

Charles Stanley Institute
Course: The Armor of God
Lesson 1: Preparing for Battle Part 1 (RB101)

Introduction:

Jesus never told us that the Christian life would be easy. In fact, He warned us of the opposite. In the Gospel of John, chapter 16 and verse 33, He made this solemn promise: "In this world, you will have trouble."

This word from the Lord came to pass in dramatic ways, as Jesus Himself was beaten and murdered. Then, His church came under harsh assault from the Roman government. Church history records that every single one of the disciples was killed for his faith, except for John, who was forced to live out the remainder of his life in exile.

My friend, all these hundreds and thousands of years have not brought an end to the struggle we face as Christians. However, we don't have to live in fear and despair. Just as Jesus promised that we would face trouble, He also declared, "but take heart! I have overcome the world!"

In this course, entitled *The Armor of God*, we will see that we have not been left defenseless in a hostile world. When we dress for battle by taking on God's holy armor, then we will be ready to face whatever the world throws at us.

Lesson 1, Section 1

Objectives

At the end of this section of Lesson 1, you should be able to:

- A. Recognize the truth of our daily spiritual warfare.
- B. Recognize our enemy in this battle.

Scripture

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-6

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

Every morning when you and I wake up, we are at war. Many believers admit this point, but do not take it very seriously. When we talk about spiritual warfare, however, we must remember that every day, we wake up to a real, personal battle that we must fight.

Failure to recognize this vital truth results in painful defeat time and again. Dedicated Christians go about confused and downtrodden because they simply do not understand why they continue to experience failures in their Christian lives. Just when they think they have something conquered, it rises back up to defeat them once again.

J1: Think about a few particular failures you have experienced in your Christian life. Has there been a reoccurring problem that you once thought you had overcome, only to have it rise back up? What were the causes of your setbacks? Respond in your journal.

Now, one of the primary reasons they are defeated is because the enemy catches them completely unaware. These believers are simply going about their days with no thought to the war being waged in their own lives. At the same time, they may develop a rather callused attitude toward the Word of God. They might cry, “God, if this Book is everything You say it is, and if the Gospel is as powerful as You have promised, then why isn’t it working in my life?”

My friend, the problem is not that the Word is lacking in power. The real problem is that we often fail to recognize the intense spiritual battle that is taking place. We are at war, and it is a fight for our lives—not our physical lives, but our spiritual lives. The only way for us to survive this conflict is to get prepared for the battle.

In Ephesians 6:10-18, the apostle Paul instructs the church in Ephesus to prepare by putting on “the full armor of God.” This is a wonderful passage that we will study in close detail over the next few lessons. For now, however, I’d like to give you some basic steps of preparation that we can consider before examining the spiritual armor in detail.

First of all, we must know who the enemy is. Paul makes this perfectly clear in Ephesians 6:12, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Here, Paul is saying that our enemy is the devil, all

of his wicked angels, and his entire demonic host that work against us every day.

What does the devil want? His primary objective is to get us to doubt the Word of God. He wants us to be distracted by worldly things rather than focusing on the things of God. He wants to accomplish these objectives and anything else that will disable our witness and service to God. When we get to that point of spiritual disability, we become useless, defeated soldiers of the kingdom.

Q1: True / False. The devil is primarily interested in getting us to do bad things.

Lesson 1, Section 2

Objectives

At the end of this section of Lesson 1, you should be able to:

- A. Understand the language of “weapons” in 2 Corinthians 10:3-4.
- B. Evaluate the manner in which you begin each day, and whether or not you live as though you know you are engaged in spiritual battle.

Second, we must recognize the situation. Many well-meaning Christians hear the word “warfare” and object, saying, “Well, this whole idea of weapons and warfare just seems so ungodly. I believe in peace and so I don’t believe the Bible really talks about all of these things.”

Recognizing that we are called to be peacemakers (James 3:18), let us take an honest look at what Scripture says about spiritual warfare. In writing to his apprentice Timothy, Paul declares that they are, in fact, “soldiers of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3-4). Also, in 2 Corinthians 10:4, Paul refers to the “weapons of our warfare” in the midst of a spiritual battle.

