

GOD'S STRATEGY FOR WINNING IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Ephesians 6

Have you ever been just humming along as a Christian? You're doing well, firing on all cylinders, when all of a sudden you are just barraged with an onslaught of spiritual attacks—from trials to doubts to heavy-duty temptations. You wonder, "What on earth is happening? Have I committed some sin that has caused this to happen?" No. It is called spiritual warfare, and you are in the heat of the battle.

So, how are we to prevail in this spiritual battle?

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

1. **The belt of truth.** To live successfully as a Christian you must be truthful before God—not living a life of hypocrisy or trying to live in two worlds, or doing things you should not do. If you don't have truth on, the rest of the armor isn't really going to matter.
2. **The breastplate of righteousness.** When you put your faith in Jesus Christ, you are justified. That means God has forgiven you of all your sins and has placed the righteousness of Christ into your spiritual account. You stand righteous before God.
3. **Feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.** Roman soldiers wore boots with little cleats that would give them footing in battle and protect their feet from hidden traps placed in the ground by the enemy. Their boots spoke of holding ground and gaining ground. With our feet, we carry the gospel—we must gain ground.
4. **The shield of faith.** This protects us from those flaming arrows of temptation or spiritual attack from the devil. These attacks usually come after a great spiritual victory, when speaking up for your faith, or while reading the Bible. God's Word says when you are hit and don't know what to do, put up the shield of faith. As long as you believe God, your shield is up.
5. **The helmet of salvation.** The helmet protects your mind. Our mind, thoughts, and imaginations must be guarded because it is there that temptation generally starts. Proverbs 23:7 says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." If you will trace back to that sin, I think you would find that it started here.
6. **The sword of the spirit.** This is the Word of God. You can have the greatest armor, but without the sword, your enemy is going to take you out. The psalmist said, "Your Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you." It is a good thing to carry a Bible in your briefcase, backpack, or purse, but the best place to carry the Word of God is in your heart—memorized.

GREG'S NOTES

A NEW BEGINNING TEACHING OUTLINES

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RELEVANT REMINDERS

- We have an enemy, the devil, who moves in relatively predictable patterns. He uses the same tactics year after year, generation after generation. He doesn't really change; his strategies are found in the Bible and it is good for us to understand what they are.
- We are all in this battle together—Christians from all around the world. We must pull together with fellow Christians and lock shields as we march forward in the battle that God has called us into.
- If you neglect Scripture, your spiritual life will unravel. You need God's Word in your life. He will speak to you through it. And when you read the Bible you should pray. The Word of God and prayer are inseparable. The Word enlightens us. Prayer enables us.

APPLICABLE ACTIONS

If it is true that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, it is also true that the devil hates you and has a horrible plan for your life. If you don't want to follow Christ, here is what I would say to you: enjoy this life on earth because this is as good as it gets. For the nonbeliever, life on earth is as good as it gets. In the afterlife judgment will come. But for the Christian, life on earth is as bad as it gets. For us the best is yet to come. That's good to know.