

We Are The Army Of The Lord ...



By Bill Fairchild, Jr.



Uses For This Lesson Material

This lesson material has been designed for multiple uses. You will find below several of those uses. It is our intent through this material to lead individuals to a deeper appreciation for our God who made us ... appreciation for His revealed Word that serves to guide and comfort us ... and to help prepare our souls for eternity! May the Lord bless you as you study from His Word!

Individual Study: You can go through this series of lessons on your own at a pace that you are comfortable with. It would be suggested that you study one lesson per week to give you time to really consider the content of each lesson.

Family Study: This material can serve as a wonderful guide for a family to sit down and learn together what God expects of His own.

Group Study: You can use this series of lessons in a group setting such as a young people's devotion where each one who attends the class agrees to keep up with the study from class to class.

Bible Class Curriculum: This series of lessons is suitable for a 13-week or a 26-week quarterly system study and it contains sufficient material to be implemented both Sunday morning and Wednesday night if desired.

One-On-One Study: This series of lessons is suitable for you and a friend to study together from week to week. And both of you will experience personal growth in your faith and service to the Lord.



Practical Suggestions On Getting The Most Out Of This Lesson Series

If you want to really grow as a Christian ... you must be willing to spend the time necessary to know God's Word better and be courageous enough to apply what you learn to your own life! Sometimes ... there are truths learned in the Scriptures that can be most challenging to our hearts and our lives. This series of lessons will help you ... if you follow these suggestions:

- ☞ **Begin every Bible study with prayer. Ask the Lord to help you to have an open mind and a receptive heart!**
- ☞ **Use a good study Bible. You might want to consider the New King James Version or the New American Standard Bible. Also the English Standard Version.**
- ☞ **Really work through each lesson.**
 - **Look up every Bible verse that is referenced.**
 - **Think about each one of the questions that is being asked.**
 - **Answer each question ... don't skip any of them.**
 - **Make notes in the margin of the lesson sheet ... including any questions or thoughts you might have.**
 - **Start trying to memorize the text passages at the beginning of each lesson and those at the end of the lesson.**
- ☞ **Be brave enough to apply each Bible lesson to your own life.**
 - **Accept God's teachings as truth and be willing to obey Him in every relationship you have.**
 - **Be willing to change any attitudes that you may have that are not in keeping with God's will.**
 - **Determine to share the truths you learn from these studies with your friends, family and anyone else who will listen.**

Psalm 102:18

***“This will be written for a generation to come,
that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.”***

The objective of the WalkingInSunlight.com literature is to help young people to acquire a better understanding of ... and appreciation for ... God, His Word, and the church He purchased with the blood of His Son.

Our goal is to prepare young people for their daily challenges of choosing what will bring them real happiness by arming them with the ability to use God’s Word to answer every question.

Laying their own life questions and experiences alongside the proper scriptures will enable them to clearly see God’s directions.

God’s instructions are so clear that even children can understand how God wants them to behave and what He would have them choose when they look at the Scriptures without prejudices.

- These studies are made age-specific by **Discussion**.
- **Read aloud every Scripture** – every student should look up every Scripture in their own Bible.
- Allow adequate time for students to **think about and answer every question**.
- **Listen** to what they say.
- **Point them to God’s instructions**, written and preserved for their benefit.

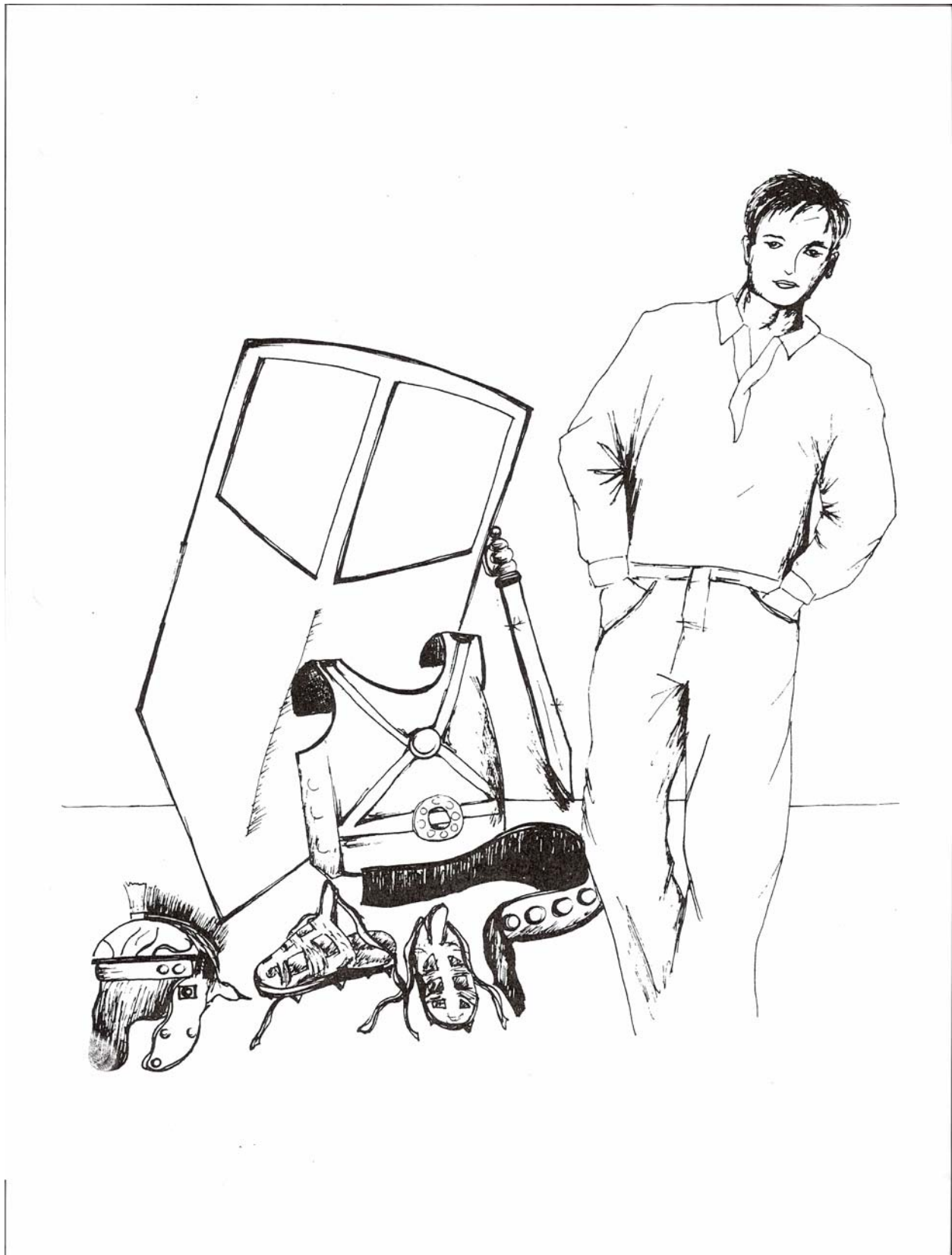
Hosea 4:1,6 *“Hear the word of the Lord, you children of Israel, for the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth or mercy or knowledge of God in the land.” “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me. Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.”*

Each lesson may require several class periods.

It is an awesome privilege to help young people grow closer to God!

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Introduction To The Study ...

1. The day you become a Christian, a child of God, is the most important day of your life!
 - a. I can remember the day, the things people said to me, the things they did, their expressions of joy and happiness --- even the weather.

Question: For you who are Christians --- can you remember?

2. God uses different words to describe the different ways that we are now His people. Words like: child, sheep, pilgrim, stone, runner, priest, member of Christ's body and **soldier!**
3. Soldier? What in the world does God mean when He says we are soldiers in His army?

Questions: Am I **really** a soldier in the Lord's army?
If I am to be a soldier, what kind of soldier am I?
Do I want to be better?
Do I even care?

4. The day we become a Christian --- some amazing things begin to happen in our lives:
 - We are forgiven of our sins!
 - We have the hope of heaven!
 - We can talk with God in prayer and know that He is listening / answering!
 - We have a new source of energy to become and to do --- what God wants us to become and to accomplish. You see, we have Christ living in us, through faith we can gain in knowing God's Word!
 - We begin to acquire a whole new set of values and characteristics!
5. Only one problem --- actually, several! We soon begin to realize that things aren't working out like we thought. We begin to struggle with "measuring up" to God's expectations of us. Some evidence of these thoughts:
 - Reading our Bible and praying regularly doesn't always happen, sometimes they are hard to do.

- Sometimes we seem to be too tired, too busy or too distracted to spend **quality time** with God!
- Too embarrassed to share the message of the gospel with our friends, or even too ashamed!
- We've made commitments to do better in our Christian lives, but somehow keep coming up short!

6. Do any of these struggles sound familiar? Sure they do!

Questions: Why do our lives (your's and mine) often seem like a war zone?
 Why does each day seem to feel like the start of another battle?
 Or why does each day seem to pick up where the last one left off?

7. Folks --- the painful truth is that each of us are right in the middle of a great spiritual war between the Lord and His Church, and the Devil and his sinister army!

a. And though there are no guns or bullets or planes or ships or rockets --- it is still a violent life and death struggle that affects **all of us** --- Christians and non-Christians!

8. Though we may find this hard to believe or accept, this spiritual war is raging around us each and every day --- and can cause horrible destruction in our lives.

9. Did you know we're at war?

Questions: Whose soldier are you?
 Did you even know there is a war going on?
 Whose side are you on?
 Have you already surrendered or been taken as a prisoner of war?

