

The Whole Armour of God

A Sunday School Series
by Sis. Joan E. Massey
compiled by Sis. Sandra Luraas

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CDs are available for the articles above. To order a copy, please refer to the CD title number indicated.

EPHESIANS 6

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

11 Put on the whole armour 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.

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:

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

The Belt of Truth

CD #102906S

Imprisoned for his faith, Apostle Paul was familiar with armour. In Ephesians chapter 6, Paul made an analogy between a soldier's armour and the whole armour of God. From this we can learn about our spiritual armour. Our loins are to be girt about with truth (verse 11).

The belt was the first piece of protective equipment a soldier put on. It had two purposes. The belt tied up a soldier's garments, so they would not get in his way while he fought. Similarly, putting on the belt of truth keeps D.I.D. (distractions, interruptions, and disruptions) from hindering our walk with the Lord. The Roman soldier's belt was also used to secure his sword. The soldier was then prepared for action.

Christians are engaged in spiritual warfare. "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 6:12). Daily girding your loins with truth will prepare you for action and give you victory.

"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts" (Psalm 51:6). A Christian must be a person of truth, possessing integrity and trustworthiness. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). An honest life is a testimony to others.

A lie is the opposite of the truth. The devil's most effective weapon is discouragement through lies. "The devil...there is no truth in him...for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). The devil can take a lie and make it sound like the truth. Through these lies, he causes you to doubt God's Word. These lies will take an emotional toll on your life as they cause you to feel emotionally drained and defeated. Through lies, the adversary deceives, confuses, and blinds.

David was overcome with discouragement as he wrote "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest" (Psalm 55:6). The name "devil" describes Satan as a slanderer. He slanders man to God, and slanders God to man. The devil told Eve, "ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Eve fell for the lie and ate the forbidden fruit (verse 6). When the devil feeds you a lie, allow God's truth to defeat it. Revelation 21:8 reveals the fate of liars: "and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

Television is an illusion. God's Word exhorts us to think on those things which are true (Philippians 4:8). It is critical to be able to discern false doctrine so that "we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine...whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14). The truth of God's word will keep you from error. Hold onto true doctrine; there are many false doctrines in the world. The foundation of true doctrine is contained in Ephesians 4:5 "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

The devil is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4). He never took anything away from God; God gave it to him. The devil tried to tempt Jesus with an offer of the world's riches: "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:8).

If you are walking in the truth, there is no reason to compromise. Compromising retards growth; it does not help others. Scripture cautions us against compromise: "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15). "Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Proverb 27:5-6). When a Christian fails to speak out, the future hurt is only being prolonged. Sooner or later, the truth will have to be met head on.

Just because someone or something is called Christian does not mean that it contains Biblically sound concepts. Even Christian

cartoons can carry the philosophy and lies of the world.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). We can depend on Jesus to be a true and faithful friend to us. Truth is contained in the Word of God. “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). We need to accept God’s truth and walk in its light. “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18).

“Jesus answered....To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (John 18:37). There is comfort in the truth. Jesus said, “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16-17). The truth is a faultless witness. Sooner or later a lie will be found out. If you are truthful, you never have to worry about remembering what you said. Regardless of what happens, it is best to tell the truth.

God’s truth endures forever. “Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever” (Psalm 119:160). “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31). “Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name” (Psalm 86:11). The devil is a liar; he tries to steal your joy and testimony. Deception is rampant. Do not allow yourself to fall for it. Feed yourself the truth and you will believe it. Claim victory through the Word of God. Prepare yourself for action, so you will not be caught unaware. Gird up your loins with truth!

*A Prayer for Honesty
Lord, I am not always honest,
Even with myself
Reveal the small lies
And secret dishonesties
That I hide in my life.
Make me completely like you.*

Breastplate of Righteousness

CD #110506S, 112606S, 120306S, 121006S, 121706S

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11). The breastplate of righteousness is a critical part of the armour of God. It protects a large area of the body that contains our vital organs, primarily the heart and lungs.

The word “righteousness” is derived from the Greek root word “tsehdek” meaning upright, just straight, innocent, true, and sincere. Putting on the breastplate of righteousness makes us upright according to God’s heavenly plan. Righteousness is one of the chief attributes of God. “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ephesians 4:24). When you put on the breastplate of righteousness, you have spiritual vitality. It is a good feeling to know that the line is clear between you and God.

