

**The Christian Armor**  
(An Exposition of Ephesians 6:10-18)

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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.

Strong to meet the foe,  
Marching on we go,  
While our cause we know  
Must prevail;  
Shield and banner bright  
Gleaming in the light,  
Batt'ling for the right,  
We ne'er can fail.

Oh! Thou, God of all,  
Hear us when we call,  
Help us, one and all,  
By Thy grace;  
When the battle's done,  
And the vict'ry won,  
May we wear the crown  
Before Thy face.

Rouse then, soldiers! rally round the banner!  
Ready, steady, pass the word along;  
Onward, forward, shout aloud, Hosanna!  
Christ is the Captain of the mighty throng."

The believer has a victorious battle cry today that must be sounded forth with new freshness, zeal and triumphant determination. We are soldiers in a fierce battle and unless we realize this and discover God's strategy for victory the enemy will defeat us. Dear friend, we must sound the battle cry today against Satan who is our foe and raise the victorious standard high so that we might not be overcome and defeated by our enemy. Satan wants to ruin our personal lives, our families and our church ministries. We are in an all-out-war against Satan and evil. And when the believer realizes this he will at once flee to the Lord for victory and assistance.

There are two preparatory commands given in this section of Scripture. The first command is simple. We must be strong in the Lord's power (vs. 10). The second command is also clearly recognized. We must be schooled in the use of God's armor (vss. 11-18).

### 1. We Must Be Strong in the Lord's Power (Ephesians 6:10).

God's power is unleashed within our present lives through the spiritual armor that He has provided for us in this present period of grace. But behind the working of the armor is the power of the Lord. The power of Jesus Christ is the underlying premise of all that is going to be said about the armor.

Ephesians 6:10 says:

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

The first preparatory command in this section of Scripture is that we should be continually strengthened in the Lord and in the boundless resources of His might. God's best soldiers are those who are conscious of their own weakness and ineffectiveness, and who rely solely on Him. We have all the resources of Jesus Christ at our disposal to combat the devil and receive victory (Eph. 1:19). As we use the armor that God has provided for us we will do so by relying upon the strength of Jesus Christ who lives within us. The working of the armor revolves around the strength of the Lord who provides us with His victorious power to ward off Satan. As we put on the armor of God piece by piece we will do so relying upon the strength of the Lord knowing that it's only through His power that the armor can be

effective in our lives. So behind the armor is the power or strength of the Lord. The armor can only be effective as we experience the power of Jesus Christ operating in our lives. If you put on the armor but do not rely upon the inward working of the Lord's power in your life then you will be defeated. The armor is useless if we do not rely upon the inworking power of Jesus Christ operating in our lives. The armor can only work as we rely upon the power of the indwelling Christ (Phil. 4:13).

## 2. We Must Be Schooled in the Use of God's Armor (Ephesians 6:11-18)

The second preparatory command is given in Ephesians 6:11 and then explained in detail in verses 12-18. We must be schooled in the use of God's armor Ephesians 6:11 says, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

### A. The purpose for wearing the armor (Ephesians 6:11, 13, 14)

The purpose is given why we must wear this spiritual armor and is indicated by the word "that" in verse eleven. This same purpose is clearly seen in verses 13 and verse 14. God's armor provides protection and victory for our personal Christian lives. It gives us the divine aid needed to stand in victory against the devil and ward off his evil attacks upon our lives (Eph. 6:11, 13). The purpose for wearing this spiritual armor is so that we can stand our ground when the devil and his demons tempt us. If we wait to put the armor on until the devil strikes us, then it will be too late. The devil will trap us in his temptation. Likewise, if we don't wear each piece of the armor, then we will be living on the brink of defeat. Satan knows how to hit our open areas and bring us down into the place of defeat.

Ephesians 6:11 reads:

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

God has provided the "whole armor" for us. If we omit some portion of the armor, then we give Satan an unguarded place to attack us. Satan looks for that unguarded area where he can get a beachhead. When we fail to wear some of the armor we allow a vulnerable spot in our lives where Satan can

effectively defeat us. The Bible says we must beware of opening up a section of our lives to the enemy.

Ephesians 4:27 says:

“Neither give place to the devil.”

The story is told of a soldier who learned a valuable lesson the hard way. In 1586 a British soldier, Sir Philip Sidney, was fighting in the Netherlands. He saw one of his friends fighting in the battle without his leg armor on, so he figured he could take his off. But he was soon hit in the leg and died as a result. The enemy was able to find one small spot that was left unprotected, and he attacked that area. We are not to give up any territory.

Sometimes we can fall into the trap thinking that we don't need a certain piece of the armor. However, if we leave a piece out, we can be sure that the devil will hit us where we are unprotected! This armor mentioned here is spiritual armor, which you need to mentally put on and use within your Christian life. The armor of a soldier will help you to understand the real way to have victory. Doing battle with Satan while wearing the protection of this armor will result in victory and leave us in control of the battlefield. There is a military side to the Christian life. The Bible uses the images of war to depict the Christian life (see 2 Timothy 2:3; 1 Timothy 6:12). Someone has said, “The Christian life is not a playground, it is a battleground.” As a soldier in the Lord's army, God has given to us the armor and protection we need to fight off the enemy. We need to know what we must wear when we go to war.

In this section of the Word of God, we must note the posture of the warrior who is a saint. It is one of defense and not offense. The Christian does not go chasing after the devil in order to attack him and run him out of town. Just the opposite is true. The devil comes chasing after us as a roaring lion (1 Peter. 5:8) and we must defensively stand against his attacks and hold the ground that we have in Christ. The Scripture verifies this defensive stance.

Ephesians 6:11

“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

Ephesians 6:13

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day (the day of temptation), and having done all, to stand.”

Ephesians 6:14

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”

Why is there so much emphasis on standing? It's because the armor of the Christian life is given to help us maintain the ground that we already possess. We are told to stand and protect our territory so that we do not lose ground to the enemy. The purpose why we must wear this spiritual armor is not to gain new territory but to maintain the territory that is already ours in Christ. We must claim and hold on to the victory that was already won and provided for us through Jesus Christ. In Christ, we have already gained a great inheritance.

Ephesians 1:3

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

The Bible teaches that each believing sinner in some marvelous way is raised with Christ and has a spiritual sphere of existence in Christ up yonder in heaven. And it's from this unseen position in Christ that all of our spiritual blessings flow. In other words, the heavenlies is not only where Christ resides and is seated, but is also a place of spiritual existence for the child of God where he receives all of his spiritual blessings in Christ. We must remember that Christ is in heaven and every believer is already seated there with Christ sharing His own life. We have a spiritual bond or tie (union) with Jesus Christ in heaven so that we have already received all of the saving, transforming, victorious and eternal benefits that Christ has provided for us. Nothing has been left out! We have everything from A-Z!

We must conclude that the term “heavenlies” refers not only to the place where the glorified Jesus resides but also that sphere of spiritual existence in Christ that believer's share. It points to that spiritual unseen union with

Christ up yonder in glory. This relationship is naked to the physical eye but open or unveiled to the spiritual eye of faith. What a beautiful way to express salvation! Our salvation is in the heavenlies. It is up there in Christ and not down here in man! It resides in a person - Jesus Christ! This unique expression (“in the heavenlies in Christ”) tells the never-ending story that believers have already received every spiritual blessing from God Himself. This is because Jesus Christ is seated in heaven and each believer has a heavenly association or union with Christ. Because of this union they share the very life of Jesus Christ and receive the saving and sanctifying benefits from such a glorious relationship (Col. 3:1-4). They share a spiritual or invisible union with the risen Lord, which grants them the spiritual and eternal blessings of God Himself! This is what it means to be in the heavenlies.

Here is a pyramid of grace:

Blessing  
Spiritual blessing  
Every spiritual blessing  
Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places  
Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ

Merrill F. Unger explains what spiritual blessings are when saying: “They are the realm of the believer’s position and experience as a result of his being united to Christ by the baptism of the Spirit.”

1 Corinthians 12:13 says:

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

At the moment we were joined to Christ, by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit, we were forever delivered from the condemnation and bondage of our past position and brought into a new living and vital victorious union with the living Christ in glory. Because of this unique union with Christ we can experience and enjoy all the spiritual blessings brought into our lives through the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit. Spiritual blessings refer to those unseen blessings we receive from the hand of God as the Holy Spirit makes them applicable to our lives. Furthermore, we must understand that

the blessings of New Testament Christianity are spiritual, in that they deal with treasures that are nonmaterial, invisible, and imperishable.

It is true that the OT saints also enjoyed some spiritual blessings, but the Christian today enjoys spiritual blessings in Christ that were unknown in previous dispensations. To be “in Christ” (Eph. 1:3) in the present order means that I have an unseen spiritual union with Jesus in heaven. Being “in Christ” speaks of that union which our blessed Lord promised to His disciples – “Ye in me, and I in you” (John 14:20). It is that glorious position that the child of God has in the ascended and risen Lord which promises not only salvation (Romans 8:1) but also sanctification (Romans 6). From this union or position of grace we receive salvation and sanctification and every spiritual blessing that we will ever need in the Christian life. What a great inheritance we have in Christ. The Father has blessed us with this great inheritance.

1 Corinthians 3:21 promises: “... For all things are yours.” Colossians 2:10 concluded the whole matter by saying: “And ye are complete in him.” We have every spiritual blessing that we need in Christ – from salvation to victory over Satan. We have received a heavenly association in Christ and because we have been joined to the living Christ in glory, and possess a spiritual tie or union with Him, we have received everything that we need for salvation.

Dr. Ironside used to say: If Somebody says to me, “Have you had the second blessing?” Second blessing! My friend, I’m working way up in the hundreds—in fact, up in the thousands. I’ve not only had a second blessing; I’ve had a thousand blessings. He’s blessed us, and He’s done it in Christ.

God has done everything for us! He has given us everything (“all spiritual blessings”). Absolutely Everything! And you cannot add anything to an absolutely everything! You can’t add anything to everything! You can’t add some things to all things! It’s all of grace! It’s grace all the way my friend! Salvation from start to finish is all of God! It comes from the heavenlies in that it comes from God through the gracious provision of our spiritual tie with the risen Son of God. We have heavenly riches in heavenly places! What an inheritance we have received.

Ephesians 1:3 is worth repeating:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

Ephesians 1:11 also says:

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”

The heavenly inheritance that we have received in Christ is something that we already possess. As we have seen, this inheritance refers to all the spiritual blessings that we have through Christ. God has already blessed us with every spiritual resource in life that we need to overcome the devil and his demonic hordes. This is because of our position or union with Christ “in the heavenlies.” This is prepositional phrase that refers to the victorious place that Jesus occupies beside the Father in Heaven (Hebrews 1:3). The Bible teaches that Jesus victoriously ascended “far above” all principalities and powers declaring His absolute victory over them through His finished work upon the cross.

Ephesians 1:19-22

“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.”

Every spirit being is under the feet of Jesus Christ! That is victory! And the Bible teaches that every believer has this same victorious standing or position with Christ beside the Father. This means that we share in Christ’s victory and participate in His triumph over Satan, demons and the world system. We have the privilege of sitting on Christ’s throne. We stand in the victory of Christ up yonder in Heaven and can claim it down here upon



earth in our everyday lives. Part of this great inheritance is victory over the world system.

In view of His coming death and resurrection, Jesus said in John 16:33: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

The “world” is that organized system of wickedness that is against God and the Christian life. Since Jesus has overcome every evil spiritual force and entity within this wicked system, we can now claim the victory that Christ has won for our lives. Victory is summed up in that one little pronoun that relates to the work of Christ, “I.” Never forget what Jesus said. “I have overcome the world.” You cannot overcome the world by your own efforts. Christ has overcome the world for you! All you must do is claim the victory that Christ has already won by actively placing His armor upon your life.

In Christ (our position) we have also overcome the wicked One (the devil) and have been granted the privilege of present day victory over his evil forces in our lives.

1 John 2:14 says:

“I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.”

This means the spiritual armor of protection that we are told to wear is the armor that we can possess because of our spiritual tie with Christ’s victory. We can wear this armor and experience victory over the enemy all because of our great spiritual inheritance that we now possess in Christ. We are seated with Him in the heavenlies or this place of victorious position upon the throne. We have this armor to wear because we have been blessed with so much wealth and resources through Christ. Satan wants to rob us of this rich inheritance that we have in Christ. The devil wants us to surrender the ground that we already possess in Christ. He wants to rob us of the victorious ground that is ours through Christ by distracting our attention

away from the heavenlies and placing it upon the earthly! And if we are not prepared and protected with God's armor, Satan will take control of our lives and march into our own territory waving his evil victorious banner. As we will see, God has designed the armor to help defend us from those vicious attacks of the devil upon our lives. Each piece of armor reflects the areas that Satan tries to attack us. But do not be dismayed, "ye have overcome the wicked one."

Positionally we are seated with Him on the throne, but practically we are still here on planet earth. This means that we must translate our position in Heaven into every day practice down here upon earth. We must remember our victorious inheritance that we have in Christ and "stand" our ground by putting on the armor that we possess in Christ. We should not give up what we know is ours in Christ. Once we know what our heavenly wealth is in Christ, then we must learn to walk in accordance with this wealth down here upon earth. When a person has wealth but does not use it, then they are missing out on what they have in the bank.

Claiming our wealth or inheritance in Christ involves aggressive praying, claiming the promises of the Word of God and possessing great faith, as we will see in the picture of the armor. Once again we must understand that this inheritance is all that Christ has obtained for us and granted to our lives through His finished work upon the cross and in His risen, exalted and victorious position in heaven. All that Christ has given to us is ours. This includes victory over the devil. Therefore, we must simply claim the ground and hold our turf, which has already been given to us in Christ.

The classic Old Testament illustration that portrays our victorious position in Christ is when the people of God were preparing to enter the Promised Land, which was their inheritance in the Old Testament.

Joshua 1:2-3

"Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses."

In other words, God was saying, "Start walking and claim your inheritance." The children of Israel needed to fight the inhabitants of the land. However, they did not fight to claim new territory but to only claim the territory that God had already given to them. They knew that the land was theirs and they had to claim it by faith. In order to claim it they needed to start walking and remain courageous in the battles that they faced.

Joshua 1:6-7

"Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest."

Joshua 1:9

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

The typological truth and picture is very easy to see. God has given to us today our own Promised Land or spiritual inheritance in Christ. In Christ and through Christ we have received our wealth and inheritance. Now we must walk by faith and claim this to be true. And while we walk in faith we must remain courageous. This is exactly what Paul told us to do.

Ephesians 6:10 says:

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

We must be courageous and strong in the Lord throughout our journey. We need strength and courage for the battles we face with the enemy. When we possess fear then we fail. Fear robs us of our victory that we have in Christ. We must stand courageous and strong in the Lord's power and promise of victory today through the armor, which He has given to us. We must claim our own victory ground or Promised Land in Christ! There in the heavenlies we stand in Christ sharing all of His riches and resources. Therefore, we can "stand" down here upon earth in everyday victory

holding the victorious ground that we already possess in Christ (see Eph. 6:11, 13, 14 – note “stand”). Have you been standing in victory? Have you been claiming your victorious ground in Christ? Have you been claiming the ground that you have been walking upon? We need to have victory over anger, lusts, addictive habits and many other sins that try to rule our lives. We are victors in Christ and the way that we claim this victory is to use the armor that He has given to us. So we must investigate the pieces of this spiritual armor and know how to have victory. We must learn how to claim the inheritance that we have through our Victor – Jesus Christ. Jesus has done everything for us! Now all we must do is put on the armor and walk in victorious faith by maintaining the ground that we already possess.

We are also told that we should not be ignorant of Satan’s devices. Many times we do not know what the enemy is thinking or how the enemy is trying to defeat our lives.

2 Corinthians 2:11 says:

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

Someone has said: “The first step on the way to victory is to recognize the enemy.” We must know who our enemy is and have some basis understanding about his workings. The devil’s “devices” speak about the ways that he thinks and operates. These devices refer to the evil perception or thinking of the devil in relationship to his scheming plans that he uses to defeat our lives. They point to his perceptive thoughts and purposes to bring our lives into spiritual defeat and bondage. The Bible also talks about the devil’s “wiles” (Ephesians 6:11) which point to the actual tricks and crafty techniques that he uses to trap our lives.

The devil is a very wise being that is out to trip us up in life through his temptations and various schemes and traps. Therefore, we should not be ignorant of the strategic tactics the enemy uses against our lives and how the devil primarily works through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. However, it is equally true that we should not be ignorant of God’s provision for victory. Many of God’s children live defeated lives because they spend all of their time looking at the enemy

instead of looking at God's victorious provision for their lives. Knowing and understanding how Satan tempts us is important. Being able to determine the working of the Evil One is mandatory. But becoming absorbed in demonic activity and living in fear of a demon behind every tree takes our eyes off of our own victorious provision and inheritance in Jesus Christ. This is what the enemy wants us to do – only focus on him. If our eyes become more focused on the enemy, we will forget about the “weapons of our warfare” (2 Cor. 10:4) and become defeated.

We cannot afford to forget about the plan of God for victory. Our minds and hearts must revolve around God's plan for victory as seen in the armor of God. This must be our primary focus in life. We must mentally prepare ourselves for the spiritual battle that is before us and learn how we can possess victory in our everyday lives. We need to prepare ourselves for the “the evil day” (Eph. 6:13) which is the present hour of temptation that we all face and experience. The evil day probably refers to any time when the enemy comes against us like a flood. Satanic opposition seems to occur in waves, advancing and receding. Even after our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, the devil left Him for a season (Luke 4:13). Nevertheless, we know that the devil does not stay away very long. Temptation is just around the corner and this is why believers are exhorted to be sober (1 Thess. 5:6-8).

#### **B. The personal war while wearing the armor (Ephesians 6:12)**

“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.”

The personal war that we are facing while wearing the armor is indicated by the word “for” (vs. 12). Something is very obvious and clear. We are in a war with spiritual forces. The battle of the Christian life is a spiritual battle with unseen forces roaming about the heavenly atmosphere. Satan has a well-organized group of fallen angels that are countless in number. The references in this particular verse are to fallen angels known as demons (“principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual wickedness”). They obviously refer to spirit-rulers with differing degrees of authority, such as

presidents, governors and mayors. We “wrestle” or do battle with a hierarchy of demonic powers that roam the heavenly atmosphere trying to tempt us and trap our lives in sin. Our enemy is spiritual, and the warfare is spiritual. That is why we need spiritual power and assistance for victory. Our own physical power is helpless and ineffective against a spiritual host of unseen spirits. This is why we need spiritual armor to engage in the spiritual warfare that we face today.

This expression “in high places” (literally – in the heavenlies) is found several times in this epistle and marks it off as a heavenly epistle. This term is used five times in Ephesians with these appropriate meanings:

- 1:3 - The sphere of our spiritual blessing in Christ;
- 1:20 - The scene of Christ’s present enthronement;
- 2:6 - The scene of our present position in Christ;
- 3:10 - The location from which angels witness God’s wisdom exhibited in the church;
- 6:12 - The unseen region which is the source of our present conflict with evil spirits.

Many have merely identified “the heavenlies” (Rev. 6:12) as a reference to the lower atmospheric heavens surrounding this earth where Satan is allowed to swoop down and raise spiritual havoc among believer’s lives. There is certainly truth to this conclusion since Satan is the “prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2). There is a mass of unseen wicked spirits that roam the heavenly atmosphere where Satan is given rightful domain.