10. When it comes to following Jesus, our Commander-in-Chief, it is impossible to be neutral. *"He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with me scatters abroad."* **Matthew 12:30**

a. Moses' cry still applies: *"Whoever is on the Lord's side?"* **Exodus 32:26**

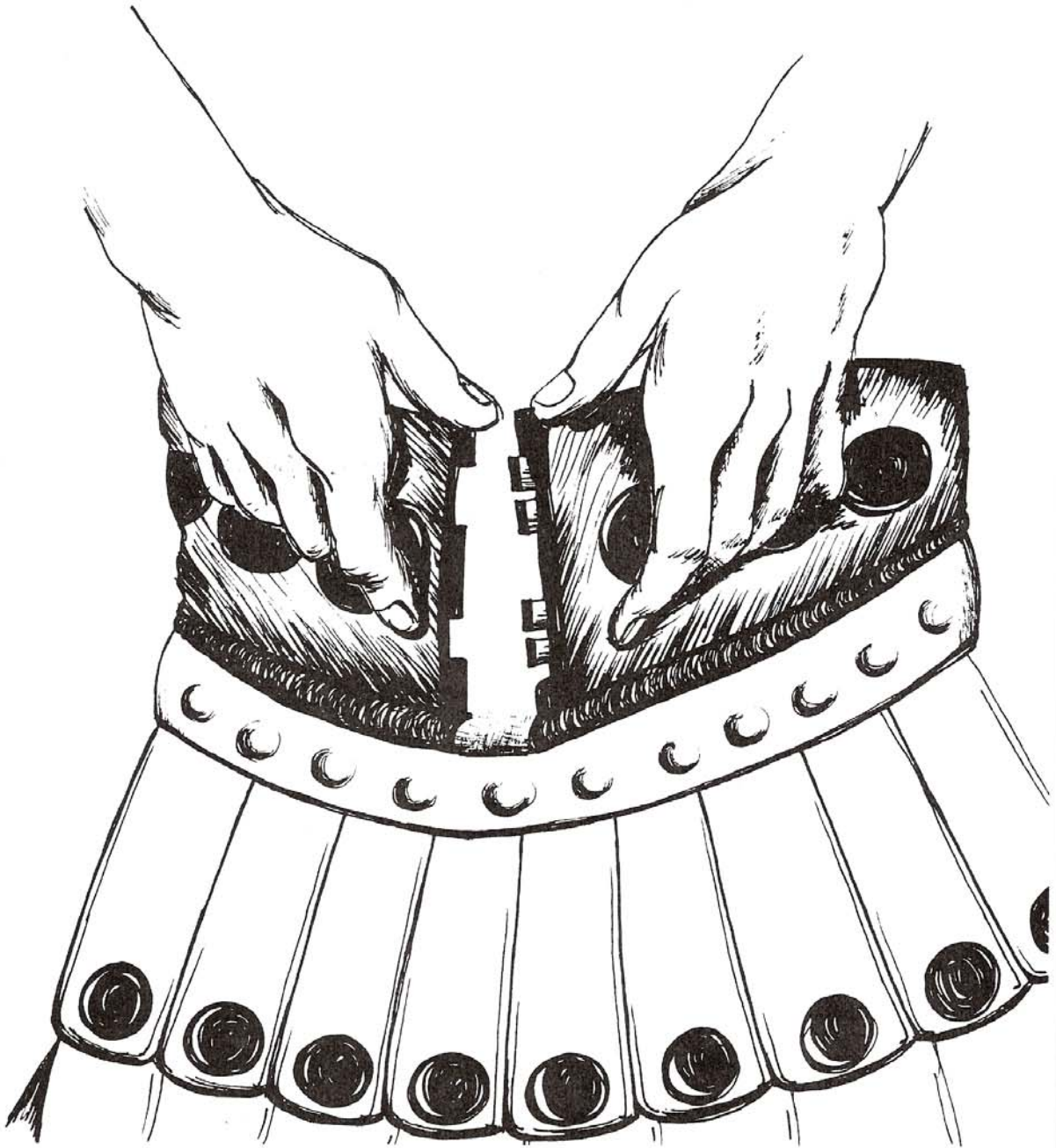
11. Are we marching into the enemy's camp and laying our weapons down?
 Are we shedding our armor as we go and leaving it on the ground?

12. We sing songs in worship like: Soldiers of Christ, Arise; Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus; To Christ Be True; and Onward Christian Soldiers.

a. Do we realize what we're singing?
 Do we know, understand and mean these words as we sing them?
 Do they apply to us now?

13. Yes --- we're at war! But we don't have to be afraid! You see, God loves us and He is on our side!
 - a. Read **Romans 8:31-39**.
14. God wants to protect us and equip us so that we can personally experience the great victory of overcoming sin and death and of being with the Lord forever!
15. During this series of studies we are going to talk about the things God has provided for us as soldiers in His army to be successful!
 - a. "*Take up the whole armor of God*" is for real and it applies to you and me. **Ephesians 6:13**.
16. Make no mistake about it --- if we don't put it on and keep it on, we will lose!
17. We will be studying from **Ephesians 6:10-18**. We will learn about taking a stand with the Lord, about each of the pieces of our armor, about our enemy, and about praying to be successful --- in the heat of battle or in the quiet of the night!
18. So, are you ready to go through some basic training in order to become the very best soldier that you can be?
19. We are the army of the Lord --- let's be strong in the power of His might --- let's prove to the enemy --- **we've won the victory!**







COMMITMENT TO THE TRUTH ... BELT OF TRUTH AND INTEGRITY

Text: **Ephesians 6:14**

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: What is a soldier?
What does a soldier do?
Can a soldier be a young man or a young woman?
Do all soldiers have to be trained?
Why?
2. A professional soldier would never dream of going to war without the proper equipment.
 - a. To enter into a battle, into hand-to-hand combat, without the proper equipment would be suicidal!
3. Each day of our lives, we face a brutal enemy. When we don't put on God's protective armor, we struggle home wounded and discouraged.
Note: And sometimes we don't even make it back. The lights of the far country win out! (Luke 16 - parable of the prodigal son.) Discuss.
4. The apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 6 that God has made it possible for us to protect ourselves from Satan's vicious attacks!
Question: Aren't you glad? I sure am!
 - a. Read **Ephesians 6:10-14**
 - b. Yes, God has given us all the protection we need.
Questions: What does the word "protection" mean?
What do we need protection from?
5. Young people --- we should all be encouraged that God's armor can withstand every spiritual attack!

Warning: Just knowing we have the armor is not enough --- we must learn to use it!

Example: This principle is true with musical instruments, sports equipment, computers, etc.

6. The Apostle Paul lived during the time of the Roman Empire. This great empire had been built by the conquering Roman army.
 - a. When Paul, who at the time of this writing was probably chained to a Roman soldier, wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus, he used the image of a Roman soldier as his model.
 - b. The secret to the success of these soldiers?
It was their preparation!
7. In much the same way, **Ephesians 6:14-15** tells us that we must prepare for our battles by learning to put on our **Spiritual Armor!**
8. Let's look at the Christian soldier's belt.

I. DISCUSSION:

1. The belt of the Roman soldier was most often a thick leather strap, with more than one use.
 - a. It served as a utility belt - designed to hold both weapons and tools a soldier might need for combat.
 - b. It also gave the soldier freedom to move around as he entered battle. You see, in that day, people wore long, flowing robes.
Questions: Can you imagine trying to run / fight in these robes? Note **Luke 12:35; 2 Timothy 2:4.**
What would be some of the difficulties if you could not bind these robes up out of your way? Trip, fall, etc.
 - c. Therefore, a soldier would pull up the loose ends of his robe and tuck them into his belt. Then, he was ready to fight.
2. **The Bible tells us that we, too, must buckle on our spiritual belt if we are to be prepared to fight!**
 - a. Read **Ephesians 6:14a** (KJV, NKJV, NASV, NIV)
Questions: What do you think the "belt of truth" is?
Why should we need to buckle on this belt?
Would it need to be put on every day?
Could we get by some days without it?

3. The belt of truth is the knowledge that when we become Christians, we conduct our entire lives based upon a whole new way of thinking and living that allows us to live **completely by God's will!**
 - a. Read **John 8:32**.
Questions: What did Jesus mean when he said, "*You shall know the truth?*"
What is "truth?"
What is the opposite of truth?
How can you tell the difference?
And, what does Jesus mean by "the truth shall make you free?"

4. You see, the belt of truth represents a life and a mind that is pulled together and ready to serve for the glory of God! It speaks of **integrity**.
Question: What is integrity?
Defined: It is the truth in the inner part of us!
It's what we really are on the inside that is good and right!
 - a. Read **Psalms 51:6**.
 - b. It is not enough just to carry the sword of the Spirit - the Word of God - your Bible - around with you! Discuss.
 - c. The truth of His Word must become a part of our lives --- so that **our** actions, **our** words, **our** motives, are governed by integrity and truth!

5. Questions: What does it mean to be honest?
What does it mean to be dishonest?
What does the word "hypocrite" mean?
Are adults ever hypocrites?
What about young people, can they ever be hypocrites?
Are you a hypocrite?

6. Listen to me: Jesus says you just can't be a hypocrite and be a loyal soldier in His army. Note **Matthew 12:30**
 - a. Read **Matthew 6:24**
Questions: What does the word "*master*" mean?
What does the word "*serve*" mean?
Why does Jesus say we can't serve two masters successfully?
Do we still try? Why? How?

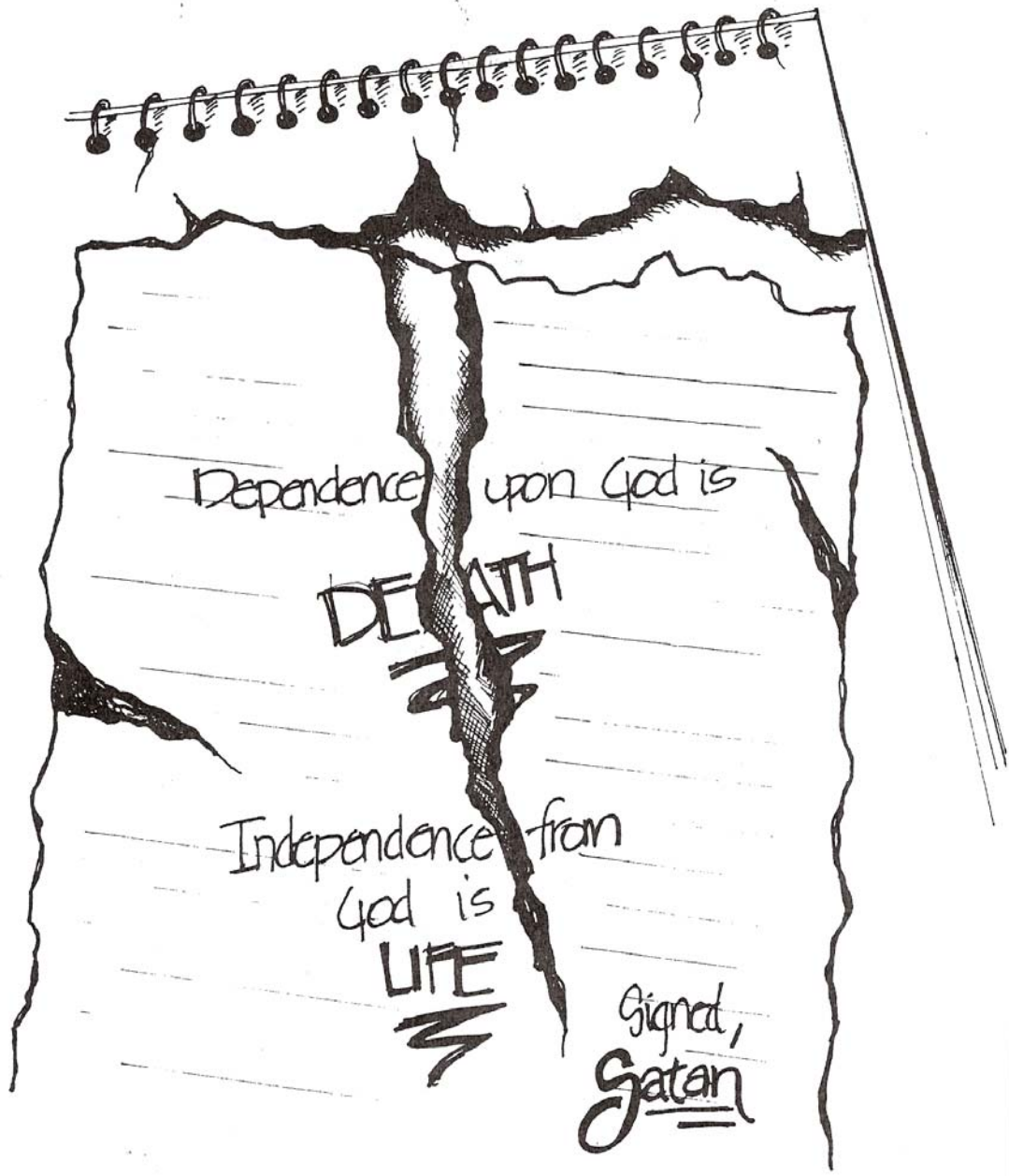
7. Only the soldier who has directed **all his energies** toward one goal --- winning the battle --- will be victorious!
 - a. Paul had this singleness of purpose in his life. Read **Philippians 3:14,15**.