The breastplate of righteousness guards our spiritual heart, the seat of affection. The Word of God emphasizes the importance of the heart: “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Proverb 4:23). “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart” (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

Solomon prayed about his heart: “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad” (I Kings 3:9). An understanding heart helps us discern right from wrong in feelings, decisions, and words.

God expects us to monitor our hearts. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). “Cleanse thou me from secret faults” (Psalm 19:12). God can change your heart. “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes....and ye shall be my

people, and I will be your God" (Ezekiel 36:26-28).

The Word of God emphasizes the importance of our spiritual breath: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). "The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4).

The Word of God breathes life into us: "The hand of the LORD... set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones... And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD...as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone...So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (Ezekiel 37:1, 3-4, 7, 10).

The dry bones illustrate life's problems. The solution and answer is to hear the Word of the Lord. The Laodicean church has strayed from the Word of God. It is in spiritual darkness, possessing no spiritual life. By equipping ourselves with spiritual armour, we stir up spiritual vitality and become a living church. God is not dead; He is yet alive. "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 150:6).

The adversary tries to attack us through our heart. When you resist the devil, the Lord will help you. When you hear the Word of the Lord, even if there is just a little flicker of spirit in you, God can bring it to life. Ask for a heavenly inspection. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts" (Psalm 139:23).

We need Christ's righteousness and not our own. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). We cannot make ourselves right with God by our own good works. Putting on the breastplate of righteousness should not make you feel conceited or haughty. We only become recipients of God's righteous-

ness by faith. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength" (Isaiah 45:24). Despite Abraham's greatness, he obtained righteousness only through faith. "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Romans 4:3, 7). Put on the breastplate of righteousness!

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). Our own righteousness cannot save us. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). We need God's righteousness; we cannot make ourselves right with God. "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). We can never merit Heaven; we are made righteous through God's work on the cross. His death on the cross imputes our righteousness through faith.

Putting on the breastplate of righteousness is not an achievement of perfection. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverb 4:18). When you fall, the Lord will not fail you. "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again" (Proverb 24:16).

"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). When you ask the Lord to order your steps, He will enlarge them so that your feet will not slip. In doing so, every step we take is in the will of God.

One of the devil's strategies is to make us feel hopeless. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). God has given us an outlet, the throne of grace. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Putting on the breastplate of righteousness is critical. It protects our spiritual heart. If a soldier does not wear the breastplate of

righteousness, an arrow can pierce and damage his heart. The content of your heart is dependent on what you feed yourself. Allow the Word of God to work on your heart. You do not need quick fixes in your life. God intends to bring you through the full process that you may “be perfect and entire, wanting (lacking) nothing” (James 1:4).

Drivers have head-on collisions because they inadvertently travel the wrong way. Spiritually, we need discernment to follow God’s will. “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12). When you realize that you are going the wrong way, stop, pull over, and call on the Lord for help. Only God can put you back on track. It is disastrous when you try to do things your own way. Ask the Lord to intervene in your situation.

Putting on the breastplate of righteousness means doing right. We need a right attitude: “Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matthew 23:12). We need a right mind: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). We need to walk on the right path: “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jeremiah 6:16). We need the right commitment: “I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29). We need to maintain the right conversation and motives: “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer” (Psalm 19:14). Put on the breastplate of righteousness and be right with God!

Feet Shod with the Gospel of Peace

CD #122406S, 123106S, 010707S, 011407S

“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15). Marching was an essential part of a soldier’s life. No soldier could march far without sturdy shoes. Roman soldiers were so closely indented with their shoes that the term “bootmen” was used to describe them.

Preparation implies readiness. Just as a soldier’s shoes kept him from slipping in battle, even so having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace keeps us from slipping spiritually. Without shoes, a soldier could not maintain his position against his enemies. Without God’s peace in our lives, we cannot maintain our position in Christ. Preparation means prepared foundation. That foundation provides a firm basis for a soldier’s feet. The Word of God provides us with a firm foundation on which to stand.

God wants a prepared people. “Wake up the mighty men” (Joel 3:9). If you are spiritually asleep, you will be overtaken. “Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...” (Romans 12:1). We must prepare, since we cannot present ourselves to the Lord in any manner. God did not accept Cain’s offering (Genesis 4:5). David, a man after God’s own heart, prepared abundantly (II Chronicles 22:2-5).

The greatest desire we could ever have is to make it to Heaven. Discipleship is preparation making us fit for citizenship into Heaven. No other aspiration in our lives should rival our desire for Heaven. To be a prepared disciple involves becoming a committed learner and follower of Christ.

