

The Armor of God and Victory

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

The Christian must know what to wear to war. And wearing the Christian armor (“the whole armour of God” – Eph. 6:13) is the way God’s victory is channeled into our lives and how our victorious position “in the Lord” is actualized or made practical in day-to-day combat through the ministry or prayer. We dare not forget one piece of the armor to protect us.

“Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole.”

The introductory verse that leads into the section of Scripture explaining the armor is Ephesians 6:10. “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” This means two things. First, as we dress for war we must do so trusting in the Lord’s power and strength that is already available to us for victory. We dare not put on the armor in our own strength or ability. There can be no victory without complete dependence upon the Lord’s power. Second, wearing the Christian armor (“the whole armour of God” – Eph. 6:11) is another way to experience God’s victorious power in your life (Eph. 6:10). In other words, God’s power is also channeled into our lives through wearing the proper armor. Be sure of this one thing. God’s power is needed so “ye may be able to withstand in the evil day” (the time of temptation) – Eph. 6:13.

In other words, the only way we can be strong in the Lord and His power is to wear the armor that God has provided for us. So, as we put on the armor, we must do so trusting in God’s power and at the same time realize that we will also experience His protective and life-changing power in our own life as we practice wearing the spiritual armor. I must reiterate something. We cannot forget one piece of the armor, which is designed to protect us against Satan and his evil workers (“take unto you the whole armour of God” – Eph. 6:13). If one piece of the armor is not worn, we will become vulnerable to one of Satan’s fiery darts.

Nevertheless, the believer's union with Christ is the underlying cause for spiritual victory for it is from this place of spiritual position in Christ that all of our victory lies. We draw from God's power only as we realize our union with Christ. Ephesians 6:10 states, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord (the place of position and victory), and in the power of his might (the provision of victory). The power flows forth from this place of position in Christ and only through Christ's power we can put on the whole armor of God and claim our victory over Satan. In fact, even before the Christian soldier places on the armor of God he must remember that divine strength for victory flows from the Lord and His might, which comes from the inside in view of the believer's union with the indwelling Christ (Gal. 2:20). We possess no power in and of ourselves to defeat the enemy. We must know beforehand where the power lies, and as we place on the armor, do so dependent upon God's inner power (Phil. 2:13).

"That soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes.
That soul though all hell should endeavor to shake;
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

We must use the armor relying on God's supernatural strength. With the Lord's strength on the inside the believer is ready to use His complete armor in the full strength and provision of God's life.

"Stand, then, in His great might,
With all His strength endued;
And take, to arm you for the flight,
The panoply of God."

It's true that we already have this armor for in Christ we possess all the spiritual blessings we need for victory (Eph. 1:3). Nevertheless, it's our duty to experientially, mentally, and prayerfully place this spiritual armor on our lives - "Put on the whole armour of God" (vs. 11) and "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God" (vs. 13). In a similar way we are told to "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14). Essentially, this is what it means to wear the armor. When we are putting on the armor we are putting on Christ. We must actively and mentally place this armor on our lives in order to experience

victory. We must claim our victorious ground through Jesus Christ by taking an active role in using God's armor. This explained as putting on God's armor (Eph. 6:11) or experientially using it in our everyday life. If we don't do our part by staying on active duty, using the armor, we are likely to become a causality in the war. We must take an active part in this prepared strategy for victory.

We must then remember that there is a delicate balance between dependency upon God's power for victory (God's effort – 2 Pet. 1:3-4) and the believer's desire and determination to obey God and live holy (man's effort – 2 Pet. 1:5-7) in order to possess victory. When we are passive and take no initiative to change (Rom. 6:12; 13:14; 2 Cor. 7:1) then there will be no victory. Likewise, when we depend upon our own self-discipline this will not bring victory into our lives (Rom. 7:10-14; 2 Cor. 12:9). Being self-disciplined without proper reliance on God's power will not lead to victory in our lives. There is a proper balance to maintain in the battle. But we can be sure that God's strength coupled with the determination to renounce sin, avoid sin, and live for God by choosing to wear God's armor, prepares the believer to "stand" before the time of battle (Eph. 6:11), then "withstand in the evil day" or time of temptation or battle (vs. 13), and finally come out of the battle victorious ("and having done all, to stand" – vs. 13b). "If God be for us, who can be against us" (Rom. 8:31).

"Sound the battle cry!
See, the foe is nigh;
Raise the standard high
For the Lord;

Gird your armor on,
Stand firm ev'ry one,
Rest your cause upon
His holy word."

Belt of Truth

The Christian's Magna Charta of protection is Ephesians 6:10-18. Special attention must be given to the spiritual armor that the believer must wear to maintain victory in his Christian life. In other words, the believer must mentally place these pieces of armor on and apply

them to his life if he is ever going to experience victory. He must learn to dress for success! To begin with there is the belt of truth (“loins girt about with truth” – Eph. 6:14). This concept speaks of the believer’s life being pulled together and surrounded by truth. Truth is a strengthening factor in the life and experience of the Christian soldier. This piece of the Roman soldier’s armor was the thick leather belt the Roman soldier wore to hold his tunic in place. When the Roman soldier girded his loins, he tucked his long outer robe under his belt so that it would not get in his way when running or fighting (1 Pet. 1:13). We are to prepare our minds and lives for action and get ready for spiritual combat. We are to get focused on the battle and be prepared by making a total commitment to truth and setting our mind on following truth at all costs. Truth is the great liberator. This piece of the Roman soldier’s armor could represent several things.

Truth of Our Identity in Christ

First, believers must know the truth about their identity and the victorious inheritance that they possess in Christ (Eph. 6:10 – “in the Lord”). In Christ (a place of spiritual union) we share in His victory over Satan and in Christ we share His power (“the power of his might” – Eph. 6:10) which enables us to live victorious. We are to live in the power of our great Victor! This power is especially manifested in our lives when we apply God’s armor to our everyday living. As we apply the armor, we depend upon God’s inner power operating in our lives.

“Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through His eternal Son;
Strong in the Lord of hosts,
And in His mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.”

Because we are in Christ (a place of spiritual position) we have already shared in His victory over sin (Rom. 6:5-7) and Satan (Eph. 1:19-23; Col. 2:15; 1 Cor. 3:21-23). Christ’s complete victory can be claimed as our own victory. Knowing the truth that we have a spiritual position with Christ and that we share His victory is very important.

We must know the truth that we are co-crucified (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20), co-resurrected (Rom. 6:5, 8) and co-exalted (Eph. 1:3; 19-23) with Christ as victors over sin and Satan. We must know that we are victors or overcomers in Christ (1 John 5:4) so that we do not have to be overcome by sin and Satan. We must have our “loins girt about with truth” – even the truth about our spiritual identity and victory in Christ.

Truth of Scripture

Second, God’s people must also know the truth of Scripture, which liberates them from sin (John 8:32; James 1:25). As a roaring lion, Satan stalks believers and we must learn to resist him “steadfast in the faith” (the truth of Scripture - 1 Peter 5:8–9). Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44) and will seek to deceive us with his many lies (Gen. 3:2-3). Truth counteracts Satan’s lies. Truth is not flexible but revealed in the final authority of Scripture. Truth is not what feels right to me (relativism) but what is firmly anchored in the absolute standard - the Bible (John 17:17 – “thy word is truth”). Remember that Satan sold the lie of relativism to Eve in the Garden when he said that they could have an experiential knowledge of good and evil (“ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” – Gen. 3:5).

In other words, they could be as gods and be free to write their own rules and decide what is truth to them and right for them. Relativism says, “What is true for me might not be true for you.” Relativism thrives in our culture today and sets no objective standard of truth. Man becomes a law unto himself. This is why we need to maintain the old Book and the old Faith and not steer off the course. We must remember that the Bible is our final authority (“thy word is truth” – John 17:17). The Biblical truth that spells out our personal victory over sin and Satan (Col. 2:15; Rom. 6:6,13-14; 8:31, 37; 1 Cor.15:57; 2 Cor. 2:11,14; 1 Jn. 2:13; 5:4) and other Biblical texts of truth that we use to counteract Satan’s lies becomes the key liberating force in our life. Victory is a truth encounter. We cannot out-muscle, out-shout or out-smart Satan. But we can out-truth Satan. We must have your “loins girt about with truth.” Jesus said in John 8:32, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Jesus said that you can be “free indeed” (John 8:36).

