



TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

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From the middle of Ephesians 6, Paul provides us with the most detailed account in the NT regarding the nature of Christian warfare and the means of withstanding it.

'Therefore, put on every piece of God's armour so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil.'
(Ephesians 6:13 NLT)

Please turn to Ephesians 6:10-18

UNDERSTANDING SPIRITUAL WARFARE FROM A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE:

(1) This passage (along with others) makes it clear that we are in a battle as the Christian walk is not void of spiritual conflict and opposition (Matt. 11:12; 1 Thess. 2:18)

(2) We will never outgrow 'spiritual warfare', we must simply learn to fight (Jude 1:3; 1 Tim. 1:18)

(3) Physical forces are not our enemy (Ephesians 6:12a)

(4) Our real enemy is the devil (6:11) and all his powers of darkness (6:12b)

What we need to know about our enemy the devil:

- Jesus taught that Satan's mandate mission behind everything he does is threefold: to steal, to kill, to destroy (John 10:10)
- He is the great deceiver who attacks with lies and is void of no truth himself (Rev. 12:9; John 8:44)
- He seeks to take out those who concede ground to him (1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 4:27)
- The whole unbelieving-in-Christ world is under his sway (1 John 5:19)
- Satan is a defeated foe (Rom. 16:20; Col. 2:15)

(5) Spiritual warfare is about standing against the wiles of the devil that seeks to oppose us doing God's will (Eph 6:11b; James 4:3)

What are the wiles (schemes) of the evil one?

'Lest Satan should take advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.' (2 Corinthians 2:11 NJKV)

- Deception (John 8:44; Rev. 12:9; 2 Cor. 1:14)
- Division (Luke 11:17)
- Distraction (Luke 8:11-14)
- Discouragement (Daniel 7:25)
- Devourment (1 Peter 5:8; Luke 22:31)

(6) We should not mistake spiritual warfare with imaginary unscriptural cultural combat (Colossians 2:8)

(7) Spiritual warfare means being on the offensive in pursuing souls for Christ and advancing the gospel of the kingdom into unconverted and hostile terrains through prayer and evangelism (1 Corinthians 16:9)

Paul uses the analogy of a Roman soldier in preparing for spiritual battle:

The apostle Paul used great physical analogies to illustrate and emphasise great spiritual truths (2 Tim 2:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-27, 9:9; Rom. 7:2-3; Eph. 5:22-29)

Paul may have used the Roman armoury as a metaphor for fighting the spiritual battle he talked about in Eph. 6:10-20 for the following reasons:

- Paul held Roman citizenship (Acts 22:27), giving him strategic insight into the Roman military
- He wrote this epistle whilst in prison in Rome (Eph 6:20)
- Ephesus itself was a major port city of the Roman Empire, therefore its readers could easily visually connect and relate to a Roman soldier's military equipment in paradox to spiritual warfare

TRUTH: 'THE BELT OF TRUTH' (EPHESIANS 6:13)

The first piece of spiritual armour that Paul instructs us to put on is the Belt of Truth.

What is meant by the 'Belt of Truth'?

The Roman soldier's military belt was made of leather attached to an apron. It clung closely to the soldier which upheld the rest of the armour, as well as providing an attachment for the soldier's sword. The Belt of Truth for the believer, when fastened tightly, protects us and prepares us for the battle and is pivotal in upholding the rest of the spiritual pieces of armour in truth:



- True righteousness (Philippians 3:9)
- True gospel of peace (John 14:27)
- True faith (1 Peter 1:7)
- True salvation (Ephesians 1:13)
- True application of God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15)

Why is putting on the belt paramount to the believer?

- Truth is the very essence of who the true and living eternal Godhead is (Deut. 32:4; Psalm 31:5; Isaiah 45:19; John 14:7, 17)
- God desires us to live and walk and relate to Him in all truth (Psalm 51:6; 3 John 1:4; John 8:23-24, 4:24)
- Taking hold of God's truth is both a strength and a defence for the believer: Jesus said, *'You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.'* (John 8:32)

God's truth liberates us to do the following:

- To embrace who God is as revealed in His Word, and what He has done for us through His son Jesus Christ
- To enjoy living in the privileged position of who we are in Christ (Eph. 2:6; Rom. 8:37)
- To know that our adversary Satan is a defeated foe (Rom. 16:20; Col 2:15)
- It provides us with strength and is a defence against all of Satan's lies and deception (1 John 2:21; Psalm 91:4)

How do we fasten ourselves in tightly?

- By devoting ourselves to the word of God (John 17:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; Proverbs 23:23)
- By speaking the word of God over every situation (Isaiah 53:1)
- Staying accountable to the local church for spiritual safeguarding against deception (Hebrews 13:17)
- Pursue a life of honesty and integrity in all things in the sight of the Lord and sight of men (2 Cor. 8:21)

RIGHTEOUSNESS: 'THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS' (EPHESIANS 6:14)

The second piece of spiritual armour the apostle Paul instructs us to put on is the 'Breastplate of Righteousness.'

What is meant by the 'Breastplate of Righteousness'?

The breastplate was a central part of the Roman soldier's armour, which was fastened around his chest to protect the vital organs by deflecting away the deadly arrows and fatal body blows inflicted from the enemy.

The Breastplate of Righteousness refers to the righteousness purchased for us by Jesus at the cross (2 Corinthians 5:21). The breastplate is issued to each repentant sinner. It is specially designed by God to protect our heart and soul from evil and deception. Our own righteous acts are no match for Satan's attacks. Therefore wearing the righteousness of Christ is the only sufficient thing to aid us against every Satanic attack.

What does it mean to put on the armour?

We can be confident and fully assured in our position before God:

- Christ at the cross of Calvary took all of our sin, shame, judgement and condemnation upon Himself. Christ has accredited His righteousness onto our account. We can therefore stand secure as we have a right-standing with God (Rom. 4:22-24, 8:1; 1 Thess. 1:10; 1 John 1:7)
- We can boldly access the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16)

We have full protection from the following:

- Satan's accusations – God took away Satan's power to accuse us of sin that has been paid for through the blood of his son Jesus Christ (Rev. 12:10-11)
- Succumbing to the relentless temptation and snares of the wicked one (1 John 5:18; Eph. 4:22-24)

Satan cannot touch us as the righteousness that comes through Christ guards our heart from succumbing to the relentless temptation and snare of the wicked one.

How do we put on the Breastplate of Righteousness?

- Seeking God and His righteousness above everything else (Matthew 6:33)
- Yielding and aligning ourselves in every area as instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6:13)
- We must guard our heart at all times (Proverbs 4:23)
- By putting our faith in Christ above everything else (Romans 4:3; 1:17)