

Prepared for Battle

TEXT: Ephesians 6:10-18

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 59:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Hebrews 4:12

KEY VERSE: Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. — Ephesians 6:13

The Christian soldier's strength and power is in the Lord. God has provided spiritual armor for us. It is not enough for us to know that it is available. If we are to stand in the day of battle we must put the armor on. The battle is not against foes which we can see, but against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God" (2 Corinthians 10:4). The armor of God has several parts, and like any system of personal armor, works best when it is complete. As we put on each part and use it effectively we can be more than conquerors.

1. In our text, the first mention of the armor is that the loins be girt about with truth. In the context of this verse what does *truth* mean? Using Jesus' experience in the wilderness of temptation, explain the importance of this part of the armor. See Matthew 4:1-11.

2. The second piece of equipment is the breastplate of righteousness. Can you explain the difference between self-righteousness and the righteousness received from God? Use Matthew 3:7-10 and 2 Corinthians 5:17 as references.

3. Another part of the armor is the helmet of salvation. Read how it is described in 1 Thessalonians 5:8. Using Isaiah 26:3, explain the importance of having our minds covered with the helmet of salvation.

4. The Christian soldier's feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. This allows him to be prepared at all times to declare God's peace and goodwill to the world. Using 2 Timothy 4:2 and 1 Peter 3:15, define *preparation* as it relates to our walk with Christ. List ways we can be better prepared for Christian service.

5. "Above all, taking the shield of faith." Why is faith so important in this spiritual warfare? And why, "above all"?

6. We have observed thus far that all of the pieces of armor mentioned have been of a protective nature. However, the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is designed to be used both offensively and defensively. It is to guard the Christian soldier, and by it he can vanquish all his foes. The Sword can be adapted to every state and circumstance in which we are placed. How can we effectively use the Sword of the Spirit? See Psalm 119:11 and 2 Timothy 2:15.

7. Prayer is essential to the Christian warfare. What did the Apostle Paul mean when he said, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit"?

8. Ephesians 6:11,13 refers to the "whole armour of God." What a relief to know that we do not have to lean upon our own understanding to provide proper protection. The Christian warfare is a battle of right against wrong. Some have said that the best defense is a good offense. A Christian is not merely holding his own, but is moving forward and defeating the enemy. Where, in your own life, might you use the offensive weapons illustrated by the following verses: Proverbs 15:1; Romans 12:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:15?