The “high places” or “heavenlies” can and does refer to the atmospheric heaven above us where unseen spirits roam about seeking to defeat God’s purposes. The place of roaming of wicked spirits is in the heavenlies, which not only describes their realm of their activities or the place that they roam but also their realm of existence – they are spiritual in nature or design. Satan has an army of invisible wicked spirits who roam the atmospheric heavens (air) above us. They are looking for ways to hinder the walk of God’s earthly people and God’s present day work. Satan is in the heavens today (2:2) but he will be cast out in the middle of the Tribulation (see Rev. 12:9-10). In the mean time, Satan is trying to rob believers of the spiritual

blessings God has given to them in Christ, which is also in the realm of our spiritual (unseen) existence with Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3).

Everything about our warfare is heavenly, which means that it exists in the realm of the unseen world. First, wicked spirits themselves are spirit beings who are unseen (Eph. 6:12; 2:2). Second, they roam the heavenly atmosphere above us (“air”) which cannot be seen (2:2; 6:12). Third, they try to rob believers of their heavenly or spiritual blessings that they have in Christ in view of their tie with the risen Christ (Eph. 1:3; 2:6). This is accomplished as these wicked spirits of the “prince of the power of the air” swoop down from their atmospheric post in the heavens to tempt us in our present existence on earth.

But this term “heavenlies” means more than just the atmospheric domain of evil spirits. In our present text of Ephesians 6:12 “the heavenlies” also points to the actual spiritual or unseen battle that is taking place with demonic forces of wickedness. The “heavenlies” refers to the spiritual or unseen place of battle with evil spirits who are not visible to the human eye. Our battles are not really earthly in nature. In reality, they are heavenly or take place in the sphere of the spiritual unseen world. The devil and his demonic hordes are spirits that seek to combat us from within by affecting our inner spiritual nature and life. Temptation and the present-day battle take place in the spiritual or unseen realm of man’s nature where Satan’s emissaries seek to communicate messages to our own inner heart or control center.

The battle we face is a heavenly or spiritual battle with evil unseen forces that are seeking to control the spiritual make-up of our inner being. This is why Paul says that we are not wrestling “against flesh and blood” (vs. 12) as we know it. We are not engaged in a fleshly war with an army that can be seen with the naked eye. Rather, we are engaged in a spiritual war with spiritual beings who are “in the heavenlies” or unseen world. We have a spiritual or unseen enemy that is trying to gain control of our own inner spiritual lives. All temptation and spiritual warfare takes place in the realm of a person’s inner heart. This is where the spiritual or unseen battle occurs today and where we win or lose the battle with Satan. Our battles are spiritual in nature because we are spiritual in design.

We must take our heads out of the sand and realize that there is a demonic world all around us that is manifesting itself at the present hour. In fact, the world of these wicked spirits (spiritual Mafia) seek to do havoc in our lives everyday without believers being fully aware of their activity. They are waging warfare against us. And the battle we have with them is a one-on-one combat. The word “wrestle” (vs. 12) refers to hand-to-hand combat. There is an individual war that we must fight in the trenches of our spiritual lives. However, the spiritual warfare that we engage in is not a losing battle. God has promised us victory as we appropriate His spiritual armor to our lives. Victory in the Christian life involves the appropriation of the Lord’s spiritual resource to our lives. We need God’s spiritual power and resource for the spiritual battle that lies before us.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 says:

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)”

“The arm of flesh will fail you,  
You dare not trust your own.  
Put on the gospel armor,  
Each piece put on with prayer.”

### C. The practice of wearing the armor (Ephesians 6:14-18)

Christians must mentally place upon themselves six pieces of spiritual armor in order to prepare themselves for spiritual battle:

1. The girdle of truth (14) – (held the uniform together, the belt around waist)

The belt on the Roman soldier was not just some kind of strip worn around his waist. It was actually a leather apron that was used to help protect the lower part of his body. Its main function was to pull all the other parts of the armor together. It is that which held everything together. The soldier wore a tunic of loose-fitting cloth. Since ancient combat was largely hand-to-hand, a loose tunic was a potential hindrance and danger. A belt was



necessary to pull together the loosely hanging material. The belt that pulls the entire spiritual armor together is “truth” or what we might understand to be “truthfulness” or possessing a heart that is honest and sincere about wanting victory and winning the battle over evil forces.

The Greek scholar Thayer talks about this word as having the connotation of “personal excellence or that candor of mind which is free from affection, pretence, simulation, falsehood, deceit.” Later in this same section Paul will mention about the “sword of the Spirit” or the “Word of God” (vs. 17). It’s in this later reference that Paul will deal with the actual truth of Scripture in regards to our victory. But this particular reference to truth in verse fourteen seems to suggest that we need to live in a sincere, honest or truthful manner in life. We must be honest and open about living for the Lord and our need and desire for victory. There can be no hidden desire in our heart to love and want sin more than victory. You must earnestly desire victory if you are ever going to have it.

The girdle of truth speaks of integrity. Integrity means uncompromising allegiance to a specific purpose in life. It’s the state of being wholly dedicated to something or desiring something above all else. In short, spiritual integrity means to be sold out for God. It means that your sole desire is to live victoriously. Paul had this overwhelming desire and drive for victory. There was no hypocrisy in his heart. He was truthful, sincere and determined to do what was right. Love for sin and personal lusts will keep us from possessing true victory in our lives (James 1:14). There needs to be an honest or truthful determination to live victoriously. We must truly love the Lord more than our sin and want victory if we are ever going to experience true victory over the bondage of certain sins.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:27:

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection (slavery): lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

The verb “keep” is taken from the world of boxing and means to “hit under the eye” (give a black eye). Paul is saying that he disciplined his body spiritually because he had the sole desire and determination to live a life

that was pleasing before God so that he might receive a reward or prize when he stands before the Lord. Paul was wearing the girdle of truth in his life.

We need to have the same drive and determination today for personal victory in our lives. There is no room for hypocrisy or second-guessing! When you second-guess, then you will find yourself defeated. We must be sincere and open before God about this matter of victory. We must wear the girdle of truth or possess the sincere and unhypocritical determination to do what is right. There must be a single purpose and singular focus and aim in our lives to live victoriously. This purpose should be to live victoriously in life by following God's plan for victory as outlined in Scripture. This is what the word "truth" suggests in this verse. Truthfulness, the intense desire to win or possess victory, is what will hold everything else together within your life. Without the sincere desire or single purpose to live victoriously, you will fall in defeat under the hand of the enemy.

Geoffery Wilson once said:

"The finest armor is wasted on the soldier who has no will to fight."

In other words, if we don't possess the drive and determination to see the fight through, then the rest of the armor will do us no good. Jesus had this aim to please God and do His will (John 4:34; 8:29). Paul also had this truthfulness in his life or this integrity (Phil. 3:14-15). Jesus said that we must be devoted to the cause of living for Him and wanting to please Him in all that we do (Matthew 6:24). Our heart can only be in one place at a time. Double hearts and double willed living is not truthful or sincere living.

James 1:6-7

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

The principle of this verse states that whatever we ask to receive from God, whether it's wisdom or victory, we must do so with a confident and sincere faith. If we are truly seeking for victory and desire victory, we will have to possess a steady faith and not doubt that God's power can provide us with

victory. We must approach God in faith, with no doubting. We must believe He loves and cares, and that nothing is impossible with Him. If we doubt His goodness and His power and love our sin, we will have no victory in the “evil day” or the time of temptation. The word “wavereth” speaks of the kind of faith we sometimes have when we ask God for something. It is a divided faith or faith that is like the waves. One minute we might be resting calmly on God’s promises, but the next we will feel that God has forgotten to be kind and cannot provide us with victory. We will be like the surge of the sea, rising to great heights, then falling back into valleys—troubled and tossed. God is not honored by the kind of faith that alternates between optimism and pessimism. This is not a sincere and honest faith. There is no integrity or truthfulness found in this type of faith.

Unless we possess a child like faith in God and desire victory more than anything else, then we will not receive victory over sin “(let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord)”. The believer must have an intense and sincere desire to love Christ more than anything else in life and step out and do what is right (see Mark 12:30). God is looking for integrity! He is looking for the truthful or sincere desire to live for Him and possess the victorious ground or inheritance that He has provided for us.

A devoted follower of Socrates asked him the best way to acquire knowledge. Socrates responded by leading him to a river and plunging him beneath the surface. The man struggled to free himself, but Socrates kept his head submerged. Finally, after much effort, the man was able to break loose and emerge from the water. Socrates then asked, "When you thought you were drowning, what one thing did you want most of all?" Still gasping for breath, the man exclaimed, "I wanted air!" The philosopher wisely commented, "When you want knowledge as much as you wanted air, then you will get it!" The same is true with our desire for victory in the Christian life. We must want victory as much as we want to breath air! We must wear the girdle of truthfulness or integrity, desiring to have victory in our Christian life more than anything else.

When our life lacks truth or the sincere desire, drive and determination to win the battle, then we will be losers instead of winners. Truthfulness or the integrity of living, this intense desire and devoted purpose to win the

battle, is the “girdle of truth” and is what holds all the other armor together. You can never be a winner if you don’t want to really win! Paul reminded Timothy of this (see 2 Timothy 2:3-4). We should be bent on pleasing the Lord and possessing victory over sin in our lives. This should be our determination and ultimate desire in life. We must wear the girdle of truth and possess a determined desire to have victory in life.

Joshua 24:14-15 says:

“Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth (integrity): and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

These are the words of integrity. They are the words of uncompromising adherence to a definite purpose. They are the words of someone who is going to stick to their guns and do what is right. My friend, if you really want victory then you will have it. Don’t say that you can’t have victory. The problem is that you don’t want victory. And you won’t have victory if there is no loving drive and commitment to Christ. If you are not devoted to this single purpose, then you will live in defeat.

We need to be completely devoted to winning the battle. There needs to be an intense or truthful desire to win. There needs to be a settled conviction that we are going to win the battle! If we do not have this sincere desire, then there can be no triumph. We should be free of any hypocrisy in our life. When you talk one way and live another way, you are setting yourself up for spiritual defeat. To live a double standard life means that you will always be vulnerable to the devil and remain defeated in life. God wants you to be totally sincere and honest (truthful) about your desire for victory. There must be a determined heart that has no desire to hold on to sin with one hand and try to do what is right with the other hand.

General Douglas MacArthur once said:

“It is fatal to enter any war without the will to win it.”

Victory is only assured when you come to God with an open, truthful or sincere heart that is bent on doing what is right and living for God. The girdle of truth or truthfulness is then speaking about our sincere (honest) commitment to God and desire for victory as a soldier in the Lord's army. In short, you must truthfully or sincerely want victory in your life. You must come to the point where you hate your sin and want to go the victory route. You will hate your sin for what it does to you and for how it separates you from God's fellowship (1 John 1:6-9). Your will is your want to! And you must in true sincerity seek the victorious path and demonstrate your commitment to living the victorious life by getting your life straightened out. This is what the girdle of truth or sincerity is talking about. Your heart needs to be genuine about wanting victory. There needs to be a desire to do right and live for the Lord.

Psalm 139:23-24 says:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Psalm 119:10

"With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments."

This is a truthful or sincere response to God and the desire for absolute cleansing and victory over sin. This is the girdle of truth or sincerity that we need to wear today so that we might have victory.

One writer said:

"In the Christian's battle with temptation, the will is vitally important. This is because we choose to sin; that is, with our will we make the decision to break God's law. Behind every sin is the choice to disobey."

Jerry Bridges wrote:

"It is time for us Christians to face up to our responsibility for holiness. Too often we say we are defeated by this or that sin. No, we are not defeated; we are simply disobedient! It might be well if we stopped using the terms victory and defeat to describe our progress. Rather, we should use the

terms obedience and disobedience. When I say I am defeated by something, I am unconsciously slipping out from under my responsibility. I am saying something outside of me has defeated me. But when I say I am disobedient, that places the responsibility for my sin squarely on me. We may, in fact, be defeated, but the reason we are defeated is because we have chosen to disobey. We have chosen to entertain lustful thoughts, or to harbor resentment, or to shade the truth a little."

What this writer says is absolutely true. In essence, we lose the battle because we really don't want to win the battle! We enjoy our sin too much. We want to enjoy the pleasures of sin for another season (Heb. 11:25). If we are not truthful or sincere about wanting victory, then we will lose all our other spiritual garments! All of your protection will fall down. In short, we will lose our spiritual armor. Let us put on the belt of truth or this earnest, sincere and determined desire to win the battle. When we do, we can enter the battle boldly knowing that Satan is powerless against our lives.

2. **The breastplate of righteousness (14)** – (covered the torso area and protected the vital organs)

The breastplate was usually a tough, sleeveless piece of leather or heavy material with animal horn or hoof pieces sewn on, covering the soldier's full torso, protecting his heart and other vital organs. The breastplate on the soldier was very important. It covered the entire upper body of the soldier. The back as well as the front was protected. The breastplate of righteousness would first of all speak of the believer protecting his life by practicing daily righteousness or right living as a Christian. The reference can first of all be talking about practical holy living before God. Apparently, righteous or holy living is an effective way to overcome the attacks of the devil and his helpers. We need to possess a day-to-day practical righteousness in our words, walk and motives.

1 Timothy 6:11 says:

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness..."

Consistent living, which is righteous and holy, is a sure way to stay on top of all the devil's tricks and temptations which he is using to lead us astray. Lack of holiness, on the other hand, leaves you very vulnerable to the devil and allows the devil to get a hold of your life (see 2 Cor. 2:10-11). Satan gets advantage of us when we are already harboring sin in our hearts and lives, such as an unforgiving spirit toward someone (vs.10). This, in return, allows Satan to already have a starting point to work with and makes it much easier for him to work us over and bring more sin and confusion into our lives. As a soldier's breastplate protected his chest from an enemy's attacks, so living a righteous and holy life guards our own heart against the assaults of the devil (see Romans 6:13).

We must remember that we do not experience victory by trying to excuse our sin or overlook the things that we are doing wrong. You must face your sins head on and quickly confess them as they invade your life (1 John 1:9). Then and only then can you live righteously and victoriously over Satan. To hang on to various sins in your life is the sure way for continual defeat and downfall. The only way to combat evil is by doing good or living a righteous or holy life.

The "armor of righteousness" is also described in 2 Corinthians 6:7 where Paul is explaining how to overcome the enemy's accusations against his ministry. "By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." The armor in this context again pictures an upright, consistent character.

Someone has said:

"When a man is clothed in practical righteousness, he is impregnable."

If our conscience is void of offense toward God and man (Acts 24:16), the devil has little to shoot at. There is some doubt as to the exact meaning of the expression "on the right hand and on the left." One of the more probable explanations is that in ancient warfare the sword was held in the right hand and the shield in the left. The sword spoke of offensive combat and the shield of defensive. If this is the case, Paul would be saying that good Christian character or overall righteous living is the best offense and defense. Offence would include Paul's battle with the "beasts" or false

teachers that he encountered (1 Cor. 15:32) was many times offensive (Acts. 19:9). The defense would be with Satan's direct temptations and attacks upon his own life.

As we return to Ephesians chapter 6:14, we must also understand that Paul may also have our positional righteousness in mind. Day to day practical righteousness is important. But so is the perfect righteousness that God has given to us. This is the perfect righteousness that we have before God, which gives us our eternal and unchanging acceptance before God (Romans 3:19-24; 4:5-6). Imputed righteousness, which God gives to us out of His grace, means that God puts His own righteousness on our account. God goes to the record book where all of our sins have been recorded and erases all of our past record of sins. He also makes certain that nothing else is written on that page in the future by filling it with His own righteousness! Thus, when you turn to the page in the entry book where your name is written, you will find only one word written down. It is the word "righteous!" My friend, we are righteous in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). Once the entry of righteousness is placed on your spiritual record in Heaven, then the matter is settled once for all!

So, it's also true that the imputed righteousness of God can provide us with security in the time of temptation or the "evil day." Our standing of sure and eternal acceptance before God can be a strength builder in the time of temptation. Knowing that God has accepted us can provide us with the assurance that He will not give up on us and fail to provide us with assistance. God has accepted me as His own child and will certainly be with me to provide all the necessary assistance that I need to counteract the devil.

We must also remember that Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Rev. 12:10). Satan not only accuses us before God but also tries to accuse us from within through the realm of our own conscience and heart. And what he accuses us of is our past sins and failures (Phil. 3:13). When Satan does this, we must answer him with the breastplate of righteousness. We must remember our imputed righteousness through Christ and our forgiven standing in Him so we can ward off the doubts and accusations that Satan makes in our minds. Satan tries to discourage us in the battle by bringing up



the past. He wants us to think that we are not worthy to be a soldier in the Lord's army or worthy to possess victory. When this happens, we must protect ourselves behind the breastplate of Christ's righteousness, which has totally declared us innocent and forgiven in God's sight. We must learn to defend ourselves against the accusations of the Evil One when he tries to defeat us with our past failures and sins.

Satan torments our minds with our past sins and failures. He tries to make us feel that we are unworthy to serve the Lord. But we can pray to God and claim the complete forgiveness and righteous standing we have in Christ and have victory over the devil's temptations. The protection that God has given us to overcome the devil is the breastplate of righteousness. We can know that God has accepted us and given us a completely forgiven and righteous standing in Christ in spite of our past sins.

In the classic "Pilgrim's Progress," we find the important lesson on righteousness. The main character called "Christian" meets Apollyon or Satan. And Satan begins to do his work of accusing Christian of his past. Satan reminded the main character of his past sins. But Christian then answered Satan with these words: "All this is true, and much more which thou hast left out; but the Prince whom I serve and honour is merciful and ready to forgive; but besides, these infirmities possesses me in thy country... and I have groaned under them, been sorry for them, and have obtained the pardon of my Prince."

In this well-known story, the character called Christian was claiming the breastplate of righteousness. We need to wear the breastplate as well in the time of temptation or the evil day. Our righteous standing in Christ can provide victory over the devil's accusations, which are against us, and the doubts he sends our way, when he tries to convince us that we are not worthy to serve the Lord or have victory in our present life. If we do not put on the breastplate of righteousness, then Satan will defeat us. Satan will use our memories of past sins and failures to defeat us and keep us from serving the Lord and having victory in our present lives. If we do not wear the breastplate, then our memories will accuse us day and night. And if we dwell on these past memories then we will put ourselves on a shelf and find ourselves no longer being used of God.

The devil not only accuses God's people of their past sins and failures in life, he also uses other people to accuse us, as Scripture seems to bear out (see 2 Cor. 6:8-9). Nehemiah was accused of trying to become a king (Neh. 6:6-7). Moses was accused by his own brother and sister of being a dictator over people's lives (Numbers 12:1-7). Paul was accused by what he said in 2 Corinthians 6:3-4 and that his motives were wrong in serving the Lord (1 Cor. 4:1-5). Jesus was falsely accused (Matthew 11:19).

Satan tries to use others to falsely accuse our lives in order to discourage us and defeat our lives. Even believers must beware of not becoming a pawn in the hands of Satan when it comes to falsely accusing those who want to do right and stand up for absolute truth. We can be against what God is for and be used by the devil to try and defeat God's work and ministry. We must stay on guard and claim the breastplate of our righteous position before God and remember the fact that God is on our side! He will not give up on us. God will not fail us.

Satan not only uses our past failures and other people to defeat us but he can also use our present feelings to defeat our lives. We must understand that the devil hits us when we are low. When we are run down because of lack of sleep and poor eating habits or even illness, it's then that we start feeling sorry for ourselves. At this point the devil comes along and says, "You have every right to feel sorry for yourself." In doing this, he adds fuel to the fire. And before you know it, you are defeated in self-pity and falling into other sins. So the devil can use our feelings to defeat our lives.

