
BATTLE LINES

Ephesians 6:10-13 - *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 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 firm.”*

Christians are certainly engaged in a spiritual battle that we are unable to fight and win apart from the Lord. Fortunately, He has prepared armor for us that will allow us to stand in His strength and resist the forces of evil.

This short series on the different parts of the spiritual armor is designed for personal and family devotional or perhaps use in a Sunday School class. The text for this series is Ephesians 6:14-18, which defines each piece of the Christian’s spiritual armor. Each lesson contains contextual background, additional scripture readings, commentary, discussion questions and some suggested songs. Our intent is to be accurate, clear, and practical.

Thanks to the members of [The Anchor Missionary Baptist Church](#) in Anchorage, Alaska for helping to write and assemble these lessons. All glory be to God. May He fit you to fight and enable you to successfully stand.



THE BELT OF TRUTH

Ephesians 6:14 - *“Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth...”*

Background:

The Roman soldier’s belt served multiple purposes. It was first used to “gird the loins”, meaning that the long-hanging tunic was tucked in so that the warrior would be mobile for battle. The belt may have also carried part of the weight of the breastplate, sharing the load with the shoulders.



Additional Scripture Readings:

Ephesians 5:15-17 - *“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”*

Psalms 119:105 - *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*

1 Peter 1:13 - *“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”*

Commentary:

We see three concepts combined in the belt: 1) readiness for action; 2) commitment to action; and 3) God’s truth. What is the connection between readiness, commitment, and truth? We must recognize the spiritual warfare around us and discern the difference between good and evil. We must perceive where the line is drawn and be ready and willing to stand on God’s side of the line.

You do not prepare yourself to fight unless you are willing to fight. You cannot wear the belt if you are not willing to stand. Remember, this is spiritual armor for spiritual warfare. Spiritual insight (discerning truth) is the result of committed seeking from a heart surrendered to God. If you want to know God’s will, you need a heart to obey His will. We put on the belt of truth by prayerfully receiving His Word while prayerfully seeking His strength to be committed to the fight.

Discussion Questions:

What is the relationship between the Belt of Truth and the other pieces of the defensive armor (righteousness, gospel of peace, faith, hope of salvation)?

What is the relationship between the Belt of Truth and the offensive weapons (the Word of God and prayer)?

Can you recall an example of when you have put on the belt of truth to fight Satan? Share it.

Suggested Songs:

The Lord’s Army (Children’s Song); The Voice of Truth (Casting Crowns); Thy Word (Amy Grant)

BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Ephesians 6:14 - *“Stand therefore... having put on the breastplate of righteousness,”*

Background:

The breastplate worn by the Roman soldier protected the core muscles and vital organs. It consisted of overlapping pieces of metal that could withstand most hand-to-hand attacks and wrapped over the shoulders and around to the back.



Additional Scripture Readings:

Acts 24:16 - *“So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:8 - *“But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.”*

1 Timothy 3:2-7 - *“Therefore an overseer must be above reproach... Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”*

Commentary:

Revelation 12:10 says that Satan accuses Christians day and night. Accusations are troublesome, but they can do no enduring damage if they are false or pertain to forgiven sin. Adorning the breastplate of righteousness involves living out our faith and dealing with sin when it arises.

Every day a Christian must choose whether they will practice righteousness or follow the desires of sin. Real obedience to God (practical righteousness) enabled by the presence and power of God protects us from the accusations Satan hurls at us. A clear conscience and blameless character will guard your reputation and keep you in the fight.

What if we stumble? Even the most spiritually mature Christian falls short routinely. How can we fight when Satan’s accusations are true? Are we forever ruined? Not at all, we have a remedy for sin! The blood of Jesus. If we humble ourselves, confess our sins and repent, God will forgive us. Our conscience can be washed clean. Walk the walk in the power of Christ and deal with your sin when it arises. Like Paul, prioritize a clear conscience to avoid the snare of Satan.

Discussion Questions:

Think of an example in which you were falsely accused and an example of when you were rightly accused of wrongdoing. What was the difference in your heart? How did it impact you spiritually?

Is there something you need to get right with God? Is your conscience free and clear?

Suggested Songs:

O Be Careful Little Eyes (Kids Song), Give Us Clean Hands (Tomlin), Nothing but the Blood

SHOES OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

Ephesians 6:15 - *“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”*

Background & Definitions:

The Roman soldiers wore caligae on their feet, a heavy-soled and hobnailed military sandal/boot designed to equip the soldier for long journeys and protect their feet from sores and injury. Razor sharp objects were sometimes placed on the ground to pierce the soles of the enemy’s feet and render them useless. Caligae were fitted with studs for protection, to provide stability over rugged terrain, and to stomp on fallen enemies.