Questions: What was his purpose in living?
What is your purpose in living?
Is it the same as Paul's?
If not, why not?

CONCLUSION:

1. Throughout His entire life on this earth, Jesus had one purpose and goal in mind --- *"My meat (purpose) is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."* **John 4:34(KJV).**
2. If we are going to stand our ground against Satan and his forces, **we must declare our allegiance to Christ and maintain our integrity!**
3. The minute we display any division / hypocrisy in our lives, we are giving Satan an opening where he can attack us --- and he is always looking / listening!
4. Each of us must learn to practice the greatest of all commandments: *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."* **Mark 12:30** (KJV)
 - a. This is integrity!
 - b. It means putting on the belt of truth and saying, ***"I am totally devoted to the Lord. I don't have another master. I am looking only to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of my faith. I love Him with all of my heart; I listen to Him with all of my attention; I understand His Word with all of my mind; and I want to do His will with all of my will!"***
5. Satan and his forces want to keep Christians from putting on the belt of truth. If we don't believe and live the foundational truths of who we are (we're children of God), we, like the Roman soldier, will trip and fall over Satan's lies and deceptions!
6. Remember: We are the army of the Lord --- **we've won the victory!** And we will win when we 'buckle up for safety' with the Belt of Truth!





Dependence upon God is

DEATH

Independence from
God is

LIFE

Signed,
Satan



LESSON THREE

DO YOU KNOW YOUR ENEMY?

Text: **Ephesians 6:12, 13**

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: Do you believe in the Devil?
What do you think he looks like?
Would you recognize him if you saw him?
2. The Bible teaches us with great clearness that Satan is our adversary.
1 Peter 5:8.
Questions: What does the word "*adversary*" mean?
Why is the devil our adversary?
Does he really care about any of us?
3. The Bible also teaches us that "*he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*" **1 Peter 5:8(KJV)**
Questions: What do you think about when you think about a roaring lion?
What does the word "*devour*" mean?
Should we be fearful of the Devil?
Why or why not?
4. Folks, we're at war! And Satan is the commander-in-chief in the opposing army!
 - a. Satan cares about one thing --- destroying your soul and mine!
 - b. That makes him **our** enemy!
5. If Satan is our enemy --- and he is --- then we need to learn as much as we can about how he works, etc., so that we can successfully overcome him.
6. In this lesson, we want to get to know our enemy a little better.

I. DISCUSSION:

1. Paul writes in **Ephesians 6:11**, "...that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."
Question: How do we do this?
Why should we do this?
Answer: Because we have the power of the Lord and we've put on the whole armor of God! Discuss.
2. Observation: We are told to "*stand firm*" --- not attack! We are never told to attack the Devil! We are told to resist him and he will flee from us. **James 4:7**.
Questions: What does the word "*resist*" mean?
How do we resist the Devil?
What does James mean by "*he will flee from you*?"
Does this mean he will leave and never come back?
3. Satan is for real! He is alive ... he is very active ... and he is very successful!
Discuss.
4. Jesus believed in Him:
--- He talked **with** Him. **Matt. 4:1-11**
--- He talked **about** Him. **John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 8:44**
5. The apostles believed in Him:
--- Paul talked about him. **1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Thess. 2:18**
--- Peter talked about him. **1 Peter 5:8**
--- James did, too. **James 4:7**
6. So --- how is he so successful in keeping folks from becoming Christians and gaining back those who made the choice to become Christians, soldiers in the army of the Lord?

Let's look more closely at Satan's attacks!

A. On The Non-Christian.

1. He is very successful with many people, young and old, by preventing the Word from having its desired effect.
Question: What is God's Word designed to do? **Acts 20:32; Psalms 19:7-9**
2. How does Satan prevent God's Word from working in the non-Christian's heart and life?
 - a. Read **Luke 8:12**..
Questions: How does he snatch the word away?
Has he been successful with someone you know?

b. Read **2 Corinthians 4:3-4**.

Questions: What does it mean to be blind?
How does Satan blind men's eyes to the truth?

c. Read **Romans 1:18-32**

Question: How does Satan pervert the truth?

Answer: By having folks deny the authority of the Scriptures, deny the deity of Jesus, salvation by grace through faith, the second coming, judgment, heaven, and hell!

3. So, if you're not a child of the King, a soldier in His army, you need to think about who you're serving!

B. His Relentless Attacks On Christians

1. Unfortunately, Satan is enjoying huge success in conquering some of the Lord's soldiers. Discuss.

2. Since the Lord's army (that's you and me) and Satan are on a collision course, since we meet on the field of battle **every** day, we need to understand something of how Satan attacks us. Here are some of his favorite tactics.

a. **He undermines God's character and credibility!**

1. Satan wants **you** to doubt God, just like he did in **Genesis 3:1-5**.

Question: How does he do this?

Answers: He wants us to believe God won't deliver, that He won't / can't keep His word!

He wants us to doubt God's power, His grace, His mercy, His forgiveness, His love.

Question: Ever find yourself doubting any of these areas? Be honest!

Answer: Consider the source of these doubts --- it's the Devil!

b. **He tries to make it hard to live the Christian life!**

1. Through persecution. **2 Timothy 3:12**

2. Through peer pressure. Some folks don't want to stand up for God because they don't want to lose their friends, or move out of the circle they're in, or be thought of as being "different."

Question: Do you ever deal with these feelings in your own heart?

Answer: If you haven't, you will! If you have, how are you dealing with them?

Note: Some folks like being liked more than they like pleasing the Lord!
Don't make that mistake!

c. **He will try to confuse you with false doctrine!**

1. Read **Ephesians 4:14**

Questions: What is the picture Paul describes here?

How does this happen to a Christian?

How can **we** prevent it from happening to us? To others?

d. **He will try all kinds of things to keep us from being good soldiers in the Lord's army --- even betrayal!**

CONCLUSION:

1. There are a couple of thoughts that each of us need to remember about all of this:

Number One: Satan hates Christians because of what God has done for us.

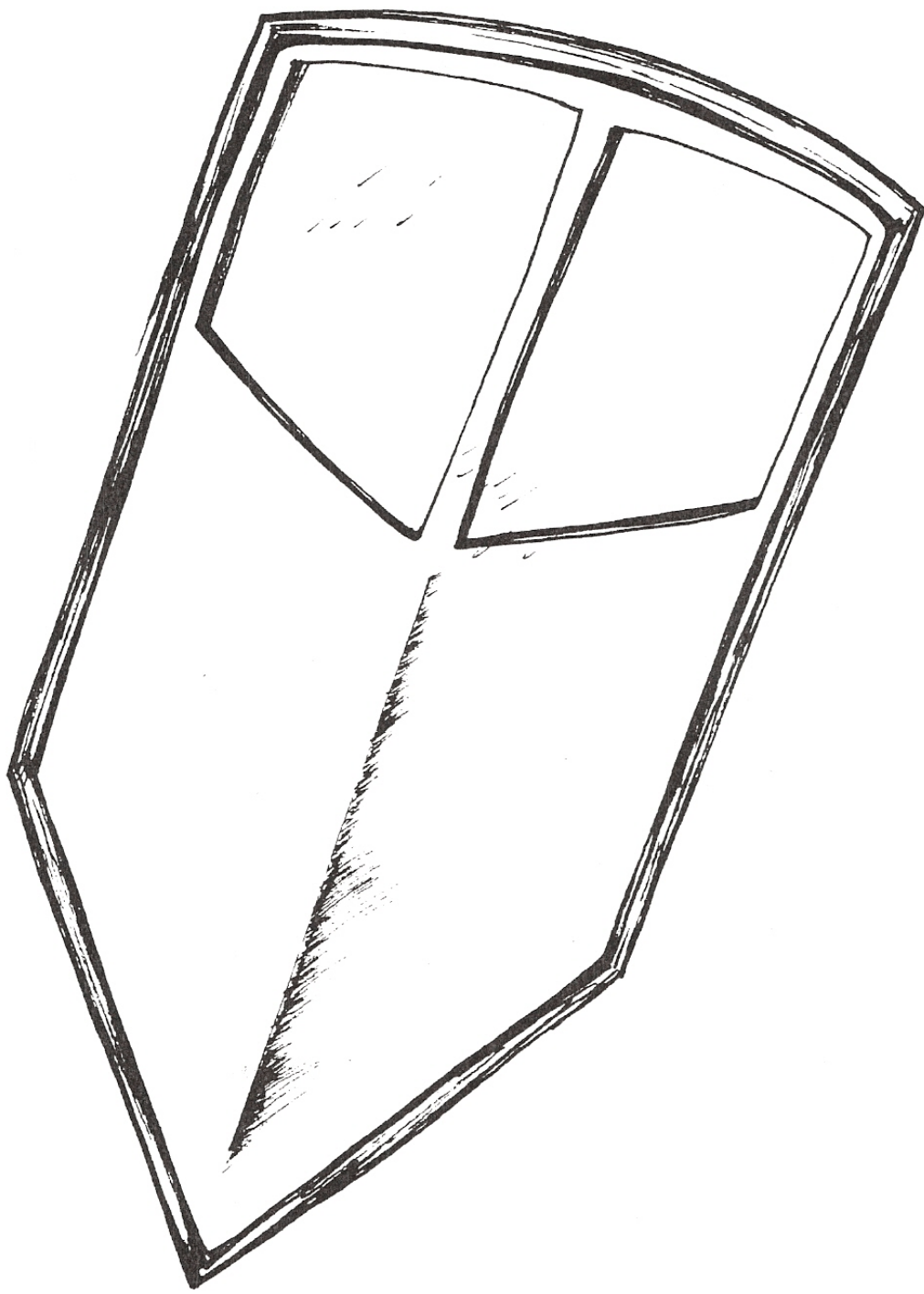
He has rescued us from the devil's slavery. He has given us the power to resist his lies. And, he has given us the power to save others from his hateful grip! Nevertheless, Satan is and always will be --- a powerful enemy! And he will not give up or give in!