Before going on to the next point, it is worthy to note that the believer should distinguish between Satan's accusations and God's convictions.

Warren Wiersbe has said:

"God convicts us in love; Satan accuses us in hatred. The Holy Spirit uses the Word to convict us. Satan uses feelings and memories to accuse us. When God convicts us, it draws us closer to Him, but when Satan accuses us, it pulls us away from the Lord. When God convicts, it is so we might look ahead and have hope. When Satan accuses, he wants us to look back and to give up."

3. **The shoes of peace (15)** – (protected the feet and gave the soldier good footing for the battle)

The Roman soldier wore sandals with hobnails in the soles to give him better footing for the battle. If you are going to “stand” (verse 11) and “withstand” (verse 13) against the attacks of the devil, then you will need the right shoes. You need to have good footing. You need to have the shoes of the Gospel of peace. Satan has declared war on our lives as believers. But the only antidote for war is peace. The Bible seems to be teaching here that Satan cannot destroy us in the war when we are wearing the Gospel shoes of peace.

The word “shod” means to bind the feet with shoes. The word “preparation” speaks of readiness. The Greek picture painted by these words is this: the believer is to be ready for the battle by firmly planting his feet in the ground to stand against the devil’s attacks. If you don’t get ready for the battle, then you will be defeated when the battle comes. Preparation means readiness. We must be prepared. The soldier must firmly plant his Gospel shoes in the soil of battle and be ready for war against the enemy. A soldier knows that if he has trouble with his feet then he will not be able to stand very long. In short, he will not be able to fight very well. He makes himself vulnerable. The Bible teaches that we need to stand victoriously by having our feet bound in the “gospel of peace.”

The word “gospel” speaks of good news. The Gospel is the good news that Jesus has died, was buried, and has been raised for us (1 Corinthians 15:1-5). Satan hates the Gospel message because through the work of the Gospel he has been forever defeated (Colossians 2:15; John 12:31; John 16:7,11). The Gospel brings the provision of liberty and victory to the believing sinner because through the work of the Gospel the believer has been released from the devil’s powerful grip upon his life. But the Gospel message also brings victory and freedom in the believer’s life because it provides a new peaceful standing before God’s presence.

This is why we need to know the right Gospel and not be led astray into some other false Gospel (Galatians 1:6-8). Another gospel will not give us this peaceful standing before God’s presence and therefore can provide no

victorious assistance in our fight over the devil. We must take our stand on the true Gospel and believe by faith that this true Gospel has given us a newfound peaceful standing before God. It has provided for us an accepted peaceful standing in God's sight.

There are two kinds of peace that believers possess in their lives. First, there is the peace with God (see Romans 5:1). This is the peaceful standing that every believer now has before the presence of a holy God. When we were lost we were at enmity with God. We were God's enemy because sin separated us from His holy presence (Romans 5:8-10). However, through the work of the Gospel, Jesus has declared us legally righteous in God's presence. By clothing us with His own righteousness, we were immediately accepted in God's presence and now are at peace with a holy God! Jesus Christ and His righteousness becomes the basis of our peaceful standing before God (see Ephesians 2:14).

This peace means that God has accepted the believing sinner in His presence and is no longer separated from God. God no longer considers the believing sinner His enemy. Because believers have this peace with God through the Gospel, or this peace before God's presence, we can be ready for the battle with Satan ("the preparation of the gospel of peace"). But how can this be?

Knowing that you now have an acceptable or peaceful standing before God's presence, provides assurance in your heart and life that God is working on your side and that He will not let you down. This in return will help you to remain stable and strong as you battle with the enemy. God accepts you and is at peace with you. This means that He will provide you with the strength that you need to live victoriously over those evil entities that are against you.

Romans 8:31 says:

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

We are at peace before God's holy presence. This means that God is now for us and will not let us down in the time of temptation when demonic

assaults invade our life. We are at peace with God. The war with God is over. We are no longer God's enemy. This means that God will not let us down in the time of battle. He will be there to help us stand victoriously over Satan. The Gospel of peace has brought us into a right relationship with God and has opened up a new path before God so that God can now assist us as His own child in the time of temptation. We know that God is on the believer's side since we are at peace with Him. (Rom. 5:6–10). And it is this confidence of divine acceptance, which allows the believer to stand firm and victorious in the time of temptation.

The Gospel of peace provides sure footing and stability in our Christian life in the time of temptation. It reminds us that God has accepted us in His presence and that God is for us. How wonderful it is to know that God is on our side! This provides us with those hobnailed shoes or surefootedness in the time of temptation. I am at peace with God! God is on my side. Therefore, I can be a winner with God on my side! The Gospel of peace is important for Satan will try and defeat us by hurling accusations against us.

Advice columnist Abigail Van Buren illustrated man's ability to overcome obstacles when she wrote: "Cripple him, and you have a Sir Walter Scott. Lock him in a prison cell, and you have a John Bunyan. Bury him in the snows of Valley Forge, and you have a George Washington. Afflict him with asthma as a child, and you have a Theodore Roosevelt. Make him play second fiddle in an obscure South American orchestra, and you have a Toscanini. Deny her the ability to see, hear, and speak, and you have a Helen Keller."

In a similar way, the believer does not have to be a loser in the war or the battle with Satan. If you are using some particular circumstance or hardship as an excuse for not possessing victory, then it's time to put on the Gospel shoes of peace and realize that God is on your side. You are a winner!

The second kind of peace that the Gospel brings into our lives is the daily peace for our Christian living – the peace of God. The results of the Gospel and salvation also bring a day-to-day practical peace to believers, freeing them from anxiety as they face the pressures and temptations, which the devil brings into their path. This is called the peace of God which believers

can have everyday of their lives (Phil. 4:7). This peace, which Jesus gives to us (John 14:27), produces stability or surefootedness, which gives Christians the needed help to stand in the battle and be prepared for the enemy's attacks ("preparation of the gospel of peace"). This practical peace is especially precious as we face the fears that are sometimes connected with demonic oppression and harassment. Jesus stills our heart and gives us His reassuring peace in the time of temptation. We must remember that doubts and uncertainty about victory can overcome a soldier and be devastating to him on the battlefield. But God's peace in our heart can give us an inner rest in the time of battle that God will see us through and give us victory. We are all like a little David facing our Goliath as the devil and his helpers tempt us. But the peace of God provides that needed tranquility in the time of temptation.

Colossians 3:15

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts..."

Isaiah 26:3

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

John 6:20

"But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid."

The peace, which we have from God, provides serenity, strength and a settled heart as we face the onslaughts of the enemy. It keeps us from experiencing debilitating fear. God's peace is a needed part of our everyday living so that we are not frightened and overcome by the Wicked One!

Romans 16:19-20 says:

"For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

Paul was happy about the obedience of these people. However, Paul also wanted these Christians to be skilled and discerning ("wise") about good

teaching and to be very “simple” concerning evil teaching (Romans 16:19). The word for “simple” means to be “unmixed or pure.” In Greek it was used of wine that was not diluted, and of metal that was not weakened in any way. This does not mean that Christians are to become unsuspecting or naive about the error of false teachers through which Satan was working. Instead, Christians should be pure and unmixed in relationship to all evil and false teaching. They should have no part with it in any way. Paul then reminds and encourages these Christians that God will give them a swift victory over Satan in the future. If this is true, then God can also sustain them in the present and give them victory. Here we see how God’s peace is linked to crushing Satan. This will be true in the future during the kingdom when Satan is bound in the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3) and when Satan is finally cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10). Paul seems to have the kingdom reference in mind even as he did back in Romans 14:17.

The word "crush" suggests that Paul has in mind the "promise" of Genesis 3:15 as the background for his statement but applies it to the future when Satan is going to be bound during the kingdom reign. Paul's statement in v. 20 seems best to be taken as a reference to the Second Advent and the establishment of Christ’s kingdom of peace upon the earth (millennium). It’s in this glorious coming day when the saints will experience Satan under their feet or as the expression means – Satan’s outward defeat. This will occur when Christ puts Satan in his place of millennial confinement. The false teachers (Rom. 16:17-18) were under Satan’s influence, but the saints needed to be reminded that someday Satan will be bound and God will quickly (“shortly”) establish peace when the time of Christ’s Second Advent takes place (Rev. 20:1-6). Christ’s return will assure a speedy victory over the devil.

Romans 16:20 suggests that these false teachers (vs. 17) really came from Satan, and one day even he shall be completely defeated when Jesus returns. In other words, God will outwardly manifest His defeat over Satan in this coming day and it’s then that millennial peace will be established upon the earth. The principle behind this future scenario, which we can apply to our lives today, is that God’s peace is always associated with the devils’ defeat. This is because God’s peace promotes defeat over Satan by providing the believer with calmness of the soul in the midst of the battle

with Satan and his workers. What we need is a calm inner heart of peace during the “evil day.”

“Like the sunshine after rain,  
Like a rest that follows pain,  
Like a hope returned again,  
Is the peace that Jesus gives.”

The peace of God within our soul (Phil. 4:7), which results from the Gospel and salvation, is desperately needed so that we do not fear the attacks of Satan or men. Peace in the heart will keep us from being overcome with fear, frustration and failure.

An elderly British minister had reached the end of his earthly journey. On the morning of what would become his last day, a friend remarked to him, "They tell me you did not sleep very well last night." "It's true," replied the aged Christian, "I did not sleep very well, but I rested gloriously; for I put my head down on three pillows - the pillow of infinite wisdom, the pillow of infinite power, and the pillow of infinite peace and love. I had a beautiful night!"

This two-fold peace which results from the Gospel (peace with God and peace of God) provides stability and assistance in our spiritual battles in life just like the Roman shoes provided good footing for the soldier's physical battles with the enemy. The Gospel shoes of peace will provide strong footing for our battles with the devil, so that we can have daily victory in our lives. God's peace (positional & practical) gives us the sure footing we need to overcome the devil. God is for us and will not let us down (peace with God) and God is providing inner peace (peace of God) in our hearts, which results in freedom from fear and frustration as we face those daily battles with Satan in life. In both these ways the Gospel of peace prepares us for the battle (“preparation of the gospel of peace”).

This verse in Ephesians 6:15 may also suggest a readiness to go out with the good news of the Gospel, which brings peace into the lives of other people. The word “preparation” does mean readiness. Therefore, it is also true that we must be ready at all times to share the Gospel of peace with others. We



should always be ready to witness for Christ (1 Peter 3:15). The world of lost humanity is at war with God. They are separated from God because of their sin. It is wonderful to be able to give them the Gospel of peace so their war with God can be ended as well. The point seems to be this. When you relax in your tents, you become open game for the enemy and are in deadly peril. Your safety is to be found in following the beautiful feet of the Savior on the mountains, bearing glad tidings and publishing peace (Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:15).

The world has invented shoes that make feet look beautiful. Most people don't like to show their feet because they are not one of the most beautiful parts of the human body. They try to hide their ingrown toenails and cracked toenails and dirty toenails! So we invent fancy dress shoes and other designer shoes to make the feet appear to be more beautiful than they really are. My daughter likes to wear those high heel shoes that make her two inches taller. Shoes are designed to try and make feet more attractive and more impressive. Well, the Bible teaches that the real beautiful feet are those feet that are ready to take the Gospel message to others. Beautiful feet are not feet that are covered with the latest fashions in shoes. They are the feet that take the Gospel of peace into the lives of others, the Gospel message that brings lost people into a peaceful standing before God.

The feet that wear the shoes of peace are beautiful feet because they take the Gospel of peace to a world that has no peace. Believers should be an active witness for Christ and keep themselves busy in this work. Activity in God's work, through sharing the Gospel message, is one way to ward off the attacks of the devil. Laziness provides a wedge for the devil to work in our lives. This suggests that we should be busy about sharing the Gospel message with the lost. Evangelistic effort and outreach in our lives can become a victorious way to overcome the devil. In short, we can have victory over temptation and ward off the devil's attacks, as we are ready to share the Gospel with others. Generally speaking, spiritual activity can keep us from becoming vulnerable to the enemy of our soul. Do you have beautiful feet? Where have your feet been taking you?

Frances Ridley Havergal said:

“Take my feet and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee”

4. **The shield of faith (16)** – (protected the soldier from the arrows of the enemy which were shot at him)

The Roman shield was large, usually about four feet by two feet, made of two layers of wood, and covered with tough leather. The shield was almost like a door. By crouching behind it, the soldier could hide himself completely. It protected his entire body. As the soldier held it before him, it protected him from spears, arrows, and “fiery darts.” Fiery darts were arrows covered with pitch or tar and set afire. They were then shot into the bodies of enemy soldiers.

The term “wicked” in verse sixteen has reference to the “wicked one” which is speaking of Satan himself. Therefore, the fiery darts have reference to Satan’s fiery and piercing suggestive arrows, which Satan shoots into our mind or thinking process. They are fiery suggestions of lust, anger, pride, jealousy and all kinds of wickedness. We must remember that Satan’s desire and plan is to control our mind. When we are not protected from his fiery darts, we then become vulnerable and allow these flaming suggestions to ignite a fire of sin within our soul.

Other fiery darts that Satan sometimes pulls out of his quiver are the flaming arrows of problems such as sickness, financial loss, and broken relationships. He also shoots fear, depression, doubt and self-pity into our hearts. If the believer does not have a strong line of defense he will fall on the battlefield. Fear is a very common arrow that Satan sends our way. We can have fear ignite in our heart by what someone says to us or by a change in our circumstances. Fear can swell up in our hearts because of what we hear or read. Many times, the devil uses the flaming arrow of fear to get at our lives. When we become afraid, we lose our faith in the Lord’s ability to help us. This leaves the door wide open for Satan to work in our lives. We must remember that fear and faith do not live in the same heart. Jesus reminded the disciples of this by what He said to them while crossing the

stormy sea. In essence, Jesus was saying to the disciples, “Can’t you trust me to take care of you?”

Mark 4:40

“And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?”

Satan also loves to shoot the flaming arrow of doubt into our lives. Many times we might ask ourselves, “Does God really know what He is doing? Does He understand what my problems are? Is His word really true? Can God really help me?” When we start questioning God like this, then we must understand that the flaming arrow of doubt has penetrated our spiritual soul. Satan works to plant doubts in our mind.

There are also times when Satan sends the arrows of fire through the words he implants within our mind. He wants us to think certain evil things so that they will spill over into our speech and lives. Satan wants to get us to think about things that we should not think about and say things that we should not say. His fiery arrows of words can penetrate our thinking very easily and affect our speech and living for the Lord.

The old serpent also tries to send the fiery arrow of confusion into our lives. When our thinking and emotional lives become full of confusion, we can be sure that Satan may be sending a fiery arrow at our lives. We know that God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). Therefore, it may very well be the master of confusion trying to get at our lives when we become twisted in our spiritual thinking and when our emotions are directed in a way that leads us away from the Lord and the right path to walk.

There are all kinds of fiery arrows that Satan shoots in our direction without any warning. These arrows of fear, doubt, confusion, words, lust and evil desires must be identified as coming from the Evil One and must be dealt with by using the shield of faith. Thank the Lord that He has given us a shield to ward off these flaming arrows Satan sends our way.

The Bible says, “Above all, taking the shield of faith.” This means that the shield of faith is of utmost importance in the battle with the enemy. It is of paramount importance. The shield protected the soldier but also the rest of

the armor as well. It added a double protection for the rest of the soldier's armor. When it comes to faith, don't leave home without it! The shield of faith puts out the fiery arrows as they hit our lives and protects us so we do not become injured by them.

The "faith" mentioned here is a living practical faith, a day-to-day trust in three major things.

✓ We are to have faith in God's person (Eph. 6:10; Genesis 15:1).

Abraham was to possess great faith in God's own person. God was a shield of protection to his life and would also provide for his life through rewarding him. My friend, I have everything that I need in God (see Psalm 3:1-4). Faith says that I am trusting God to give me victory because He is my personal shield of protection in life.

✓ We are to have faith in God's providence (Romans 8:28).

The shield of faith is the kind of faith that realizes that everything is working together in one's life according to God's ordered plan. It's a faith that is settled in the sovereignty of God. This faith realizes that no matter what battle Satan sends our way, we know that ultimately God has allowed it to be so and that we can trust in God's plan and in His victory at the same time.

F.B. Meyer said:

"Unbelief puts our circumstance between us and God, but faith puts God between us and our circumstances."

Proverbs 3:5-6

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding (our own plans, ideas and wisdom). In all thy ways acknowledge him (His will and sovereignty over your circumstances and entire life), and he shall direct thy paths (show us His will for our lives)."

When descending the Grand Canyon, often times a person has to travel on narrow ledges that have only enough room for a mule to get a foothold. The ribbons of rock that run along the edges of these towering cliffs

overlook vertical valleys that descend hundreds of feet to the valley below. When one must make use of these stony paths, the safest course is to let the mule find his own way; for the slightest touch on the bridle may easily throw both the animal and his rider over the cliff to sudden death. So it is in the believer's life. In some circumstances, if he would keep himself from having sinful doubts and falling into despair, he must lay the bridle on the neck of faith, and commit his way to God even as that rider must by faith trust in the mule to direct him through the canyon. No matter how bad things look, he may take comfort in these words, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." I will see you through the Grand Canyon in your own life. In such trying experiences the only thing to do is to trust in God and walk by faith, not by sight.

✓ We are to have faith in God's promises (Romans 10:17).

Both saving faith and practical faith for the Christian life is generated by the promises of God's Word. The saints must continue to possess faith in God's promises of God's word. You might be standing on the church premises but not standing on the promises of God's Word. There needs to be an everyday practical faith or trust in the promises of God's Word so that we can have victory over the devil. When the devil tempts us with fear, anger or lust, we must bring Scriptures to memory that will help combat these temptations. Scriptures that deal with God ridding us of fear and giving us peace are important to memorize. References dealing with anger and what God says about anger are important to know in the time of temptation. Other Scriptures dealing with the devil's defeat over our lives are important to memorize. Whatever you are struggling with, memorize several Scriptures that deal with your problem areas. This will help you to combat the devil when he tempts you about a particular area that you are struggling with.

D.L. Moody said that for many years he struggled to have faith but it alluded him. Then he read, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). He stopped praying for faith and spent more time in the Scriptures. The more time we spend in the Word of God, the greater our faith will become to ward off the fiery darts of the devil.

Your faith is generated by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). The more you read and study the Bible, the greater your faith in God and the promises of His word will become. When Satan tempts you to worry or become depressed in life, then you must place faith in those promises that can give you victory over these things (Psalms 55:22, 1 Peter 5:7). When Satan tempts you to be full of bitterness or resentment, then you must read those Bible verses that deal with this subject (Eph.4:31- 32) and by faith claim God's victory over these sins. When Satan tempts you to be angry, you must go to a verse such as Ephesians 4:26. God's word acts as a pump, which transports faith into our hearts, so that we can overcome the devil. The heart is our will and control center which controls all of our decisions.

Psalm 119:11

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

As the promises and instructions of the Word of God are pulled from the bank of our memory and believed to be true, then we can strengthen the shield of faith and find protection from the devil. Whatever temptation Satan shoots your way, you can counteract it by placing your faith in the commands and promises of God's Word. When you do this, you will avoid being overcome by the devil. You can extinguish the fiery arrows of the devil by this shield of faith in the promises and pleas of the Bible. After all, the "water of the word" (Eph. 5:26) will put out any fiery arrows that come your way.