Preparation involves learning, which is the individual’s responsibility. You are held responsible for what you miss when you are not at church. We are not only responsible for what we hear, but also how we hear. “Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

God has provided us with the maturation process: “desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (I Peter 2:2). Accept God’s discretion in your life. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (I Corinthians 10:13). If God permits a situation in your life, He will give you the grace to handle it.

There are two types of hearers, those that believe and those that do not believe. “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Hebrews 4:2). We must act upon what we hear. “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

Much preparation goes into spiritual warfare. “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD” (Ezra 7:10). Preparation requires work: “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4). Your preparation will reflect your expectation.

There are consequences for not preparing to receive the Word of God. Rehoboam “did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD” (II Chronicles 12:14).

If you are preoccupied with earthly things, you will have no room for a spiritual appetite. Our spiritual appetite must increase. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6). To be prepared, we need more of God and less of everything else.

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9). Take the initiative to make peace. If you are being persecuted, it should be because of righteousness’ sake “for great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:12). Let your feet be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, so that you may attain spiritual maturity.

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"(Ephesians 6:15). Stephen was prepared with the gospel of peace. "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue...disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6:8-10, 15).

Peace is the freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions; harmony in personal relations. Peace comes from "The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28-29).

The Apostle Paul had peace. Even after he was flogged and thrown into prison he "prayed, and sang praises unto God" (Acts 16:25). Paul was in a literal prison, yet his mind was free. Some people are physically free, yet mentally imprisoned. Be a peacemaker. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

Keeping God's commandments produces peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee..." (Isaiah 26:3). "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee" (Proverbs 3:1-2).

The key to peace is in the mind. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). "And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39). Just as Jesus spoke peace to the storm, He can speak peace to the storms in your life.

To attain peace, you need to change the way you think. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the

renewing of your mind..." (Romans 12:1-2). "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

One of the devil's most effective weapons is discouragement through lies which causes doubt and wreaks havoc on our emotions. The absence of peace yields mental, emotional, and spiritual instability, confusion, and perplexity.

Those who have no peace in their lives have difficulty regulating their emotions. The only way the devil can get to you is through your senses. You have over 3.6 million thoughts a year. The devil wants to get to you through your mind. Be watchful! Any thought can enter your mind, but it is up to you to rebuke those thoughts that do not belong there.

You have the advantage: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). The devil gets the advantage only if you choose to give it to him. If you lose your focus, the devil will capitalize on your feelings making you feel confused, frustrated, and defeated. When you allow the devil to get a hold of your mind, you need deliverance. This condition of spiritual bondage requires spiritual warfare. Take control of your mind! "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (I Corinthians 10:4-5).

Captive minds can be set free. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). You can find peace by rearranging your thinking. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things....and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:8-9).

The Shield of Faith

CD#012107S, 012807S, 020407S, 021107S, 022507S, 030407S

“Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked” (Ephesians 6:16). Every temptation and distraction can be extinguished with the shield of faith. “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors... ”(Romans 8:37). By faith, God is our shield. “But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head” (Psalm 3:3). “The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped...” (Psalm 28:7). “Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield” (Psalm 33:20).

Saul, the first king of Israel, was self-willed, not having faith in God. Because of his disobedience, he was dispossessed: “the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil” (II Samuel 1:21). Saul’s trust was in his natural shield and strength.

A Christian’s trust is in the shield of faith. “Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:9-11).

“Thou art my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word” (Psalm 119:114). If you cannot handle your problems, remember that God can.

Faith is an integral component of a Christian’s armour. “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” (Hebrews 11:6).

Hebrews chapter 11 contains faith’s hall of fame. It is replete with godly examples of faith: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses... Their works are examples of what can be accomplished

through faith. Have faith in God, for God is faithful.

Using the shield of faith requires a choice (Hebrews 11:25). Do not allow yourself to feel sorry for yourself. Your situation could always be worse: "And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment" (Hebrews 11:36).

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:1-3). Do not allow yourself to become weary in your mind. Be patient; you cannot hurry God. Learn to wait on the Lord.

With the shield of faith we trust God. "Now faith is the substance [assurance] of things hoped for, the evidence [conviction] of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Do not believe the devil's lies; you can bear your circumstances. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4). When you use the shield of faith, "no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17).

After having taken the effort to come this far, do not undo what has already been done. "The just shall live by faith..." (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). Be determined to walk by faith and not by sight.