“Fierce may be the conflict,
Strong may be the foe,
But the King’s own army,
None can overthrow;
Round His standard ranging,
Vict’ry is secure,
For His truth unchanging
Makes the triumph sure.”

Truthful Living (Integrity)

Third, in relationship to our own lives we must also be an individual of truth (truthfulness, personal excellence). This would mean that we are a truthful and honest person that is full of integrity and free from guile and hypocrisy (“thou desirest truth in the inward parts” – Ps. 51:6). We must be earnest, sincere, and free from pretense. First, we must be honest with ourselves and with God and admit that we struggle with sin and need victory (1 John 1:8). We will need to confess our sin and learn to totally depend upon Christ for victory (1 John 1:9). Second, our desire for victory must be sincere, real, and genuine (Joshua 24:14; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 6:24).

We must earnestly desire victory and have no seed thoughts or second thoughts in the back of our mind about sinning against God. In short, our desire for victory must be real and genuine. A man of truth is a man who earnestly desires victory and has no second thoughts in the back of his mind about sinning against God. He is not a man who is trying to commit himself to God while holding back sinful pleasures in his heart that he still wants to enjoy. Don’t become a person who is trying to commit himself to God while holding back sinful pleasures in your heart that you still want to enjoy. Don’t try to put one hand in the world and have another hand upon Christ (James 4:4). This double standard always gives Satan a starting point and stepping-stone to work in our life (Eph. 4:27).

If we are a person of truthfulness (integrity) we will have a settled conviction and determination to possess victory. We will not possess a double standard or divided opinion in our heart. The man of truthfulness or integrity is not a “double-minded” man (James 1:6-8)

nor is he a double-hearted man (Matt. 6:19-21) trying to live in two different worlds (the spiritual and earthly) and seeking to serve two masters (Mat. 6:24). We must learn to love God with all our heart (Matt. 22:37). We must be truthful, real, and genuine. God is looking for the real deal! He is looking for a person of integrity. We must have our "loins girt about with truth" or this truthfulness or integrity that is to be part of our everyday living.

Jesus said in Luke 12:35, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." The soldiers in Christ day had to pull up their tunic through the belt area to secure it around their waist. When doing this they could run and be ready for battle. The same is true in relation to our Christian life. We must be ready at all times for battle (Matt. 13:25; 26:41; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 4:7; Eph. 6:18). We must be ready to counteract Satan's lies by using the truth about our identity in Christ (spiritual union and position of victory), the absolute truth of God's Word, and also become an individual of truth by living a life of personal integrity and excellence before God. In every way we must be ready for the battle as you learn to apply truth to your life. Stay alert and prepared. Tighten up your belt and be ready at all times to do battle and keep the lights burning.

Breastplate of Righteousness

The breastplate was an important part of the Roman soldier's battle gear. It was a metal cast of a human torso that protected the upper part of the body, including the heart and lungs. It protected the body from swords, arrows, and spears of the enemy. The "breastplate of righteousness" (Eph. 6:14) speaks of the believer's life being surrounded by righteousness. This breastplate represents several things.

Positional Righteousness Before God

The breastplate of righteousness can represent the perfect righteousness that we have been given before God's presence. The believer must always understand that he has a perfect righteous standing or position of acceptance before God's presence through Jesus Christ. In short, this means that God has forever accepted us in His presence. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ actually

becomes our righteous standing before God's holy presence so that we are eternally accepted before God on the basis of Christ's perfect righteousness. Christ is "made unto us righteousness" before God (1 Cor. 1:30). The perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ has been imputed or imparted to our lives and God now sees us perfectly righteous before His presence through Jesus Christ. This is called positional righteousness before God's presence.

Christ's righteousness has been given to us or has been imputed or placed on our spiritual account before God (Rom. 4:3, 6-7). When God looks at His children, He looks through Jesus Christ and sees that we are forever clothed in the perfect righteousness of His Son. This is called positional righteousness before God's presence. This perfect and eternal righteousness before God becomes ours when we trust Christ as your Savior (Rom. 3:22 – "the righteousness of God which is by faith"). The righteousness of Jesus Christ has been put to our spiritual account (imputed or imparted) because we have trusted Him as our Savior (Rom. 3:19-24). Our spiritual status before God is now a person who has been acquitted of all guilt and we now have a position of acceptance before God on the basis or ground of Christ's righteousness – not our own way of living or how we feel (Phil. 3:9).

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head."

How does this righteous standing before God protect the believer in the time of spiritual warfare or battle? The promise of Christ's righteousness protects us from feelings of guilt and condemnation before God (Rom. 8:33-34). This is important because Satan will try to defeat our life by bringing personal accusations against us. Satan brings thoughts of deception into our mind attempting to convince us that God does not accept us when we sin or that God is finished with us. The Evil One makes us feel guilty and condemned before God when we sin against Him. When we fail the devil tries to bring the guilt trip upon our heart and life so that he can keep us in spiritual depression and defeat. He tries to feed us the lies that God no longer accepts us or that God has given up on us and that we will never

amount to anything. He reminds us of both our present sins and then brings up our past sins, which we have committed, in order to make us think and feel that God has abandoned us and no longer loves or accepts us. In addition, the devil also accuses us or whispers in our ear words like this: “Admit it. You are a loser. You are no good. God will never forgive you for what you have done. You have lost God’s love and favor.”

Once we start to listen to Satan’s lies, we become defenseless. But when we remember that we stand in the perfect righteousness of Christ Satan’s accusations against us cannot defeat our life. We can remember that God always loves and accepts us unconditionally in His holy presence because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. God sees us through the righteousness of His Son and because of this God always accepts us and loves us as His own children no matter what we do or have done in the past. The righteousness of Jesus Christ assures you of this! God will always love us and accept us no matter how many times we fail Him since we stand in Christ’s perfect righteousness. So, we must claim our righteous position in Christ. The Father sees us through the Son’s perfect righteousness (Jude 24). This provides God’s children with assurance of their eternal acceptance before the Father and His unending love for them (Rom. 8:37-39). We remember that we stand in the righteousness of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). Satan’s accusations against us (Rev. 12:10) cannot be accepted by God since we stand in Christ’s righteousness. Let us claim our righteous position in Christ.

Practical Righteousness in Daily Living

The breastplate of righteousness can also represent our day-to-day righteous living. This too is an important part of our protection against satanic attack. 1 Timothy 6:11 says, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness ...” Revelation 22:11 reminds you of this same important truth when saying “... he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” When we fail to live a consistent righteous life, we will become much more vulnerable to Satan’s attacks upon our personal life. As believers we must seek to live a righteous and holy life on a daily basis before God (1 John 2:29; 3:7) and never try to excuse our sin and overlook those things in our lives that are wrong (1 John 1:8).

Satan always gets an advantage over our life when we harbor certain sins in our heart (2 Cor. 2:10-12) and fail to live a righteous life. Living a righteous life keeps us from developing “spiritual hardening of the arteries” which slowly kills our spiritual life and affects our day-to-day power and victory that we can experience.

Second Corinthians 7:1 reminds us that we must practice obedience or righteous living through cleansing ourselves outwardly (“filthiness of the flesh” - body) and inwardly (“and spirit” – the inner life). Both outward righteous living and the inward purity of a righteous heart provide spiritual stability and a stable environment, which helps you as a Christian soldier to maintain victory when combating evil. The breastplate of righteousness will help the Christian soldier to maintain both an outward life and inner life that is tender, righteous, and pure in the spiritual realm. Psalm 24:4 puts it this way: “clean hands, and a pure heart” or a total life that is outwardly and inwardly operating efficiently for Christian living and service.