Satan shoots "fiery darts" at our hearts and minds such as lies, sensual and evil thoughts, hateful thoughts about others, doubts, and burning desires for sin. If we do not by faith quench these darts, they will light a fire within and we will disobey God. We never know when Satan will shoot a dart at us, so we must always walk by faith in God's power and sufficiency and the promises of God's Word. Only then can we stand behind the shield of faith and ward off Satan's flaming arrows. There is nothing like a good old "Thus saith the Lord" or "Thus saith the Word" to quench the fiery darts of Satan. Faith says that I am trusting in God to give me the victory through the promises of His Word. Faith in the promises of God's Word is a defensive weapon, which protects us from Satan's fiery darts. Faith in a Christian's life produces a shielding effect that effectively deflects and extinguishes

Satan's flaming arrows of temptation, which he plants within our mind. We must learn to hide behind the shield of faith. Faith in God's Word is another way to overcome the system of this world, which Satan is behind.

In summary, without the shield of faith in God's power, God's providence and God's promises we are helpless against the enemy. Satan is ever trying to destroy our faith so that he can get a fiery arrow into our lives. Satan tries to attack our faith through all of his fiery arrows, which he sends our way. That's why we must not let down the shield. Satan will try and do everything he can to keep you away from God and His Word. Satan will want you to worry about everything and become confused in life. He will want you to do anything that will keep faith from growing strong in your heart. We must remember that without faith, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6).

Imagine a soldier who does not have a shield! Imagine a Christian who has let down his shield of faith in God's person, power, provision, providence and promises! Satan has his bow drawn and is ready to shoot us with his arrows. When he sees we are not relying on the Lord then he is quick to shoot us with his arrows so he can start a raging fire in our lives. Remember, Satan loves to strike us when our shields are down! His arrows can penetrate our souls and ignite passions and sin in our hearts and lives. We need to keep the shield of faith lifted up so we can be protected.

In Matthew 14:3, Jesus said:

"O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

We cannot doubt Christ's power, provision and promises for our lives as we face temptation and the assaults of the devil. There is no time to doubt! There is only time for faith! Faith in God's power, strength and promises are the only way to be victorious in your life. Faith is the victory!

1 John 5:4 says:

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Saving faith (the moment you trusted Christ to save you) is what brought you into the family of God and made you a complete overcomer in Christ. We have already overcome the satanic blindness and power of the devil because of our regenerated position in Christ. Likewise, continuing faith in what you already have or possess in Christ (overcoming power) will see you through the battle and keep your Christian walk full of victory after victory. We are overcomers in Christ so that we do not have to be overcome in our everyday living.

We must apply our overcoming position in Christ to our everyday living so that we can overcome the devil in day-to-day combat and be promised eternal reward and privilege of service in the future (Revelation 2:7,11,17,26; 3:5,12, 21; 21:7). For the Christian, to trust is to triumph! Faith in God's power, providence and promises spells triumph instead of defeat. Remember that God wants you to be a victor and not a victim. This can only happen as we take up the shield of faith and protect ourselves from the fiery temptations that the devil sends our way. Satan cannot penetrate the shield of faith.

“Encamped upon the hills of light,  
Ye Christian soldiers rise,  
And press the battle ere the night  
Shall veil the glowing skies.  
Against the foe in vales below,  
Let all our strength be hurled;  
Faith is the victory we know,  
That overcomes the world.  
Faith is the victory! Faith is the victory!  
Oh, glorious victory, that overcomes the world.”

5. **The helmet of salvation** – (protected the head of the soldier, which was a major target in battle)

In war, the two most vulnerable spots are the heart and the head. When a person is wounded in these places, he will likely die. The enemy soldier wanted to give a vital blow to the physical brain. For this reason, a helmet has always been one of the most important parts of the soldier's armor.



The Roman soldier had a bronze helmet with a leather strap on it. This helmet was carried on his shoulder or his side so that he was always ready to wear it in the time of battle. The helmet never left the soldier's side and he never entered a battle without his helmet on.

What is the purpose of the helmet of salvation for the Christian? The application is very easy to see. It protects our mind from the attacks of our enemy. Satan wants to attack our spiritual mind or the way that we think. Therefore, we must wear a spiritual helmet to give us salvation, or better, deliverance from our enemy who is the devil. In order to have victory in the Christian life something must happen to our minds. Our minds must be changed. The way we think must be changed.

Victory does not come through our emotions or through feeling good. Some believers only emphasize the emotions. But God emphasizes the mind or the way that the believer thinks. So we must prepare our minds for the battle of life. And it is a battle! A mind that is settled on truth can become a protective piece of armor in the time of battle. As we think right thoughts and allow our minds to be filled with the truth of God's Word we can overcome Satan. This is why the Word of God is linked closely to the helmet of salvation (see Ephesians 6:17).

We must remember that the devil defeated Eve by getting into her mind or thinking process (see 2 Cor. 11:1–3). The helmet refers to the mind controlled by God, which provides a spiritual deliverance (salvation) for our lives on a daily basis. The salvation or deliverance that is in view here is the daily deliverance that I can have through right thinking. It is a daily mind deliverance from the powerful suggestions of the enemy.

1 Thessalonians 5:8 says:

“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.”

The “hope of salvation” is that blessed hope of the future. It deals with an eschatological hope. We are not looking to enter the Tribulation period of God's wrath. When Paul speaks of the “helmet, the hope of salvation” (vs. 8) he is saying that these believers could protect their minds from worry

and despair. They could possess the certainty and assurance in their own minds that they will be delivered from the Day of the Lord. This is what wearing the “helmet of the hope of salvation” means. Their minds should not be tormented by uncertainty as to whether or not they will be overtaken by this coming judgment. Using the figure of a helmet on a Roman soldier, the Bible teaches that we must protect our minds from worrying about any future involvement in the Tribulation period. No person should be able to steal the blessed hope from our hearts as we think about truth and what God has promised to us. There is power in right thinking! It’s too bad how many Christians have the idea that the intellect is not important, when in reality it plays a vital role in Christian growth, service, and victory.

Someone has said:

“The mind is a battlefield where all the decisive battles of life are won or lost.”

The most powerful weapon in Satan’s arsenal is the power of suggestion. When God controls the mind, Satan cannot lead the believer astray. However, Satan, working in connection with the old nature, sends sensual suggestions and thoughts into our minds or thought processes. Knowing our particular areas of weakness, Satan uses the old nature to zero in on our weakness. He can inflame the temptations and make them very attractive to us as he sends thoughts and suggestions into our minds. Even the old nature itself can create certain suggestive suggestions in our minds (“the works of the flesh” – Galatians 5:19). Many times it is difficult to decipher between these two evil workers (the flesh and Satan). When you become intellectually controlled by evil thoughts, then you will be defeated in your Christian life. Intellectual defiance is the reason that you live in a defeated manner in life. We must simply understand that Satan is out to control our mind. Satan’s goal is to control our mind.

The mind itself is actually a spiritual entity. It is spiritual in nature or design. We must remember that the human brain is merely the instrument of the human body that the spiritual part of man (man’s immaterial nature), which is eternal, seeks to control or dominate (see 1 Corinthians 2:11). If we can know things through the inward spiritual part of our design, it

stands to reason that Satan tempts us through this same inner spiritual region of our lives. The physical brain of the body is actually the place where both the spiritual and physical interact. That is why man cannot begin to figure out the complexities of the brain. The spiritual is working in connection with this fantastic instrument of God. The physical brain is simply the vehicle that the human body uses while it exists here upon earth. However, thoughts are really spiritual in nature, meaning that they come from the spiritual part of man that is inward or the control center of his inner being – the heart.

The real brain in our lives is our inward human nature, which is spiritual in its design. Man is actually capable of thinking through the spiritual part of his nature. This is where all of our decisions are made and where all victories or defeats take place. Therefore, when we deal with the mind we are really dealing with a spiritual entity and the inner spiritual nature of a person that transmits thoughts to our human brain in these bodies.

Our mind or thinking capacities exist in the same realm of existence as the Holy Spirit, Satan and demons. This means that our real sphere of existence is immaterial and is not bound to this physical world. In one sense, we are an immaterial entity tied to a different world. I know that sounds like science fiction, but it really is true. Our inward human spirits are tied to the world of the unseen where spiritual forces and battles are raging. This is why Satan and demons influence and do battle with the spiritual part within us. It's because they themselves are spiritual in nature and can easily identify with the spiritual part of man (heart) which exhibits will, thinking and emotions. Satan and his demons work by influencing the inward person (spiritual part of man) in order to produce defeat during our human and bodily existence within this world.

Satan, working in connection with the old nature, sends spiritual ideas into our mind to become angry, jealous, fearful, revengeful and lustful. He sends thoughts into our minds to curse, gossip, smoke, drink alcohol or exhibit some other wrong action. These potential seed thoughts for lust simply interact with the physical chemical reactions of the brain, so our human body can process and receive the message being sent through our inner spirit. Of course, the function of the spirit within man can produce thinking

capabilities without a body (Luke 16:25-28). Since our mind is really a spiritual entity in nature it can operate in the spirit world after life here on planet earth.

In any event, the helmet, or mind controlled by God, will give believers victory over the satanic suggestions that are sent their way in the realm of their spiritual nature. The believer is told to actively demolish all of these evil thoughts, which the old nature and the devil are behind.

2 Corinthians 10:5 says:

“Casting down (demolishing) imaginations (reasoning of the mind or intellect), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

Carnal and sinful patterns of living originate from anti-Christian philosophies and suggestions, which seek to invade our thinking process in order to destroy our concept about God. What we think has a profound effect on what we do. And in particular, what we think about God affects our lives. We must remember that Satan attempts to destroy the true picture about God when He tempts our lives (“against the knowledge of God”). Satan loves to change our concept of God or the way that we think about God. This is his number one agenda. He wants to distract our thinking or knowledge about God – the knowledge of His goodness, will and program for our lives. This is exactly what he did to Eve when tempting her in the garden.

Genesis 3:1

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”

Satan attacked Eve’s concept of God in this verse. He questioned the goodness of God. He said to the woman, “Eve, God’s withholding something from you. Isn’t he? Would a good and loving God restrict your rights by placing one of the trees of this garden off limits? Eve, don’t you think that God is holding something back on you? How can God be so mean to deprive your life of something that is good?” Of course, this is the old

line of the devil. He wanted Eve to start thinking like he thinks. And the devil successfully got her mind or thinking about God all twisted and distorted. The more she thought the devil's thoughts the lower her estimation of God became. You see, the devil tries to destroy our right thinking about God. He tries to get our mind dwelling on a wrong or distorted concept of God. He tries to get our attention away from the knowledge of God's will, goodness and plan for our lives. This is why the Scripture tells us to destroy these twisted thoughts about God before they overtake our lives.

2 Corinthians 10:5 once again states:

"Casting down ("demolishing") imaginations (reasoning of the mind or intellect), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Satan plants very subtle and improper thoughts about God in our thinking until he has us preconditioned for a fall. And when we are thinking wrong about God we are ready to take the bait and bite into the fruit. At this point, the trap slams shut upon our lives. Little by little the devil gets us to think wrongly about God and in the end he wins out. I think that some Christians only feel that Satan tempts them at a particular instance or time when he says, "Do it." But we fail to understand that the devil many times sets us up for a fall through a process of days, weeks, months and even years! He comes to us and tries to germinate ideas in our mind through his subtle subliminal stimuli. He influences our attitude and wins a minor victory but is actually setting us up for the "big fall."

Let me remind you that the top strategy in the devil's battle for our mind is to lower our concept about God. He lowered Eve's concept about God and the consequences speak for themselves. Dear friend, don't think that you can outsmart the devil. The day that you think you can, you'll get the surprise of your life. He will knock you out of the contest in the first round. The only hope we have is to study the Bible and fill our minds with the true concept about God as the Scriptures portray Him. The truth about God's person, program and plan for our lives establishes a right perspective and straightens our course in life. Until we understand who God is, our lives will not be much different then they are right now. We need to get a fresh

glimpse of God's holiness and almighty power and His attributes. When we do, we will fall before His majesty. We will change our lives to please His own person. We need to get back to a serious pursuit of the person of God as revealed in Scripture. In short, right living begins with right thinking. And right thinking begins with thinking right about God.

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."

We know that the Bible portrays God as absolutely just in His ways and good in his dealings with mankind and our own personal lives (Rev. 15:3; Ps. 145:17). When Abraham bargained with God and tried to butter Him up, he admittedly understood that whatever decision God made would always be right.

Genesis 18:25

"That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Yes, God will always do right because He is infinitely wise and holy. But the devil will try to place the thoughts in our mind that God is not doing right. He will try and get us to believe that God has shortchanged our lives in some way. I say again, the power of suggestion is the most powerful weapon in Satan's arsenal. This is why we need the helmet of salvation for protection. We must protect our thinking or mind from the fiery arrows of Satan. If the devil can get you to dwell upon a certain suggestion long enough, his fiery arrow will give you the burning desire to sin. You will then follow the lust created within your heart and sin. Satan's subtle suggestions and the exciting potential that these suggestions offer can become the governing factors, which control our mind and sweep us down under.

James 1:13-15 says:

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when

lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin (ultimately), when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

James reminds us that when we are tempted to sin and do evil that it is always from the devil. God never tempts us to do evil. He will test us but not tempt us to do evil or wrong. He tested man in the Garden of Eden. The tree served as a point of testing and not temptation. And God made the test very simple. You can have any tree in the garden except one tree! This causes us to reflect upon the truth that God will not test us above and beyond what we can bear. His tests in our lives are always reasonable and fair. He will not test us above and beyond what we can bear (see 1 Corinthians 10:13).

In any event, James says that God does not tempt us to sin. You have no right to pin the blame on God when you sin (Genesis 3:12-13). Adam pinned the blame on God for giving him Eve and Eve put the blame on the serpent. Adam assumed it was God’s fault and Eve was wearing the T-shirt that read, “The devil made me do it.” Many people try to push the blame on other people for their own sins and the hole, which they have dug for themselves. Satan and God are blamed for the sins that people do. People might say, “Look here God. I was doing just fine until You put me into an impossible situation.” But we must remember that God does not tempt us and we cannot use God as a scapegoat when we sin. People say today, “It’s the fault of my past environment.” “We are victims,” psychology says. The fact is this. We must push the blame for our sinful actions squarely upon ourselves.

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Our own desire to lust after sin is because of our own love for sin. We are drawn away by Satan’s temptations ultimately because we want to sin (“drawn away of his own lust”). Behind the sin is the old nature and in many cases behind the old nature is the devil. But behind all of this is your own love for sin! We love the lust and want to entertain it in our lives. But you will notice that there is a time frame between the conception (“conceived”) of sin and the actual birth (“bringeth forth”) of sin in our lives. Many times there is this subtle

stimulus to sin that is being placed in our thinking process by the devil. This is the conception stage. But if we purposefully keep dwelling on a sinful idea or action too long, we will eventually begin to be overtaken by it. This is the state when sin is brought forth or given actual birth in our lives. We take the bait Satan offers and actually accept or respond to the lustful suggestions and thoughts, entertaining them in our minds. As a result, we give birth to sin in both our hearts and lives.

Many times Satan does not set the hook until after a certain amount of temptation and the weakening of our defenses. Satan dangles the worm in front of our eyes or plays with our mind over a period of time. Many times there is a conception of sin, which may not lead to sin right away. There is this interim period of time when we battle in our mind and toy around with the idea before we actually give into the sin and allow it to conquer our spiritual lives. Satan knows how to plant or germinate these thoughts in our mind so as to lead us ultimately down the path of defeat. This is the evolution of sin and how it takes control of our lives.

When James says that sin brings forth death, he may be looking back to Genesis and be reminding all of us that because of original sin, man was promised that he would die physically. This is the ultimate end of all sin. This is what happened to Adam and Eve. Then too, James may also have the thought of separation in mind. This is what death really is. It is separation. And when a believer sins he is separated from God's fellowship. He loses communion with God. This also happened to Adam and Eve in the garden (Genesis 3:8-9). On this point of separation, we must remember that God never severs fellowship with the believer. It is the believer who severs fellowship with God. Actually, a believer sins because he has already broken fellowship with God in his heart. He wouldn't have sinned if he had stayed in fellowship with God.

James seems to suggest that we sin when we are led astray by these lusts that are generated within our inner man or spiritual part of our being. And we must remember that what we allow to enter our ear gate and eye gate has much to do with what we think about in our hearts. The term "heart," as used in Scripture, applies to the inner control center of a person's life. The heart is a spiritual entity where our emotions, will and decisions are



made. Man thinks, cries, sighs, laughs and makes decisions from the realm of his heart. The heart is the computer chip of our lives and the center of all our reflection. It is the seat of all our moral, emotional and intellectual life. Jesus said that sin is generated within the heart of man and this is why we sin from our hearts as they are controlled by the old nature.

Mark 7:21-23

“For from within (within the spiritual part of man’s innermost being), out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within (the spiritual or unseen part of man), and defile the man.”

The Pharisees wanted to know why His disciples did not follow their legalistic hand washing rules (Mark 7:5). Jesus lets them have it about their outward show of traditions by saying that their worship was man-made and not God-centered. He also said that their hearts were far from Him (7:6-8, 13). What was wrong with the Pharisees? They believed and taught that spiritual living and worship of God was only on the outside in forms and religious traditions. But Jesus said that spiritual living and true worship resides from the inside. And Jesus makes it very clear that what was on the inside of the hearts of these Pharisees was nothing more than a spiritual junkyard (21-23). Their hearts were full of sin. The inner spiritual part of their lives was far from God.

Their lives were a spiritual wreck or junkyard on the inside and all of their outward traditions in the world could not change that. True worship and spiritual living begin on the inside and work to the outside (John 4:24). Jesus did an exploratory surgery to find out what was on the inside of these people. And they did not like it one bit. His teaching class, “Anatomy 101,” was not well liked! These religious hypocrites did not want to know what was really on the inside of their hearts. Jesus said that their hearts were full of dead man’s bones (Matthew 23:27). Inside, the Pharisees were full of wickedness. Their hearts were ugly or dirty on the inside. Therefore, their inward thoughts were not pure and holy.

Evidently God is concerned with the heart. The heart is where we truly worship God. The heart tells us what kind of person we really are. In this statement (Mark 7:21-23), Jesus is very clear to identify where our sin originates. It originates from this spiritual entity within all of us. And it is true that the heart, controlled by the old nature, is a wicked heart. Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

I once had a lady tell me that she only heard me preach one bad sermon. I thought that this was a pretty good running record! Only one bad sermon after several years of preaching! She shared with me that she did not appreciate the sermon, which told her that she had an evil heart. But Jesus said that the heart is wicked. The potential for sin always exists in the realm of our hearts. It's from within our hearts that we sin and where sin is generated and where sin is followed. Therefore, our hearts have the potential to follow all kinds of evil. The heart left untouched by the new nature can only sin and be under bondage to sin. Therefore, because we still have an old nature and are influenced by this old nature, we do still have potential wickedness residing in our hearts. However, as our heart, or the control center of our lives, becomes influenced by the new nature and the Holy Spirit, it's then our heart can become a new heart. It can be a changed heart with new thought patterns and new desires that are godly and honoring to the Lord.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit (regenerated human spirit with new life and a new nature – which provides new drives, desires and direction) will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart (the old hardened condition that rejected God's way and will) out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh (a heart that is soft and open to God way and will). And I will put my spirit within you (Holy Spirit – which provides power), and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

When we are born again we receive a new nature and the Holy Spirit, which begins to transform our heart. Praise the Lord; He can make a brand new heart! God promises to create a new heart or control center within our

lives through the infusion of His new nature and the Holy Spirit. We must remember that the heart is simply the vehicle that is used by the old or new nature. It is either controlled by the old nature or the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it can be wicked or new depending upon who is controlling it at the present time. A new heart means that we can now think differently than we used to think. Our minds can now be controlled by truth and God instead of by the old nature.