Jesus was tempted of the devil (Matthew 4:1-11). The devil wants you to be impulsive. Using the shield of faith, fight back with the Word of God: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (verse 4). We are not in this spiritual battle alone: "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psalm 91:11).

Life is not about how much you have; it is about what you do with what you have. “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful” (I Corinthians 4:2). Our desire is for the Lord to say to us one day, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).

Spiritual warfare is a faith-building experience. When you live by faith, the shield of faith will help you to be invincible. “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not” (II Corinthians 8:12). Willing means eager to help; prompt to act or respond without reluctance. God takes the little we have and multiplies it when we give it to Him with a willing mind in faith. Step out in faith with the little you have and God will bless.

A world-a-holic is someone who is intoxicated with the things of the world. “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (I Timothy 6:9-10).

Seek true riches: “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1). “Rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (I Peter 1:8). “Be content with such things as ye have” (Hebrews 13:5). If we focus on the spiritual, God will take care of us. “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life” (John 6:27).

When you put off your armor, you become vulnerable. With the shield of faith, you can “fight the good fight of faith” (I Timothy 6:12). Take your burdens to the Lord, and leave them there. We must constantly repel the devil with our shield of faith. Look at your circumstances through the eyes of faith.

Faith transforms your mind, attitude, and your situation. Faith is critical: “For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Hebrews 4:2).

When you take heed to the Word of God, there is always hope. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:3-4). You do not have to understand all that God is doing in your life. Spiritual warfare is a faith-building experience. God's promises are appropriated by faith.

By faith, create a spiritual oasis in your mind; externally nothing needs to change. "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). Creating a spiritual oasis in your mind will give you peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). Others should be able to see the victory and joy in our lives.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:16). Use your shield of faith; trust in the Lord. If you fail, view it as an opportunity to start over again. "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness" (Lamentations 3:21-23).

The Helmet of Salvation

CD #040107S

“And take the helmet of salvation...” (Ephesians 6:17). The helmet of salvation safeguards our minds. “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin” (I Peter 4:1). “O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle” (Psalm 140:7).

We need to get permanent victory in our minds, since the mind is where the battle is won or lost. “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...” (Proverbs 23:7). We become what our thoughts are. The type of mind you cultivate, spiritual or carnal, influences your decision-making and perspective in life. “For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6).

The carnal mind had its early beginnings with Lucifer’s rebellion in Heaven. His pride caused his fall: “I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14). The carnal mind results in dire consequences: “Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell” (verse 15).

The carnal mind is preoccupied with evil imaginations as it was in Noah’s days: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5).

I Corinthians 8:2 contains a Scriptural definition of imagination: “And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.” The Bible takes the word imagination from Hebrew and Greek words meaning scheme, stubbornness, doubt, and dispute.

Scripture contains many attributes of a carnal mind. The carnal mind is forgetful. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psalm 9:17). “Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none

to deliver" (Psalm 50:22). The carnal mind is proud. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be...highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Timothy 3:1, 2, 4).

The carnal mind is preoccupied with the things of this world. "Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matthew 6:31-34).

The carnal mind is enmity, meaning hostile, hatred, antagonistic. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). A consequence of having a carnal mind is a reprobate mind: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:28).

God has a remedy for a carnal mind full of imaginations: "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5). When you are armed with the helmet of salvation, you have a spiritual mind, the mind of Christ.

Christians are to be different, not emulating the world. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (Ephesians 4:17).

Philippians chapter two contains attributes of the mind of Christ: consolation, comfort, love, fellowship, mercy, no strife or vain-glory, lowliness of mind, humble, obedient, without murmurings and disputings, blameless, shine as lights, holding forth the word of life.

A spiritual mind has a mind to work. "Epaphroditus, my brother,

and companion in labour...." (Philippians 2:25). "So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work" (Nehemiah 4:6).

God's thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace. "I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jeremiah 29:11). God's thoughts toward us are abundant. "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered" (Psalm 40:5). God's thoughts toward us are gracious. "But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me..." (Psalm 40:17). God's thoughts toward us are great and precious. "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" (Psalm 139:17). God's thoughts toward us are higher than our thoughts. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9).

The Bible exhorts us to have a spiritual mind. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10).

Meditating on the Word of God will enable you to have a spiritual mind. "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

Cultivate a spiritual mind by thinking right thoughts. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies" (Psalm 119:59). "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever

things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Cultivate a spiritual mind by remembering God's goodness. God instituted memorials to remind His people. The Passover reminded Israel of God's deliverance from their cruel bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12:14). The laying up of manna reminded Israel of God's supernatural provision (Exodus 16:32). At the Lord's Supper, Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2). By remembering God's goodness and reference points in our lives we will cultivate a spiritual mind.