Number Two: No matter what Satan tries, God has not left us hopeless or defenseless! We must never forget the good news of the **gospel!** Satan's power has been made useless against every Christian **who, by faith and obedience,** stands with Christ!

2. We must learn to be strong in the Lord. Why? Because the enemy is strong! Because the day is evil! Because the outcome is serious! We're fighting a battle!

3. We are the army of the Lord and **we've won the victory** through Christ! Know your enemy! Look at him straight up and say, "I am a soldier of the cross!" And say that every day until the Lord says to you on the last day, "Well done!"







PUT OUT THE FIRES ... THE SHIELD OF FAITH

Text: **Ephesians 6:16**

INTRODUCTION:

1. God wants us as His soldiers to be victorious!
Questions: What does the word victorious mean?
How can we as Christians be victorious?
Victorious over what?
2. Because God wants us to be victorious, He has given us the spiritual armor we will need to wear in our battle against Satan.
3. In **Ephesians 6:16**, Paul describes another piece of our armor --- **the shield of faith**.
4. Questions: What is a shield?
Why would you need to have a shield on the battlefield?
Why would you need to have a shield in every day life?
5. Young people, our enemy has a well-stocked arsenal of weapons that he uses to wage the war against us.
 - a. His quiver is full of flaming fears of adversity (difficulties), and he constantly bombards our defenses with these fiery darts.
 - b. Frequently, he fires a round of problems at us (sickness, money problems, broken friendships / relationships), and then when our defenses are down, he hits us with his emotional darts of anger, fear, doubt, depression, self-pity, selfishness, or greed.
 - c. Let me tell you something: **Without a strong line of defense** --- these arrows will hit their mark, and we will fall on the battlefield!Questions: When these unpleasant things happen in our lives, don't they bother us?
Do they bother you? They do me!
For how long? Sometimes, for a long time!

6. Good news --- Satan can throw all these darts and shoot all the arrows he wants to --- the Lord has given us a shield to ward these off --- **the shield of faith!** (**Ephesians 6:16**)
7. The shield that Paul was referring to was not the small, round shield we normally think of.
 - a. This shield which the Roman soldier carried was quite large, like a plank of wood, 4-1/2 feet by 2 feet. It was covered on the outside with metal and sometimes also with thick leather.
 - b. Soldiers in Paul's day used many tactics that were violent and brutal. For example, these warriors often shot arrows tipped with flaming pitch. Upon impact, the burning tar would splatter, inflicting painful wounds on their enemy.

Questions: Sounds horrible, doesn't it?
Would you believe that is exactly what Satan is trying to do to us?
Why would anyone **ever** want to serve him?
 - c. To guard against these attacks, the soldier would simply crouch down behind his shield and the flaming arrows / darts would be deflected and extinguished.

I. **DISCUSSION:**

1. Questions: What do you think the "*shield of faith*" is?
Why is faith a shield for us?
What does it shield us from?
2. First of all, what is faith? It is believing in God enough to do what He asks!
 - a. Read **Hebrews 11:6**

Questions Is this kind of faith available today?
For you? For me?
How do we get it?
Can we go and buy it somewhere?
Can we order it off the internet?

Answers: Faith is available to everyone who chooses to believe that God exists, that He wrote the Bible, that His Son, Jesus, came ... lived ... died ... and was raised from the dead ... for each of us! **Romans 1:17**

3. You see, faith becomes a way of life for us! Look at all the great characters of faith described in Hebrews 11.

Questions: Are they any different than us?
Didn't they have troubles? Trials?
Didn't they have to face problems and temptations like us?

4. It is not enough for us to say, "we believe in God." We have to live it! We must learn to hide ourselves behind the shield of faith that says God will always be there for us! **We must raise up our shield!**

5. Note the following examples and discuss:

a. **Romans 4:20-22** --- Abraham

b. **2 Corinthians 1:24b**

c. **Proverbs 30:5** In other words, what God says is true!

Question: Do you really trust the Lord enough to serve Him completely with your life?

d. **Psalms 12:6**

e. **Psalms 18:30**

f. **1 John 5:4**

6. As the shield of the Roman soldier was large enough to protect him from head to toe, so our Shield of Faith, God, offers us total protection from Satan's attacks.

a. Note **Psalms 5:12**

b. Read **Romans 8:31-39**

Questions: What is the promise of v. 31?
What is the promise of vs 38-39?

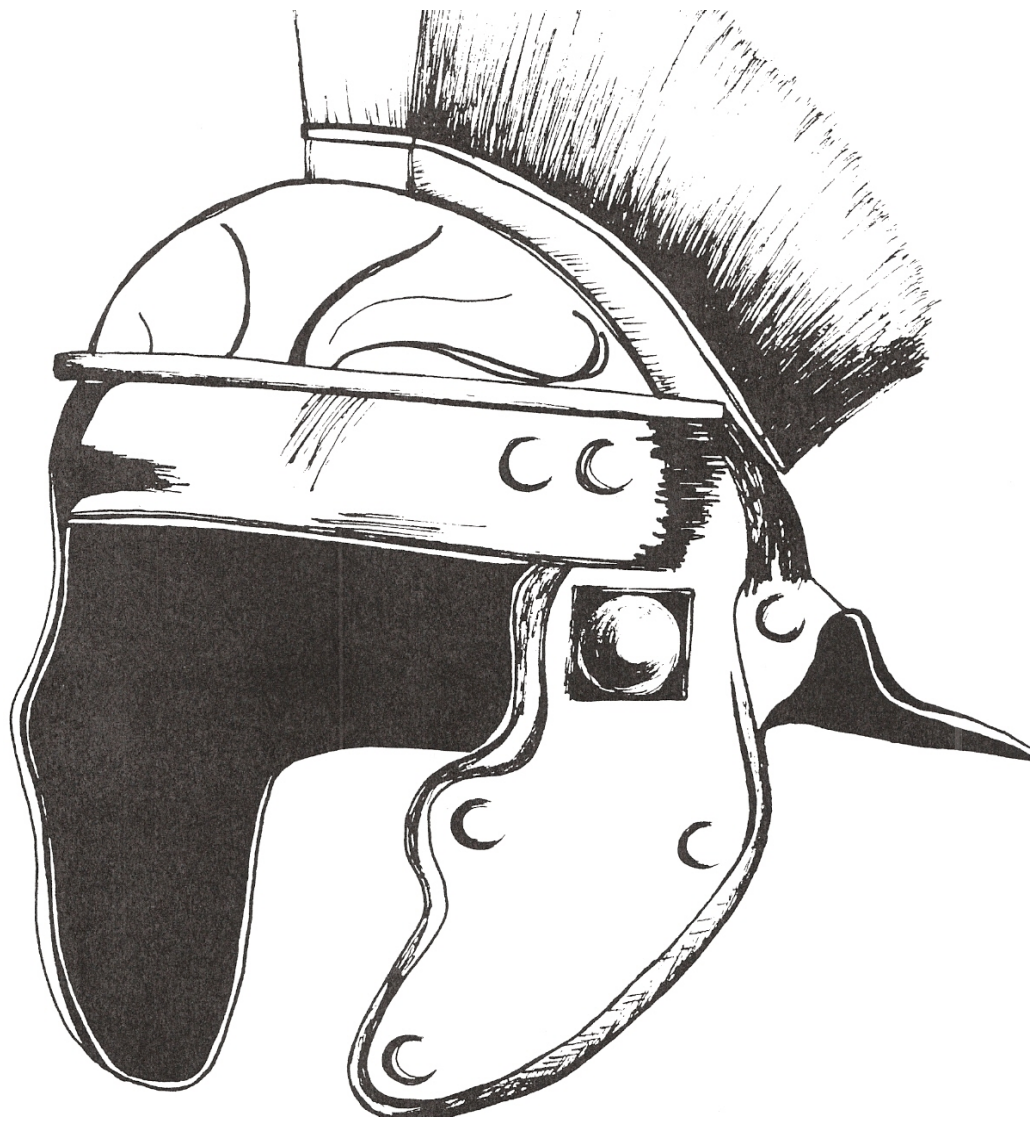
c. Read **1 Corinthians 10:13**

Questions: What is the promise of this passage?
Do you really believe it means what it says?
How can we tell when we really believe these words?

CONCLUSION:

1. When **we** "*take up the shield of faith*" --- **we** are telling Satan and his army that, by faith, he cannot separate us from God!
2. As we trust God to see us through our trials and remain dependent upon Him --- He becomes our Protective Shield against all of Satan's attacks. **Psalm 46:1**
3. One other thought: When the Roman soldiers knelt down in a row / line **together**, they formed a solid wall. Swords and arrows couldn't penetrate that wall as they marched forward.
 - a. What a beautiful picture of what faith should mean to you and me!
 - b. Because of our common faith, love for the Lord and desire to serve and be with Him eternally, you and I should love each other, walk together, stand together and fight together against our enemy!
 - c. Will you raise **your** shield of faith up with me as we all strive to do God's will!
4. We are the army of the Lord, let's put our armor on with full assurance of the victory!







THINK LIKE A SOLDIER ... THE HELMET OF SALVATION

Text: **Ephesians 6:17**

INTRODUCTION:

1. In a war involving hand-to-hand combat, the two most sought after targets are the head and the heart.
 - a. If a soldier was wounded in either of these two places, he would probably die.
 - b. For this reason, a helmet has always been one of the most important pieces of the soldier's equipment.Questions: Can you imagine playing football without a helmet?
Can you imagine stepping up to the plate to face Roger Clemens without a batting helmet on?
2. You see, the head is the control center for all of our thoughts and actions. For a soldier, the head injury had to be avoided at all costs, because even a minor wound could cloud his thinking and make him useless or an easy target on the battlefield.
Questions: What would be some of the problems that could arise from having his thinking become clouded on the battlefield?
In a spiritual war, what would some of those dangers be? Discuss.
3. A Roman soldier would never go into battle without putting his helmet on!
 - a. The helmet that Roman soldiers wore was usually made of bronze and had a leather strap on it.
4. Question: What is the purpose of the "*helmet of salvation*?"
Answer: It protects your mind from the attacks of the enemy - Satan!
Questions: What do you think the "*helmet of salvation*" is?
Is it really necessary to wear it?
What if we don't put it on, or leave it at home?
5. Let's look more closely at this piece of equipment and why we need to wear it every day.

