

## The Armor of God

“What are the concerns about your eligibility?” Trina asked her husband.

“I don’t know,” Cordell answered. “Pastor couldn’t tell me because they were anonymous and didn’t list any specifics.”

Cordell and Trina had been members at the Rose of Sharon Fellowship Church for the past four years, where Cordell had worked earnestly since they joined. Pastor McCleary asked Cordell about serving as a deacon almost a year ago. He and Trina prayed about it and then rendered a positive response.

The prospect of Cordell joining the deacon board had been met with overwhelming support and excitement. Then just a few weeks ago, the pastor had begun getting unsolicited, anonymous “concerns” about Cordell’s qualifications to serve as a deacon.

“I don’t know if it’s from one person or what,” Pastor McCleary had said.

“But I want to know who it is,” Trina said.

“We don’t need to know who it is,” Cordell said. “We know the enemy comes to kill, steal, and destroy. We also know that God is not the author of confusion. We know how to prepare for battle.”

“We are constantly at war with the enemy of our soul,” Cordell told his wife earlier, before they began their three-day fast. “We are not going to focus on the enemy, but we are going to make sure we keep our godly armor securely on. We trust God, for the battle belongs to the Lord.”

- 1.** *When was a time you had to deeply trust in the Lord?*
- 2.** *Who is someone in your life that you trust? What makes them trustworthy?*
- 3.** *Have you ever faced spiritual warfare? If so, what happened?*

<p><b>LESSON FOCUS:</b> Can’t see the enemy? Pray, prepare, and trust the unseen God.</p>
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## Strength to Fight

*Ephesians 6:10-12, KJV*

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 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.

*Ephesians 6:10-12, NIV*

<sup>10</sup>Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup>Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Paul wants to conclude this letter with a punch. He begins his battle cry for the Church by commanding them to seek strength from God. To seek His strength entails putting on His armor. A soldier's armor identified him in battle. Therefore, to put on the whole armor of God means not only to seek His protection, but also to identify with God's character—to be like Him.

By referring to the devil's work as a "scheme" (vs. 11), Paul is indicating that deceptive trickery is the demons' primary attack strategy against God's people. In verse 12, Paul says that Christians "struggle" and "wrestle" with not only the devil, but all of his deputies (his "rulers," "authorities," "cosmic powers") in the heavenly sphere. The word wrestle implies close hand-to-hand combat. Though these forces reside above human beings in the heavenly places, God's people wrestle with them down here on earth. Christians must defend themselves so they will "to be able to stand" (vs. 11, KJV) against their spiritual enemies and endure their attacks.

Christians today are engaged in a spiritual war no

less fierce than the one that raged in the early years of the church. In fact, our spiritual battles are really the continuation of a war begun long ago. Satan and his demons have adapted their strategies to current situations. But their goals have not changed. They want to prevent unbelievers from hearing the Gospel, they want to undermine the faith of believers, and they want to prevent Christians from contributing to God's work in the world.

4. *What does it mean to "be strong in the Lord" (vs. 11)?*

5. *Who are the enemies that Paul describes here?*

## The Armor of God

*Ephesians 6:13-17 KJV*

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

*Ephesians 6:13-17, NIV*

<sup>13</sup>Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup>and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Christians stand strong against their enemies by clothing themselves in God's truth and righteousness;

this includes telling the truth of God's love for His people and living righteous lives which shield them from the devil's schemes. "The belt of truth" repels the devil's work because falsehood is driven out by "truth" (vs. 14). The breastplate of righteousness includes both God's declaration that we are righteous in Christ and our response of living righteously before Him. To put that on as a shield for protection is to live righteously, and to "give no opportunity to the devil" (Eph. 4:27, ESV).

With the metaphor of shoes in verse 15, Paul implies that Christians should be ready and motivated to always proclaim the Gospel to all people. They rely on faith as a soldier relies on a shield, trusting that God is who He says He is even as the devil attempts to deceive them (see Gen. 3:1-17). Because the dark forces attack primarily through persuasion and falsehood, the way to defend oneself is through trusting God and not succumbing to their lies.