Proverbs 23:7 says:

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he ... ”

You have heard the saying, “You are what you eat?” The same is true in the spiritual realm. You are what you think and dwell upon in your heart. In the twenty-third chapter of Proverbs we find that Solomon was giving good advice to those who are about to be conned into a bad deal. He portrays a situation where a rich ruler wants to swindle a dinner guest (Proverbs 23:1-3). In order to accomplish this great rip off, the rich man pretends to be sincerely interested in the guest. But Solomon warns that as soon as he gets what he wants he will drop you like a hot potato. Solomon basically observes, “Don’t go by appearances. Things are not always what they seem to be!” Solomon then observes that a man is not necessarily what he says or does. He may spread the dinner table out for you but behind his actions there is a wicked heart. He may shake your hand and smile but behind all of this is his real heart. And his real heart is saying that he doesn’t have two cents worth of interest in your life.

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he ... ”

This is the principle that we cannot forget. The real you is on the inside. What is in your heart? All of your outward trappings and fancy dinners that you cook up may not be telling the true story. True spirituality and worship to God reside from within the heart. And the heart can become very conniving, wicked and dirty in no time at all. This is why we are told to keep our heart pure and free from hypocrisy and sinful tendencies.

A man who loved to study nature was strolling down a crowded city street with a friend. Stopping abruptly, he said, "Do you hear a cricket?" His

friend responded, "A cricket? Not here in the center of the city with all this noise!" But the naturalist reached down, turned over a stone, and there was the cricket. Puzzled, his friend asked, "Did you actually hear that cricket chirping?" "Certainly!" said the man. "I spend my time listening to nature, regardless of where I am. Everyone hears what he listens for."

This kind of concentration can also be used to control what we think about. We must learn to think upon those things, which are wholesome and good, for what we think about will have a great influence on what we do. If we concentrate on what is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, as Paul admonished in Philippians 4:8, we will set a positive pattern. The things that we think about are the kinds of things that we will do. If we think upon righteous and pure things we will practice righteous and pure actions. On the other hand, if we entertain the thoughts of scandal, backbiting, false reports, gossip, anger, jealousy, revenge, pride, covetousness, fornication or adultery in our hearts, we may soon find ourselves caught up in those activities. That's what Solomon meant when he said "as he (a man) thinketh in his heart, so is he " (Prov. 23:7).

Proverbs 4:20-23 says:

"My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep (guard) thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

The Bible teaches that we must guard our hearts from contamination. The reason is this. The heart is the source of all the outgoing of our lives. It determines our thoughts, words, actions, decisions and behavior in life. You are exactly what you think. The word "issues" means a border. Solomon is saying that the border or source, where your life escapes or flows out, is from the realm of your inner heart. So the heart is the central part of our being or lives. The heart is the spiritual nervous system of our lives. From the heart we reason and make decisions. We determine who we are spiritually. Thus, it is our responsibility to not allow our heart to become wicked and controlled by evil. The heart is the real place where decisions and thinking are generated and where our real spiritual life exists.

The difficulty of controlling our inner mind is underscored by Lanny Bassham, an Olympic gold medalist in shooting the small-bore rifle. He wrote, "Our sport is controlled nonmovement. We are shooting from 50 meters--over half a football field--at a bull's eye three-quarters the size of a dime. If the angle of error at the point of the barrel is more than .005 of a millimeter (that is five one-thousandths), you drop into the next circle and lose a point. So we have to learn how to make everything stop. I stop my breathing. I stop my digestion by not eating for 12 hours before the competition. I train by running to keep my pulse around 60, so I have a full second between beats. You do all of this and you have the technical control. But you have to have some years of experience in reading conditions: the wind, the mirage. Then you have the other 80 percent of the problem--the mind!"

How often we fail in that vital part of life! Our thoughts begin to drift into forbidden areas, and we let them go. We are lustful. We think proudly. We give in to self-pity. Racecar driver Sterling Moss once said of driving at high speeds, "It's necessary to relax your muscles when you can. Relaxing your brain is fatal!" It's the same in the battle with Satan. Learn to control your mind.

We are again reminded of what 2 Corinthians 10:5 says:  
"Casting down ("demolishing") imaginations (reasoning of the mind or intellect), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

But you may ask, "How can I rid my life from these thoughts that are warring inside of me?" The way that you can rid yourself of these thoughts or cast them out of your thought process is to meditate upon the Scriptures. We have studied this in our last section in dealing with the importance of Bible memory. The Scriptures protect our minds from contamination. They are the main helmet of salvation or deliverance that we need in life. God's Word deals with every phase of our lives and can be effectively used to counteract the temptations to sin. The Bible suggests that we must hide the Word of God in our hearts and allow it to penetrate our thinking as temptation comes.

One preacher recalled his days as a young boy. He wanted to memorize 80 or 90 verses in order to win a free trip to a summer Christian camp. He wanted to go to camp. They had everything at that camp that a boy could ever want. Well, the young boy started memorizing all the short verses that he could in the Bible. "Jesus wept." He then moved on to "Rejoice evermore" then he tackled "Pray without ceasing." That was three verses. But camp still seemed to be a long way off! Finally, the boy got around to Psalm 119:11. And like this boy, I think many of us have learned this verse, while thinking about camp or some other interest in our lives, and have not received the full impact that this truth can have for our daily lives.

Psalm 119:11

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart (the inner control center of our lives), that I might not sin against thee."

Psalm 119 is the richest chapter in the Word of God dealing with the Word of God. And Psalm 119:11 is teaching us that as we hide God's Word in our heart (where all of our thought originate), only then can we counteract sin and the temptation to sin. If we fail to program Scripture into our hearts, we will allow the satanically controlled world system to access our hearts and influence us in a wrong direction. I will find myself being captivated by the sensations of this evil world and will ultimately become a victim of the world culture.

Some Christians resemble a pressure cooker with the lid ready to blow off. They allow themselves to see and hear things that captivate their hearts and allow the world to pump more and more pressure into their thought lives, such as selfish ambitions, lusts, worry, anger, resentment, fear and greed. Their life becomes like a pressure cooker, which is leading to an eventual explosion of ungodly behavior and worldly living. Dear friend, the only way that you can keep yourself from becoming this worldly pressure cooker is to fill your heart with the Word of God. It's the truth and spiritual direction of Scripture that keeps us from blowing our top or lid in life and which will help us to counteract the worldly pressures that we face in life. Remember, what you think is what you are!

The Scripture treasured in our heart will override the evil emotions, desires and the stubborn will to sin. Our inner most being must be directed by the objective truth of Scripture and not the subjective experience that we like to feel. The way we feel will get us into trouble because, quite frankly, we can very easily feel like sinning and allow the devil to manipulate our minds to sin. We must base the direction of life's decisions, emotions and desires on the basis of His infallible Word. When we allow the Word of God to direct the decisions, emotions and the direction of our hearts, then we will not allow our hearts to be carried away into sin by feelings and emotional mix-ups.

Don Miller, writing in his book entitled, "The Authority of the Bible, said: "What we need then, is not the authority of experience, but the experience of authority."

We must remember that experience and emotions are not the basis of truth or real faith (Romans 10:17). We must also remember that scriptural truth is a liberator from sin's bondage and sin's strongholds on our lives. What did Jesus say?

John 8:32

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Make no mistake about it. Truth leads to experience and the greatest experience you could ever have is to be set free from sin's powerful sway and control over your mind and life. Furthermore, experience that is not based on truth leads to bondage and to enslavement. This is why those who are practicing the unscriptural false experiences of tongues and other phenomena today become addicted or enslaved to the experience itself, wanting ever more to satisfy their desire and feeling for the euphoric experience of false spirituality. People will need a higher dosage of these false experiences to feel like they are spiritual before God.

God wants the Bible to control us on the inside. The Bible is to get down to the innermost being of our lives and affect our inward decisions and emotions so that we are not led astray by Satan's temptations, false teachings, feelings, experiences and manipulative movements that try and

lead us into making wrong decisions (see Hebrews 4:12). God wants the truth of Scripture, which teaches us what to believe, how to live, how to act and what to say, to influence, change and direct our inner most beings, so that we do not allow the old nature to overtake our hearts and create sin in our lives. When truth effects our inner heart (the place of decisions, will, emotions and personal response), then it will ultimately direct our heart in the right manner and keep it from wickedness and wrong decisions. I must learn to test the thoughts that are coming into my heart and decide by the truth of Scripture what thoughts I should allow to settle in my innermost self (heart).

The need to know Scripture in the day of battle and to allow Scripture to formulate our heart's decisions, determination and emotional response is without a doubt the most important deterrent to combat sin. Our thoughts and actions must be based on the absolute truth. What does God say about my action, decision and desire? Does His Word give me direction and insight?

Let's take a deeper look at what Hebrews 4:12 is really saying:

“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.”

The Bible is alive and full of energy (“quick”) so it can penetrate our lives like a sword penetrates the flesh of a body. The sword of Scripture can penetrate the innermost being of a person (soul\spirit) where our thoughts and attitudes and decisions are formed in life. The heart is simply a catchword for these inner parts of man's makeup. The Bible itself is a living and powerful book that penetrates our deepest thoughts and attitudes in life. It affects our innermost being by “dividing” or marking out a difference between what are actually fleshly or soulish motivations (“soul” – affected by the flesh) and spiritual motivations (“spirit” – affected by the new nature).

The Bible, working in our hearts, sorts out which thoughts are pure and which thoughts are unholy (“dividing asunder [separating] of the soul and



spirit"). It makes the distinction between those desires or motivations that reside in the soulish part of man (the flesh) and those desires, which stem from the spiritual part of man (born again human spirit) under the influence of the new nature and Holy Spirit. This distinction between spiritual and soulish (fleshly) desires are closely interwoven together in a strange mixture of motivations within our hearts just as the joints and marrow within the human body are interwoven together and interlocked together ("of the joints and the marrow"). Apparently the writer of Hebrews is using the joints and marrow as an illustrative way to convey how both the soulish and spiritual desires are interwoven together within the inward making of a man's spiritual being.

The Word of God sets itself up as a "critic" (discerner) of the thoughts coming from our heart. It reveals what is in the human heart. In doing this, the Word of God sorts out the good from the bad and exposes the evil things that we think. This is why we need to feast on the truth of Scripture. Sometimes Satan can try and make something, which is evil, appear to be spiritual to us! The only way we can make the distinction between the soulish and the spiritual is to go to the Word of God and allow the sword to stick us in our spiritual heart. Remember: The Word judges us; we do not judge the Word! In light of our present study, we are reminded how important to study the Word of God. However, it is equally important that we allow the Word of God to study us!

Christian Johnson said:

"A Bible that's falling apart probably belongs to someone who isn't."

We need to refresh our lives and minds with all of the Scripture. It gives us commands, principles and practical direction for all of our lives and the decisions we face.

Little Johnny came home from vacation Bible school and announced that he would need a new Bible next year. Confused, his mom said, "But we just bought you one for your birthday." "Yeah, Mom," Johnny said, "but it's a New Testament. By next year it will be an Old Testament." Of course, Johnny was confused what the Old Testament was. But many believers think the Bible is old and outdated for their modern lives. We can thank the

Lord that the Bible never becomes old or outdated for our lives. The Bible is up-to-date and relevant and gives us spiritual direction for our lives. It gives us the defense and deliverance we need in the time of battle.

In the time of battle, the believer can also meditate upon the goodness and beauty of the Lord and the spiritual things that pertain to godly living, such as the joy of salvation and their love for God and fellowship with Him. This type of meditation will help cast out the seed thoughts of evil and lust as they try to germinate themselves within our hearts.

Philippians 4:8 says:

“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.”

God wants us to reflect or meditate upon those things that are holy and good for our lives. This involves meditation upon the Scriptures and God’s own person. It involves reflection upon Christ and the cross. All these things are worthy to reflect upon and will produce a mind that is pure and wholesome in its thoughts. It’s interesting that God’s peace is promised to our lives only as we think right (Phil. 4:9). What Paul had just shared with the people about thinking was part of his message to them. When you learn to think right then you will learn to have peace in your heart and life. That is the promise of Scripture.

Isaiah 26:3

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

How we think affects our state of peace in life. Reflecting on the promises of the Word, thinking right about God and reflection upon His character and provision for your life, will lead you to the place of blessed peace and rest.

Ephesians 4:23 also talks about the mind:

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”

To be renewed or renovated in your thinking process is a command. The believer must work on this daily. In this passage the word “spirit” takes on the meaning of possessing a proper outlook or orientation on life. The believer should have a different outlook, orientation and philosophy of life than unsaved people have in this world. Instead of allowing the “spirit of this world” to permeate our thinking (1 Corinthians 2:12), we must begin to allow truth to change our inward thinking so that we can have a different spirit (outlook or philosophy) on life and be changed in the way that we think. Paul is saying that we must be renewed in the “spirit of our mind” or the way that we think. We must change our outlook or mindset on life and think differently, by exchanging the world’s view and philosophies with God’s perspectives on life, as revealed in the Scripture.

Romans 12:2 speaks about the daily renewal:

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing (renovation) of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Believers need to learn how to reprogram their minds in order to have victory over the world system (lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life) and the devil’s mental suggestions. In short, each believer must learn to clean house! Our minds need to go through a daily renovation process called the “renewing of our mind.” You can only transform or change your living by the way that you think! We need to consciously put the bad out and bring the good into our minds. We need to renew or renovate our minds in a practical way as we go throughout life.

We cannot allow the old human nature to dominate our thinking. Reflecting upon what God’s Word tells us to do and the spiritual truths of the Bible (such as verses dealing with victory, salvation, joy, peace) and meditating upon God’s love, grace and companionship in our lives, will be the key factors to overcome the battle for our minds. Meditating upon these things, engaging our mind in spiritual activity, feeding our soul refreshing food, will help us to overcome the power of suggestive thinking habits and the patterns of wrong thinking. We must clean out our minds if we are ever going to change our conduct. Purity of mind means purity of living. The way that you think will be the way that you act. When God

controls our mind it will provide us with victory over those evil thoughts and suggestions that Satan sends into our thought processes. A pure mind means a victorious life.

The human brain is a fabulous computer. As a matter of fact, no person has been able to build an efficient and effective computer like the brain. The brain is capable of recording 800 memories per second for seventy-five years without ever getting tired. However, those who are in the computer business are familiar with an expression and understand the significance of it. It is called GIGO. GIGO may sound like a Greek verb or an Italian food. But GIGO is actually an acronym for that saying that we have all heard – “Garbage In, Garbage Out.”

We must remember that what is true about our home computers is also true about the computer of our own mind. “Garbage in, garbage out.” If you allow greed, jealousy, anger, bitterness, unforgiveness and sensual thoughts to begin to permeate your mind, then these thought patterns will eventually overtake you. If you allow God’s Word, beauty and love for you to capture your mind, then you will be overcome by the “lovely things” that promote victory in your life (Phil. 4:8).

Although we cannot escape evil thoughts from racing into our thinking process, we can rid ourselves of these thoughts and not be overcome by them. We do not have to allow these satanic suggestions to take root in our hearts and give birth to some form of lustful sin. Let me restate something I said earlier. The time we must choose to get rid of sin is when the thoughts of sin first enter our mind. If we entertain the thought of lust, rejecting our passion will be increasingly difficult.

Then too, many times we give sin a beachhead (starting point) by what we look at and where we go. For instance, it’s amazing how much garbage some Christians will program into their brains as they sit for hours in front of the TV. We all know, first hand, how easy it is to fail to exercise care in what we feed into God’s computer or our inner spiritual being. The Bible definitely teaches that what we purposely feed into our minds is what is going to come out in our personal lives. What are we doing to our minds as we look at TV? Furthermore, what are we allowing to enter the minds of

our children? As Christians, we have the responsibility to not entertain ourselves with evil for it will give birth to sin (Psalm 101:3). I must endeavor to keep my heart pure!

Proverbs 4:23

“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

In order to keep our hearts pure, we must learn, by God’s power, to cast out the evil imaginations within our minds. We cannot afford to harbor these suggestive thoughts within our minds for they will surely take seed, give birth to sin and control our lives (2 Corinthians 10:5). The way that we think is really the beginning of victory or the start of our spiritual downfall and defeat. Unless we learn to change our thought patterns, our firmest resolutions to not sin, usually collapse under the awesome and dictatorial power of mental suggestion. When you start harboring thoughts in your mind too long, you are setting yourself up for a fire to ignite within your soul. Entertaining thoughts too long can easily ignite the passion fire. It’s like someone waiting to throw a match into a can of gasoline!

Someone has said:

“The sex drive can make a man cheat, steal or kill, or make him throw away all his wealth or talent in order to pursue it.”

This is why we must practice casting out every evil thought that enters our mind. We should not allow it to fester in our mind. When we do, it will only be a matter of time until we sin. You may be thinking about how a certain person has ridiculed you or given you a real shaft in life, as we like to say. Because you are reflecting upon it, you are allowing the root of bitterness to spring up in your heart and create an unforgiving spirit of sin within your heart.

Hebrews 12:15 gives us this timely reminder:

“...lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”

Remember this for now. Where you go and what you look at can easily erode your moral resistance within your mind or thinking process. You will

have little chance to overcome the powerful suggestions of the mind, if you place yourself in the areas or vicinity that enhances those suggestions. We will comment on this at a later time in our study. For now, we must remember that our minds are not to be a garbage pit or refuge dump. The Bible teaches that my life is actually the temple or sanctuary of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). God dwells within my life and wants to direct my life in holiness. God now owns my life. We are His real estate bought and purchased with His own blood (Ephesians 1:7, 14; 1 Cor. 6:20).

Because God owns our body we must allow our bodies to obey His every wish and purpose. We must use our bodies for His holy purposes and not our own. When I allow wickedness to rule my heart, then God is offended and we are not surrendering to the very One, who bought and purchased us, and who indwells within us to run our lives according to His holy plan. God dwells within us in the person of the Holy Spirit to control our lives and to own our lives. We are not to try and live independent of God by corrupting our heart.

One man said to another Christian that he did not want to go into the church sanctuary until he finished his smoke. He said, "I'd like to finish this smoke first, you go in and I will be there in a minute or so." The other Christian said, "Why don't you take your cigarette with you and go in right now?" He gave the Christian a strange look and said: "Take the cigarette in there? Don't you know that our church is the temple of God?" The other believer then said, "Don't you know that you have that thing sticking in the temple of God right now. You are the temple of God!"

The point is this. A room or auditorium is not God's real sanctuary. The real sanctuary in the New Testament is His people. God does not reside in a building; He resides in people. And because He lives within our lives we must keep them under His control and use them for His holy purposes. The world's goods are not to master our lives. Dear friend, your body was given to you by a wonderful Creator, who now lives within you, as a Christian. Therefore, you should not allow your heart to become corrupted by another invader, sin and uncleanness, which robs God of His rightful place in your heart and life. So you must not use your body as a garbage can. It belongs to God for His tremendous holy purposes.

1 Peter 1:13 says:

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

It’s our responsibility, through the provision of God’s Word, to change the way that we think. God has given us the “helmet of salvation” or deliverance (Eph. 6:17) through His Word and we are responsible to prepare ourselves for the battle and do something about changing the way that we think. This is brought out in our present verse. The word “gird up” in the Greek language conveys a metaphorical meaning of preparation. This Greek word was taken from the practice of the Orientals, who in order to be unimpeded in their movements, were accustomed to bind their long flowing garments closely around their bodies and fasten them with a leather belt, before starting on a journey or engaging in any work. In a similar way, believers must prepare themselves for the spiritual battle that they face with the devil.