I. DISCUSSION:

1. The "*helmet of our salvation*" is our belief that God forgave us of our sins through obedience to the gospel --- that our salvation is strong enough to deliver us from the power of Satan's kingdom and to even force him to flee for a while.
2. Questions: What does "*forgiveness of sins*" mean to you? **Ephesians 1:7**
What does "*obedience*" mean? **Hebrews 5:8,9**
What does "deliver" mean when we talk about being delivered from the power of Satan?
Does he ever give up?
3. Satan is very effective at attacking our mind, our heart. That is why it is so important to be careful what we put into it. **Proverbs 23:7.**
 - a. That's how he got to Adam and Eve in the Garden. (Genesis 3)
 1. He convinced Eve that God's truth was a lie and that his own lies were the truth!

Question: If he could do that to Eve and to Adam, can he be that successful with us?

Answer: You better believe he can!
Read **2 Corinthians 11:2,3**
4. Satan wants us to believe that our salvation isn't really all that great or all that effective or all that strong enough to save us from his power!
 - a. Read **Colossians 1:13.**
 - b. Questions: According to this verse, under what power were we before Christ rescued us?
Because those of us who are Christians have received this salvation, **where are we now?**
5. Let me tell you something --- the Bible is very clear that our salvation (your's and mine) is not only strong enough to save us from Satan's power, but we can know that it is strong enough to make Satan flee.
 - a. Read **James 4:7**
 - b. Questions: What does James mean by "*submit yourselves to God?*"
Do we ever have a problem doing this?
Is it because we are selfish or self-willed?
What does selfish mean?
Answer: It is the deliberate choice of self over God, others, etc!

- c. Read **Matthew 16:24**
 Questions: What does Jesus mean by "*deny yourself?*"
 Can we really please the Lord if we don't do this?
- d. According to **James 4:7**, if we do stand against Satan, what will he do?
 Question: Does this mean he will leave and never come back?
 While he is gone, what should we be doing?

6. Paul wrote in **1 Thessalonians 5:8-10**

- a. There is, within the heart of the child of God, the hope that one day, when this life is over with, heaven can be our home!
- b. The "*helmet of salvation*" is confidence that the day of the Lord will finally appear. It is the confidence that one day the battle will be over!

7. It is the confidence which says the Lord is on my side. Read **1 Samuel 17:45,46. Philippians 4:13**

- a. David could face Goliath without fear because he had confidence in the Lord to deliver him!
- b. He trusted God's protection and power completely!

Questions: Did David have good reason to be this confident in the Lord?
 Why?
 Do we have good reason to be this confident ourselves?
 Why?

Answer: Because of all that God has done, is doing, and promises to do in each of our lives! Note **1 Peter 5:6-8; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:19**

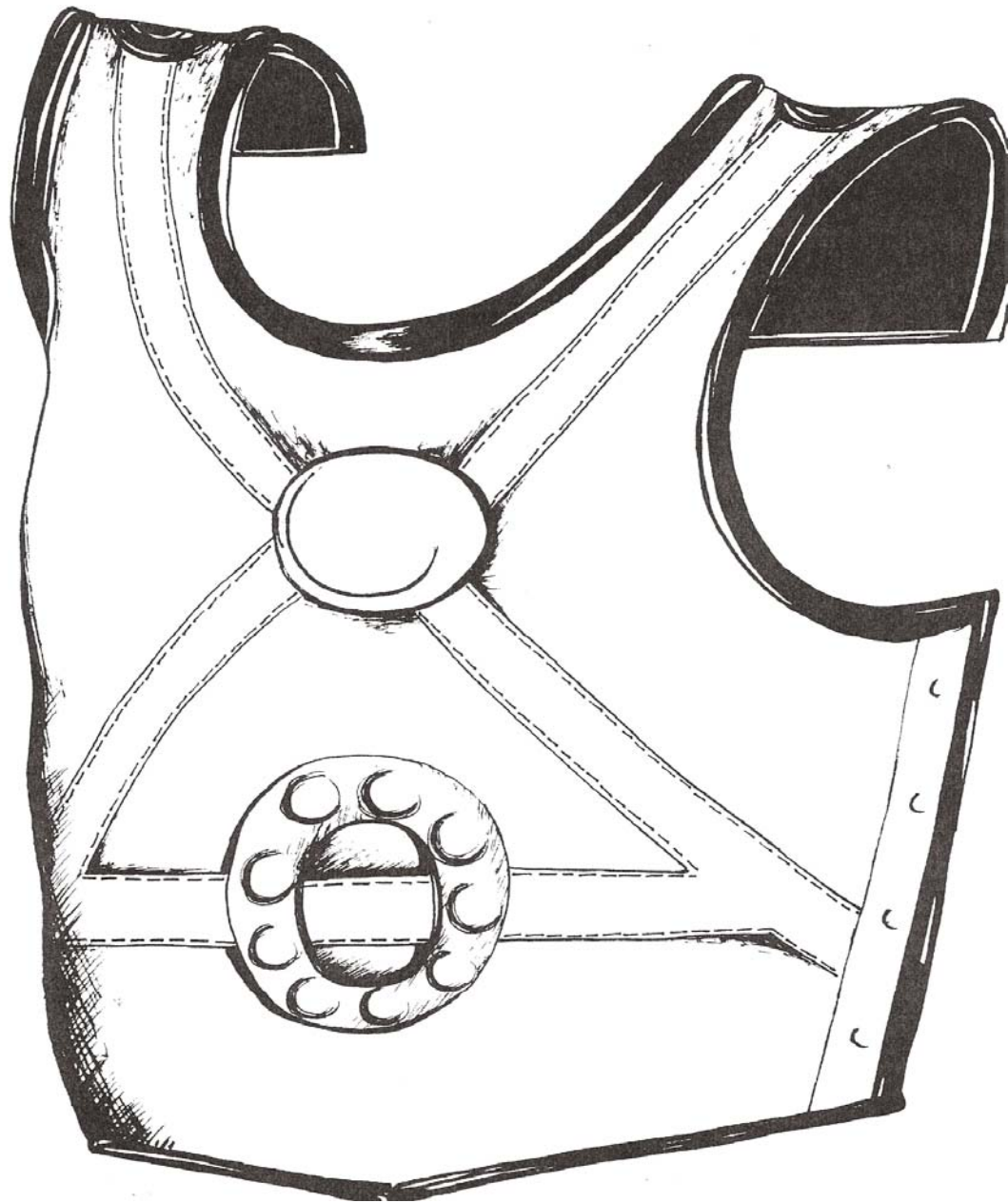
Question: Are you starting to get the picture?
 Are you starting to understand what this is all about?

Thought: Whatever the giant is in your life or mine, with the Lord's help, we can overcome! We can be victorious!!

CONCLUSION:

1. Wearing the "*helmet of my salvation*" protects us from fainting in the heat of the battle or giving up the fight, or growing weary of it all.
Question: What does "weary" mean?
How can a Christian grow weary in his or her service to God?
2. Many Christians have started the race, enlisted in the army of the Lord, only to surrender or quit. They've walked into the enemy's camp and laid their weapons down!
3. Decide in your own heart: "I don't want to face my Commanding Officer --- Jesus Christ --- with shame on my face because I quit in the middle of the battle." I want to be there to the end and say, "I may be bruised and bleeding --- but I'm here!" "*I fought a good fight, I finished my course, I kept the faith.*" **2 Timothy 4:7-8.**
4. Young people / older people --- we are the army of the Lord and with our helmets of salvation placed on tightly, we'll think like a soldier in the Lord's army. **Victory is ours!**







DAILY HOLINESS ...THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Text: **Ephesians 6:14**

INTRODUCTION:

1. No Roman soldier in his right mind would ever go into battle without his breastplate on.
 - a. It protected him not only in hand-to-hand combat, but also from any unexpected arrows coming at him from other directions.

Questions: Why do police officers wear bullet-proof vests?
If you were a police officer, would you wear one? Why?
If you were in a physical battle, would you wear the breastplate? Or say, "Oh, not today, it's too hot, or too heavy to wear?"

2. The most familiar breastplate worn by the Roman soldiers was made of molded metal that was shaped to fit a soldier's upper body and it served to protect his vital organs.
3. If a soldier could successfully land a blow upon an enemy who was not wearing a breastplate, he could seriously wound or even kill him.
4. In **Ephesians 6:14**, the Bible tells us that Christians must also put on a breastplate if they are to protect themselves from Satan's deadly attacks.
 - a. Make no mistake, they are deadly.
5. Let's look more closely at this vital piece of equipment that God says His soldiers must wear.

I. DISCUSSION:

1. Questions: What do you think the "*breastplate of righteousness*" is?
What does the term "*righteousness*" mean?

Can we be righteous people in this evil world that we live in?
Are you sure?

2. Righteousness is the breastplate God has furnished His soldiers to protect themselves from the darts of the enemy that are being hurled at us every day of our lives.

a. Righteousness is gained by doing the will of God! Read **Matthew 7:21-23**.

Questions: How important is it for us to do the will of God?
Can we please God without doing His will?
How can we know what the will of the Lord really is?

Answer: **Read 2 Timothy 3:16,17**. Discuss.

Question: How can we know we are really pleasing God?

Answer: Read **Luke 6:46**. You see, we can know when we are really doing the will of God --- when we are doing the things He says to do!
Not what we want to do!

3. The righteousness of God is that plan of obedience to Him, that God has said we must do to be saved!

4. You and I clothe ourselves with that righteousness of God **when we walk in the way He has said for us to walk!** What does it mean to walk in his way?
Ephesians 4:1; I John 1:7.

a. Note **1 John 3:7**

5. Young people, every time we go out to face a new day, we must wear this breastplate!

a. If there is no righteousness (right thinking, right talking, right doing, right being), chances are you're not going to be wearing the "*belt of truthfulness*", holding the "*shield of faith*" or wearing the "*shoes of peace*" or the "*helmet of salvation*." Discuss.

b. And I'll tell you something else --- you won't even be able to effectively use the sword of the Spirit!