Q2: Multiple Choice. In light of 2 Timothy 2:3-4 and 2 Corinthians 10:3-4, we can understand the call to be “peacemakers” (James 3:18) as:

- A. a command to be active participants in the spiritual battles that surround us.***
- B. a command to remain passive and uninvolved in the midst of spiritual battles.***
- C. having to do only with pastors.***

Certainly, Paul was familiar with the language of war. As a Roman citizen of the first century A.D., he would have witnessed a great deal of military activity. Moreover, he himself was often victim to the whim of the Roman authorities. We must trust that, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul was very careful about the words he used in describing our spiritual condition. When Paul used words like “warfare,” “weapons,” and “soldier,” there can be no doubt that he understood us all to be in the middle of a great war, not of the flesh, but of the spirit.

J2: Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-4. Does this passage’s discussion of the “weapons of our warfare” make you uncomfortable? What do you think Paul is referring to in this passage? Respond in your journal.

Third, we must be properly dressed for battle. Think about how you dress in the morning. We all dress according to what the day may hold. If I’m going to church on Sunday, I’ll put on a suit and tie. If I’m going fishing, I’ll put on some dirty old pants and a shirt I don’t mind getting wet. If I’m going hunting, I’ll put on the appropriate camouflage and safety gear. And, if I’m going to battle, I will absolutely have to put on my armor.

We usually wake up every morning like we are going to a party. We get our clothes out, make sure they are neatly pressed and clean, and try to make ourselves look as nice as we can. The truth is, however, that we are not going to a party; we are going into battle. How can we expect to be faithful, effective soldiers if we are not dressed for battle? When Paul says in Ephesians 6:11, “put on the full armor of God,” he means exactly what he says—we are to put on every piece of that armor intentionally, meticulously, and consistently. When we step onto the battlefield unprotected, we make an easy target for the enemy’s attack.

In the next lesson of this course, we will take a close look at the individual pieces of armor that Paul mentions, and we will come to understand the historical significance of Roman battle armor. Until then, I challenge you to examine your regular morning routine. Do you wake up every day knowing that you are stepping out of bed and onto a battlefield?

J3: Take some time to seriously consider the question above. Then, in your journal, write out your normal morning routine. Do you start the day by taking up your spiritual armor? If not,

what would have to change to allow this to become a regular part of your morning? Do you think it is important to give yourself this time of preparation for battle?

Prayer

Father God, we know that we are in the middle of a great battle. Day after day, night after night, we are under attack by the enemy. But You have not left us defenseless, Father. You knew what we would need to fight against these forces of darkness. And so, we pray that You would make the reality of this warfare real in our hearts, in our minds, and in our lives. And it is in Jesus' name we ask it, Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory:

The Scripture memory assignment for this course is given below. Be sure to commit this passage to memory before moving on to the next lesson. Then, practice reciting it over and over throughout this course.

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

Charles Stanley Institute
Course: The Armor of God
Lesson 2: Preparing for Battle Part 2 (RB101)

Introduction: This lesson is divided into two sections to help you complete the entire lesson at your convenience. In order to renew your mind with God's Word and give you an accurate view of Him, it's very important that you take time to complete each assignment before moving on to the next lesson.

Lesson 2, Section 1
Objectives

By the end of this section of Lesson 2, you should be able to:

- A. Recognize the need to understand Scripture in its historical context.
- B. Begin to grasp the historical significance of each piece of the armor of God.

Scripture

Read Ephesians 6:10-18

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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.

Throughout *Faith Foundations*, I have stressed the importance of examining Scripture in its full context. This means that when we read a passage, we must ask ourselves: *Who is doing the speaking here? What was the life experience of the author? Who was this passage written to?*

What was the historical situation of the time? Where does this passage fall in the grand sweep of Scripture? When we apply these questions to Ephesians 6:10-18, we begin to see very clearly the importance of Paul's discussion of armor.

We know from Scripture that the apostle Paul was in and out of several Roman prisons. For a while, he was even chained to a Roman soldier during one of these imprisonments. And, as a Roman citizen, he was, of course, familiar with Roman culture, politics, warfare, and military supplies. So, when we think of this passage on spiritual armor, we know without a doubt that Paul was very familiar with how a good soldier should dress for battle. In this lesson, we will examine the individual pieces of armor in their historical context, and then, in Lesson 3, we will see how they can be applied to our spiritual battle.