To “gird up the loins of your mind” means to prepare yourself for the battle over your mind. You must take on the “helmet of salvation” and win the battle over your mind. If you don’t, you will be full of “dead men’s bones” on the inside of your heart or be full of ugly wicked thoughts that are not holy and God honoring. We must protect the mind with the helmet of deliverance.

May I also say something else that I believe is very helpful at this point? It is something that all believers, who are involved in spiritual warfare, should never forget. As remarkable as it may seem, our victory does not lie in having our minds occupied with the enemy – the devil. Our victory lies in looking unto Jesus! The mind cannot have victory if it is constantly looking for a demon behind every bush and the devil behind every other reflection of thought. Too much reflection upon the enemy will only bring discouragement and actually cause us to weaken our life from a spiritual standpoint. I have often witnessed this type of overreaction in the lives of certain Christians involved in the Charismatic Movement of our day. Some of them live lives of defeat and I wonder why.

The way I see it, they have their mind continually preoccupied with the enemy. There is too much hype over Satan and demons today and Satan loves it. Satan knows that when we get our eyes off of Jesus Christ and place them on him, more than the Lord Jesus, that we will become unbalanced in life and defeated. If a general only studies the enemy and fails to keep his own ranks in order, then there will be defeat when the enemy comes in like a raging storm. The home base must be kept strong and steady in order to overcome the enemy. The believer keeps his or her home base strong by keeping their eyes and mind focused on Christ.

Hebrews 12:2 states:

“Looking unto Jesus (not the devil) 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.”

Only as we keep our eyes fixed on the person of Jesus Christ and the victory He has provided for us, can we ever expect to possess an everyday, balanced and victorious approach to the Christian life. We must place our faith in the power of the Son of God as our Commanding General. He will lead us in the way of victory. Far too often in this age of fascination with the supernatural and underworld, the minds of Christians are caught up with the devil.

Years ago J.B. Phillips wrote a book entitled, “Your God is too Small.” Today another book should be written entitled, “Your Devil is too Big” and be handed to many believers who are overly fascinated with the demonic world of evil. When we place too much focus or attention on the devil then our minds are actually some place where they should not be. Your devil is too big if you are fascinated with him and believe that he can place curses upon your life without God’s will and intervention. Your devil is too big if you feel your future life is in his hands.

Do you know what the problem is today? The devil is too big in the lives of many Christians. That is why we have devil movements today among Christians! Believers are overcome and infatuated with the devil. I want you to remember that Satan can block our vision of God and His Son. He can get our eyes focused on his life and working to the point that we no longer are



looking to Jesus, as we should. Remember that Satan gets more power only as we give it to him. Satan is only as powerful as we make him out to be. If we keep centering all of our energy and attention upon him, we are implying, by this action, that Satan is not a defeated foe. But he is! His power and bondage over our lives has been forever broken! Why must we play around with the devil all the time if his power has been broken over our lives? Stop playing around with the devil and start looking unto Jesus! Our minds must be occupied with Christ instead of demons and the devil.

Erwin Lutzer has remarked:

“We must never see Satan without seeing God!”

Too many believers today are seeing Satan everywhere and centering their life and mind on the enemy. They are anointing their rooms with oil to keep demons away and are frightened over curses, which have been supposedly handed down through family generations and which may be placed upon their lives. One man that I talking with believed that there was a demonic curse inflicted upon his family line. I told him that he had nothing to fear as a believer because Satan cannot curse a believer without God’s approval. God is all-powerful and Satan cannot do anything to us that God has not willed to be done (Job 1:11-12).

Martin Luther said:

“The devil is God’s devil.”

This means that God is all-powerful and has sovereign control of the devil’s plan of operations over our life. God is sovereign and the Superpower of the universe. Satan is always limited by the plans and program of God. As believers our lives are in God’s hands, not the devil’s hands.

“Why worry, when you can pray?  
Trust Jesus, He’ll be your stay;  
Don’t be a doubting Thomas,  
Rest fully on His promise,  
Why worry, worry, worry, worry,  
When you can pray?”

We need not worry what the devil can do to us because God is shielding us and protecting us from harms way! We will not be attacked or blindsided by the devil without God's approval. So why are so many Christians today caught up in the Charismatic Movement or Devil Movement, as I like to call it? I personally believe it's because the devil has blocked their vision of God! And this is something the devil can do to any Christian. We can center our attention or mind on the wrong program today! We can become so overwhelmed by demons and the devil that we start opening ourselves up to their suggestions and lustful allurements. If we keep our mind on the enemy all the time, then we will become sensitive to the enemy and open ourselves to even more Satanic suggestions. The Christian should not be morbidly occupied with the subject of demonism. We need to return to reflecting upon Christ and not demons. Our mind is to be Christ-centered and not demon-centered.

2 Corinthians 3:18 says:

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The Bible is teaching us that we should be like the person who is looking at the reflection of his face in a polished piece of glass or mirror. The point is this. The more we grow in our Christian life and look into the mirror, we should see the face of Jesus! This is because we are to be changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ through the passing years. The "glass" or mirror is elsewhere identified as the Word of God (see James 1:22-25). And the more we study the Word of God the more we will see the reflection of Jesus Christ in our lives. What happens as we spend more time studying the Word of God? The Bible says that we are changed into the glory of Jesus Christ ("changed into the same image from glory to glory").

In other words, the more that we reflect upon Christ in the Scriptures, the more we will become like Him. We are to see Jesus and allow the Spirit to do His work to change us into the likeness of Jesus Christ ("even as by the Spirit of the Lord"). This change happens "from glory to glory" or from one phase of our Christlikeness to another. The word "glory" speaks of the beauty, magnificence, splendor and wonder of His person. It points to all of

Christ's loveliness, majesty, greatness, mercy, character and charm. The believer is to be changing into the likeness of Christ's glory on a continual basis. The glory of God's presence and life should not fade away from our lives as it did on Moses' face. Here, in a word, is the secret of Christian holiness. It is occupation with Christ. It is not occupation with self, Satan or sin. This will only bring disappointment and defeat into our lives. Our minds must be occupied with the glory of the Lord so that we will become more and more like Him.

The glory evident in Moses' face was a diminishing radiance (see 2 Cor. 3:7). By contrast, in the faces of Christians is God's ever-increasing glory of His likeness ("from glory into glory" - from one stage of glory to another - from one level of glory to another level of glory - from one level of manifesting Christ to another). This verse describes progressive sanctification. We move from one phase of Christlikeness into another. There is no experience in the Christian life that will reproduce His image in a moment. It is a process, not a crisis moment of time. And it is not like the fading glory of the law, but an ever-increasing glory.

A Christian's glory, like that of Moses, is a reflection of the Lord's glory (life and presence). But unlike Moses' fading glory, a believer's glory is continual. This is because of God's abiding presence through the Holy Spirit ("even as by the Spirit of the Lord" - see 4:17). As believers manifest the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), they are progressively being "changed" (transformed) into His likeness. Christlikeness is the goal of the Christian walk (Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10). No wonder Paul said the New is far superior to the Old!

In 2 Corinthians 3:8 we read:

"How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?"

It is only through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit that we can see Christ in the mirror of God's Word and be changed into His likeness on an ever-increasing basis. But none of this will take place unless we are looking at Jesus Christ and centering our mind on Him. To overspend our mind on demonology more than Christology is the downfall of many Christian lives. Some Christians know more about the devil than they do about Jesus

Christ. Is it any wonder why their lives are so messed up? May I suggest to you that you do not become more like Christ by looking at Satan!

The treasury department will tell you that you don't have to study the counterfeit or the phony dollar bill in order to recognize it. Those being trained must study the real thing throughout their training process so that in the end they can recognize the counterfeit. The emphasis is to be placed upon the real thing and not the phony. Likewise, those who are becoming educated in cancer research spend most of their time studying healthy tissue instead of the cancerous tissue. This is because they need to be able to recognize and appreciate what healthy tissue really is like.

So it is true in the spiritual realm of our minds. We must be thinking upon Christ and researching His person. We must learn to find out what Jesus is like and meditate upon His glorious person. We must come to know Him as the Lily of the Valley and the Rose of Sharon. To spend too much time on Satanism and the occult will only take our eyes away from Christ. Only as we see Christ in His Word can the Spirit change us into His likeness. Overemphasizing demons and the devil will not promote Christlikeness in our lives. We must keep our eyes and minds focused on Christ these days instead of Satan. In order for our mind and life to undergo this change or metamorphosis we must turn our eyes upon Jesus once again.

“Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face:  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.”

6. **The sword of the Spirit** - (protected the soldier during his face to face battles with the enemy)

The other parts of the armor are absolutely necessary. However, if the believer has no weapon, then he will have nothing to defend himself. The enemy will come in like a raging storm and easily overcome you if you have no weapon. Because of this the Roman soldier wore on his belt a short sword, which was used for combat fighting. This sword was the only

weapon that the Roman soldier had. In a similar fashion believers are to use the only weapon that they have, which is the Word of God. The Bible is likened to the Roman sword because it is an effective way to defeat the enemy, when believers come face to face with him. As the Roman soldier used his sword to defeat the enemy soldier, so each believer today uses the promises and truth of the Bible to defeat their enemy who is Satan. Believe you me, you will feel like you come face to face with the devil many times in your life!

Satan is not always satisfied with throwing fiery darts (Eph. 6:16). Sometimes the devil and his army moves in on us and we are forced to do hand to hand combat with the sword. The only way that we can do battle with the devil is to resist him with the protection of this sword.

James 4:7

“Submit yourselves therefore to God (in humble repentance). Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

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! There are those today who actually believe that speaking in what they call “tongues” or some unintelligible angelic language will help them to gain victory. Let me say right now that there is no other way for victory except through the “sword of the Spirit.” The way to have victory is not through subjective experiences of any kind; the way for victory is to encounter the devil with truth, the truth of the Word of God. Victory is achieved through the objective facts of the Word of God and not through subjective feelings or experiences.

We must learn to effectively counteract the devil’s fiery temptations by bringing Scripture to our mind and heart. When you use the sword (the Bible) against Satan, you are out to give him a blow, that will stop him from tempting your life and hindering your testimony and walk with God. The emphasis on the “word (rhema) of God” in Ephesians 6:17, means that you are to quote portions of the Bible that help you in the very battle which you are facing. This word is very significant for it actually indicates the need to speak forth the Word of God to Satan in the time of battle.

Psalm 107:2

“Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.”

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Christ used the “sword of the Spirit” and defeated the enemy. Three times Jesus quoted specific portions of the Word of God. He did not just use some random verses, but the appropriate verses, which the Holy Spirit gave Him for that occasion. Three times Jesus said, “It is written” (see Luke 4:1–13).

Please note that Satan can also quote the Bible. The devil said, “For it is written” (Luke 4:10). This is the DSV version of the Bible, the Devil’s Standard Version. The problem is that the devil does not quote Scripture completely and accurately (see Psalms 91:11). Satan tries to use the Word of God to confuse you, so it’s very important that you learn more about the Bible and know the Bible in the time of temptation (“evil day”) so that you can effectively use it against the devil.

Someone has said, “You can prove anything by the Bible.” This is true if you take verses out of context, leave out words, and wrongly interpret verses. The better you know the Word of God, the easier it will be for you to detect Satan’s lies and reject his offers. Knowing the Word of God provides you with the ammunition to overcome the lies and temptations that the devil launches your way. The devil will seek to confuse your mind concerning truth and attempt to cloud over the truth in your thinking process. He will try to send confusing messages to your mind concerning the Word of God! 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. The devil wants you to become lenient toward what the Bible says and begin to question the simplicity of the Bible and what it really says.

Since your primary weapon against the devil is the Word of God, you must learn to aggressively quote the Scriptures as Jesus did in the time of temptation. You may even want to use some of the very verses Jesus used (Luke 4:4; 4:8). 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 (Colossians 2:15). On the cross, Jesus disarmed Satan and the rulers of darkness. This means that Christ, through His death, has won the victory for you over the devil's power and rule in your life. The devil no longer is to have ruling authority in your life. Since Jesus by His death has provided victory over Satan's power, you can claim this victory by quoting the very scriptures dealing with this victory.

In the time of temptation, you should emphasize those verses that bring this victory to your attention. Note these victorious verses: Colossians 2:15; Romans 6:6,13-14; 8:37; 1Cor.15:57; 2 Cor. 2:11,14; 1 John 2:13; 5:4. As you prayerfully speak about the victory of the cross, through the use of Bible passages, Satan will flee your presence as a defeated coward. 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).

The only way we can resist the devil or counteract his attacks is to effectively and practically use the Word of God to defeat him. But we must be careful that we do not separate the sword of the Word of God from the Holy Spirit ("sword of the Spirit"). The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible. It was given to us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). The Bible is the book of the Spirit. 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" means that the Holy Spirit drives home the truth of the Bible to our hearts and lives. The Holy Spirit wrote the Word and the Holy Spirit brings important verses to your attention in the time of temptation. You simply need to take these verses by faith and use them in the battle.

This is why you need to learn the Word of God and effectively use those portions of the Bible that will give you victory over worry (Phil. 4:6-7), stress (1 Peter 5:7), jealousy (Prov. 14:30), pride (Prov. 16:18, 1John 2:16), anger (Eph. 4:26), lying (Eph. 4:25), fear (Psalms 34:4) and unforgiveness (Eph. 4:30-32).

The Bible is a remarkable book. It is the only book in the world where the author is immediately available to guide us in understanding what we read.

It is the only book where the author is available to give you the strength and grace that you need. This means that we must depend upon the Holy Spirit as we use the Word of God against Satan. Using the Scripture without the strength of the author will lead to defeat. I think that many believers today acquire a great deal of knowledge and then think that this knowledge alone will give them victory over the devil and defeat him. But we must remember that Satan knows the Bible better than we do. Knowledge of the Bible alone is not enough to defeat the devil. We must depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit to enable us to claim the promises of the Bible in the time of temptation. We must “walk in the Spirit” or daily be relying upon the Spirit’s control and power for our daily lives (Gal. 5:25; Eph. 5:18).

The reason we don’t have victory is because we are not walking in the Spirit. Instead, we are walking in the flesh. This is the underlying cause of defeat in the Christian life. Trying to quote Bible verses for victory without the filling or control of the Spirit is like trying to run a marathon race without shoes. The sword always works in connection with the Spirit’s power. We cannot separate the sword from the Spirit’s ministry in our lives. We must be filled or controlled with the Spirit so that we can use the tool of the Holy Spirit (Bible) effectively. Trying to use the Bible as a quick fix for victory without walking in the Spirit is useless. However, the Spirit controlled believer can use the Scriptures effectively in the time of attack.

The believer needs to hide God’s Word in his heart so that the Holy Spirit can take the precious portions of the Bible and bring them to his attention, when Satan tempts him to sin in some particular way. Satan will try to take the promises and principles of the Word of God out of your heart through his devilish tactics of temptation. Satan wants to get your mind off of the Bible and try to get you to focus on your own lusts.

Luke 8:12 says:

“...then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts...”

Satan is a master at his trade! He has been doing it since Eden. A brief review of the devil’s temptation in the Garden of Eden will help us to see how Satan tries to get our attention off of the clear teachings of the Word of God.



### Genesis 3:1-5

“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

I was talking with another preacher at a street fair in our hometown area. While he was eating his greasy French-Fries and I was eating a greasy sandwich, he gave me a greasy Bible outline. I’m just kidding. He gave to me a little outline that I could follow while studying Genesis chapter three. Like the greasy sandwich that I was eating, the simple outline that he gave to me was good! So I am going to give it to you right now.

➤ Satan tempted Eve to doubt God’s Word (vs. 1 - “Yea, hath God said”).

Satan puts a question mark where God puts a period. Eve, did God really say what you think He said? There was only one tree that they could not eat of, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If they did eat of this tree, then they would die both physically and spiritually. But the serpent tried to get Eve to doubt what God had originally said. He tries to manipulate her mind and take her away from what God had originally said to her.

Today Satan tries to place doubts in our own minds about God’s Word. He places thoughts in our minds that would try to contradict the truth. He tries to confuse our minds about whether or not God meant what He said. He tries to cloud our thinking about truth by saying to our minds, “Did God say what we originally thought He said?” The fact is, God has said it! God said it, I believe it, and that settles it for me. We sing this song but it’s amazing how Satan strategically hoodwinks us. He has a way of manipulating the mind and bringing ultimate deception into our mind concerning what God

has said. If he can get us to cloud the issue of truth in our mind, then we are on the first step down the spiral of defeat. Without the clear revelation of God's truth in our mind and heart, concerning the error of personal sins and the promise of personal victory in life, we will be defeated. We will be raked over the coals.

Satan slithers along our path in life and places the thought in our mind, "Yea, hath God really said that you should not worry or get angry? Has God really said that you have no right to blow off some steam." Satan may place the thought in your mind, "Yea, hath God really said that you can never experiment with sex and lust outside of marriage?" "Yea, hath God said that drinking a few cold beers will harm you?" Satan comes along and says in our minds, "Yea, hath God really said that shooting Cocaine is wrong?" "Yea, hath God really said that it's wrong to feel proud because of who you are and what you have done?" "Yea, hath God really said that you must not look at this particular picture on TV just because there is some nudity and swearing on the screen?" "Yea, hath God really said that you should go to church faithfully and support a local ministry?" "Yea, hath God really said that you should not listen to this kind of music?"

Dear friend, Satan has been trying to get man to doubt God's Word since the Garden of Eden. And he is still in the doubting business today. We had better wake up to the serpent's subtle and sly suggestions in our mind as he tries to get us to doubt God's Word and cloud the truth in our mind. Our only defense against his tactics of doubt is the sword of the Spirit. We must know the truth of the Bible and never turn to the right or to the left (Joshua 1:7; 23:6). The eternal and unchanging truth of the Scriptures is the only hope we have against such deception and doubt. I reemphasize, battling with Satan is a truth encounter.

There is something else that we need to be aware of today. When we start to wonder what God's will might be for our life concerning a job change, church change or important decision that we must make, we must first determine whose thoughts are being placed within our mind. Does this statement alarm you? We need to be aware of the fact that Satan can try to get our minds going in a wrong direction when it comes to the will of God for our life. He wants to detour us away from the will of God any way he

can. Satan will sometimes try to disguise God's will or veil God's will from your life by sending the seed thoughts of change in order to distract your minds from really doing God's will.

Remember, we can really stray from the will of God for our lives when we do not seek the truth of His Word and ask ourselves this question first, "What I am thinking about doing, does it go contrary to the truth in any way?" Second, we must ask God for wisdom through the ministry of prayer as we seek to determine His will for our lives (James 1:5). All your thinking without searching for the truth in the Bible and without earnestly praying for God's wisdom, may take your life in a wrong direction and give Satan a victory over your mind. I believe that many of us unknowingly fall victim to the devil's suggestions instead of God's suggestions. We must be very careful of the serpent's subtle ways to detour us from doing what is right. We cannot allow Satan to get in our head!

➤ Satan tempted Eve to dilute God's Word (vs. 2-3 - "neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die")

Eve begins to talk to the serpent at this point. By this time, her mind has been captivated by the doubt that Satan had placed upon God's original saying and truth. Satan was strategically and effectively reprogramming her mind to dilute God's original words. Once she doubted God's words, it was only one easy step to dilute God's original words. God never said that they could not touch the forbidden fruit on the tree. God said that they would die if they ate the fruit (2:17). Eve added to the Word of God and thus diluted the truth and meaning that God had originally given to her. This is the same way the devil works on us today.