Remember that the soldier’s breastplate protected the heart (vital physical organ) and as a Christian we need to protect our heart (the vital spiritual organ) on the inside of us from sinful thoughts. This is done by counteracting unrighteous patterns of thoughts with righteous thoughts that are true and pleasing to God (Phil. 4:8). In wearing the breastplate of righteousness, the Christian soldier will protect the heart (inner control center) of his life from being swept away into sinful fantasy, rebellion against God (Ps. 78:8), and wickedness (Ps. 141:4). This is because sin generates from a heart that is controlled by the sin nature (Jer. 17:9). Remember, our heart is the seat or control center of our entire life (Prov. 23:7). So, we must keep our heart right before God or our inner spiritual life righteous and pure and then our outer life or how we live will be righteous (Prov. 4:23). Also, remember that it’s possible to look clean and righteous on the outside but be unclean and unrighteous on the inside (Matt. 23:27).

Righteous living can only be experienced when we practice daily obedience to God’s Word. We must accept and obey the truth, say no sin, and keep our life right before God. Cleansing ourselves means we must obey God’s truth instead of our own will and the old nature. This will involve not going to those places that tempt us or watch and

listen to those things that tempt us. It involves saying no to sin and yes to God on every level. God will not do something for us that we can do for ourselves. We must take the initiative to cleanse ourselves (2 Cor. 7:1) by becoming obedient to what God says, by not placing ourselves in those environments that tempt us, and by simply saying no sin. Satan always has a greater advantage in our life (2 Cor. 2:11) when we fail to practice righteous living. However, living a righteous life keeps us from developing “spiritual hardening of the arteries” which slowly kills our spiritual life and affects our day-to-day power and victory that we can experience.

Gospel Shoes of Peace

The Gospel shoes of peace (“feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” – Eph. 6:15) presents the truth how the believer’s victory is somehow connected with peace. The word “shod” means to bind feet with shoes and the word “preparation” means readiness. The entire thought seems to be this. There is a spiritual readiness or preparedness that comes through the “gospel of peace” which helps the believer in the time of temptation. If we want to be prepared for battle, we must know about the Gospel of peace. The Gospel of peace, which we have and possess, prepares us for the spiritual battle with sin and Satan. Therefore, we need to be wearing the Gospel shoes of peace. We can’t go barefoot in the time of battle! Satan will be sure that we stub our toe and suffer pain and defeat. Whoever heard of barefoot soldiers!

Positional Peace (Peace with God)

There is a positional peace that comes through the Gospel, which prepares every Christian for the battle. As a result of the work of the Gospel (death and resurrection of Christ) we are prepared or ready for the battle knowing that we have a positional peace or peaceful standing before God’s presence (Rom. 5:1 – “we have peace with God”). The Gospel of peace brings us into a place where we possess a positional peace before God’s presence. Through the work of the Gospel (Christ’s finished work) believing sinners have had their sins forgiven (past, present, future) and been forever acquitted of their guilt before God’s holy presence (Heb. 7:25). Because of this

acquittal we are no longer God's enemy (Rom. 5:10). Instead, God is at peace with us and we have a peaceful standing of acceptance before Him. Knowing that we have a peaceful standing before God through Christ's finished work provides us with the reassurance that God has accepted us, loves us, that He is with us, working on our behalf, and that He will never leave us (Isa. 41:10) or let us down as His children (John 6:20).

Think of it. We were once the enemy of God (Col. 1:21) but are now at peace with God forever! God is not angry with our life. God is not our enemy. God is not against us. God will never condemn us or judge us. God will always unconditionally accept us as His own children. God will never disown us as His children. He will always take us back and make us feel at home with Him. We are His forever!

“Things that once were wild alarms
Cannot now disturb my rest;
Closed in everlasting arms,
Pillowed on the loving breast.
Oh, to lie forever here,
Doubt, and care, and self resign,
While He whispers in my ear—
I am His and He is mine.”

The fact that we are at peace with God will help us to keep our footing in the time of battle and remain stable and strong (Joshua 1:6-7). The positional truth that we are at peace before God prepares us (“preparation of the gospel of peace”) for the spiritual battle. Because we are at peace with God, He has accepted us in His presence and will never leave us nor forsake us in the time of battle (Heb. 13:5). God is not against us. God loves us. God accepts us as His children and wants to come to our rescue (Ps. 46:1). Always remember that it is Satan who is against us. God is not against us. Furthermore, we are at peace with God but at war with Satan. Don't allow Satan to steal this truth from your heart. Satan was banned from the presence of God (Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:16) but we are accepted in God's presence forever (Rom. 5:1) and have God's refuge and unending love (Rom. 8:38-39) to help us on to victory. The Gospel has brought the believer into a place of positional peace before God and this in return prepares us for the spiritual battle providing the assurance that

God has accepted us and that we are at peace with God. This reminds us that God is our constant companion in life and that He will always help us, accept us, and love us, even when we fail.

Practical Peace (Peace of God)

There is a practical peace that comes through the Gospel, which also prepares the believer for the time of battle. This has been called the God prescribed tranquilizer for Christian living. Another result of the Gospel (death and resurrection of Christ) is that the believer is saved and then provided with a day-to-day practical peace for his life (Phil. 4:7 – “peace of God”). This is a peace that frees the believer from anxieties and fears, which come from the harassment that Satan brings into his life, through demonic pressures and temptations. Thank the Lord for the Gospel of peace or the practical peace that comes into our life when we receive the Gospel message.

God’s peace is promised to us in the time of spiritual conflict with the enemy and prepares us (“preparation of the gospel of peace”) for the battle (Col. 3:15; John 14:27; Isa. 26:3). What a refuge we have though the peace of God. I don’t have to fear that Satan will destroy me and make my life miserable. Instead, I can possess God’s peace through the time of battle, knowing that God is on my side and will not allow my heart to be disturbed from His perfect peace and rest. We must always remember that God’s saints are the objects of His deep concern and care and the Lord provides peace for them in the time of battle. The Gospel has brought God’s peace into our life and this in return prepares us for the spiritual battle.

“Like the sunshine after rain, like a rest that follows pain,
Like a hope returned again, is the peace that Jesus gives.
Oh the peace that Jesus gives, never dies it always lives,
Like the music of a psalm, like a great eternal calm,
Is the peace that Jesus gives.”

Pursuing Peace (Sharing the Gospel of Peace)

There is also a pursuing (sharing) peace. This means that we should take the Gospel message, which tells how a person can have peace with God, and then share it with other people who are lost in sin. This is evangelism. When we have your “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” it means that we are ready to share the Gospel message with others. We are prepared to be a witness for Christ and bring the message of peace to others – the message how they too can have peace before God.

But we might ask, “How does sharing the Gospel of peace with others help in our own personal battle with Satan?” To state it simply, being prepared or ready to witness for Christ, or staying active in the Lord’s service, keeps us from idleness and spiritual lethargy. Our Lord said, “But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way” (Matt. 13:25). Readiness to witness and serve the Lord will keep us active in the work of the Lord instead of the devil’s work. The Bible says you should be prepared or ready to share the Gospel of peace with others wherever you go. Romans 10:15 says, “And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”

Sharing the message of peace that others can have before God keeps a Christian actively engaged in the work of God. Activity in God’s work (evangelism) is one way to help ward off the attacks of the devil (1 Cor. 15:58). Laziness provides a wedge for the devil to work in our life. A lazy man is the devil’s workshop.

Someone said: “The train of failure usually runs on the track of laziness.” Satan usually can get to us faster when we are idle and stay cooped up in our own little world of self-centeredness and do not serve the Lord (1 Tim. 5:13-15). Sharing the Gospel of peace with others keeps us active in God’s work and this in return keeps our mind engaged on spiritual things and others instead of ourselves (John 13:1-16). Starting to love and serve others will help us to overcome fear and many other sins because it gets our mind off ourselves and redirects our attention to the needs of others (1 John

4:18). Self-pity and self-centeredness usually become a breeding ground for Satan to work. We must deny ourselves of pity (Luke 9:23) and start sharing the Gospel of peace with others through email, letters, tracts, and witnessing. It will help keep us on the victorious road instead of the road of defeat.