J1: Before we examine the individual pieces of armor, take a moment to think about each part: the helmet, breastplate, girdle, sandals, shield, and sword. What are your initial thoughts about the usefulness of each piece of armor?

First, in verse 14, Paul refers to the great belt, or girdle, that soldiers wore. This was usually made of leather and metal, and was worn around the entire abdominal region. This vital piece of armor protected the "core," or the center, of the soldier's body.

Second, also in verse 14, Paul mentions the breastplate. This was a heavy, protective vest made of leather and often overlaid with metal to protect soldiers from flying arrows or even close-range attacks with a sword. This piece of equipment could withstand the mightiest of blows, and was invaluable in protecting the soldier's upper body.

Third, in verse 15, Paul discusses the foot-coverings, or sandals, of a soldier. These were made of thick leather that covered the ankles, giving support and solid footing. However, there was much more to the sandals than that. Quite often, Roman sandals also included spikes or nails in the soles. This enabled the soldier to firmly set his feet in the ground, thereby resisting any force that tried to move him back.

Fourth, in verse 16, Paul mentions the mighty Roman shield. Now, this particular word does not refer to the small, round shields with which we may be familiar from movies and other depictions. Rather, the word Paul uses here is the same word that is often used for "door." In military usage, this word was used for a large wooden shield, often lined with metal, that was big enough to protect a man's entire body.

Sometimes, in the face of an advancing enemy, Roman armies would stand shoulder to shoulder, shield to shield and make an imposing wall across the battlefield. If the enemy attempted to go around or jump over the wall, the Roman soldiers would simply strike them from behind as soon as they breached the shield barricade. So, you see, the shield was much more than a simple defensive tool.

J2: How does this image of the Roman shield translate into your spiritual life? What connections can you make between the Roman shield and the “shield of faith” to which Paul refers?

Lesson 2, Section 2

Objectives

By the end of this section of Lesson 2, you should be able to:

- A. Memorize Ephesians 6:11.
- B. Understand the purpose and function of each piece of armor that Paul mentions.

Fifth, in verse 17, Paul mentions perhaps the most important piece of armor, the helmet. These helmets were often decorative, while being extremely sturdy on the outside and soft on the inside. Flaps sometimes came down from the helmet to cover the soldier's face, in addition to his head. These helmets were able to withstand impressive blows without breaking and were obviously an indispensable part of the soldier's armor.

Finally, in verse 17, Paul discusses the primary offensive weapon in the army's arsenal: the sword. This was not the long, awkward sword that you may have seen, but rather a shorter, more maneuverable weapon that could be used in quick jabs and waves. Because it was so easy to handle, the sword was useful as a defensive, as well as offensive, weapon. In battle, the soldier was able to deflect enemy swords and even arrows by knocking them aside with his sword.

J3: How does this image of the sword as both offensive and defensive apply to your spiritual life? If the sword is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17), how might you use it offensively and defensively?

So, you see, every piece of armor had a definite purpose, and each piece worked together to provide the maximum benefit for the soldier.

With this rich, meaningful background in mind, Paul instructed his readers to “put on the full armor of God” (Ephesians 6:11).

This lesson differs from other Institute studies in that it primarily consists of historical and linguistic issues. However, establishing the military perspective of the apostle Paul is absolutely necessary to understanding why he used this type of language in this discussion. In the next lesson of this course, we will see how we can translate these ancient military artifacts into living, vital tools in our spiritual lives.

Prayer

Father God, it is truly amazing how You so often use our experiences to teach us new things. And Lord, we know that this is not a new thing. Two thousand years ago, Your Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to describe our spiritual preparation in this specific way, in the language of a soldier. And Father, we ask that as we move into the next lesson, You would take what we have just learned about the historical pieces of armor and show us how that translates into our preparation for this great spiritual battle that has been waged in our lives. And we ask it in Jesus’ mighty name, Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

J4: In the next lesson, we will see how these pieces of armor should be viewed in light of our spiritual battle. Before then, however, carefully consider each piece of armor that was mentioned in this lesson. What correlations can you make between the physical armor and your spiritual armor? How do you think each piece serves to protect you in the spiritual battles you face each day?