Shod - to bind underneath

Preparation - readiness, also firm footing (foundation). The gospel is to be the firm footing of the believer, his walk being worthy of it and therefore a testimony to it. (Philippians 1:27)

Gospel - good news, good message. Have you ever been ashamed of the gospel? If so why (Romans 1:16)? How can you “make known” the gospel? (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

Peace - The tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is. Peace comes from Christ, peace with God. (Colossians 3:15, Philippians 4:7) Do you have peace with God?

Commentary & Discussion Questions:

“The gospel of peace” is the good news of Christ, who reconciles the believer to God. Thus, we are at peace with God (Romans 5:1-2, Colossians 1:19-20). When our feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace the Christian soldier has strong assurance of God’s presence, confidence in God’s plan, and is able to tread firmly, standing secure and well protected from the spikes, snares and schemes of the devil (1 Samuel 2:9). We prepare for battle by being saturated in the gospel, which enables us to stand firm in the assurance of our salvation and in the power of the cross. Spiritually, this makes our feet as hind’s feet (2 Samuel 2:34, Habakkuk 3:19), able to climb the high places, engage in battle, and spread the Gospel to all the ends of the earth.

What is a firm foundation? (2 Timothy 2:19, Hebrews 11:10, and Isaiah 28:16)

What does a firm foundation enable the Christian soldier to do? (Ephesians 6:11, 13,14)

Where and to whom can you bring the good news? (Isaiah 52:7)

How is the Roman Soldier like the Christian Soldier? How are they different?

Think back to a time when you didn’t prepare for a trip, a race, a project, etc... what happened? How do you feel? Were you successful?

Suggested Songs:

How Firm a Foundation, Standing on the Solid Rock, Footsteps of Jesus

SHIELD OF FAITH

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

Background:

This Roman soldier’s shield was so large that he could stand behind it for full-body protection as a first line of defense in battle. It was covered with layers of animal hide, so the enemies’ flaming arrows would imbed and be extinguished. Soldiers could also link their shields to advance in unison against the enemy or to form a wall of protection.



Additional Scripture Readings:

Psalms 28:7 - *“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.”*

Hebrews 11:6 - *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*

Commentary:

We act in faith each time we are fully convinced to believe God at His word and obey Him. Confidence in God and His word protects us spiritually from Satan’s attacks. Satan wants to put temptations, worries, and doubts in our mind, but having faith that God’s way is best can immediately extinguish those thoughts. Faith helps us shun sin and shut down Satan’s lies.

However, we become vulnerable to Satan’s attacks when we begin to doubt God’s character or the trustworthiness of His Word. When we sin, we are not taking God at His word; instead, we have believed a deception from Satan. This lowers our shield of spiritual protection and Satan’s attacks of doubt, temptation, worry, etc. are no longer blocked by our faith in God. We must get our shield back up! How? By believing God and obeying His word. We can pray and confess to God our weakness and ask Him to help increase our faith. We can learn more about Him and His promises by spending time reading and hearing the word. Hearing fellow believers’ testimonies of God’s faithfulness to them can also help increase our faith. God desires our faith to be fully in Him in all situations and to fully trust that there is no better way.

“As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.” - Psalm 18:30 NKJV

Discussion Questions:

What can we do when we realize we are under attack from Satan?

What can be a benefit of many shields of faith in our church/family/relationships?

How did Jesus fight off Satan’s attacks when Satan tempted Him? (Matthew 4:1-11)

Suggested Songs:

Warrior (Caedmon’s Call), Walk by Faith (Jeremy Camp), Trust & Obey (Hymn/Kids’ Song)

HELMET OF SALVATION

Ephesians 6:17a - *“And take the helmet of salvation, ...”*

Background:

The ancient Roman helmet (galea) came in various styles and decorations depending on the soldier’s responsibilities and rank. Shown is the basic and more common helmet. Whatever the appearance, all helmets were designed to protect the soldier’s head (ears, cheeks, top and back) from enemy weapons, while allowing him clear vision to fight. An unprotected head is an inviting target to an enemy who wants to disorient his opponent and hinder his ability to fight.



Additional Scripture Readings:

Romans 8:31-39 - *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ... For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Philippians 1:6 - *“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”*

Commentary:

The “helmet of salvation” is not speaking of being saved. Rather it is speaking about the knowledge and assurance that comes in knowing we are saved. The additional scripture readings above point out that as a saved person, God will never forsake us, and His presence will always be with us. He will deliver on His promise of eternal life to us. Knowing this gives us courage to face Satan and his troops. This assurance is our helmet.