Times have not changed. Satan attempts to dilute the truth in our own minds or thinking so that we can become defeated. Satan manipulated Eve's mind so that she would dilute the truth and begin to question God's goodness to her. In essence, Eve thought, "God said that we cannot even touch the fruit. How inconsiderate of God." In a similar fashion, Satan comes along and tries to cloud our thinking concerning what God has originally said. He tries to get us to dilute the truth of what He has clearly said in His Word so we too will doubt His goodness in our lives. Beware

when you start to dilute what God has clearly said! This will eventually lead to your downfall. When we try to change what God really says in the Bible, then we will set ourselves up for satanic error and defeat.

We may begin to wonder if God really does condemn a certain action or we may try and use other Bible verses to try and actually condone our actions that are wrong and sinful and forget about God's clear commands and revelation. We dilute the Word of God in this way. We can actually begin to use the Bible as a measuring stick for our wrong actions. This happens when we dilute what God has clearly said in His Word. Many times we dilute truth so we can excuse our sins. We think that we will get away with them and God will say that it is all right. And we actually believe this in our mind. Of course, this is Satan having victory over our mind. Whenever we stray from what God clearly says and tells us to do, Satan may very well have victimized us by causing us to dilute the Word of God in our minds.

I remember one man in particular who knocked on my door. It was around the Christmas season and he was asking for money or food. He quoted a Bible verse to me out of context and demanded that I give him something. Of course, the Bible verse did not demand that I give money to him. It actually was a verse that promised that God would meet all of his needs. But it's amazing how the minds of people can become diluted about the truth when they use the Bible to their own end.

I think we can be caught up in the same practice of Eve when we find ourselves straying from what God clearly wants for our lives. We sometimes use the Bible to back us up when in reality the Bible condemns our action. But we have been conned by the devil into diluting the truth so we can go merrily on our way with our chin high in the air. Beware of diluting the truth so you can use the Bible for your own greedy and sinful end.

➤ Satan tempted Eve to deny God's Word (Genesis 3:4).

Finally, Satan comes out with this bold lie. "Ye shall not surely die." After setting Eve up through the doubt he placed upon the Word of God and the diluting of the Word of God, Satan then was ready for the outright lie. He

said that she would not die if she decides to eat the fruit, "It will be all right. Go ahead and make your day." Beware of the devil's lies. We sometimes wonder why we accept his lies. The reason is because Satan has strategically set us up for defeat. He gets us to first doubt God's Word and then dilute the truth. Now he can give us the lie that we are ready to hear and we accept it. So we bite into the fruit and find that it was all a lie. This is because sin always has its wages attached to it. Sin never is a free ride as Satan suggests. Sin always brings heartache and despair into our lives. The grass is never greener on the other side of sin!

Numbers 32:23

"But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out."

This is the forgotten verse of the Bible! Sin will always find you out. This means that sin will always bring despair and chastisement upon your life. Sin never brings true fulfillment and satisfaction. It ultimately will bring repercussions in our lives as His children. This is why we cannot live in sin and expect an easy road.

Proverbs 13:15

"Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard."

Of course, Satan never shows the other side of sin. He only wants us to see the bait and the immediate gratification. But we can be sure that sin always has its hardships attached to it. Sin brings bondage into our lives and heartaches that many times take us down into the dumps of life. In addition, God also chastens and disciplines the lives of His sinful children (Hebrews 12:5-6). He gets them to see their sin for what it really is and what it is doing to their life. Sin is never an easy road. It never pays to deny God's Word and think that you can get away with sin. When we believe Satan's lie, it's then that we set ourselves up for a great downfall.

Satan comes along and says, "Ye shall not surely get into trouble if you try drugs one time. Ye shall not surely have any problem if you look at that lewd magazine one time. You shall not surely go back to smoking if you try just one cigarette. Ye shall not surely be at fault if you tell your neighbor a

thing or two and set the record straight.” Ye shall not surely be wrong if you go ahead and cut church out of your life for sports and other family endeavors.” You see, the lies go on and on. And we believe them and find ourselves in the devil’s trap.

➤ **Satan tempted Eve to distort God’s Word (Genesis 3:5).**

Now Satan promises to Eve that she would “be as gods, knowing good and evil.” It is true that Eve would, in one sense, gain knowledge like God, in that she would know the difference between good and evil when she sinned (Genesis 3:22). However, there was a distortion of the facts. She would not become as a god. In other words, she would not become like God Himself if she sins. This was a distortion of the facts related to sin. In fact, when she sinned, Eve recognized how far away from God she really was (Genesis 3:8-10).

Sometimes we allow Satan to distort the truth in our thinking. We take his advice, which is bad advice, and run away with it where we can be all alone. Then when we sin we find that we were the victims of a distortion plot and the devil is the kingpin. The devil is running a distortion racket, which is aimed at distorting the truth of God’s Word in our minds. Many times we allow Satan to distort the truth in some measure so that it sounds good to us (“ye shall be as gods”). You remember that old saying, “If it’s too good to be true, it probably is not true.”

We have heard of those programs that promise you a million dollars if you will sell their product for five years. They show you slides of millionaires over in Hawaii who have become rich by selling this product. They then assure you that you can be one of them if you will dedicate yourself to this product. You too can become a winner instead of being a loser. They are saying, “Ye shall be as millionaires.” Well, these gimmicks sound good. But the reality is this. They simply are not true. And the devil does the same thing to our own lives as believers. He tries to sell us a bill of goods but there are no goods at the other end of the sale! Beware of the devil’s distortions of the Word of God. After we sign on the dotted line we are left holding the empty bag!

With all of this doubting, diluting, denial and distorting of God's Word going on, one must wonder how we can overcome the devil's tricks. The answer is to know the truth of the Word of God. The "sword of the Spirit" is the way to counteract the devil's doubts and distortions that he sends our way concerning the Word of God. Doing battle with Satan is a truth encounter. We must face him with the sword in dependence upon the Holy Spirit to give us the true meaning of the Word and the strength to overcome all of this manipulation. We can be very easily manipulated to live a worldly life and go into seclusion somewhere thinking that we are all right. The problem is this. We have been deceived instead of being led by the good Book or the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

"Mid the storms of doubt and unbelief we fear,  
Stands a Book eternal that the world holds dear;  
Thru the endless ages it remains the same.  
'Tis the Book of God, and the Bible is its name!

'Tis the Book that tells us of the will of God,  
And the Savior's teachings while the earth He trod.  
How He soothed earth's sorrows and relieved its woe,  
Thru whom strength is given to conquer every foe!

The old Book and the old Faith,  
Are the Rock on which I stand!  
The old Book and the old Faith,  
Are the bullwark of the land!

Thru storm and stress they stand the test,  
In every clime and nation blest;  
The old Book and the old Faith,  
Are the hope of every land!"

The Bible, which is the old Book and the old Faith, is our only hope in our day-to-day struggle with the enemy. The "sword of the Spirit" is our only weapon in the real battle. God has given us only one weapon. It is heaven's weapon for the battle. Don't try to use your carnal weapons in the battle because you will be defeated. Your reformation or your own blood and

guts, as they say, will not do. You must use the weapon that God has given to you. It is the absolute truth of the Bible that will slay all the hellish forces that come against your soul! By the living Word of God we shall prevail, standing on the promises of God!

Then too, in order to effectively use the Bible for victory you must rid your hands of the world's trash. You cannot smoke a cigarette or cigar and use the sword at the same time. You cannot be holding a can of beer in your hand and expect to be a good swordsman. You cannot be caught holding the world's bag of goods and expect to have victory with the sword. You must free your hands and life from worldly sins so that you are absolutely free to fight the battle (2 Corinthians 7:1). Dear friend, take time to be holy.

“The Spirit yields,  
To holy hands and humble hearts,  
More swords and shields,  
Than sin hath snares or hell hath darts.”

It is said that when Edward the Sixth, the boy king of England, was crowned, the swords were handed to him as King of England, France and Ireland. When he had received them, he said, “There is yet another sword to be delivered to me.” Those in attendance wondered what he meant; so the young king went on to explain, “I mean the sacred Bible, which is the sword of the Spirit. Without that Sword we are nothing.”

So it is true in our own Christian lives. Without the sword we are nothing. We are helpless and will be overcome by the devil. We must effectively use the sword that God has given to us. It's the only weapon we have. While we can become a dull hearer (Hebrews 5:11) the Bible itself never becomes a dull weapon in the time of battle (Hebrews 4:12). We must learn to use the armor effectively as the enemy of soul tempts us in the areas of our weakness. But we can be sure that he will always use the same tactics that he used with Eve in the garden. The Bible unveils to us that Satan tempted Eve through the lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life.

Genesis 3:6

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh), and that it was pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eyes), and a tree to



be desired to make one wise (pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

Satan tried the same approach on Jesus in the wilderness. He tried to draw the attention of Jesus away from the truth of Scripture and place it on his own fleshly needs, instead of what God wanted Him to do.

Matthew 4:1-11

“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 (lust of the flesh). But he 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. 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 (pride of life): for it is written, 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. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him (lust of the eyes) 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.”

We were all in the wilderness many times this week. Just the devil and yourself were there. The battle was on. Who won the battle this week? Far too often we allow the devil to win because we are not a man or woman of the Word as we should be. Listen, if we are going to combat the devil like Jesus did, then we are going to have to be a person whose life is absorbed in the Bible. This is why so many Christians live in utter defeat today. It’s because we are not committed to building the Word of God into our lives and using it effectively against the attacks of the devil. Your commitment to the Word of God helps you to overcome satanic assaults today. If Jesus used the Word, then we will have to use it as well.

You will notice that the devil hit Christ when He was hungry. The devil always seems to hit us when our stomachs are growling or when we are at a low spot in our lives. The Father wanted the Son to trust in His provision and not in any other avenue to obtain food (vs. 11). He wanted the Son to only trust in the Father's care and loving provision. But the devil tempted Jesus through the "lust of the flesh" as he tried to get Jesus to go against the Father's plans. The response of Jesus demonstrated that He was a Word-filled man (vs.4).

This was actually a quote from Deuteronomy 8:3. Jesus was quoting the Scripture. You see, the Word-filled man knows the Bible and knows how to use it in the time of temptation or "evil day." Jesus, in essence, was saying that the Word of God was more important than His own physical needs because it catered to His spiritual needs, which were far more important. Also, there is true and lasting joy when we listen to the Word of God and its spiritual direction instead of obeying our own physical appetites. The Bible says that man's physical needs are not to take priority over his spiritual needs (Matt. 6:33). Many people want the bread before they want the Bible! The devil wants us to take things into our own hands and take whatever we think we need in life. When this happens we generate lust in our heart and go against God's will. We will find ourselves in the devil's trap.

After this the devil took Jesus up to the pinnacle of the temple and wanted to perform a spectacular stunt of leaping off the temple (vs. 5-6). It's as if the devil was saying, "If you are trusting in the Father to meet all of your needs then jump off of this temple." The text does not say it but I think the devil was probably singing, "Be not dismayed whate'er be-tide, God will take care of you, beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you." Well, that is tempting God! It's tempting God to take care of your life when you try to do something out of God's will and for your own profit. Jesus knew that the devil was tempting God as He responds to him (vs.7). Once again the Word-filled man quotes the Bible. Jesus responds with the Scripture to counteract the devil's attack. This is a quote from Deuteronomy 6:16. Moses was reminding the Israelites how they tempted or tested God in the wilderness (see Exodus 17:7). In essence they were

saying that if God is really with us and cares for us, then He will give us water. That was not trusting God, it was testing God.

Sometimes we tempt God to do something for us that He does not want to do. We, in essence, tempt God to act according to our own plan. "God, if You will just give me this car then I will serve You and live for You. God, if You are really there, then You will heal me of this illness or You will bring me that check in the mail. God, if You are really out there and care for me, then You will bring a girlfriend or boyfriend into my life. You will help me pass the exam and get that job that I have been looking for. God, if You will just do what I say then I will know that you really care for me." I want to say that this type of praying and talk is tempting God (vs.7)!

Richard Strauss has said:

"When you truly trust someone, you never ask him to prove himself. Our trust makes it unnecessary to put him to the test."

So it is with God. We can trust God to meet our needs without demanding anything from Him or tempting Him. Also, we can have trust in God, knowing that He knows what is best for our lives. And just maybe jumping off of a roof or cliff is not what God had in mind for you on Monday morning. This was a temptation that centered upon the "pride of life." He wanted the Son of God to demonstrate the glory and power of the Messiah instead of His servant character within His earthly life and mission (vs.6).

In essence, the devil wanted Jesus to bypass the humility of the cross and go straight to the glory and throne of the Messiah by exalting Himself in some spectacular feat. But this again was not in the Father's plans for the Son. The cross was upon the horizon and not the future glory of the Messiah. Furthermore, as the devil showed Christ the kingdoms of the world ("the glory of them") he attempted to inflate pride in the heart of Christ as well. He wanted Christ to be filled with the glory and pride of being able to reign these world kingdoms.

Then the devil did something that was more devilish than he had ever done. This is the devilish of all devilish acts. It is more devilish than deviled eggs or deviled ham! The devil quoted the Bible (vs. 6b). Why, the devil

quoted the Scripture to the Lord Jesus in order to try and trick Him. Watch out! The devil knows the Bible! However, we discover by reading Psalms 19:11 that the devil misquoted the Bible. I suppose it was just an accident? Not at all! The devil has a degree in taking away from the Bible. He directly left out a portion of Psalms 19:11 which says, "in all thy ways" meaning that whatever Jesus did He would do in the will of God and follow the ways of God for His life. Jumping off of the temple was not in God's plan. And maybe what you think is right for your life is not God's way for your life. Did you ever stop and think about that? I wouldn't try to jump off of a cliff and expect God to give you a soft landing! There won't be a pillow waiting down at the bottom.

When the devil softly quotes the Bible in your ear, watch out! He's up to something that is no good. The devil has a way of watering down the Bible, misquoting it and making it say something that it does not say. In doing this, he also gets our attention away from the truth of Scripture. The devil will do anything to divert our attention away from truth. If the devil can draw our attention away from the truth of the Bible and deceive us about the real message of the Bible, then he has captured our mind.

The Word-filled believer will respond with the absolute truth of the Bible to counteract all of the devil's lies (vs.7). Jesus as the Word-filled man once again responded with the Bible in order to counteract all of the devil's temptation and misquotation of Scripture. Jesus used the absolute truth of Scripture to arouse the devil's attention and bring continued victory in His life. Dear friend, I must say again that victory in the Christian life is a truth encounter! We must learn to be filled with the Word of God so that we can find victory over the devil's lies and attractive temptations. And just when we think the devil went out the backdoor, we find that he comes in the side door to tempt us again (vs.8). He will also come right in the front door and sit down beside you at the breakfast table and ask you to pass the toast and orange juice. The old devil does not give up very easily. But this should not surprise us. He is the tempter. This time the devil began to tempt through the "lust of the eyes" and then ended up with the old "pride of life" trick.

The Bible says in verse 8 that "he sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world." The devil was tempting through the avenue of the eyes, trying to

get Jesus to lust for all of these kingdoms as he looked upon them. This was the age-old “lust of the eyes” routine. Jesus was too smart to fall for it. The kingdoms are under the power and control of the devil (John 12:31). Satan has the ruling authority over the world nations and people’s lives today. That is why the nations of this world are in such a spiritually ruined condition. Of course, this will all change in the future!

Revelation 11:15 says:

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

Someday in the future God’s plan will be for the Son to take over the kingdoms of this world and rule them with a rod of iron. However, this was not in God’s plan right now. Jesus knew that the cross had to come before the crown. Satan was offering a way for Jesus to get to the crown without the cross. I am so glad that Jesus did not give in to the tempter or else there would have been no cross. Besides, when Jesus returns in power and great glory He will take the kingdoms of this world from Satan. Satan wanted Jesus to bow down and worship himself. This is something Satan has always desired since the initial rebellion. But what is the response of the Word-filled man (see vs. 10)?

Jesus was saying that God is the only one to be worshipped, not Mary or any other saint. God and God alone! It is God that is to be worshipped and served, not the devil. But what do we do many times? We give into the devil’s temptations to worship other things, whether they are houses, cars, pornography, money, fame or recognition of ourselves. Only the Word-filled man can keep his head above the water and live on the victory side. Only the Word-filled man can combat all the temptations and schemes of the devil. Without being filled with the Word of God you will only see Satan’s agenda and Satan’s plan. In fact, you will be sucked into the great vacuum and pull of his satanic system. Satan’s system is like a giant whirlpool that is swirling about and taking everybody down into it that is not filled with the truth of the Word.

Once again, let us remind ourselves that Jesus quotes the Scripture (vs.10). This time a passage from Deuteronomy 6:13. You see what Jesus was doing? He was using the Word of God to gain victory over the evil one. It's the Bible hidden within our heart that will give us victory. The truth of the Bible helps us to fight off the attacks of the evil one.

Psalms 119:11 once again reminds us:

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Psalms 119:9 says:

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.”

The Psalmist realized the importance of the Word of God in his fight for daily victory. There was no doubt about it. Victory is won through the Word. Freedom from the bondage of sin is accomplished by applying the promises and commands of the Bible to your times of temptations. It can only be had through the aggressive application of the truth to your life.

John 8:31-32

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

The truth of the Word of God sets true disciples free from the bondage of sin. Knowing what the Bible says concerning truth can liberate our lives from the sinful works of the devil.

Ephesians 6:17 says:

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

The Holy Spirit takes the Word of God and drives it home to our heart, providing victory for our lives. That is why it is called the “sword of the spirit.” The Holy Spirit uses the holy book to help us fight off the unholy attacks of Satan. Without these two working together, we are open game for Satan. What happens when the Word-filled and Word-directed man

uses the Scripture to combat Satan? The Bible says that the devil will flee from him.

James 4:7 says:

“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

This is exactly what happened when Jesus used the Word against Satan. He fled from tempting the Lord Jesus.

Matthew 4:11 says:

“Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

How do we resist the devil’s temptations and tricks today? By becoming a Word-filled and Word-directed individual. As Satan tempts us to do something contrary to God’s will, we can have the Word hidden within our hearts and be able to quote the Scripture to him in the time of temptation. When the devil tempts us to be angry or to be unforgiving, we should go to those Scriptures that pertain to these subjects and forbid such actions (Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:31-32). In this way we know God’s mind about our sinful actions. At the same time, we must memorize and apply those verses to our lives, which pertain to our victory in Christ and the devil’s defeat (Ephesians 6:10-19; Col. 2:15; 1 John 2:14; 3:3; 4:4).

Quoting Scripture in the actual time of temptation provides an incredible outlet for victory. In fact, it is the only outlet. The man who is walking in the Spirit’s provision and power, instead of the flesh, has a resource of Biblical promises to which he can turn in the time of temptation. The Holy Spirit takes the absolute truth and purity of the Word of God and drives it home to our heart, providing victory for our lives. That is why it is called the “sword of the Spirit.” It helps us to fight off the attacks of Satan. Victory is a truth encounter.

The promise is that the devil will flee from the Word-filled man or woman. He will leave us and we can be comforted (Matthew 5:11). The Word is the way out. You will be stuck in sin if you do not know what the Bible says and if you are not willing to use the truth to counteract the devil. Without a

healthy diet in the Scriptures, you will be biting the devil's hook and be pulled along by his power.