Charles Stanley Institute
Course: The Armor of God
Lesson 3: Preparing for Battle Part 3 (RB101)

Introduction: What makes a successful student? The Lord answers, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it" (Joshua 1:8). Divided into two sections, this lesson contains assignments that you are encouraged to finish before continuing to the next lesson.

Lesson 3, Section 1

Objectives

At the end of this section of Lesson 3, you should be able to:

- A. Understand the reality of our spiritual armor even though we cannot see it.
- B. Begin to understand how we are to put on the armor of God each day.

Scripture

Read Ephesians 6:10-18

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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.

In the previous lesson of this course, we examined the historical background behind Paul's military imagery. Now that we understand a bit about how each piece of Roman armor was used, let us continue by

discovering how we can apply these individual pieces of armor to our spiritual lives.

The most obvious question in discussing the armor of God is, “How do I put on something that isn’t real?” Well, there is a problem with that question. We simply cannot define “real” and “unreal” by what we see. Think about your faith. It is real, isn’t it? However, it does not have a physical form. The same can be said of the Holy Spirit. In revealing this point to Nicodemus, Jesus explained, “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

We can see the evidence of wind, even though we cannot see the wind itself. In the same way, we cannot see the spiritual warfare around us, but we are aware of its effects. Now, with this in mind, we must deal with Paul’s admonition to “put on the full armor of God” (Ephesians 6:13). Scripture would never call us to do something that we could never do. Therefore, we must understand that even though we cannot see the armor, we can still put it on every day.

J1: Think about the information in the paragraphs above. In your journal, list some things in your life that are real and important to you, and yet have no visible, physical form. Does their lack of physical substance make them any less real to you?

Now, let’s return to the question: “How do we put it on?” I want to suggest putting it on one piece at a time, from top to bottom. This is what I do every morning. I go through each piece of armor and remind myself of its purpose as soon as I get out of bed.

First, imagine that beautiful helmet and picture yourself slipping it over your head, saying, “Lord, I choose to put on the helmet of salvation today in order to protect my thinking. I only want to think Your thoughts, Lord. I do not want any thoughts in my head that will damage my testimony or my relationship with You. When Satan sends one of his thoughts my way, I just want to thank You that this helmet of salvation will protect my thinking.”

We must remember that the battle begins in our minds; that is Satan’s battleground. It may slip into our emotions and actions later, but it always begins with our minds. Therefore, our minds must be protected from assault at all times.

Q1: True/False. Satan's sinful allure begins in our feelings.

Second, picture that immense breastplate and say, "Lord, I choose to put on the breastplate of righteousness to protect my emotions. I only want to feel what You feel. Don't let me react out of my emotions; rather, let me react to the obstacles and attacks of life based on the truth I know in my mind, in my relationship with You."

Too many people are led through life by their emotions. My friend, human emotion can be a wonderful thing, but it can also be our downfall. If you allow your emotions to carry you wherever they will, you will be utterly defeated in your Christian life. One of Satan's prime objectives is to make us feel wrongly about ourselves. If he can distract us with feelings of false guilt and worthlessness, leading us to forget God's amazing grace and forgiveness, then he can cripple our faith. Instead, make sure that your emotions—your heart—is guarded closely by the breastplate of righteousness.

J2: Think about a time in your life when you were led outside of God's will by your feelings, such as guilt, loneliness, self-doubt, etc. What was the situation? How did you react? What was the outcome? How did you realize that you had moved outside of God's will?

Lesson 3, Section 2

Objectives

By the end of this section of Lesson 3, you should be able to:

- A. Effectively put on the armor of God, understanding each piece's spiritual significance.
- B. Understand the danger in trying to choose which piece or pieces of the armor to put on each day.

Third, strap on the girdle of truth and say, "Lord, I choose to put on this belt of truth, and I ask that it keep the core of my body centered on Your Word. I want to live in the truth, walk in the truth, and testify to the truth."

When we are wrapped up in the truth of God, then we cannot be deceived by Satan's lies. False teaching falls to the sides as we filter everything we hear through the truth of Scripture.

Fourth, consider your feet and pray, "Lord, I choose to put on the sandals of peace. Father, wherever I go today, I want to be a peacemaker.

I want my footprints to be the evidence of the peace I carry in the Holy Spirit.”