So, we can conclude that our positional, practical, and pursuing peace (evangelism/service for the Lord), which is related to the Gospel message, prepares us (makes you ready) for our spiritual battle with Satan. It provides us with strength, stability, and steadfast service for the Lord, as we face our number one spiritual enemy in the world, who is the devil.

Shield of Faith

The shield of faith is an important part of the Christian armor (Eph. 6:16). The fact that Paul says we are to “above all” take up the shield of faith stresses the importance of possessing faith for the battle. Faith is pictured as a soldier’s shield designed to deflect and destroy the fiery darts that Satan sends our way. The Roman soldier had a body length shield placed in front of him at all times. It was covered in leather and soaked in water before the battle to extinguish fiery darts that were shot in his direction. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). If we are ever going to be victorious, we must demonstrate faith in the Lord’s power and provision for our lives. It’s faith and not feelings that will bring victory into our lives. This is because feelings unguided by truth cannot be trusted.

The “shield of faith” (Eph. 6:16) is said to extinguish the “fiery darts” of Satan or as we might say in today’s terminology “the blazing missiles” of Satan. This is because Satan shoots fiery suggestions into our minds to lust, or to look at something that we should not, to be angry, or to demonstrate pride. He also shoots fear, depression, doubt, worry, and self-pity into our minds. When we become afraid, we lose our faith in the Lord’s ability to help us.

We need to keep the shield of faith in front of us at all times so Satan’s flaming or suggestive arrows do not take root in our hearts and minds. Faith or steadfast reliance on God and His truth can snuff out any accusations, temptations, deceptions, or tricks that the devil

sends our way. Faith extinguishes the flames that threaten to ignite us into lust, anger, discouragement, doubt, lack of service for God, and many other sinful desires that can invade our soul. Behind the shield we can sometimes see the fiery darts coming in our direction, but the shield of faith provides us with protection from the enemy's assaults on our life. As we place our trust in God's provision and promises the power of temptation can be destroyed over our lives. The shield requires our active faith for its effectiveness ("taking the shield of faith" – vs. 16). This means that we must go through the process of claiming our armor and believing what we have in Christ. We must make the effort and determination to walk and live by faith. We are in a battle and only persistent effort to apply God's armor to our lives will bring victory. The application of God's armor to our lives can only happen when we apply the armor to our lives through faith. Faith is the victory!

"Faith is the victory, Faith is the victory,
Oh glorious victory,
That overcomes the world."

The believer's steadfast faith in God's person and power (Eph. 6:10; Gen. 15:1), God's providence (Rom. 8:28; Prov. 3:5-6; 1 Cor. 10:13), and God's promises (Rom. 10:17; 2 Pet. 1:4; 2 Cor. 1:20) brings faith into our hearts. These things act as a pump to transport faith into our hearts, so that we can overcome the devil. The important thing is to quench the fiery dart immediately by acting in faith. Instantly look to Christ by faith, recall some promise of the Word, and believe it. If you don't the fire will start to spread, and if you add fuel to the fire it will burn beyond your control. Your feelings will get aroused and upset, and before long Satan will be in control. So, faith is the victory – the shield of faith. To trust is to experience triumph in Christ. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world! Faith believes that God can provide the Christian with victory over any sin. Faith says, "No matter what happens God will give the victory." We must have faith and believe that nothing is impossible with God (Luke 1:37). When we pray in doubt we do without (James 1:6-7). Faith is utter dependence on God's presence, power, and provision. Faith puts God between the believer and the enemy.

“Strong to meet the foe,
Marching on we go,
While our cause we know
Must prevail;
Shield and banner bright
Gleaming in the light,
Battling for the right,
Me ne’er can fail.”

It’s important to remember that Satan wants to weaken our faith in the truth of God’s Word during the struggles and hardships of life (see 1 Thess. 3:1-7 - note the emphasis on faith in this chapter). When Satan tempted Eve, he began by weakening her faith in God - Gen. 3:1 - “Yea, hath God said?” We must never forget that Satan’s number one goal is to weaken our faith in God, the truth of God’s Word, and that we are victors in Christ. When our faith is weakened, we are vulnerable to Satan’s fiery darts. The shield of faith is an absolute necessity in the time of battle. We must keep it ever before us or we will be wounded by Satan’s fiery suggestions.

Hebrews 11:33-34 speaks about believers who possessed great faith in the time of the devil’s persecution and suffering - “Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” One of the greatest temptations that we face in our Christian lives is to stop being dependent upon God and relying on our own intellect and resources. As long as we think we can live the Christian life by ourselves, we will fail miserably. The spiritual erosion occurs when our confidence of faith is shifted to our own resources and abilities instead of directing our faith toward God. It takes faith in the Lord to live the Christian life (Prov. 3:5-6). Someone created an acrostic of what true victorious faith stands for and what faith must claim during the Christian battle.

F – Forgiveness of sin
A – Assurance of salvation
I – Identification in God’s family
T – Triumph over Satan
H – Hope of deliverance

Helmet of Salvation

The Roman soldier would wear a helmet in order to protect his head or skull area from injury. Any vital blow to the head area would mean sure defeat and death. In the Christian experience the “helmet of salvation” (Eph. 6:17) refers to protection for the believer’s mind. The salvation or deliverance being referred to is the practical salvation (present tense of salvation) in the believer’s life. Satan’s invasion of our thinking processes is the way he defeats our lives (2 Cor. 11:3). This is Satan’s chief strategy. Satan’s target is our mind. Satan wants to keep us ignorant of God’s truth so that he can control our minds. When we begin to believe any of Satan’s lies, we develop a double mind and try to live with two minds (James 1:8). We can develop spiritual schizophrenia where the mind divides itself into two parts. One part believes truth and the other part believes Satan’s lies. We should constantly pray for an undivided heart in all that we do (Psalm 86:11). We must be careful of the tendency to have faith in one area but not faith in another area or be willing to be victorious in one area but not another. When we try to live like this, we become divided in our thinking and are no longer loyal to our Master (1 Cor. 7:22).

We must understand that the physical mind of the human body is actually used by the unseen or immaterial human spirit (1 Cor. 2:11). The human spirit is a spiritual entity tied to the spiritual world of existence. God communicates to us through our human spirit (Job 32:8; Prov. 20:27), which relays truth to our physical mind in our bodily existence. Therefore, our thinking process is a spiritual matter and becomes the primary place of attack where Satan, who is a spirit being, can tempt us. He approaches us through the realm of our unseen spiritual existence. The mind is susceptible and vulnerable to Satan’s lies, half-truths, errors, and other counterfeit ways that he has designed to manipulate and control our minds or inner being (Acts 8:5).

Satan can attack the mind and heart of people relentlessly and ruthlessly. He has the power to project thoughts into our mind so that we actually believe they are the thoughts that we think. In order to possess victory our minds, which are a spiritual entity, must be reprogrammed with the truth of God’s Word (Rom. 12:1-2). We must

change our thinking habits (Phil. 4:8). David found this to be true long ago (Psalm 119:11). If we are serious about protecting our mind from Satan's control, we must fill it with God's Word. Dear friend, just when we feel the most lost and forsaken, just when the enemy seems to be winning the day, just when the storm is heaviest, the helmet of deliverance comes to lead us back to safety.

Let us remember that thoughts that are wrong must be replaced with thoughts that are righteous and holy. Thoughts of defeat must be replaced with thoughts and promises of victory. Thoughts of discouragement, despair, and divisiveness must be replaced with truthful thoughts that rest upon the foundation of God's Word. Satan will bring thoughts into your mind like, "You can't do anything right. You will never amount to anything for God. There is no hope for you. Give up. You don't have to go to church today. Skip prayer meeting and devotions." These kinds of thoughts are not from our own thinking, as the devil would want us to believe, but from Satan's own book of thoughts.

