



Walking to Battle

Ephesians 6:10-24

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FIRST THOUGHTS

The Bible is full of people who met challenges with courage and confidence. Elijah faced the prophets of Baal. David stood his ground in front of Goliath. Esther risked death to reveal Haman's plot. Peter defied the order to stop preaching the gospel. Each of these people put their confidence in God and not solely in their own abilities. God prepared them and provided the resources for these defining moments, and He continues to do so for His followers today.

As believers in a secular and immoral culture we are going to face opposition to what we believe. this should not come as a surprise to us. Jesus warned his disciples that they would face opposition and even death for following Him. But Jesus also told them that He was going to send the Holy Spirit to provide the power needed to overcome anything they faced.

If we are going to be victorious in the battle, we are going to have to be Aware, Prepared, and willing to use the Field Support that Christ has provided.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

Aware

[Ephesians 6:10–13](#) (ESV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Why is it important for believers to identify the enemy accurately?

Growing up as a military dependent during the Cold War, I knew how the enemy was. It was the communist nation of the USSR. While living in Europe it was always on our minds was the fact that we were there to help protect Germany in the case of invasion from the USSR. All those in the military were aware of the threat that the USSR posed and prepared daily to meet that threat.

We have to be aware of the threat that Satan poses to the church. We are going to be attacked. Satan will do anything he can to stop the spreading of the Gospel. He will cause you to doubt your faith. He works to bring disunity in the local church. Thus making them weak and ineffective in reaching the culture. The devil is evil and also intelligent. He carefully strategizes ways to attack the people of God to minimize their influence and make them feel the battle is lost, even if it has been conquered by Christ in His death and resurrection.

This battle we are engaged is not a physical battle but a spiritual battle. The method of the enemy's attack is described in verse 11 as schemes. The English word methods is derived from this Greek word for schemes. It implied subtle, strategic tactics. The real battle is with rulers, authorities, cosmic powers of this darkness, and evil spiritual forces in the heavens. These are demonic forces under the direction of Satan.

In light of verse 12, Paul urged believers to take up the full armor of God. This is now the second time in this section he has encouraged such action (v. 11). The hope of the believer is not to outsmart the enemy or to overpower him. The hope of the believer comes in appropriating the armor God has made available to the soldier for the battle. In verse 11 Paul used a word meaning "be clothed in," and here he used a word that meant to "take up or assume." Believers are to clothe themselves in spiritual armor and then appropriate it into their lives for battle.

Prepared

[Ephesians 6:14–17](#) (ESV)

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

Describe the resources God has provided to prepare believers for battle.

Paul begins in verse 14 to describe the armor that belongs to the believer in this war against the forces of darkness. I would imagine that as he is writing this, he is looking at the Roman soldiers that are guarding him.

The main foot-soldier had two weapons at his disposal. Each soldier had a lance, which was over three feet long and had an iron point. He also carried a sword for hand-to-hand combat. The soldier would often throw the lance and then draw his sword for combat. These offensive weapons were supplemented with a defensive weapon: a wooden shield. The shield was oval and covered in leather. It protected the soldier during combat, and the wooden nature of the shield extinguished flaming arrows that were directed at the soldier.

The clothing of the soldier served various functions. During combat the soldier wore a metal helmet, protecting this crucial part of the body from the lance or the sword. A breastplate covered the heart and was usually made of metal over a kilt of leather. Sometimes the shoulder area and lower legs were protected by metal armor, and the shoes were often spiked sandals that allowed traction for the soldier as he advanced in battle.

Paul specifically describes the various pieces of armor.