Do you remember that Roman soldiers often had long spikes on the bottom of their sandals to enable them to plant their feet firmly in the ground? Similarly, with the sandals of peace, we can boldly set our feet on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ, trusting in the Lord that the world cannot make us lose our footing.

Q2: Multiple Choice. The sandals of peace enable you to:

- A. stand firm in the Lord in the midst of conflict.**
- B. remain peaceful by running swiftly from conflict.**
- C. bring peace into conflict.**
- D. protect yourself by hiding from the conflict around you.**
- E. All of the above**
- F. Both A and C**
- G. Both A and B**

Fifth, imagine that giant, door-sized Roman shield and say, “Lord, I choose to take up the shield of faith. I want to thank You that, no matter how many fiery arrows the enemy hurls at me today, no matter how many trials or temptations may come, I can stand safely behind the shield of faith.” Faith is a mighty force; it is our faith that makes the difference between success and failure, between victory and bitter defeat.

Finally, wrap your fingers around the Word and say, “Lord, I choose to lift high the sword of the Spirit, Your holy Word. Father, thank you for this spiritual weapon that cuts so deeply to bring about such conviction and repentance.”

The sword of the Spirit is both defensive and offensive. It enables us to deflect the blows of the enemy, and it pierces the hearts of sinful man. Success in battle depends upon taking up and mastering our only weapon: God’s holy Word.

Now, how did you put this armor on? You put it on by faith. How do you know that you have it on? My friend, if you claim this armor in the power of the Holy Spirit, God will honor your commitment. Even though you cannot see it, you can trust that God will indeed wrap you completely in His power and His presence as you go out each day into a dark world.

The danger we must avoid is the notion that we can choose what pieces of the armor we need for each day. Would a soldier ever go into battle half-dressed? Of course not! The reason is because every single

piece of armor is vital to his survival. Likewise, if we step onto our spiritual battlefield missing the helmet of salvation, or the breastplate of righteousness, or the shield of faith, Satan will surely attack our weak, unprotected areas. That is why Paul specifically commands us to put on the *full* armor of God. If any piece is missing, then we will give the enemy an easy target.

Sadly, the armor of God is a spiritual truth that far too many Christians take for granted, or simply do not take very seriously at all. I want to challenge you, then, to be intentional about dressing for the spiritual battles you will face every day. God has provided resources for us; all we must do is put them on. You are heading into battle today. Are you dressed for it?

Q3: Fill in the Blanks. The armor of God includes the following pieces:

- *The _____ of salvation*
- *The _____ of the Spirit, which is the Word*
- *The _____ of peace*
- *The _____ of truth*
- *The _____ of faith*
- *The _____ of righteousness*

Prayer

Father God, we know that we are at war. You have told us in Your Word that “in this world, we *will* face trouble.” We know that the enemy is after us. We know that Satan wants nothing more than to tear us down, to destroy our testimony, and to break our spirit. But You give us the armor of protection from his schemes. Help us every day to get out of bed alert, ready, and fully dressed for battle. And it is in Jesus’ victorious name we ask it, Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory

Be sure to review your Scripture memory assignment for this course!

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

Studies have shown that if you do something for 21 days in a row, it becomes a natural part of your life. With this in mind, make a commitment to put on the armor of God each morning for the next 21 days. As part of your prayer time, put on each piece of armor as described above. Throughout these 21 days, keep a record in your journal of what you notice about your ability to fend off Satan's attacks and temptations.

Transcript of Audio/Video Teaching Clip The Armor of God

Several years ago, I preached a sermon on the Armor of God. Soon after that, someone from the church gave me a wonderful picture of a soldier dressed in the armor that Paul describes in Ephesians. So, I kept thinking, “Well, where should I put that?” I decided to place it right beside the shower so that I’d be sure to see it as I got dressed every morning. That way, I would be reminded to put on my spiritual armor, too.

But after a while, I realized that the best time to put on the armor of God is before I ever get out of bed. Because, sometimes we get attacked just as soon as we open our eyes in the morning. If we wait until we are already up and moving around, we have given Satan plenty of opportunities to attack us in those early moments of our day. And, I learned long ago that it only takes one swift attack in the morning to throw our entire day off track.

