

04 – DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Eph. 6:13 (Weymouth) – “Therefore, put on the complete armor of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground on the day of battle, and having fought to the end, to remain victors on the field.”

Observations

A.) The Armor Has to Be Put On

- ✓ He said, “Put on” the armor. The understood subject of that sentence is “you”. YOU put it on! No one can do it for you. You have to dress *yourself* for the battle.

B.) “Put on the Complete Armor”

- ✓ You need ALL of the armor! Think about it: (Suppose you’re in a natural war.) It wouldn’t do much good to cover your head, if you left your chest uncovered. It wouldn’t be helpful to put your shoes on, if you left your sword and shield at home. The same thing is true in a *spiritual war*! Every piece of armor you DON’T put on, leaves you vulnerable in some way. (You’ve got to put it all on!)

C.) “Put On the Armor, That You May Be Able to Stand”

- ✓ That Means: If you don’t put the armor on, you won’t be able to stand! The armor is what allows you to stand strong, endure the fight ... and eventually win.

D.) “Stand Your Ground on the Day of Battle”

- ✓ Understand This: Attacks aren’t constant. Some days, you’ll have a battle. And some days you won’t.
- ✓ My Advice Is: Enjoy the days when the battle subsides. (Live your life! Enjoy it!) But don’t forget about the war entirely. *Use* those peaceful seasons to replenish your inner resources. Spend time in the Word and get “prayed up”, so you’re ready for the next battle.

E.) “And Having Fought to the End, to Remain Victors on the Field”

- ✓ That’s the goal in every battle! When all the “shots” have been fired, and the “smoke” clears, you want to be the guy who’s still standing.

How Do We “Put On” the Armor?

- ✓ Years ago, Bev and I were pastoring in Calgary. Before each service, we’d gather for preservice prayer. We’d start praying, and inevitably (2 or 3 minutes into it), a certain fellow would stand up and say, “Pastor! Wait a minute! We forgot to put on the armor. Here, let me do it!” And he’d pray through the verses in this chapter. (He’d say, “I gird my loins with truth”, as he pretended to put on a belt. He did that for each piece of armor, acting it all out.)
- ✓ I never said it out loud, but I remember thinking: “I can’t picture Satan trembling because we’re putting on imaginary armor!” (“Oh no! He put on a pretend belt! And an invisible helmet! Oh no! Now I’m gonna lose for sure!”)
- ✓ The Armor of God is not something we put on with a prayer or a “faith confession”. These are character traits! When you build these qualities into your life, they protect you like armor.

1. The Belt of Truth

- ✓ The belt, believe it or not, was the central piece of a soldier’s armor. He hung his sword on it, and it held everything else in place. What does the belt represent? Paul called it the belt of “Truth”. (Jn. 17:17 – “Thy Word is Truth”.)
- ✓ Once again, you don’t put the Belt of Truth on by saying, “I gird my loins with truth”. You put it on by reading the Word, studying the Word, believing the Word, and doing the Word. When the Word of God is my first thought (in every situation), and the ultimate authority in my life ... THEN I’ve put on the Belt of Truth.

CHARACTER TRAIT – A life that’s built on the Word of God.

2. The Breastplate of Righteousness

✓ There are two kinds of Righteousness – Right Being and Right Doing.

a.) Right Being – (positional righteousness)

✓ Righteousness is being “right with God”! You didn’t earn it, and you *certainly* didn’t deserve it! But, when you believed in Jesus, He gave you His righteousness as a gift (Rom. 5:17, 2 Cor. 5:21, Rom. 3:22).

b.) Right Doing – (practical righteousness)

✓ Right “doing” is living right. (*Acting like a Christian!*)

✓ Both kinds of righteousness factor into your breastplate, because they both keep guilt at bay. (Nothing will cripple you in the battle, like guilt! It’ll drain you of your confidence as you stand before the enemy.) Confidence comes from knowing that you’re right with God (positionally), and you’re in fellowship with God – (there’s no unconfessed sin in your life)!

CHARACTER TRAIT – *You recognize your position in Christ. And you endeavor to live right.*

3. The Shoes of Peace

Wuest – “... *having sandalled your feet with a firm foundation of the good news of peace.*”

✓ Notice the words, “firm foundation”. One of the things a soldier needs most in combat is “solid footing”. He needs to be able to move quickly and decisively in any direction, at any moment. So, soldiers wore shoes with spikes on the bottom to help them stand firm. (They were designed to help the soldier “dig in” and stand his ground, even in the roughest terrain.)

✓ What allows us to “dig in” and “just stand there” in a hard place? Peace! Peace is what keeps us grounded. (We know we have peace

with God. We’re living at peace with others. And we have *internal* peace in the battle. All those things stabilize us.)

✓ How do we put the Shoes of Peace on? (Col. 3:15, Isa. 26:3, Phil. 4:6-8 – Do v. 6 to get v.7. Do v. 8 to keep v. 7.)

CHARACTER TRAIT – *Your mind is fixed on Jesus. You rest in Him, because you know He always causes you to triumph!*

4. The Shield of Faith

✓ The shield he’s referring to isn’t like the ones you see in the movies. (I’m sure you’ve seen those little round shields, that were strapped to the soldier’s forearm. Those were used in parades, but not in combat.) The shield that was used in battle was about the size of a door. If necessary, a soldier could crouch in a corner, hide behind it, and be almost completely covered.

✓ What does the shield represent? It’s called the “shield of faith”. (When you’re standing on the promises, faith protects you like a shield.)

✓ Here’s another interesting thing about the shield they used in battle. They had hooks on the sides, so you could hook *your* shield onto the *other* soldiers’ shields.

✓ If there was a barrage of arrows coming, the leader would yell, “Shields up!”, and they’d assume a position called “the tortoise”. (When you’re in a battle, your brothers and sisters can join their faith with yours!)



CHARACTER TRAIT – *You’re quick to believe the Word. You “take the shield of faith” when you actively stand on the promises.*

5. The Helmet of Salvation

- ✓ There's only *one* salvation, but it comes to us in 3 stages. (There's a "past", "present" and "future" aspect to salvation.)
- ✓ When we accepted Christ (in the past), we were saved from the penalty of sin. In the present, God saves us daily from the power of sin. And in the future – when we get to Heaven – we'll be saved from the very presence of sin.
- ✓ Why do I bring that up? Because in 1 Thess. 5:8 Paul defines the helmet as "the hope of (future) salvation."
- ✓ What does it sound like when I have the helmet on? I say, "It might be rough now, but *one day*, I'll be with Jesus." When I get my eyes on the wonderful eternity ahead of me, I've put on the helmet of the hope of salvation. (That thinking guards my mind and emotions.)

CHARACTER TRAIT – You keep your eyes on the hope of eternity with Christ. You're heavenly minded, not earthly minded. You understand that your battles are only temporary.

6. The Sword of the Spirit

- ✓ Paul defines the Sword of the Spirit as the "word" of God. But what "word" is it? ("Logos" is the *written* word, and "rhema" is the *spoken* word. The word is "rhema" – so the sword is the spoken Word.)
- ✓ The Word isn't a sword until it's in your mouth! (Sometimes people will point to their Bible, and say, "I've got my sword!" That's a book! You can't tell the difference between a sword and a book?) When Jesus said, "It is written", He was wielding the Sword of the Spirit.

Heb. 4:12 – "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged (two-mouthed) sword ..." (Heb. 13:6)

- ✓ CHARACTER TRAIT – You speak the Word – to the devil and circumstances.