The believer must learn to take inventory of his thought life and possess a solid rock commitment to truth (John 8:32). After all, your faith is only as great as your knowledge of the object of your faith, which is truth. Little knowledge results in little faith. If you only believe what you feel you will be led through life by one emotional impulse after another and never have freedom through the absolute standard of truth – the Bible. Once we know truth our feelings can line up with truth. We must walk by faith, according to what we believe or know to be true.

The counterfeit and deception must be exposed and demolished by the unbreakable standard of truth (2 Cor. 10:4-5). Choosing the truth may be difficult if you have been living a lie. Remember that deception is the subtlest of all satanic strongholds (John 8:44). The helmet refers to the mind controlled by God, which provides daily spiritual deliverance (salvation) from Satan's thoughts. Satan is a deceiver (2 Cor. 11:1-4; Rom. 12:9) and we must learn to think thoughts geared around the truth if we are going to be victorious. If Satan gets his thoughts into our mind we will be deceived by his wiles (Eph. 6:11), possess a corrupted mind (2 Cor. 11:3) and play into his masquerade of deception (2 Cor. 11:14).

The most powerful weapon in Satan's arsenal is the power of suggestion. Satanic suggestions will constantly keep us in defeat if we do not wear the helmet of deliverance (1 Tim. 4:1). When we reprogram our minds or thinking patterns God can control the mind and Satan cannot lead us astray. Let us remember that intellectual deception and defiance is the reason we live in defeat. Our minds can become a spiritual junkyard that needs to be emptied and replaced by new righteous and victorious thoughts (Eph. 4:23 – "renewed in the spirit of your mind"). The believer must learn to demolish the satanic thoughts and not allow them to control his mind (and keep guard over his mind (1 Pet. 1:13 – "gird up the loins of your mind").

Although we cannot escape evil thoughts from racing into our thinking process, we can rid ourselves of evil thoughts and do not have to be overcome by them. If we entertain the conception or thought of lust too long, then rejecting our passion will become increasingly difficult. In fact, sin will be generated (see James 1:13-15). There is a short time span between the conception stage of sin ("lust hath conceived") and the actual birth of sin ("bringeth forth sin"). The Bible says, "make not provision for the flesh" (Rom. 13:14). This word has the basic meaning of planning ahead or forethought. This means that we allow the flesh to control our lives when we think about sinful or wrong thoughts too long. We dwell upon wrong thoughts, plan them out in our minds, and eventually end up doing them.

In short, when we plan to sin, we will sin! Most sinful behavior results from wrong ideas and lustful desires that we allow to linger in our minds too long! Then too, we make provision for the flesh (make plans to sin) when we buy things that are associated with temptation, go places that are associated with temptation, watch things that tempt us to sin, when we make it easy for ourselves to sin, and when we give a higher priority to the physical than to the spiritual. We should not indulge the flesh even a little. Rather, we should, as someone stated: "Give no chance for the flesh to have its fling."

We are what we think (Prov. 23:7 – "as he thinks so is he") so we ought to "think on these things" (Phil. 4:8) or those very things which are rooted in truth, purity, holiness, and righteousness. Satan shoots his "fiery darts" (satanic suggestions – Eph. 6:16) into our minds and we need to deal with these thoughts or they will overcome our

spiritual thinking processes. If we fail to program truth into our minds and hearts, we will be victimized by Satan and ultimately become a victim of the world culture.

Earl Radmacher said it best:

“The truth of God establishes our vision, straightens our course, and resets our compass on the North Pole of accurate thought.”

The way we think is really the beginning of victory or the start of our spiritual downfall and defeat. And we must remember that our victory does not lie in having our minds occupied with the enemy – the devil. Our victory lies in looking unto Jesus and keeping our eyes fixed upon Him (Heb. 12:2; Phil. 1:21; Eph. 6:10). Jesus is the Victor! Victorious Lord! Victorious Lord! Jesus as Lord is the only One who “able to succour (aid) them that are tempted” (Heb. 2:18). Someone once remarked: “We must never see Satan without seeing God.” This means that Jesus is the only One who can rescue or deliver us in the time of temptation. Jesus is called salvation (Luke 2:30) and the “Lord is my light and my salvation (Psalm 27:1). Deliverance is always in the person of our blessed Lord. True deliverance requires Someone else to rescue us from a situation in which we are helpless. Jesus is that Someone.

Reference to the imagery of the Roman helmet is also called “the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8). Let me pass on a practical note. You can believe that your situation is hopeless and become convinced that you are trapped in your bondage and there’s nothing you can do and there is no way out. When you believe the enemy’s lie and get to this point you must remember that there is hope – the hope of deliverance through Jesus Christ.

The repeated Scriptural principle and practical truth is this. Jesus always delivers His people from adversity (2 Pet. 2:9). However, the “hope of salvation” in the context refers to the blessed hope and promise of Christ’s imminent return for His saints before the Tribulation Period. Even the truth about Christ’s imminent coming and the believer’s pre-tribulational Rapture protects our minds from fear, worry, and anxiety knowing that God has promised to deliver His people from judgment. It reminds us that God is working for his people and is the great Deliverer. Satan would like to get the

believer's attention off of Christ's imminent return since the any moment return of Christ, prior to the Tribulation Period, is a strong motive and incentive for holy living (1 John 3:2), strength (James 5:8), and faithfulness (1 Cor. 15:51-58; Rev. 2:25; 3:3,11). The pretribulational Rapture of the Church, which will occur at Christ's imminent return, provides an incentive to live victoriously. If Satan can get our minds away from the great doctrinal truth of Christ's imminent return it will be a subtle victory for the enemy. Perhaps today!

Sword of the Spirit

The way we keep wearing the "helmet of salvation" (deliverance) is by applying "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" to our minds and hearts. The Bible is comparable to a sword. The Roman sword was especially important in the battle for it was his major weapon. It was a short sword that was double-edged and ideal for close combat. It could be taken out for fighting in a moment's time. The soldier could cut with both sides of the sword making it a lethal weapon. What a wonderful picture of the power of God's Word. For believers today, our sword and weapon is the Word of God. We do battle with Satan by using the Scriptures. The Bible (truth) needs to become the center of our existence – not feelings and circumstances. We do not have to be victims of our feelings and circumstances. Our moods cannot form the basis of our decisions. Truth must be the foundation of all our decisions. We can become victors by following the truth of Scripture.

God's Word is a divinely powerful weapon. If you don't use it on the battlefield you will quickly become disabled and defeated. When we lose our sword of protection to fight off the enemy, we are going to suffer defeat. Satan will try and test you and get you to doubt God's Word. He will challenge your faith in God's truth. Remember that Satan convinced Eve that God's Word was not reliable, and this became her downfall. When we take our focus off of truth, we are left defenseless. Satan will also try to manipulate the truth and give you a wrong understanding of the Bible. This is why we need to know "sound doctrine" today (Titus 1:9; 2:1) and not follow Satan's lies, which are "contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:10). If I didn't believe the word of God could produce victory and salvation in the lives of

people, I would quit preaching and do something else. As Christians we must love truth and live truth so wherever we walk we can stand on victory ground.

The “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17) is said to be the “word of God.” This means that the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16). It was given to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). Therefore, it is the Holy Spirit that teaches us the Word of God (John 14:26) and guides us in all truth (John 16:13). It is the Holy Spirit who reminds us of what we have learned and enables us to practice what He has taught us through the Bible. The “sword of the Spirit” first means that the Holy Spirit drives home the truth of the Bible to our own hearts and lives and makes it very practical and helpful in the time of temptation (Heb. 4:12).

The Bible cuts into the deep recesses of our thoughts so that we can think right and possess an accurate understanding of truth. The Spirit takes the Scriptures and touches our hearts and minds with the truth. In doing so He enables us to do battle against Satan. The Spirit also applies the power of the “sword” against our foe in the time of battle as we use it. So the Spirit uses the sword to affect our own thinking so that we in return can do battle against Satan. The sword affects us first and then it affects our foe when we stick the devil with the truth.

