you."**

With David and King Jehoshaphat, it was the LORD's battle fought through men who were obedient to the call. It was the LORD's battle because only the LORD will be glorified!

The same goes for us, the Battle is the LORD's and nothing can come against Him. But in our pride or ignorance, we believe that the battle is ours to fight. Our only fight is to STAND on the truth of Jesus and let Him do the rest. We may be called upon to speak the Word, which is why we need to keep close to our LORD of hosts, in prayer and His Word.

Let's look at the armor as Jesus:

Jesus is the belt and the belt is TRUTH. Not a truth, more than the truth, but He IS TRUTH. He cannot lie; He cannot ever forsake you or leave you for He promised that He would be with us unto the end. The TRUTH of Jesus is the belt that keeps us tied to our Savior and keeps us in step with His desires for us. As long as we are in the TRUTH, we are safe. The father of lies cannot win

against TRUTH.

2 Corinthians 1:20 NKJV (20) For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

Jesus is the breastplate; He guards our hearts. He created us; He gave us life and even everlasting life. He knows our hearts, our innermost thoughts. And when He ascending to heaven, He fulfilled a marvelous promise:

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NKJV (21) Now He who **establishes** us with you in Christ and has **anointed** us *is* God, **(22)** who also has **sealed** us and given us **the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.**

So, our hearts are protected by the Spirit of Christ. Could we ask for anything more?

Proverbs 4:23 NLT Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.

We guard our hearts by allowing Jesus to keep it

Jesus is our faith; His faith is our shield against the lies of the devil. But He has given it to us to use. We must see all of life through the eyes of faith or we will crumble under the weight of what we see. We must allow the Spirit's Living Waters to flow into us and out of us. The fiery darts of the devil are no match for God's Living Waters.

Jesus is our sandals by which we walk the paths set before us. His gospel keeps us focused on Him; His gospel motivates us to want to share Him with others. His gospel sets us apart from the world, but it also allows us to walk in it.

Jesus is our helmet of salvation; it is by Him and Him alone that we are saved from eternal separation from God. Because we are saved, our thinking is made clear; Our salvation, wrought by the blood of Christ, even while we were despicable, sinful wretches, should not puff us up, but humble us and therefore our thoughts are heaven-ward and not earthly-bound (or in bondage to worldly ideas)

Jesus is our sword because Jesus is the WORD.

John 1:1-5 NKJV In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **(2)** He was in the beginning with God. **(3)** All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. **(4)** In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. **(5)** And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Hebrews 4:12 NKJV For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a

discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Revelation 19:11-16 NKJV (11) Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. (12) His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. (13) **He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.** (14) And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. (15) Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. (16) And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

I believe we should **NOT** focus on the armor **nor** should we focus on the devil and his schemes; I believe our focus needs to be on Jesus and Jesus alone. When you think on Him, the truth will set you free; your eternal salvation is guaranteed; we have our shoes ready for the straight and narrow paths of His choosing; your thoughts of Him and His Words will help us to fight the lies and temptations that our enemy throws our way. Focusing on Him will allow us to stand firm. His faith, His joy, His heart towards us is the basis for our faith in this Promise-Keeping Savior!

Don't concern yourselves with any failure, or anytime you are pushed over into the mud; Look up to Jesus and you will jump up and stand once again!

Let me get even more specific: the battle is spiritual but is seen and experienced in the natural:

The battle is begins in the dark but our armor is light! Listen to what Paul taught the readers of the Letter to the Romans:

Romans 13:12-14 NKJV The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and **let us put on the armor of light.** (13) Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. (14) **But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,** and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.

And again, to the believers in Colossae:

Colossians 3:5-9 NKJV Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (6) Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, (7) in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. (8) But now you yourselves are **to put off all these:** anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. (9) Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

The devil lies; Our flesh lusts and we sometimes do that which is evil in the eyes of God. For example, I still have to fight against the flesh and the lies so that I keep my eyes pure.

Colossians 3:10-17 NKJV (10) and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, (11) *where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.* (12) Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;** (13) bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do.* (14) But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. (15) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (17) And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.