6. **Righteousness is a right relationship to God** --- and unless things are right between you and Him, you won't win the battle or the war!

Questions: How important is it for us to be right with God?
Maybe we need to ask, what is being right with the Lord?

7. Questions: Does all this mean I have to live a perfect life?
Does God expect perfection from us?

Answer: No way --- if that were so, all of us blew it a long time ago!

- a. Read **Romans 3:23**. Discuss

Question: What does this verse mean?
Have we all sinned?

Answer: Yes --- all who are accountable to God have sinned. Even Paul.
1 Timothy 1:12-15.

8. We're not expected to live a perfect life (and I sure am glad about that, aren't you?).
But, we are expected to "*strive unto perfection.*" **Hebrews 6:1**(KJV)

Question: What does the term, "*strive unto perfection*" mean?

Answer: It means to be the best we can be. It means God expects each of us
to grow, to mature, to become strong in the Lord. **1 Peter 2:2,3.**

CONCLUSION:

1. To put on the "*breastplate of righteousness*" means very simply --- we obey God!
 - a. We choose --- He doesn't make us or force us --- to make His will our will!
 - b. It means we choose to be a soldier in His army and to obey his commands and to follow His lead!
2. Sheep follow their shepherd; soldiers follow their leader; we are both sheep and soldiers, so let's remember who we are and who our leader is, and whose side we're on!
 - a. The song, "Stand Up For Jesus" says it very well.
 - b. Verse three reads: "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, stand in His strength alone. The arm of flesh will fail you, **you dare not trust your own.** Put on the gospel armor, each piece put on with prayer. Where duty calls, or danger, be never wanting there."

3. Yes, we must stand up for Jesus and be strong in the power of His might I **Corinthians 16:13**. And the only way this can happen --- is by being one of His people every day in every way!

a. Read 1 **Peter 2:9-12**

Question: Do you have the courage to be this kind of person?

4. Young people, you cannot make it to heaven by yourself, but with the Lord's help, using His word to guide you --- you can be victorious! You can be the person of 1 **Peter 2:9**. What a great thought! What a great opportunity.

5. We are the Army of the Lord ... with our breastplate of righteousness securely fastened ... we're marching to Zion and Satan will not be able to stop us from gaining the victory!







TAKE A STAND ... THE ORDER FOR EVERY DAY!

Text: **Ephesians 6:10-13**

INTRODUCTION:

1. Questions: If you were called upon to take a public stand for the cause of Christ, could you do it?
More importantly, would you do it?
Would you be willing to stand up for what is right if you were out with your friends and they wanted to do something wrong, or to go somewhere you shouldn't be going?
2. Questions: Have you ever thought about what it must have been like for the early Christians in the face of death to stand up for Jesus?
Did some of them die?
Could this ever be a situation we might have to face?
3. Question: If a year or two from now you were put on trial for being a Christian, would you be tried and found guilty, or would the charges be dropped for lack of evidence?
4. The Bible frequently uses the images of war to depict the Christian life. Paul encouraged Timothy to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. **2 Timothy 2:3**.
Questions: How would you describe a "*good soldier*" of Jesus Christ?
How would you describe a "bad soldier" of Jesus Christ?

Questions: Why do you think Timothy needed to be encouraged to be a good soldier?
Would other Christians living at the time of Timothy also need to be encouraged?
How about us?
Who do you think tries to discourage us?
5. Living the life of a Christian can be difficult at times. And whether you and I like it or not, we are to "*fight the good fight of faith.*" **1 Timothy 6:12**.
Question: Why is this fight called "*the good fight of faith?*"

6. The Lord gives us in **Ephesians 6:10-13** our orders, and these orders are to be carried out --- by each one of us!

Question: Can someone else take our place or do our duty in His army for us?
Why not?

Note: **Romans 12:1-2**. "*that ye present your bodies*"

7. We want to take a look now at our orders to "*stand therefore*" and see what this is all about.

I. DISCUSSION:

1. Being "*strong in the Lord*" and "*putting on the armor*" are very important!
 - a. Now you see, we must put them on ourselves and use them ourselves!
2. We have been called as Christians, soldiers in the army of the Lord, to take a stand.
 - a. We must learn to stand **for** something and to stand **against** something.
Questions: What is the difference?
3. Satan and his army are attacking the Lord's army from every side.
Questions: Do you know how?
Do you know why?
Are you in the battle or have you marched into the enemies camp and laid your weapons down? Discuss.
4. There will come a time in every Christian's life when he or she will have to take a stand --- when they will have to speak up for the Lord --- and speak out against sin.
 - a. Read **2 Timothy 3:12**.
Questions: What does this passage mean?
Does it apply to you? To me? To us?
 - b. Read **Philippians 1:29**. Discuss
5. Now, you know what --- if you're trying to live the Christian life, if you're trying to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (**Matthew 5:13-16**), you are going to encounter opposition!
Questions: Are you willing to be God's soldier?
Are you willing to take a stand with the Lord?
How important is it to you to be on the Lord's side? **Matthew 12:30**
6. It is way past time for God's people (young and old) to stand up for what is right and decent, and to stand against that which is wrong and sinful! **1 Peter 2:9-11**.

7. Think carefully about the following questions:
 Should sin in the world around us bother us?
 Should sin in our own lives bother us?
 Do we ever overlook sin around us or in our own lives?
 Where will this lead us?
8. Think about the following statement: "Well, I can overlook all the bad language or suggestive scenes in a movie, or TV show, or the bad words in a song."
- a. What does this statement really say about the person who makes the statement? Be honest.
- b. What about the statement in **Proverbs 23:7**?
9. Let's look at another statement or two:
- "I can go to the beach or swimming pool and it won't bother me to see folks of the opposite sex in their swim suits."
- Or, "I can go to the dance and it won't even bother me to dance with the opposite sex or to watch them."
- Question: Who does the person who makes this kind of statement think they are kidding?
- Answer: Certainly not God!
10. Sin is not a little thing --- it can / will cost a person their soul! Read **Psalms 34:15-18**.
- a. Now, you tell me --- do you want to be on the side of righteousness or on the side of those who do evil?
11. Right conduct before God begins with an attitude of heart, from setting our mind on things above. **Colossians 3:1-3**
 Questions: What does this passage mean?
 How do I "*set my mind?*"
 What are "*things above?*"
12. Right conduct is opposed to wrong conduct. **1 Thessalonians 5:22; Romans 12:9**
13. Song: Purer in Heart **Matthew 5:8**
 Questions: What does it mean to be pure in heart?
 What happens in your life when your heart is pure?
 What happens in your life when your heart is not pure?

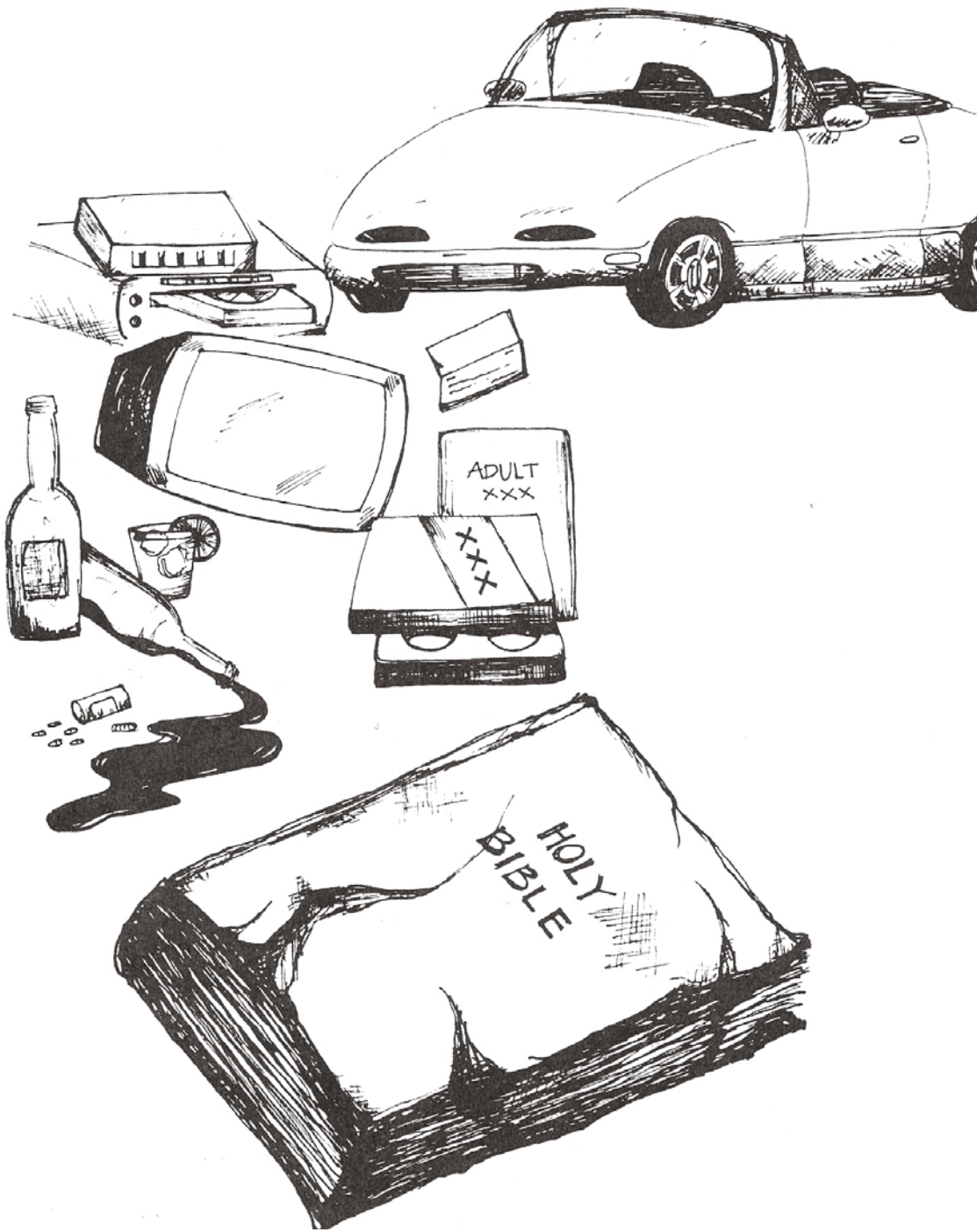
14. Read **Galatians 5:19-21**.
 Questions: Not a very good list, is it?
 What does Paul say will happen to those people who choose to do these kinds of things?
15. Listen very carefully! When a person (young or old) willfully sins --- chooses to ignore God's law --- when he or she does wrong or refuses to admit it is wrong --- that person can either repent or begin to make excuses and justify their sin.
 Question: Do you know what will happen if you ignore God's will long enough?
 Read **Hebrews 3:13**
 Do you ever want to be in this position?
16. Some Specifics:
- a. Immodest clothing. I don't even have to describe for you what fits into this category, or do I? Read **1 Timothy 2:9**.
- Questions: Do you really think God is pleased with His people dressing like this before others?
 Do you really think He just overlooks it or doesn't care?
 Would you be embarrassed if you were dressed immodestly and the Lord walked up to you?
 Is this being the light of the world?
 Is this using your influence (and you do have it) for good? Think about it.
 It is not worth missing heaven for!
- b. Drinking. **Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:10**
1. We've been created in the image of God, and God's will for us (young and old) is that we be "*conformed to the image(likeness) of His Son.*"
Romans 8:29
2. I've never met anyone who would defend drinking in moderation **or in any form** on the basis of its ability to make him or her more Christ-like.
 It is not worth missing heaven for!
- c. Bad language. **Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 3:8; Matthew 12:34-37**
1. Read **Psalms 111:9; Exodus 20:7**.
 Could someone take the Lord's name in vain and be right with Him?
2. What about the use of profanity or telling of dirty jokes --- does this make a person more Christ-like?
 It is not worth missing heaven for!