The helmet of salvation reminds the Church that it is God's work in Christ which ultimately protects her from falling. His saving power will overcome any attack that Satan devises. By "the word of God" (vs. 17), Paul refers to the Gospel, which the Spirit uses to empower Christians in their walk. Paul identifies the word of God as the Spirit's sword, suggesting that the Spirit uses the Gospel to advance God's kingdom offensively (through evangelism and spiritual growth), while protecting God's people defensively.

**6.** *How does the armor of God grant strength to Christians?*

**7.** *What does it mean to "stand" (vss. 13-14)?*

**8.** *Why does Paul refer to faith as a shield?*

## Praying in the Spirit

*Ephesians 6:18, KJV*  
18 Praying always

*Ephesians 6:18, NIV*  
<sup>18</sup>And pray in the Spirit on

with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

With the proper armor fastened on the soldiers, Paul transitions by commanding the Ephesians to pray in the Spirit, keeping alert and continuously asking God for aid in their fight. Whereas a Christian's armor is what God has done for them and their proper response to His grace; praying in the Spirit is what they do in the moment when they face spiritual trials. Paul urges the Ephesians to pray because it will help them stay alert and persevere through the everyday challenges of life. A Christian's prayers, however, are not just for oneself but for the community since each member needs the other's prayers on a regular basis. Adding to this emphasis, each verb in this passage is in the plural and the military metaphor reinforces the communal emphasis. A soldier does not fight a war on their own, and neither should any individual Christian.



*A funerary carved relief of a Roman gladiator in armor found at Ephesus.*

The enemy is identified (see vss. 10-13); the defensive initiatives are put forth (vss. 13-17); and lastly, the offensive battle plan is delivered (vs. 18).

**9.** *How does the admonition to pray (see vs. 18) relate to the previous verses about the armor?*

**10.** *What does Paul suggest that the Ephesians pray for?*

## The Armor of God: More Than a Nice Thought

One summer, my new husband decided he was going on a mission trip to Africa with our church. I stayed behind, alone in our townhouse. This was the first time I'd been left alone since we got married the previous year. Normally, I'm the kind of person that doesn't mind being alone.

I went to work and kept up my usual activities while Bryan was gone for 11 days. When I got word from the team that they were starting the journey back home, I was relieved and began praying for safe travels. However, that night, I had a severe panic attack. I was hyperventilating, gasping for air, crying hysterically—I was utterly convinced that Bryan's plane had gone down, and he was dead. I believed it as much as I believed the sky was blue.

I texted my mom and asked for prayer, explaining how much I was freaking out. She calmly replied that this was a spiritual attack; it wasn't real. Her advice to me was to pray the armor of God over myself and turn on some worship music. Not truly thinking it would work, I did as she prescribed. The intense fear subsided, my breathing returned to normal, and I stopped crying. It was a rough night, but nowhere as bad as it started.

The next morning, I heard from the mission team again saying they had landed in the U.S., and they had another flight to catch before they'd be home. I almost cried with joy. He was safe! It was all an attack on my psyche, and it had achieved its purpose until I prayed the armor of God.

When we ask for God to act according to His Word, surely, there is power!

**11.** *How can we stand firm against attacks from the enemy?*

**12.** *Is prayer your go-to in a crisis or your last resort? Why?*

**13.** *Do you currently pray the armor of God over yourself every day? If not, will you begin now?*

## Ready for the Battle

The invisible war for our souls is going on around us all the time. The spiritual armor is our best defense against attack, but it may be difficult for us to understand it and use it fully every day. We must look at each piece, pray how we will use it, and make it a habit to clothe ourselves every morning with the pieces the Lord has provided for us for our protection and power.

► *Which piece of armor feels the hardest to apply to your life and why? What are some steps you can take to begin making changes accordingly?*

### KEY VERSE

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

—Ephesians 6:13, KJV

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

—Ephesians 6:13, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

#### Week of November 28 through December 4

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** John 10:22-30—My Sheep Hear My Voice.
- Tue.** John 16:1-15—Guided by the Spirit.
- Wed.** Isaiah 30:18-26—God Will Rise Up with Mercy.
- Thu.** Psalm 103:1-12—Recounting God's Goodness.
- Fri.** Psalm 103:13-22—God's Everlasting Love.
- Sat.** Luke 1:5-17—Zechariah's Prayer Is Answered.
- Sun.** Luke 1:18-25—Hear and Believe.