The apostle Paul makes it clear for us in the book of Ephesians, chapter 6. He says without a doubt that we are at war. When you step out of bed in the morning, you’re stepping onto a battlefield. And, if that’s the case, then you are going to need more than a business suit or a pair of blue jeans. You need your armor.

And so, I want to encourage you to strap on your armor before you do anything else in the morning. You may not think it will make much difference, but try it anyway. It will make a difference. When you start the day by putting on the armor of God, you dedicate your whole self—your body, your mind, and your emotions—to the Lord. You make it clear that you belong to Christ and are under His protection. And, you show the enemy that you will not be easily defeated.

Charles Stanley Institute
Course: The Armor of God
Lesson 4: Stand Firm in the Lord (RB101)

Introduction: This lesson is divided into two sections to help you complete the entire lesson at your convenience. In order to renew your mind with God's Word and give you an accurate view of Him, it's very important that you take time to complete each assignment before moving on to the next lesson.

Lesson 4, Section 1
Objectives

By the end of this section of Lesson 4, you should be able to:

- A. Realize that it is not enough to simply wear the armor of God; we must also “stand firm in the Lord” (Ephesians 6:10).
- B. Remember that it is the resurrection power of God that enables us to resist Satan’s traps.

Scripture

Read Ephesians 1:18-23

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Over the past few lessons of this course, we have seen the utmost importance of being dressed for the battle we face every day. Now, we need to see that simply being dressed is not sufficient. Do you remember Paul’s instructions immediately preceding his breakdown of the armor of God? In Ephesians 6:10-14, he commands:

*Finally, **be strong in the Lord** and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to **stand firm***

*against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to **stand firm. Stand firm** therefore . . .*

What is it that he keeps saying? He says, “Be strong in the Lord, and stand firm.” In this short passage, he instructs us to “stand firm” three times. If it was that important to Paul, we must come to understand what he meant.

He is saying that it is not enough to simply be dressed for battle. We must also take a stand. That is, we have a position that we must take in our spiritual battle. And that position is revealed in the first part of verse 10, “be strong *in the Lord*.” This fits with Paul’s theme for the whole book of Ephesians: our position *in Christ*.

You’ll remember that we learned about the long spikes that were often attached to a Roman soldier’s sandals that enabled him to plant his feet firmly in the ground. Paul surely thought about that here as he instructs us to “stand firm.” If we have strapped on the sandals of peace, then we have the tools necessary to hold our ground in Christ.

He is saying, “Stand firm. Don’t even think about running. Don’t even think about trying to escape. Don’t even think about giving up. Your strength is in the Lord, and you can keep your footing in Him. When those demonic forces start to press in on you, when the enemy fires his fiery darts your way, when the pressures of the world threaten to knock you down . . . stand firm.” We can do this because of the firm foundation in which our feet are planted.

J1: Describe one occasion in which you wanted to run from the spiritual battle you were facing. Why did you want to escape? Did you run away or did you stand firm? What was the outcome?

The resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that is going to raise you and me from the dead. Moreover, that power is what enables us to face the raging spiritual battle in our lives today.

That is why we do not have to bow down to temptation. When we respond to temptation by planting our feet in the ground and taking up the shield of faith, God empowers us to resist the enemy's traps. In Christ, we have the power to say, "I choose to resist that." As the Spirit of God empowers us, we can be victorious in those daily battles.

On the other hand, if we face the devil while depending upon our own strength, we will be defeated every time. No man or woman in history has ever been able to handle the devil, except for Christ. And now, in Him, we share in His victory. Even though we have been given this mighty spiritual armor, Scripture never loses focus on the source of our strength. The Word does not say, "Be strong in your armor." Rather, it says, "Be strong in the Lord" (Ephesians 6:10).

Q1: True / False. God gave us our spiritual armor so that we could place our confidence in it and boldly face the enemy in our renewed strength.

Lesson 4, Section 2

Objectives

By the end of this section of Lesson 4, you should be able to:

- A. Understand some of the dangers that face us as we attempt to make a bold stand for Christ.

One of the dangers that strikes many believers is the notion that our "standing firm" requires only passive action. My friend, there is nothing passive at all about this instruction. Standing firm does not mean that we simply stand still and let the devil have his way in and around us. Rather, standing firm means that we boldly, publicly stand for Christ in every area of our lives—in our homes, schools, communities, and workplaces.