There are benefits to possessing a spiritual mind. A spiritual mind will give you peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). "Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psalm 119:165).

A spiritual mind will give you God's favor. "For if there first be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (II Corinthians 8:12). A spiritual mind will give you soundness. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7).

A spiritual mind will help you persevere in your trials. "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:3).

The helmet of salvation gives hope. "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (I Thessalonians 5:8). Put on the helmet of salvation, and think like a conqueror!

The Sword of the Spirit

“And take ...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17). The Word of God is powerful. “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged 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” (Hebrews 4:12). The world was created through the Word of God. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3).

God’s Word is everlasting. “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever...” (1 Peter 1:25). “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18). “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

When you have the Word of God, you have God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:1, 14).

Jesus used the Word of God when he was tempted by the devil. “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he [Jesus] answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:1-4).

Even when the devil misused Scripture, Jesus fought back with the Word of God. “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is writ-

ten, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:5-7).

Jesus persevered and got the victory in his trial by continuing to use the Word of God. "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him" (Matthew 4:8-11).

The Word of God is profitable. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). The Word of God must be received by faith. "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2).

We must be careful how we receive the Word of God. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). We need to apply the Word of God to our lives. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28). "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31).

The parable of the sower and the seed illustrates the importance of how we are to receive the Word of God. The Word is compared to seed that was sown. If that seed of the Word falls by the wayside, "the wicked one...catcheth away that which was sown in his heart" (Matthew 13:19). If the seed falls on stony places, "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended" (verse 21). If the seed falls among

thorns, "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (verse 22). "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it: which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (verse 23).

Hearing the Word of God builds our faith. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). By applying the Word of God to our lives, we grow in the Lord. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby (I Peter 2:2).

Do not accept everything you hear. "These [the Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

Jesus calmed the raging sea with His Word. "And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39). Even so, He can calm the storms in our lives with the Word of God.

We can nullify the Word of God in our lives. "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye" (Mark 7:13).

The more you apply the Word of God to your life, the more fruit you will bear. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him" (I John 2:5). "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door,

and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Revelations 3:8). "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life..." (I Timothy 6:12). "And take ...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17).

Praying and Watching

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“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Ephesians 6:18). “Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain” (Revelation 3:2).

If you are not watchful, you will lose the advantage you have gained. “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). To maintain the victory, you must be able to recognize satanic devices: “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices” (II Corinthian 2:11). The adversary tries to get to us through “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life...” (I John 2:16).

If you are not watchful, you will adopt a world-a-holic mentality becoming intoxicated by the world. “And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mark 4:18-19). The world-a-holic mentality is in pursuit of personal ambitions that conflict with the will of God. The natural appetite becomes more dominating than the spiritual appetite.

Money is not the answer. Just look at the lives of the rich and famous, and you will see a high rate of alcoholism, drug use, divorce, and suicide. There are things that money cannot buy. “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness” (Isaiah 55:1-2).

If we are watchful, we will keep our eyes on Heaven. “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm

30:5). "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8).

We need to view our circumstances through the eyes of faith. Twelve spies were sent out to the promised land (Numbers 13:16). Ten of the spies brought back an evil report: "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we" (verse 31). Caleb and Joshua viewed their circumstances through the eyes of faith: "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (verse 30). All twelve saw the same thing. However, they interpreted it differently.

Even so, when we look at our problems, with our own natural strength or logic, they may seem impossible. When you use the spiritual eyes of faith, you will see God's hand helping you get the victory. A spiritually mature person understands that God is God, and whatever He does is good.

Praying and watching yield benefits: turbo-boosts your faith, increases your spiritual focus, and produces spiritual fruit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Watching and praying will keep hope alive. "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:25). In spite of your trouble, never give up. "I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved" (Acts 2:25).

Watch! Do not believe the big lie. Your work is not in vain! "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

In the war of the flesh against the Spirit, who is winning the battle? We need to "be ready unto every good work" (Titus 3:1). What things are you allowing to have an influence over your spirituality? The devil wants total control over you; he wants

to nullify the reality of God's presence. "For in him [Christ] we live, and move, and have our being..." (Acts 17:28). The devil is a stalker. We must constantly repel his efforts. "And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (II Timothy 2:26).

Watch and pray! "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life..." (I Timothy 6:12).