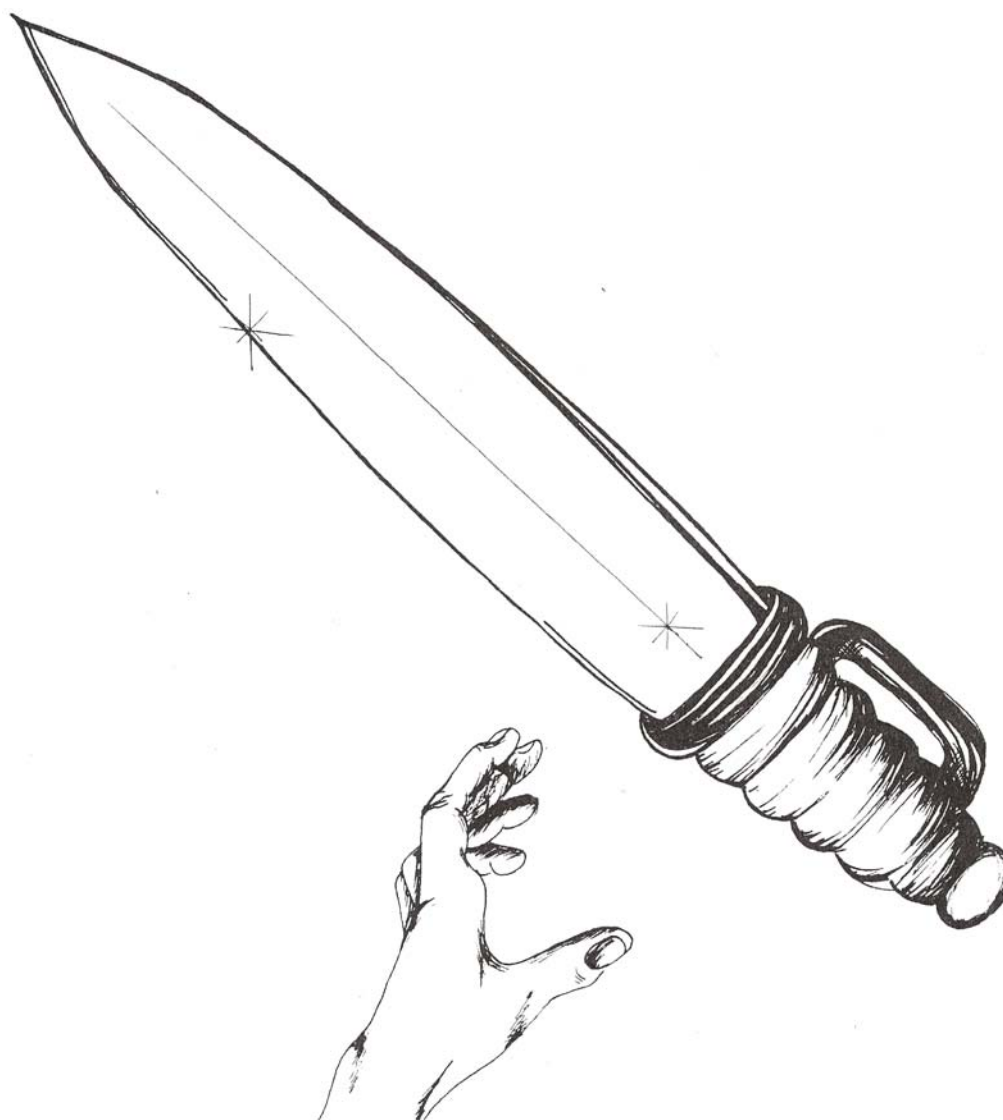
- d. Dancing. **Galatians 5:19** - "*lasciviousness*"(KJV)
1. A big word with big meaning --- filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females.
 2. Can a person deny this describes dancing of any type? Whether line dancing, swing dancing, or whatever!
 3. I would consider my wife to be "unchastely handled" if some other man held her closely or swung her around or whatever during a dance!
 4. The boy would be rare indeed who would not be aroused when dancing with a girl, by the motions, contact, etc.!
 5. Let's all be honest about this!
It is not worth missing heaven for!
- e. Movies, TV Shows, Internet **Philippians 4:8,9; Proverbs 23:7; Psalms 19:14**
It is not worth missing heaven for!

CONCLUSION:

1. Young people, we are the army of the Lord! How can we be victorious over Satan and his army if we are just like them in our thoughts, words, actions, dress, lifestyle, etc.?
2. Read **Romans 12:1,2**
3. Let me warn you, just because you see other folks who are supposed to be Christians --- soldiers in the army of the Lord --- doing the things we've shown the Bible condemns --- **that doesn't make it right, or excuse you from faithful conduct!**
 - a. It means --- they've marched into the enemy's camp and they've laid their weapons down --- they've shed their armor and left it on the ground!
 - b. **DON'T YOU!**
4. We've got to be strong in the power of the Lord (**Ephesians 6:10-13**) and prove to the enemy ...YES! WE ARE THE ARMY OF THE LORD AND WE'VE WON THE VICTORY!!!









SPIRITUAL SWORDSMANSHIP ... THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Text: **Ephesians 6:17**

INTRODUCTION:

1. As we have seen, a battle-ready Roman soldier had many pieces of armor. Review.
Questions: Can you name the pieces we have covered so far without looking back in your notebook?
More importantly, would you consider yourself to be battle-ready?
Why would a soldier not want to be prepared for battle?
2. What we need to remember is this: the goal of the Roman army was not merely protection, it was Victory!
Questions: What would victory mean to the Roman army?
What does victory mean for soldiers in the Lord's army? **2 Timothy 4:8**
Do you want that victory?
3. In order to gain this victory, a soldier had to be prepared to attack his enemy!
4. The Roman army used many different kinds of weapons. Spears and bows were very common.
 - a. But the most powerful weapon of a fully-armed Roman soldier was his sword!
 - b. Usually, this was a short, two-edged sword, allowing the soldier to respond quickly to an attacker.
5. In the same way, the Christian soldier must have a weapon for his/her war against Satan. And God has given us a very powerful weapon --- the "*sword of the Spirit.*"
6. You see, Satan doesn't stop with just throwing fiery darts at us. Sometimes, he and his army move in on us --- and we are forced to do hand-to-hand combat with them!
 - a. Young people --- the only way to resist them is by attacking with the sword of the Spirit --- the Word of God!
 - b. And I'll tell you something --- the Bible promises that when we resist the Devil, he will flee from us. **James 4:7**

Questions: Isn't that an encouraging thought for each of us to hold on to?
Isn't this exactly what happened when Jesus was tempted by the Devil. **Matthew 4:1-11**

7. Let's look more closely at this piece of equipment which can do so much for us!

I. DISCUSSION:

1. Questions: According to **Ephesians 6:17**, what is the "*sword of the Spirit*?"
Why do you think **Ephesians 6:17** calls the Word of God "*a sword*?"

2. Nothing cuts through Satan's lies like God's Word. Since Satan is the father of lies, his ability to cleverly deceive Christians (you and me) is incredible!

Questions: What is a lie anyway?

Does the Bible say anything about there being a "big lie" or a "little lie?"

What about the "white lie?"

3. God's Word, with its direct truthfulness, slashes like a sword through every lie Satan attempts to push upon us. **John 17:17**

Questions: What does the word "*truth*" mean?

What does it mean when we say someone is being truthful?

Do you always try to tell the truth?

4. When Satan attacked with his lies, Christ **always answered with the powerful truth of Scripture!** **Matthew 4:1-11** Discuss.

5. We must also be equipped with the knowledge and truth of Scripture if we are to cut through Satan's lies!

6. Before we look more closely at some of the devil's lies, I want you to understand the strength of the sword of the Spirit.

Questions: Why do you think this sword of the Spirit is so powerful?

Do you think it will ever be broken into pieces?

Why or why not?

Can we use this sword incorrectly?

If so, how? **2 Timothy 2:15** Discuss

7. The Bible makes the following claims for itself and you need to keep these points somewhere in the front/back of **your** Bible:

a. **The Bible claims it is infallible** --- this means, without error, in total, period!
Psalms 19:7

- b. **The Bible claims that it is inerrant** --- this means there is no error in anyone of its parts, period! **Proverbs 30:5-6**
 - c. **The Bible claims that it is complete** --- it doesn't need to be added to or taken away from. **Revelation 22:18-19**
 - d. **The Bible claims that it is authoritative** --- when God speaks, everyone better listen. **Isaiah 1:2**
 - e. **The Bible claims that it is sufficient** --- to make you "wise unto salvation" and to make you "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
8. The Bible is the **Source** of everything we need:
- a. Truth. **John 17:17** It is the truth about every relationship between God and man, man and man, and man and creation!
 - b. Happiness. **Proverbs 8:34; Luke 11:28**
 - c. Growth. **2 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 2:2**
 - d. Guidance. **Psalms 119:105**
 - e. Comfort. **Romans 15:4**
9. As we mentioned earlier, Satan is constantly lying to us as Christians about what will make us happy. The sword, the Word of God, attacks these lies and shows us where real happiness is found! For example:
- a. Satan wants us to believe that spending our time thinking about evil things will make us happier; **but the Word of God says in Philippians 4:8**
Question: Who do you believe?
 - b. Satan wants us to believe that we really know what is best for ourselves and that we will be happier doing our own will; **but the Word of God says in Proverbs 3:5-6**
Question: Who do you believe?