Think of this way. The Holy Spirit wrote the Word and the Holy Spirit brings important verses to your attention in the time of temptation to produce sanctification and victory in our lives (John 15:3). You simply need to take these verses by faith and use them in the battle. The Bible is the book of the Spirit and it is to be used in conjunction with prayer as we do battle with Satan (Acts 6:4). There is nothing passive about spiritual warfare. We must use the Scriptures in the time of battle if we are going to be victorious. The Holy Spirit of God will enable you to use the Word of God in the battle against Satan. In fact, the Holy Spirit will show you when Satan is using the Bible to promote his own lies as He did with Christ in the wilderness (Matt. 4:6-7).

Satan is busy twisting people’s perspective of the Word of God so that they in the end walk away from the truth. But it’s the Word of God that is our source and eternal fountain of victory. And let me say that

there is no substitute for persistent, steady, consistent application of God's Word against Satan. Using the Scriptures against the Evil One is the most urgently needed discipline of the Christian home and church.

We must remember that our words, which come forth from our lips, are not magic. The Holy Spirit does not use our words, but His inspired words revealed in the Bible. The Holy Spirit is the One who empowers His Word when we pray through Bible verses dealing with the promises about victory. He is also the One who empowers us as we use His Word. The sword will be of no value to us if we forget about the power of the Author (Acts 1:8) and when we are grieving or quenching the Spirit's ministry in our lives (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19). We cannot effectively use the Word of God in warfare unless the Holy Spirit is controlling us (Eph. 5:18). Using the Scripture without the strength of the Author will lead to defeat (Gal. 5:25 – "walk in the Spirit"). This means that we should not deify the Bible and make it into some kind of book of magic that we seek to use in our own power and strength. We must use the truth in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I think the discipline of getting up every morning and reaching for your Bible is an important part of spiritual victory. Every morning we should present our body and mind to God for spiritual renewal (Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2). It is a good thing to reaffirm the surrender of our body and will to the Lord through prayer. Then we need to meditate on the Word of God for it is the Word of God that renews the mind and transforms it (Rom. 12:2). Prayer and the Word of God go hand in hand. The Bible produces light, but prayer taps into God's power and produces the heat and energy to live, as we should.

The important thing is that when we pray, we yield ourselves fully to God's will and then we are ready to be directed in the will of God through reading the Scriptures. When we practice this system, we will be totally surrendered to God (body, mind, and will) and ready to yield to the transforming truth of the Bible. The Holy Spirit can work in our lives when our body, mind, and will are yielded to God. Please note that these are the three areas that Satan wants to attack. Satan tempts you so that you will yield your body to sin by becoming impatient or calloused to God's will, as found in the Bible. He wants to attack your mind with lies to make you ignorant of God's will and

Word. At the same time the devil wants to attack your own will with pride or self-sufficiency and make you independent of God's perfect will.

When we yield ourselves to God in body, mind, and will it's then we can start a new journey whereby the Holy Spirit will enable us to live godly and victoriously. The Holy Spirit is "the spirit of wisdom and understanding" and "the spirit of counsel" (Isa. 11:2; Eph. 1:17) who will teach us God's truth and bring it to our minds when Satan attacks us. As the "spirit of knowledge" He will give us discernment and skillful perception of the enemies plans and tricks. As the "spirit of counsel" (Isa. 11:2) he will give us advice on how to live and make proper decisions that line up with God's will. The Holy Spirit is also called the "Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29; Zech. 12:10) to strengthen us in the time of suffering and hardship. As the Holy Spirit of power (Luke 4:14; 1 Cor. 2:4; Zech. 12:10) and "spirit of might" (Isa. 11:2) He will empower us to say "No!" in the time of temptation. The Holy Spirit will work in us and through us to defeat the enemy. As "the spirit of holiness" (Rom. 1:4) he will enable us to live a holy life.

The purpose of every believer should be to prayerfully meditate on God's Word and even speak forth the truth of God's Word so that the Spirit of God will enable our minds to be transformed through the Word of God. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 says, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." When we recognize afresh and anew that this is God's Word and absolute truth then we are ready to assimilate to our lives.

So, each believer needs to awake with a surrendered heart and mind (Rom. 12:1-2). They must surrender to God and His will as found in the Scripture as they reaffirm the truthfulness of Scripture and its authority over their lives. Remember that the will of God is the most important thing in the believer's life (Ps. 40:8; Col. 1:9; 4:12; 1 Pet. 4:2; 1 John 2:17). Satan's target and goal is to get to your will and control it. He knows that living the Christian life is basically a matter of the will. If Satan can get us to follow our own will, we will end up bypassing God's will for our lives. We are told to love the Lord God with all of our heart (emotions), soul (personality), mind (intellect) and

strength (service) – Mark 12:30. This involves our entire will. We are to love God with our whole being. Consistent Christian living involves the believer giving his will to the Master (Rom. 6:12-13).

When our will is guided by the truth of God's Word, then God's will can become our foundation in life and we have spiritual willpower to live wisely and victoriously. As the deceiver, Satan seeks to make you ignorant of God's will, impatient with God's will, and bypass God's will altogether. He seeks to control your mind or thinking so that you can act or live independently of God's will as found in the Bible. If Satan can get you to act and think independent of God's will, which is found only in the Bible, then he can then control your will and life. One of the most important lessons the believer must learn is that he cannot live independent of God. He needs God's Word and power to sustain him spiritually.

The emphasis on the "word (rhema) of God" in Ephesians 6:17 means "utterances or sayings of the Scriptures." The emphasis is on the outspoken word. This would suggest that believers must learn the secret of quoting and claiming specific portions of the Bible that will help them in the specific battles which they are facing. It's one thing to wear the belt of truth (Eph. 6:14), and know truth to counteract Satan's lies, but it's another thing to actually apply specific portions of Scripture by speaking forth and claiming truth in the time of battle. This outspoken word is very significant for it actually indicates the need to speak forth the Word of God in the time of battle and use those portions of Scripture that have immediate application to the situations we are facing ("Let the redeemed of the Lord say so - Ps. 107:2).

Many believers still have their sword in the sheath. But we must remember that the enemy responds to God's sayings. The old adage says: the best defense is a good offense. A thorough knowledge and skillful use of the Word (spoken Word) is a most formidable weapon when doing battle with our spiritual enemy. The Bible says that the believer must resist the devil ("Whom resist steadfast in the faith" - 1 Pet. 5:9). This means we must know the truth of Scripture so that we can resist the devil's temptations and lies, which he brings before us, in order to ruin our lives. Since our primary weapon against the devil is the Word of God, we must learn to aggressively quote the

Scriptures as Jesus did in the time of temptation. We may even want to use some of the very verses Jesus used (Luke 4:4; 4:8).

It is good that we have verses ready to combat the three major categories of temptation mentioned in 1 John 2:16 – “the lust of the flesh” (1 Pet. 2:11; 1 Thess. 4:3), “the lust of the eyes” (Job 31:1; Ps. 101:3) and “the pride of life” (Prov. 16:18; 29:23; 1 Tim. 3:6; James 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:5). Other verses that you can bring to your attention when the devil tempts you, would be verses that strike at the very core of the devil’s defeat (Gen. 3:15; John 12:31; 16:11, 33; Rom. 8:37; 16:20; Colossians 1:13; 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 2:13; 3:8; 5:4; 5:18; Rev. 12:11; 20:10). In the time of temptation, you should also emphasize those verses that bring God’s promise for personal victory to your attention (Ps. 16:8; 91:1-6; Rom. 6:6,13-14; 8:37; 1 Cor.15:57; 2 Cor. 2:11, 14; Phil. 4:13; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; Heb. 13:20-21; Jude 24-25) and your authority over Satan in Christ (Eph. 1:19-22).

As you prayerfully meditate before the Lord and speak to Him about the victory of the cross, God’s promises for personal victory, and your authority over Satan, through the use of Bible passages, Satan will flee your presence as a defeated coward (James 4:7). The Bible brought before your mind and heart will provide a means of escape from the devil’s old temptations and bag of tricks (see Psalms 119:11). There is no substitute for persistent, steady, consistent application of God’s Word against Satan. The devil was defeated by the Lord’s persistent use of the sword (Luke 4:1-13).

