

“The Whole Armor Of God”

Introduction. The true Christian described in Ephesians 1-3 who lives the faithful life described in 4:1-6:9 can be sure that he will be involved in the spiritual warfare described in 6:10-17. The faithful Christian life is a battle; it is warfare on a grand scale -- because when God begins to bless, Satan begins to attack.

The Christian who continually seeks to grow in his knowledge of and obedience to the word and to serve the Lord more faithfully will not find their work getting easier. Therefore, one must prepare and be ready to do battle. Christians do not grow and earn reward by minimum effort, much less by no effort, but by maximum effort. These verses will help us to fight this great warfare.

I. *The Christian's Warfare*

- A. The preparation comes from strength in the Lord.
 1. Basic to a faithful life is preparation. The true strength of a Christian is dependence on God (Psalm 81:1; 84:5; 89:21; Philippians 4:13).
 2. The Lord's strength is always more than sufficient for the battle (Revelation 3:8). It is not the amount of the strength we have that is important -- only its source.
 3. If a Christian is strong, his victory over the worst Satan has to offer is guaranteed. We have no reason to be afraid if we are on the Lord's side.
- B. The provision is in the armor of God.
 1. Paul knew the armor of the earthly soldier because of his Roman imprisonment, and he knew the armor of the soldier of Christ.
 2. "Take unto you" carries the idea of once for all, of permanence. This armor is to be a Christian's lifelong companion (Jude 24).
 3. "Stand" is used in a military sense and means one who holds a critical position while under attack (Revelation 2:25).
- C. The enemy is Satan.
 1. The only way Satan can attack God is through us. We can therefore be sure that he will seek us out and attack us with his schemes.
 2. "Wiles" means "craftiness, cunning and deception." The term was often used of a wild animal who cunningly stalked and then unexpectedly pounced on its prey.
 3. The "wiles of the devil" would include all that is wrapped up in John's threefold description of temptation (1 John 2:15-16).
- D. The battle is against spiritual forces.
 1. Our greatest enemy is not the world we see, corrupt and wicked as it is, but the world we cannot see.

2. The four types of beings mentioned cover all the invisible spirits of wickedness. No empire has been so extended, or has continued so long, as that empire of darkness; and nothing on earth is so difficult to destroy.
 3. The array of these terms used to describe the personal forces of evil in the spiritual realm should frighten us deeply and impress upon us the need to put on our armor.
- E. The victory is found in standing firm.
1. It is easy to be complacent and oblivious to the seriousness of the battle around you. God gives no deferments or exemptions.
 2. Our responsibility is to resist and stand firm. Some Christians have done everything well in the Lord's work, but they do not continue to stand firm (2 John 8). Paul was fearful of losing his reward (1 Corinthians 9:27).
 3. The greatest joys come in the greatest victories, and the greatest victories come from the greatest battles (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9).

II. ***The Christian's Armor***

- A. The girdle of truth.
1. The belt or girdle was the foundation garment among the items of armor. It tied the clothing of the soldier to his body. It supported him in battle. This piece of armor has to do with the self-discipline of total commitment.
 2. God supplies the belt but the soldier must strap it on (Luke 12:35-37). By doing so, one takes his stand and evidences his willingness to enter the battle against sin (2 Timothy 2:4).
 3. Truth refers here to revealed spiritual reality. We are to arm ourselves with the actualities of incontestable and unimpeachable sacred fact. The truth makes us free (John 8:32). It is powerful and it must be taken into our hearts (Psalm 51:6).
- B. The breastplate of righteousness.
1. The breastplate protected the heart and covered the torso from neck to thighs. Righteousness is moral uprightness, holiness, virtuous goodness in character and practice.
 2. Commitment to the good life of doing right serves to protect the heart from danger (Romans 6:13; 14:17; 1 John 2:29; 3:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:8).
 3. When godliness and integrity are woven into one's being, he has wrapped around himself an iron vest which cannot be penetrated.
- C. Feet shod with the gospel.
1. Roman soldiers wore shoes or sandals with hobnail spikes to assure good footing in the forced marches against their enemies. Thus

prepared, the soldier could move quickly and effectively to any strategic position.

2. The preparedness originates and is provided by God (Titus 3:1; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). I can only be effective through reliance upon the gospel. Not just any preparation defends against Satan.
3. The preparation attained through application of the good news of peace to the willing heart wins this battle. The captain of our army is the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). When Satan comes to attack us, our feet are rooted firmly on the solid ground of the gospel, through which God is changed from our enemy to our defender.

D. The shield of faith.

1. The shield was a full body covering. It was reinforced to repel the artillery of the enemy including fiery darts, lances and spears.
2. Every person lives by some form of faith. Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "It is faith in something that makes life worth living." But faith in God is immeasurably more reliable and important than faith in practical, everyday affairs.
3. Faith describes unshakable trust in undeniable fact. True faith comes from hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). That trust knocks away temptation, doubts, fears, worry, lust, greed, envy and all those wicked attempts to pull us down to ruin.

E. The helmet of salvation.

1. The helmet of some soldiers was made of metal and ornately engraved. The helmet gave secure protection to the head from blows and enemy missiles.
2. That which enables us to hold our heads high with courage is our assurance that we have been forgiven of past sins and that we are thus in a saved condition (Luke 1:68; Galatians 3:13).
3. This security of salvation is the result of God's great grace toward us and although we can throw it aside voluntarily, the enemy can never strip it from us against our will.

F. The sword of the Spirit.

1. The one directly offensive weapon of the soldier mentioned in this text is the sword. Satan fears this weapon more than anything else because of its effectiveness (Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:12).
2. The origin of the sword is the Spirit (John 14:17). To be successful, we must not depend on the word of man, but of God (1 Peter 1:25; Isaiah 40:8). It smites the evil conscience and slaughters our self-righteousness.
3. The blessed word is the light to guide our feet and the lamp to direct our steps (Psalm 119:105). It is sufficient for its task!

Conclusion. Satan is the one who so desperately wants to defeat us and see us conquered. You had better believe in him and believe in his power, or we will not make war like we should (2 Corinthians 2:10-11; 11:13-15).

If athletes so dedicate and discipline themselves in order to possibly win a race and receive "a corruptible crown" from the world, how much more should Christians dedicate and discipline themselves to absolutely win in their struggle against Satan and receive an "incorruptible" wreath from God (1 Corinthians 9:25)?

God has set forth, in these items of armor, all we need to win our battle of life: spiritual reality, moral uprightness, preparedness, absolute trust, assurance of a right relationship with God and the revelation of God's mind and will. All of this we find through the scriptures. We could never ask for more.