As a helmet increases the courage of a soldier to face their enemy, our helmet of salvation should make us courageous in our daily battles with Satan. We recall the many heroes of faith in Scripture who faced danger and even death as they stood to fight in the Lord’s army. Allow the Lord’s assurances to you, give you courage to stand for Him as a faithful soldier in His army. With courage, let Him direct the battle for us and each of our roles on this battlefield.

Regarding the Apostles who were beaten for their faith, *“So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”* - **Acts 5:41**

Discussion Questions:

If you ever felt like God had abandoned you, how would you put on your “helmet?”

What is the difference in fighting in the Lord’s army verses fighting a personal battle with Satan?

What battles have you already fought in the Lord’s army? How did your “helmet” protect you?

Suggested Songs:

(Green Baptist Hymnal) - #446-Blessed Assurance, #436-Where He Leads Me; (Kids’ Song) Lord’s Army

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ephesians 6:17b - *"...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"*

Background:

The Roman gladius (sword) became known as "the sword that conquered the world." Adapted from a Spanish design, the prowess of the gladius in close range combat made it a fearsome tool in the hand of a skilled Roman warrior. When sharpened, its dual edges wreaked havoc on unarmed foes, while its tapered point could pierce through even heavy metal armor.



Additional Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 49:2 - *"And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;"*

Hebrews 4:12 - *"For the work of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

Revelation 1:16 - *"And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."*

Commentary:

Our words carry power. Even in the womb, babies "hear" language and form brain pathways for communication. Through words, we teach, encourage, warn, motivate, and praise. Yet words can also be used to tempt, wound, discourage, and destroy. We all bear the blessing and burden of words we have received throughout our life.

God uses words too. Creation began when He uttered the words, *"Let there be light."* (Genesis 1:3). In Eden, God used words to pronounce curses upon Adam, Eve and the serpent but also a promise of One who would come to defeat the serpent. In the fulness of time, He brought forth the Living Word (His Son) into the world who would both speak words unlike any ever heard (Matthew 7:28-29) and with a word could cast out demons and heal the sick (Matthew 8:16). God has provided and preserved His words in the Bible.

Our words carry power, but God's words carry an infinitely greater power. They can cut to the heart of an issue with surgical skill and deliver a defeating blow to the lies of the enemy. They can mend, heal, and even revive the dead. Take up this sword, the very Word of God, and use it to fight the lies of the cursed serpent.

Discussion Questions:

Why a sword? Swords are used for close combat, not long-range warfare. Could this teach us something about the nature of the battle a Christian fights? What promises can we stand on?

Suggested Songs:

Word of God Speak (Mercy Me); Speak, O Lord (Getty); Standing on the Promises (Traditional)

PRAYING WITH ALL PRAYER

Ephesians 6:18 - *“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”*



Background:

Prayer has to do with conflict. In a spiritual battle the only true power is spiritual. Prayer is an essential spiritual weapon. Because we access the power of God through prayer, its possibilities are limitless, pulling down strongholds and opposing forces. Prayer takes on three forms: Communication, Petition, and Intercession. Intercession is related to our spiritual battle, seizing ground held by the enemy. Prayer should never be a last resort but your first. For Jesus, prayer was as spontaneous and natural as breathing. Jesus tells us, “men ought always to pray and not faint.” (Luke 18:1)

Additional Scripture Readings:

Moses’ prayer of intercession for God’s people: **Exodus 32:11-14**

David’s prayer of thanksgiving: **2 Samuel 7:18-29**

Solomon’s prayer for wisdom: **1 Kings 3:4-15**

Isaiah’s prayer of confession and petition for mercy: **Isaiah 63:15-64:12**

Commentary:

We are in a battle, a spiritual battle and there is no staying out of the fight. There comes a time when we must transition from a defensive posture to the offensive. Through prayer we attack the enemy and his strongholds (Ephesians 6:12). The Word of God and prayer are the deciding factors in the spiritual battle. Jesus responded to Satan’s attacks with the Word every time (Matthew 4). He agonized in prayer until great drops of blood fell to the ground in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). Jesus won His battle but how about the disciples (Luke 22: 40-46)? Satan seeks to divert or disarm you. He knows the power of prayer. What tactics has Satan used to divert, hinder, or even stop you from praying?

Discussion Questions:

What does Paul exhort us to do in Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 2 Timothy 1:3?

How should we pray? Jude 1:20, James 1:5-8, 1 Corinthians 14:15

What hinders our prayers? James 4:3, Psalm 66:18, Luke 18:11-14

Suggested Songs:

In the Garden (Traditional); Just a Little Talk with Jesus (Traditional), When We Pray (Tauren Wells), Down to the River to Pray (Alison Krauss)