Have you been filled with the Word of God as you should be? Have you been meditating upon the eternal and unchanging truth of the Word? Only as we learn to be Word-filled and Spirit-directed can we really start to be spiritual in our manner of living and move forward in our growth with God. Start memorizing Scripture and meditating upon it. Start taking the Bible seriously.

Prisoner of war, Howard Rutledge, writes in his book, "In the Presence of Mine Enemies:" "That first New Year's Day of captivity I made at least three resolutions that I repeated each year:

- I would try never to be cold again.
- I would try never to be hungry again.
- I would never be without the Bible again."

You can be sure that if the devil can get our minds and hearts off of the settled and uncompromising truth of the Word of God, then we will be open to accept his lies about pleasure and sensual gratification that he (the devil) is trying to plant within our mind and heart.

D.L. Moody used to say something about the Bible:

"Sin will keep you from this book and this book will keep you from sin."

How very true this is! That is why we need to keep our mind and heart filled with the promises of Scripture and those portions of the Word of God, which will help us through our different battles in life with various sins. The Word of God will help us to overcome as we hide it within our heart. It will help us clean up our lives. The Bible is the spiritual Clorox or Ajax of the Christian life. It will help remove and keep out the spots or stains of sin, which soil our lives (James 1:27).

Dr. Andrew Telford used to say:

"Satan trembles when he sees, Bibles sold as cheap as these!"



Yes, indeed, there is no replacement for the Bible when it comes to enhancing our life of victory. Your Bible, don't leave home without it!

While thinking about the armour of God, as we have been studying it in this section, John Dorsey described the devil's tactics in the following poetic words:

"I had a battle fierce today  
Within my place of prayer;  
I went to meet and talk with God,  
But I found Satan there.  
He whispered, 'You can't really pray,  
You lost out long ago;  
You might say words while on your knees,  
But you can't pray, you know.'  
So then I pulled my helmet down,  
Way down upon my ears,  
And found it helped to still his voice  
And helped allay my fears.  
I checked my other armor o'er;  
My feet in peace were shod;  
My loins with truth were girded 'round;  
My sword the Word of God.  
My righteous breastplate still was on,  
My heart's love to protect.  
My shield of faith was all intact--  
His fiery darts bounced back.  
I called on God in Jesus' name,  
I pled the precious blood--  
While Satan sneaked away in shame,  
I met and talked with God!"

Moving on to Ephesians 6:18, you will note that prayer is the way in which you maintain victory for yourself and for others.

Ephesians 6:18 says:

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

Although this is not mentioned as part of the armor, you must understand that prayer is the underlying foundation for victory in the time of battle. The Word of God enlightens us but prayer enables us to have the victory. Through prayer, we contact God and pour our hearts out to Him. We depend upon Him 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. There is a definite prayer battle that we must be engaged in today. Truth and prayer are linked together in the Bible. We should not lack either of these important details for victory.

Acts 6:4 says:

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”

Prayer demonstrates our dependency upon God for strength and the Word of God enlightens us to the truth we must enforce in the time of temptation. God’s Word reveals the will of God for our lives and prayer enables us to do His will in the time of temptation. We must learn to combine truth with praying in order to have real victory. Paul’s appeal for prayer immediately follows his presentation of the armor. This tells us that all the armor must be accompanied by prayer.

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.”

All the armor will mean nothing without the ministry of prayer. Prayer unleashes the power behind the armor. There needs to be a sense of urgency, connected with the ministry of prayer, as the believer faces the enemy on the battle line. Prayer brings us in touch with God who alone can provide us with the power we need to over the enemy. We must put on each piece of this armor with prayer or with dependency upon the Lord for

victory. Trying to wear the armor and not rely upon prayer is like trying to jump out of an airplane without wearing a parachute.

The Gospel Song once again stresses it so well:

“Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
Stand in His strength alone;  
The arm of flesh will fail you -  
Ye dare not trust your own.

Put on the gospel armor,  
Each piece put on with prayer;  
Where duty calls for danger,  
Be never wanting there.”

Our part is to put on the armor by faith. Then we must pray and ask God to give us the strength we need to have victory with this armor. The Christian life is a balanced life. We must do something. We must put on the armor in faith, believing God will see us through. We must learn Scripture and do battle by effectively using the Word of God. However, we must depend upon God for strength, energy and power to overcome the enemy. And it must be understood that this strength and dependency upon God only comes through the ministry of 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!

Any good soldier knows the importance of keeping his equipment in good working order. This calls for daily maintenance and attention. Likewise, we must keep our spiritual armor in good working order by prayer. The daily maintenance that is needed in order to maintain our armor is the ministry of prayer. And prayer is needed daily and frequently because we are to be ready for war at any moment.

After the great victory of Jericho, Joshua forgot to pray for the Lord's guidance and help when he went to war with Ai. The results were devastating to the nation. Joshua's army was defeated. In the first battle, the walls came tumbling down on the enemy. But in the next battle, the

walls came tumbling down on Joshua! This is because he forgot to pray and rely upon the Lord for guidance and victory. If Joshua had prayed God would have sent him notice that there was sin in the nation that had to be dealt with before the war. But Joshua did not take time to pray. He prayed after the defeat instead of before the defeat (see Joshua 7:6). Many times we will experience certain victories in life but then somehow think that we can continue to exist off the past victories. But this is never the case. Jericho is gone! Today we must face Ai. We must always depend upon the Lord for “daily” victory since we encounter new temptations that war against our souls everyday. We cannot afford to live on our past victories. We must live in present victory! We must live in the present tense.

Ephesians 6:18 says:

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

Paul tells you how to pray if you want to defeat Satan (Eph. 6:18):

❖ You must pray always (the frequency of prayer).

This obviously does not mean “always saying vocal prayers.” You are not to be heard for your “much speaking” (Matt. 6:7). The Bible teaches that we are to pray “without ceasing” (1 Thes. 5:17) which means we are to be alert and ready to talk to the Lord at any moment or time of the day. We must remain in close contact and fellowship with the Lord so that we can enter His presence in a moment’s time.

Someone has said:

To “Pray without ceasing” means to “Keep the receiver off the hook!” It suggests that we must keep in constant fellowship and communion with the Lord.

The expression “praying always” simply means that you should be alert and ready to pray at all times and under any conditions or circumstances. Alertness to prayer is the needed plan for victory. We simply need to be on “Prayer Alert” in our Christian lives. You should never really have to say when you pray out loud, “Lord, I come into Thy presence,” because you are

never to leave His presence! You must “pray always” because you are always subject to temptations and attacks of the devil. A surprise attack will defeat you if you forget to “pray without ceasing.”

What air is for the lungs, prayer is for the soul; what breathing is physically, prayer is spiritually. Physically we cannot live without breathing. Likewise, we cannot function spiritually without praying. We are to pray always. Pray first and last. Before you do anything, pray about it. After you have done everything, pray. We do not have to be in a church building to pray. We don't have to be kneeling by our bedside to pray. Prayer is a daily matter and through prayer we can immediately come into the presence of God no matter where we are and what we are doing. During a moment of desperation, when Peter was walking on the water and began to sink, he immediately cried, “Lord, save me” (Matt. 14:30). At any moment we should be ready to enter the courts of the Almighty. When we pray in this manner our life can be lived in habitual contact with God.

Albert Hughes said:

“There is not an hour marked on the face of the old clock that we do not need to pray.”

❖ You must pray with all prayer (the variety of prayer).

There is more than one kind of praying (“all prayer”). There is the common “prayer” of worship and communion directed to God. There are also prayers of “supplication” (petition and requests). This context is talking about prayers of supplication or petition that center upon intercession for other saints (“for all saints”). These are intercessory prayers that are made on behalf of other believers for their victory over the devil. Believers must remember how important it is to intercede on the behalf of other believers. Intercessory prayer is extremely important as we do battle with the devil.

Others need our prayers of intercession as they do the work of the Lord and face the enemy. We need the prayers of fellow believers as we seek to live for the Lord. How often do we really specifically pray for others in the realm of their victorious Christian life? How often do we specifically pray that other saints will overcome the devil and experience victory in their lives?

We need to become more “victory oriented” in our intercessory prayers for others. Many times we pray for better jobs and health related problems for the saints but forget about their need for daily victory over the devil in both mind and practice.

We might also add that there are prayers of “thanksgiving” which are associated with victory (see Phil. 4:6). If you pray and only ask for things, then you are missing out on blessings that come with intercessions and giving of thanks. In fact, thanksgiving is a great prayer weapon for defeating Satan. “Praise changes things” as much as “prayer changes things.” Thanksgiving or praise is actually to be part of prayer and becomes a way to promote our confidence in God for His promised victory in any temptation. This is illustrated in the Old Testament in the book of 2 Chronicles.

The Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites were the enemies of the Jews and were invading the people. King Jehoshaphat was in for the battle of his life. But God told the people, through Jahaziel, that He would intervene. The battle was not theirs but the Lord's. What a reassuring promise!

2 Chronicles 20:15

“And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.”

We do not fight for victory we fight from victory. And God promises that He would fight the battle for them. Upon hearing this promise of victory the people praised God in anticipation of their victory over the enemy (see vs. 19). Their praise was connected with their confidence of victory. The next morning the people walked toward the battle and were praising the Lord for victory as they walked! Jehoshaphat put the choir out in front of the army as they went toward the enemy. He knew that the praise of the people would be a reminder that they had won the victory even without a battle.

2 Chronicles 20:21 says:

“And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out

before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever.”

Praise became a way to bring confidence into their lives so that they would prevail over the enemy and have victory. So thanksgiving is part of prayer. And prayerful praise to God is a way to promote confidence and faith in the Lord for His promised provision of victory. This is the thought behind this account in the Old Testament. Do not forget to thank God for the victory He provides as you worship Him.

❖ You must pray in the spirit (the guidance of prayer).

This simply means that you are to pray under the filling, guidance, power and direction of the Holy Spirit. As we do this, the Holy Spirit will help you to pray according to God’s will. When you pray selfishly and in the flesh, then you are not praying in the Spirit. This means that you are not asking in the right manner and according to the will of God (James 4:3). The more we know the Word of God the more we can pray according to the will of God and thus pray in the Spirit.

Jesus said in John 15:7:

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”

True praying in the Spirit is praying according to God’s Word and His will which is found in the Scriptures. So in order to pray in the Spirit we must have God’s Word abiding in our hearts. As we are praying over the promises of God’s Word we can find rest in them and know that God will answer our prayers based upon His many multifaceted promises. And the promise is this. When we ask according to God’s will we will receive answers to our prayers (1 John 5:14). And these answers to prayer will always lead to the glory of God (John 14:13 – “that the Father may be glorified in the Son”).

Many times we fail to remember that answered prayer is to glorify God. You may have wanted a new automobile, but would God really get the glory for answering this prayer? You may have wanted God to work in a

certain way but would God really get the glory if He answered in the way that you prayed? This is why we must always consider the matter of His will as we pray.

Praying in the Spirit means that we pray under the Spirit's guidance and direction for our lives (Jude 1:20). Praying in the Spirit does not mean that we are praying in some unintelligible tongue that nobody can understand. Praying in the Spirit is when we pray according to the Spirit's leading and direction and pray according to the will of God. The Holy Spirit's only concern and purpose is the will of God. Therefore, when we pray under the Spirit's leading we can pray according to God's will. Even when we do not know what His exact will is in a given situation, the Spirit will always lead us to pray that God's will would be accomplished in every situation as He sees fit. This keeps us from praying selfishly.

When we pray in the Spirit we will always pray with an uncompromising attitude that the will of the Lord should be done and will be done. This means that true praying in the Spirit does not mean that we will pray insisting that everyone will live and that everyone will be healed without exception. We know that not everyone will live and be healed. True prayer in the Spirit involves humility to the will of God in any given situation. Much prayer is based on what we want and how we can please ourselves. But true Spirit directed prayer always leads us to pray according to God's will.

We might also add that as we are praying in the Spirit, which means to pray under the filling, guidance, power and direction of the Holy Spirit, we will speak forth with confidence and claim victory over the devil in our time of prayer. This means that we should pray in the Spirit in the context of the victory of Calvary. It is praying with confidence and victory over the enemy. This seems to be the real emphasis in this context. The Holy Spirit will inspire us to pray confidently to God for needed victory. Praying in the Spirit will lead us through the greatest satanic obstacles that all of hell could throw at us. Praying in the Spirit means that believers will pray under the Spirit's guidance, assistance and energy and lead believers into newfound victory as they face the giant temptations of life and struggles with the world, the flesh and the devil.



I believe there is much praying being done today that is not “in the Spirit.” It is prayer that is selfish and full of show. It is prayer that is shallow and meaningless. It is prayer that is unbelieving. It is prayer that is simply self-centered. It is prayer that lacks vitality, power and faith. We need to ignite our prayer lives, my friend. We need to start praying in the Spirit so that our prayers will mean business before God! Many of our prayers are faithless, fruitless and failures when it comes to getting into the ears of God and changing our lives. This is because we are not praying in the Spirit or under His leading, guidance and power. We are not praying with confidence or boldness and expectancy from Heaven.

❖ You must pray with your eyes open (the manner of prayer).

You must pray realizing that the devil and his battalion of evil forces are seeking to disrupt your spiritual walk with God and your faithfulness to Him. You must be spiritually alert in life, watching for the enemy’s invasion into your territory and be ready to pray at a moment’s notice to rid yourself of temptation (Eph. 6:18 - “watching”). There should be constant praying for God’s victorious help and assistance through all the devil’s attacks upon your life.

1 Peter 4:7 says:

“...be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.”

This verse is teaching that we must be spiritually sober to the attacks from the enemy. We cannot fall asleep from the spiritual standpoint. We must stay on guard at all times. We must pray while being on guard. Sleeping saints are prime targets for the devil’s temptations. They are easy targets for the evil world of darkness. We must be smart like a military soldier and keep our eyes on the fort, ready to pray at all times! When we are not alert spiritually, then the world of evil spirits will gain a foothold in our lives. We need to be ready to blow the whistle upon the devil’s tricks and temptations that he sends our way.

We must remain spiritually alert to the devil’s attempts to seduce and tempt us into sin. This can only be done by remaining in a constant readiness to pray at the moment of temptation. We must always be on

highest alert in our Christian lives. We must be in a constant readiness to pray. We don't want to spend ten minutes confessing all of our sins that we had failed to confess the week before. Our hearts must be clean and our line to Heaven must be on hold!

Matthew 26:41

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

The disciples were found sleeping when Jesus returned from the garden. They really had an inward desire to do what was right (“the spirit is willing”); however, their flesh or human existence was very frail (“the flesh is weak”). The body tends to go to sleep if it sits around too long. It even happens when you pray! Like many of us, we fall asleep physically very easily. However, the real emphasis Jesus was making was that we often fall asleep from the spiritual standpoint. This is because we do not realize what is going on around us. We are in a spiritual battle or war zone. There are Scud Missiles flying all around and ground traps or landmines. We must stay awake and watch our step from a spiritual standpoint. We must be on prayer alert.

In Matthew 26:41 the believer's prayer is even a prayer of preparation before the temptation arrives (“lead us not into temptation”). This petition reflects the believer's desire to avoid the dangers of sin altogether. It is a prayer primarily for protection from the temptation itself. This is a proper attitude for the believer to possess even though God does allow His children to pass through temptation. It is the sovereign God who allows Satan to tempt to us, but it is actually Satan who tempts or seduces us. Our desire or prayer to God should be one of freedom from the realm of temptation so that we can avoid the dangers and pitfalls of sin altogether.

The same type of prayer was given to the disciples in Matthew 6:13 – “And lead us not into temptation.” The desire of the disciple or follower of Christ should be to escape the very temptation that might potentially open them up to the danger and powerful sway which the devil and the world brings their way. This is a noble desire and prayer. And only God can answer this prayer in accordance with His sovereign regulatory standards, which He places on the devil in relationship to our temptation (Matt. 4:1).

❖ **You must keep on praying (the persistence of prayer).**

The word “perseverance” in Ephesians 6:18 simply means, “to stick to it and not quit.” Many times you will become defeated in life because you fail to stick to the ministry of prayer. You become lazy in relationship to your prayer life and ministry. As believers, we need to pray when we are tired and pray when we are wide awake. We need to pray daily and hourly to God. Why do we give in to certain temptations? Many times it’s because we have no persistence in our prayer lives. We pray in the morning and forget about prayer until the evening meal. Prayer is to be a persistent practice in our lives. As we pray to God we must keep on asking (“supplication”) for victory in our lives and the lives of other saints.

Jesus spoke about persistence in Luke 11:5-10 when He said:

“And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

This is persistence or perseverance in the ministry of prayer. The parable of the persistent neighbor fully illustrates this persevering spirit in prayer. Jesus wants us to keep knocking on the door of Heaven in perseverance for the saints and concern for their spiritual welfare as they face the enemy head on in the battle.

❖ **You must pray for other people (the objects of prayer).**

Intercession for others can help bring victory into their lives and help bring victory to your own personal life as well. We must remember that we are not in the battle alone. Other believers are in the daily battle of life as well.

We sometimes think that we are the only ones fighting the battle with the devil. Of course, this is a wrong mindset. Ephesians 6:18 speaks about “watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” This involves a daily persistent prayer ministry, on the behalf of others, who are also engaged in the battle with you.

1 Samuel 12:23 says:

“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.”

Job 42:10 says:

“And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends”

As mentioned before, we need to have a growing understanding and keen awareness concerning the importance of prayer for others. We are all in the same battle. God expects us to intercede for each other through the ministry of prayer. Intercessory prayer is the trumpet note for victory! We need to keep the prayer line open!

Remember:

“The devil trembles when He sees, the weakest saint upon his knees.”

So Let’s pray!

“Dear Lord, I pray right now for victory in my life. As I am praying I am accepting the provision that you have provided for me within the armor of God. Dear Lord, I want to put on the belt of truth. I want to be truthful or sincere about wanting victory. I want victory more than anything else. I love you Lord more than my wicked sin. I want to put on the breastplate of righteousness. I want to claim my righteous position in Christ and live out this position in practical day-to-day righteousness and holiness. This is my heart’s desire dear Lord.

“Gracious Lord, I also want to know and experience the peace that comes from the Gospel of peace. I know that you have accepted me in Your holy presence through Your Son. I know that I have a peaceful standing before You. I know that You accept me, dear God, and I thank You for loving me unconditionally. I know that You hear my prayer right now in spite of what I am going through and have done. I also want to know that You will give me

peace as I face the temptations of this day and right now. Calm my heart with Your wonderful provision of peace.

“Dear Lord, above all else, I am taking on the shield of faith and believing that You can and will give me victory in my life throughout this day and right now. All my confidence and trust is in You and Your power at this time. I totally lean upon You in faith, knowing that You will help me through this temptation.

“And Lord, I also want You to control my mind. I actively claim the helmet of salvation for my life. I want to protect my mind from evil thoughts by meditating upon Your loveliness and the promises of Your Word. I want to guard my mind from being overcome by sinful thoughts. At this present time, I cast out of my mind any sensual suggestions and thoughts that the old nature and the devil have placed there. I want to begin the process of cleaning up my thought life.

“Dear Lord, I also want to claim the promises of Your own Word for my life right now. I want to use the sword of the Spirit for my life. You have told me in Your Word that through Christ I can have victory over the devil. I am pleading the promises of Your Word right now that pertain to the defeat of Satan upon the cross and victory through Christ’s blood, as being absolutely true. Lord, I need you. Lord, I want to have victory in my life and live holy. I yield myself to You once again in the protection and power of Your armor. May this be the beginning of a newfound freedom from sin and Satan that will translate itself into many more practical victories in my life. I pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.”