“O may I love Thy precious Word,
 May I explore the mine,
May I its fragrant flowers glean,
 May light upon me shine!

 O may I find my armor there!
 Thy Word my trusty sword,
I’ll learn to fight with every foe
 The battle of the Lord.”

We must remember that doing battle with the devil is a truth encounter. Satan cannot be out-muscled or out-shouted, but he can

be out-truthed! Truth is the liberating agent and way of victory! Satan wants you to doubt the plain things and the main things of the Bible. He wants to get you to suffocate these main truths of Scripture by replacing them with your own fleshly decision to live contrary to His Word and holiness (Luke 8:12; Gen. 3:1-5). Satan can try and make something, which is evil, appear to be spiritual to us. He is a master at this trade. But the better you know the Word of God, the easier it will be for you to detect Satan's lies and reject his offers. This is why you need to learn the Word of God and effectively use even specific portions of the Bible that will give you victory over many plaguing sins.

Every believer must effectively and prayerfully apply those portions of the Bible to your life that will give you victory over such things as worry (Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7; Isa. 26:3-4; 41:10, 13; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; Matt. 6:33-34), stress (1 Pet. 5:7; Phil. 4:7, 9; Isa. 26:3), jealousy (Prov. 14:30; James 1:14-15; 1 Cor. 13:4; Job 5:2; Prov. 3:31; 23:17), pride (Prov. 6:16-17; 16:18, 1 Pet. 5:5; 1 Jn. 2:16), anger (Eph. 4:26, 31-32; Col. 3:8; Jam. 1:19-20; Rom. 12:9; Ps. 4:4; Prov. 14:17, 29; 15:18; 16:32; 20:22; Jonah 4:4, 9), lying (Ex. 20:16; Ps. 15:1-2; 34:14; Prov. 12:22; Col. 3:9; Eph. 4:25; 1 John 2:21), loneliness (Duet. 31:6; Ps. 25:16; 65:5-6; 102:7-11; 142:1-4; Heb. 13:5), fear (Ps. 34:4; 1 Pet. 5:7; Josh. 1:9; Isa. 41:10, 13; 1 Jn. 4:18; Matt. 6:34), depression (Ps. 16:8; 34:18; 43:5; 46:1), discouragement (Ps. 42:5-6; 46:1; Isa. 41:10; 2 Cor. 4:8-9), grief (Ps. 23:4; 34:18; 116:15; 147:3; Rom. 8:38-39; Phil. 1:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:6-8; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Isa. 26:3; Isa. 41:10; Ps. 147:3; John 14:1), divorce (Matt. 19:6; 1 Cor. 7:39, 10-11; Mal. 2:15-16; Luke 16:18), abortion (Ex. 20:13; Ps. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5; Prov. 14:12; 12:15; 16:2; Ps. 32:3-5; 40:1-3), alcohol (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 13:13-14; 1 Pet. 4:1-3; Isa. 5:11-12, 22; Hab. 2:15-16; Prov. 20:1; 23:31) rock music (Ps. 40:3; 2 Tim. 4:4; Rom. 6:13; Phil. 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:11; 1 Cor. 6:19-20), eating disorders (1 Pet. 4:3-4; 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 19-20; Prov. 23:2), covetousness (Luke 12:15; Rom. 13:9; 1 Tim. 6:9-10), contentment (1 Tim. 6:6-8; Phil. 4:11-12), gossip (Prov. 11:13; 18:8; 21:23; 26:20, 22; Ps. 141:3; James 1:26; 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:10; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6; 1 Tim. 5:13), past memories (Phil. 3:13-15; Luke 9:62; Eph. 4:22-23; 2 Cor. 5:17; 10:4-5; Phil. 4:8), guilt (1 John 8-10; Isa. 1:18; 43:25; Mic. 7:18-19; 103:12), syndromes (Ps. 91:1-16; Is. 43:1-2; 42:11), submission (Eph. 5:21-22; Col. 3:8; 1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Pet. 3:1,5-6; Heb. 13:17),

church attendance (Heb. 11:25; Ps. 84:0; 122:1), television/movies (Ps. 101:3; Eph. 5:4; Rom. 8:5-6; Isa. 5:20; Col. 3:1; Phil. 4:8; Rom. 12:1-2); improper dress (1 Tim. 2:9-10; Prov. 11:22; 31:10; 1 Pet. 3:3-5), temptation (Jam. 1:14; 1 Cor. 10:13), sexual purity (Ex. 20:17; Rom. 13:14; James 1:21; 1 Thess. 4:3-6; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; Job 31:1; Matt. 5:28; Heb. 13:4; 1 Tim. 2:22; Col. 3:5-10), homosexuality (Rom. 1:24-27; Jude 1:7; Lev. 20:13; Rom. 8:5-6; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Ps. 141:4; 1 Pet. 4:1-3; Gal. 5:16); unforgiveness (Eph. 4:30-32; Matt. 6:14-15; 18:21-22), occult (Eph. 5:11; 6:10-12; 1 Pet. 2:9; Deut. 18:10-12; Gal. 5:19-20; Isa. 8:19; 1 John 4:4), procrastination (Ps. 90:12; Eph. 5:15-18; 1 Cor. 15:58), laziness (Prov. 10:4, 12:24, 13:4, 20:4, 31:27; Ecc. 10:18; 1 Tim. 5:8-14; 2 Thess. 3:10-12; Heb. 6:12; Rom. 12:11; 1 Cor. 15:58; Gal. 6:9), lack of faith or unbelief (Ps. 20:7; Isa. 26:4; Prov. 3:5-6; Jer. 17:7-8; Mk. 11:22), profanity (Col. 3:8; 4:6; Eph. 5:4), gambling (Luke 12:15; Rom. 13:9; 1 Tim. 6:9-10; Phil. 4:11; Hag. 1:6) and trials (2 Cor. 1:3-4; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12-13; 2 Tim. 2:3; James 1:12; Rom. 8:28).

Whatever your area, or areas of weaknesses might be, you want to develop an arsenal of verses to deal with them and be ready for the evil day of temptation. This will help you to target specific temptations. Let us not forget: Our inner most being must be directed by the objective truth of Scripture and not the subjective experiences, feelings, and moods that we like to feel. We must accept God's Word as our final authority since the strongholds in our mind (2 Cor. 10:3-5) are reinforced by our own feelings, and the deceptive thoughts and lies of Satan. We can either cling to a wrong belief system and to wrong subjective feelings or believe God's objective written truth and claim His victory. Beware of trusting your own fleshly feelings.

“The arm of flesh will fail you,
Ye dare not trust your own.”

Prayer and Victory

Each piece of the armor must be put on with prayer. This is how we make the armor of God work in our daily experience. We must mentally pray on the armor. That's why in Ephesians 6:18 we are told to wear the armor “praying always.” This statement suggests the thoroughness and intensity of our praying. Prayer should be a habit

and not an isolated act (1 Thess. 5:17). We are to always be ready to pray and commit ourselves to a consistent life of prayer. We are not to become lax in our praying. The devil is never far away when we become too busy to pray. A Christian must “pray always” because he is always subject to temptations and attacks of the devil.

The text then says, “with all prayer and supplication” (with all kinds of prayers and requests). There are many kinds of prayers that we should make such as public and private prayers; deliberate and spontaneous prayers; supplication and intercession; confession and humiliation; praise and thanksgiving. All of these different types of prayers are to keep their focus on the subject of victory, whether they are prayers of praise, prayers of intercession, or public and private prayers. The point of the writer is that a key subject in all of our praying needs to be victory. Thus, the additional words “and supplication” (vs. 18) stress the need to cry out for victory on behalf of the other saints. Furthermore, as we pray for the victory of others we will do so “in the Spirit” which simply means to pray under the guidance, power, and filling of the Holy Spirit (see Jude vs. 20). Our prayers must be inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit.