- **The belt of truth** pictures the large leather belt the Roman soldier wore. It held other weapons and kept his outer garments in place. To put on the belt of truth can be understood as accepting the truth of the Bible and choosing to follow it with integrity.
- **The breastplate of righteousness** pictures the metal armor in the shape of a human torso common to the Roman uniform. To put on the breastplate can be understood as choosing not to harbor and nurture known sin. It is striving to be like Christ and live according to his ways of righteousness.
- **Feet fitted with the readiness** pictures the hobnailed shoes which kept the soldiers footing sure in battle. To put on these shoes could be understood as believing the promises of God in the gospel and counting on them to be true for you. Faith in these promises yields peace in the Christian's life.
- **The shield of faith** pictures the small, round shield the Roman soldier used to deflect blows from the sword, arrow, or spear of the enemy. To take up this shield can be understood as rejecting temptations to doubt, sin, or quit, telling yourself the truth, and choosing on the basis of the truth to do the right thing.
- **The helmet of salvation** pictures the Roman soldier's metal protective headgear. It does not refer to our salvation in Christ. First Thessalonians speaks of the helmet of the "hope of salvation," which is probably a parallel idea. That being the case, taking the helmet of salvation could be understood as resting our hope in the future and living in this world according to the value system of the next.
- **The sword of the Spirit** pictures the soldier's weapon sheathed to his belt and used both for offensive and defensive purposes. Taking the sword of the Spirit—defined for us as the Word of God—can be understood as using Scripture specifically in life's situations to fend off attacks of the enemy and put him to flight. We see the example of Jesus using the Scripture this way in [Matthew 4:1–11](#).

All of the pieces of the armor are connected to the opening "stand firm," picturing the infantryman standing at attention as each piece is fastened to his body, providing the strength that will allow him to stand fast in battle.

It should be noted that the Roman armor worked best when the soldiers worked as a unit to defeat the enemy. In the same way when all members of the church have their armor on and work together, they can defeat anything that tries to destroy the church.

Field Support

[Ephesians 6:18–24](#) (ESV)

¹⁸ *praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,* ¹⁹ *and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,* ²⁰ *for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.* ²¹ *So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything.* ²² *I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.* ²³ *Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* ²⁴ *Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.*

What's the relationship between prayer and victory?

In addition to armor and weapons, the soldier has at his disposal field support. The first level of field support is prayer. Paul told soldiers everywhere to pray at all times. The wise soldier sharpens his prayer life before the battle even arrives. Both preparation and engagement in battle require prayer. Prayer must be offered in the Spirit. The form of the Greek word emphasizes the means by which prayer is offered. The Spirit is with the person praying, inspires the person to pray, guides the person in what to pray, and energizes him or her to keep praying. People can pray in the flesh, but it is ineffective. Effective prayer must be offered in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 18 introduces the general character of a believer's prayer life:

- ***"all prayer and supplication"*** focuses on the variety prayers we are to pray. Believers should offer prayer, a general word for prayer, and make supplication, which is the more specific word for intercession.
- ***"always"*** focuses on the frequency. Believers should always be in a state of prayer.
- ***"in the Spirit"*** focuses on submission, as we line up with the will of God. The Spirit is with the person praying, inspires the person to pray, guides the person in what to pray, and energizes him or her to keep praying.
- ***"being watchful"*** focuses on the manner of prayer. Believers must be like the watchman on the wall, always alert and ready to engage when the enemy attacks.
- ***"all perseverance"*** focuses on the persistent nature of prayer. Believers have to be persistent in their prayers. It is a major weapon in the battle against Satan.
- ***"all saints"*** focuses on the objects of our prayers. Believers are to pray constantly for each other. Just as the Roman soldier relied on his fellow soldiers for support. So believers should support each other in prayer.

Paul makes this idea of praying for one another person by asking the Ephesians to remember him in prayer. Paul describes himself as an ambassador in chains. An ambassador lives in a foreign land but represents his home country. Paul saw himself as a stranger in the lands he traveled to take the gospel, and he desired to deliver the message of his home kingdom—the kingdom of God. Though he was an ambassador, he was in battle. He was in chains for preaching the gospel. Paul asked the Ephesian to pray that even in chains he would be faithful to preach the Gospel.

APPLICATION

How can believers walk bravely into battle?

- Be aware our enemy is strong, but our God is stronger.
- We cannot win by being passive. We must activate God's available power and armor through intentional spiritual preparation and obedience.
- God doesn't intend believers to battle alone but to stand together. Pray for spiritual victory for ourselves and others.

Personal Challenge: What steps will you take to be better prepared to stand firm in the gospel in the middle of this war zone?

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