You see, God does empower us, but God will never do for Himself what He has called us to do for Him. We each have a job to do, and my friend, if we do not do it, it will not get done. He has called every believer into service and specifically gifted each one for a custom-built ministry. If we refuse to bend to God's will for our lives, then part of our battle has already been lost.

Q2: Multiple Choice. If we refuse to do what God has called us to do, then:

- A. He will call someone else to do that task.

- B. it will not get done.***
- C. He will keep pressing us to do it.***
- D. He will do it Himself.***
- E. None of the above***

Another danger is the notion that we just can't stand up to the devil. We may cry, "Oh God, I just can't fight this temptation! I can't do it!" With that, we have surrendered to the enemy. Do you know what we do when we act like this? We take off our armor and lay it down! We are not defeated by the enemy; instead, we don't even put up a fight. When we say we cannot win, all we have done is sent a message to our minds that says, "Defeat is on its way."

We must not sabotage our stand for Christ by allowing self-defeating thoughts and attitudes strip us of our armor. We must instead put on that armor piece by piece, with full confidence that God, who has *already* won the ultimate victory through Christ, will be faithful to give us the strength to stand and endure.

J2: Has there been a time in your Christian life when you simply surrendered to the enemy without putting up a fight? What was the situation? What was the outcome? How might this have been different if you had been wearing the armor of God?

Have you begun to make a habit of putting on your spiritual armor every morning? My friend, few things will make as big an impact on your daily Christian life than strapping this armor on at the start of each day. Never forget—no matter how smoothly your life seems to be progressing—that you are engaged in an intense spiritual battle. This situation is explained in great detail in the course entitled, *Spiritual Warfare: The Good Fight*. If you have not yet taken this course, I suggest you do it as an immediate follow-up to the study you have just completed.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, we love You and praise You. We bless Your name for providing every single thing we need. And we pray the Holy Spirit will write indelibly, upon every single heart, the truth of this message: that we are to be dressed properly. Clothing that we wear daily, and have been

wearing, is not sufficient. There is spiritual clothing that must cover everything else.

We pray, Father, for somebody today who is not saved. Lord, when I think about walking out into this world of demonic powers and satanic influences, and to be unsaved is to walk out in a war when the bombs are dropping everywhere and the missiles are being fired and they're exploding all around us, no way not to get hit.

I pray in Jesus' name for somebody to give their life to you and to recognize what a tremendous difference it makes when Christ becomes our Savior. I pray, Father, for many believers who have suffered one defeat after the other. Lord, would You grant them the wisdom to practice this principle of dressing properly and taking the proper stand, affirming what You said is true about us? Because it is true.

Lord, we want victory because we want to be righteous people in our conduct, in our conversation, in our character, as well as being clothed in the righteousness of Christ. You said a good soldier is not going to entangle himself with the world in such a fashion that he's no longer a good soldier. And Lord, You do not have soldiers sitting on the sideline while the battle is going on, handcuffed by the enemy, being in bondage by the enemy, imprisoned by the enemy when there is war going on and people are dying and lost.

And Father, it may be that some need to be liberated by the confession and repentance of sin and a fresh new surrender of their life to You; getting off the sideline, getting the handcuffs off. Getting out of prison and getting back into the work and the stream of the kingdom of God. We love You and praise You and ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Homework

Scripture Memory Review

Fill in the blanks to complete this course's memory verse.

*Put on the _____ of _____, so that
_____ will be _____ to _____ against the
_____ of the _____.*

Ephesians _____ : _____

Before moving on to another course, make sure that you have completed all of the journal assignments for this course. Also, enter one new journal entry detailing your experiences since making a habit out of dressing in your spiritual armor each morning.

Conclusion

Isn't it wonderful to know that the Lord has provided the tools we need to stand firm in such a hostile world? Even with the powerful armor of God, Scripture still gives us a clear warning to be on our guard. In his letter to the Ephesians, chapter 6, and verse 18, Paul instructs us: "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."

Now, we are called to be on alert, but not to live in fear. Remember, God has already won the victory over Satan! If you've not already done so, I strongly encourage you to take the Faith Foundations course entitled *Spiritual Warfare: The Good Fight*. There, you'll learn more about this ultimate victory over the Enemy.