The text goes on to specifically speak about this victorious praying when saying: “watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” Christians should fight shoulder-to-shoulder and knee-to-knee while being spiritually alert to Satan’s movements against them. The formula “Watch and pray” is the secret of victory over the world (Mark 13:33), the flesh (Mark 14:38), and the devil (Eph. 6:18). Like reliable soldiers, we are to stay spiritually alert to Satan’s workings in our own lives and the lives of other believers (“watching thereunto”), and keep being persistent in the matter of prayer, as we pray for personal and corporate victory in the lives of God’s people.

We must persistently keep on asking, seeking, and knocking (Luke 11:9). The word perseverance simply means “to stick to it and not quit.” The early believers prayed this way (Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4); and we also should pray this way (Rom. 12:12 – “continuing instant in prayer”). Most of us quit praying just before God is about to give the victory! All of us can persevere in prayer far more than we do and staying spiritually alert to what Satan is doing will keep us persistent

in our praying. Staying spiritually alert to Satan's workings will keep us on our knees! You might say that spiritual alertness and persistence in prayer go hand in hand – the one (persistence) naturally flows out of the other (alertness).

Someone wrote:

“God expects us to use our God-given senses, led by the Spirit, so that we detect Satan when he is beginning to work.”

There is a watching and alertness that is connected with prayer. When Nehemiah was repairing the walls of Jerusalem, and the enemy was trying to stop the work, Nehemiah defeated the enemy by watching and praying. “Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch” (Neh. 4:9). Praying for victory in the lives of God's people is vital for a continuing ministry of fruitfulness and blessing. “And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends” (Job 42:10). Did you know that it's a sin to not pray for others (1 Sam. 12:23)? Prayer changes things!

“My Soul be on thy guard,
Ten Thousand foes arise;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies.
Oh watch and fight and pray,
The armour ne'er lay down;
The fight of faith will not be o'er
Till thou receive the crown.”

A good summary of this verse would be as follows: “watching” focuses on the manner or way we are to pray (Matt. 26:41; Mark 13:33); “all perseverance” focuses on the persistence of prayer (Luke 11:9; 18:7, 8); “all saints” focuses on the objects of our prayers (1 Sam. 12:23).

Personal Prayer for Victory

The believer must remember to pray “in the Spirit” (vs. 18) in his time of personal battle with Satan. This does not mean to speak in some kind of gibberish or meaningless talk but to pray under the Spirit's guidance, direction, and filling ministry. Our prayers need to be

Spirit's directed and empowered. Let us remember that victory comes to us as we prayerfully claim our inheritance in Christ. The believer can mentally pray on each piece of spiritual armor and then put each piece to work whenever the enemy attacks him. These defensive pieces of armor, which are provided by God, require no action on our part, except to put them on by faith and trust God to make them work. Through prayer we contact God, pour our hearts out to Him, and then trust Him for power and victory. As we pray, we can actually pray on these pieces of armor, claiming what they will do for us, and then let God make them work for us in the time of battle. When we practice this type of praying the enemy will be defeated.

“Oh, how praying rests the weary!
Pray'r will change the night to day;
So when life seems dark and dreary,
Don't forget to pray.”

Each one of us, as God's people, must learn the secret of relying on the Lord's daily power through the provision of His armor. Believers must effectively use each piece of God's armor in the time of spiritual warfare through the ministry of prayer. We must pray forth Scripture references of truth and center our minds on truth instead of lies. As we pray, we must claim God's truth, our righteousness in Christ, the Gospel shoes of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the promises of the word – the sword of the Spirit. By praying in this manner, we can express our complete faith in God for victory. We must mentally pray the armor on claiming the provisions that the armor gives to us (truth, righteousness, peace, faith, deliverance) as we effectively use it against the enemy.

Some suggest that there is no need for the believer to mentally pray on the armor since he already possesses it. But this seems to miss Paul's main point when he says, “Put on the whole armour of God” (vs. 11) and “Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God” (vs. 13). There is a responsibility for each believer to claim what he already has and mentally dress himself for success with the provision of God's spiritual armor. We must actively, mentally, and prayerfully place this armor on our lives in order to experience victory. We agree with the hymn writer who said:

“Put on the gospel armor,
Each piece put on with prayer”

Then too, as we pray, we will be demonstrating that we are depending upon God for help and strength in the time of battle. All of the armor and all of the fighting, without prayer, will only lead to defeat. The enemy will override you if you fail to pray, as you should, and depend upon God for spiritual strength in the time of battle. There is a definite prayer battle that we must be engaged in today. And remember that truth and prayer are linked together in the Bible. We should not lack either of these important details for victory. God’s Word reveals the will of God for our lives (Ps. 40:8; 119:105) and prayer enables us to receive God’s power to do His will in the time of temptation. Each believer must take time to pray and then maintain an attitude of prayer and dependency throughout the day (Col. 4:2 – “continue in prayer”). Jesus said, “Watch and pray” (Mark 14:38). In short, we must keep the receiver off the hook! Maintain a habit and consistency about prayer. We must put on the armor with prayer and then realize that prayer is what makes all the armor work, as it should. The armor begins to work only as we pray. Prayer is the secret!

The beloved hymnwriter, William Cowper, wrote:
“Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer keeps the Christian’s armor bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon His knees.”

Corporate Prayer for Victory

It’s also vitally important that believers remember to pray for each other in the time of battle (“Watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” – Eph. 6:18b). We need to get in the habit of praying that God’s people would experience victory in their lives. We need to pray for victory to be experienced in the lives of other saints. How often we forget this! We are quick to condemn the saints but forget to pray that they would be victorious over the world and the enemy. There is power in corporate praying (Acts 12:12-13; Col. 4:2-3; 2 Chron. 7:14). Intercession for the saints to live victoriously is vital, necessary, and commanded by God. Jesus

prayed for Peter when He knew the devil was tempting him (Luke 22:31-32). Let us be alert to the needs of others and pray intercessory prayers for their victory over the Evil One (“Watch and pray” – Matt. 26:41). And when we do let us remember, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16).

“Principalities and powers
Mustering their unseen array,
Wait for thy unguarded hour;
Watch and pray.”

Jesus’ Prayer for Victory

Jesus also prayed a prayer of victory that His people can claim in the time of battle. We cannot forget the importance of the intercessory prayer of Jesus Christ. It is a prayer He made that promises sure victory over the Evil One. Jesus said in John 17:15, “I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil” The definite article would indicate that Jesus is talking about the Evil One or Satan himself (Matt. 5:37; 1 John 5:19). Then in verse 20 He adds: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” This is a prayer for protection and preservation from the enemy’s assaults and attacks (vs. 12).

Sometimes Christians think that it would be easier if they would leave this world (Numb. 11:15; 1 Kings 19:4; Jonah 4:3, 8) and live in seclusion somewhere (“out of the world”) but this is not true. Wherever we go, we take our own sinful self with us, and the powers of darkness will always follow us. Jesus did not pray for the isolation of his people but for the protection, security, and safety of His people from Satan’s power and influence as they carry out God’s work in enemy territory. This is a promise of victory for each child of God. God’s people can cling to the prayer promise of Jesus that we will be kept safe from Satan’s overcoming power and influence.

Remember that the Father has already answered the prayer of Jesus! The Father always answers the prayers of Jesus. Jesus was praying for victory in our lives in view of the coming cross and His defeat of Satan. Because of the prayer of Jesus, we have been given this

victory over the devil and demons today. The prayer of Jesus has already been answered with the Father's amen and we can be sure the Father has heard Jesus and will give His people victory in the time of battle. Satan cannot penetrate God's protection and victorious plan for the believer in Christ. The Christian has been given spiritual insulation from the Evil One. The prayer promise of Jesus is ours to claim! We must stand on the promise of this prayer and apply it to our lives in the daily battle of life.

“Standing on the promises that cannot fail,
When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,
By the living word of God I shall prevail,
Standing on the promises of God.”