- c. Satan tells us not to worry about self-discipline and hard work, but just relax, be lazy and we'll be happy; **but the Word of God says in Matthew 16:24-26**

Question: Who do you believe?

- d. Satan tells you that because you are young, you shouldn't be concerned with serving God, but only with the pleasures of youth; **but the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 12:1.**

Question: Who do you believe?

- e. Satan wants us to believe that no one will care about the gospel, so why should I share my faith; **but the Bible says in Mark 16:15.**

Question: Who do you believe?

- f. Finally, Satan wants us to believe that we will be happier if our closest friends aren't Christians; **but the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:33.**

Question: Who do you believe?

CONCLUSION:

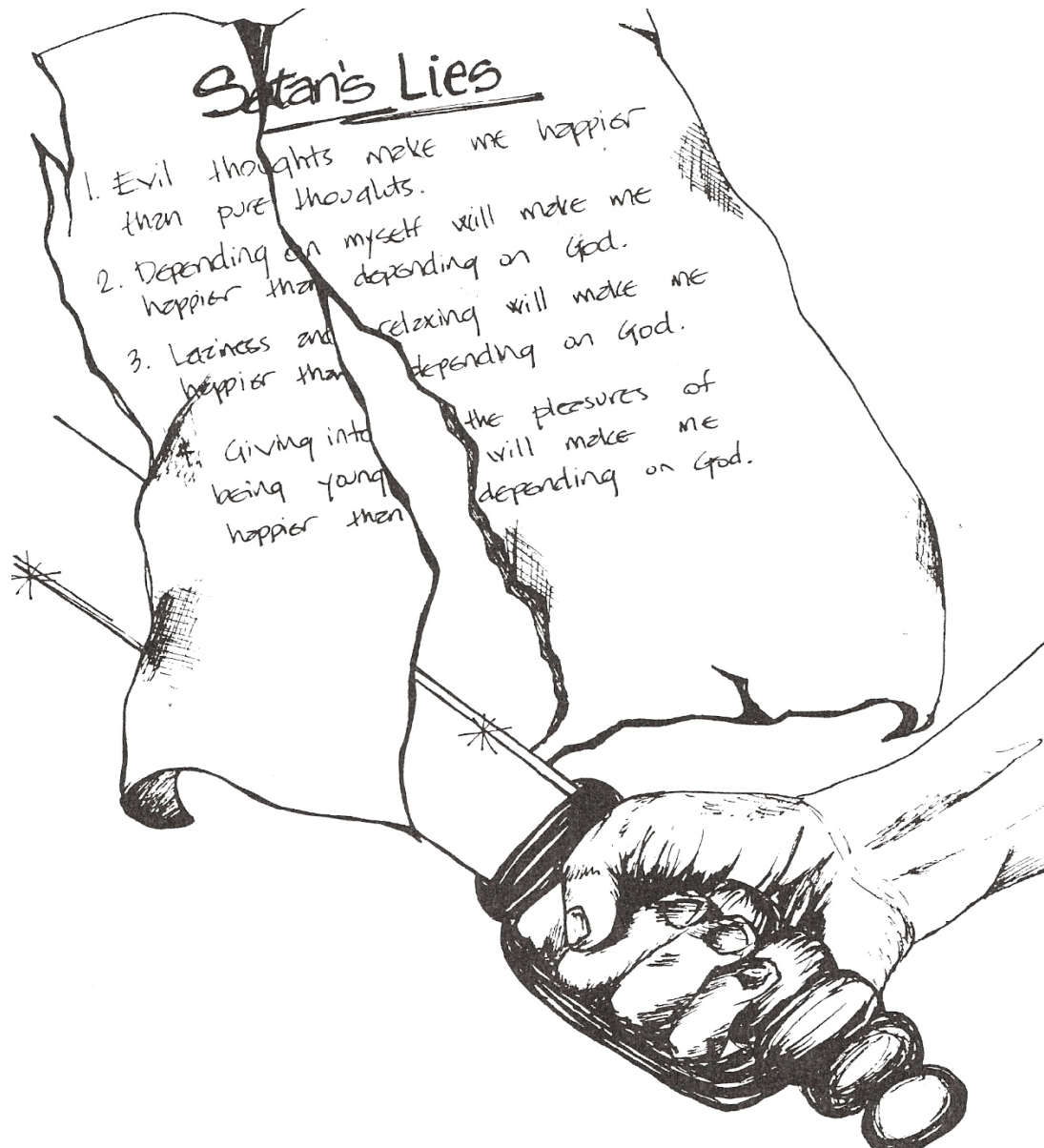
1. Young people, the Christian who is serious about winning spiritual warfare --- who is serious about heaven / hell --- must learn how to use the sword of the Spirit!
2. It is the only weapon God has provided to cut down all of Satan's lies!
3. Only by making God's Word a regular part of our lives **Psalms 119:11, 97, 98** will we become the soldiers we need to be.

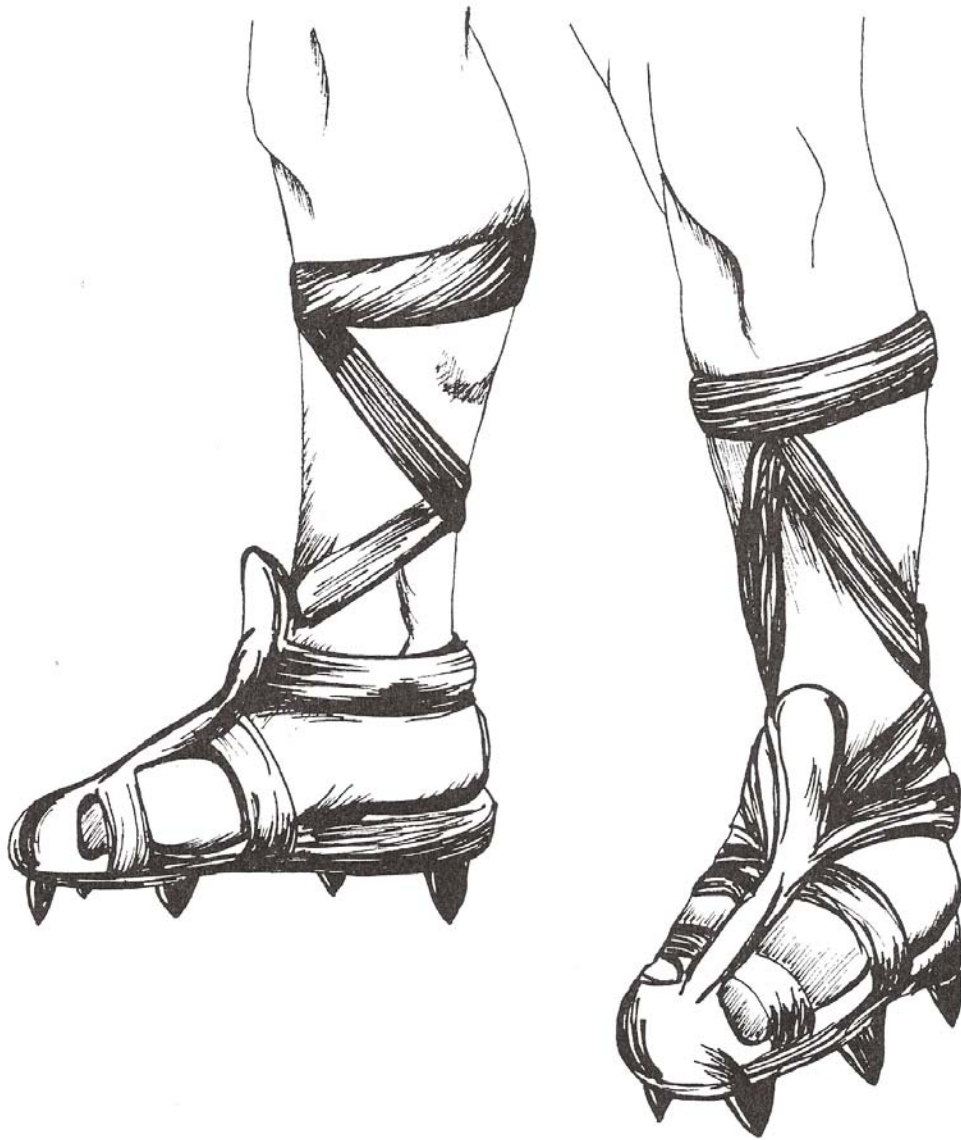
Questions: Don't **you** want to become this kind of soldier?
Do you believe you can become this kind of soldier?
Are you willing to pay the price?

4. Let each of us take up the "*sword of the spirit*" and use it wisely, carefully, lovingly. Why? Because we are the army of the Lord --- **and victory is ours!**



truth
for today's youth







KEEPING YOUR BALANCE ... THE SHOES OF PEACE

Text: **Ephesians 6:15**

INTRODUCTION:

1. Shoes have become a major consumer product! Mainly as a fashion item (Nike, Reebok, Puma, Converse, etc.).
2. Originally, shoes were used to protect feet against the terrible terrain of thorns, rocks, heat, obstacles on the ground, etc --- not to make a fashion statement!
 - a. You can get an idea of the special need for shoes when you go hiking, walking on hot pavement or across gravel!
3. To the athlete, different shoes are worn for different surfaces. To the Roman soldier, proper shoes were a must!
Questions: Can you imagine a soldier going into battle bare-footed?
Can you imagine a soldier wearing flip flops?
4. You see, a Roman soldier wouldn't get out in a battle with just a normal leather shoe on.
 - a. He would slip and slide all over the place.
5. The Roman soldier had to have a special shoe for fighting, as well as a special shoe for marching over tremendous amounts of terrain.
6. The soldier's shoes basically served as:
 - a. Protection --- In the time of the Roman wars, there was a common military practice (similar to land mines of today) of planting sticks in the ground which had been sharpened to a razor-point, and hiding them so they couldn't be seen. If the soldier stepped on these, he wouldn't be able to walk or run, and would become a prisoner or a casualty.
 1. So, in order to protect his feet, he wore a heavy-soled sandal, almost a boot, that couldn't be pierced.

- b. Stability --- His sandals had metal spikes or cleats on the soles to give him maximum traction and excellent footing.
7. The point of all this is: Paul sees a Roman soldier **standing firm, able to hold his ground**, and able to make quick moves without slipping and falling.
Question: Are you getting the picture?
8. The Christian soldier needs to have shoes, too!
Questions: Why would a soldier in the Lord's army need shoes?
Would any shoes do?
What could happen to a soldier in the Lord's army who didn't wear proper shoes?
9. Let's take a closer look at the "*shoes of the gospel of peace*" Paul writes about in **Ephesians 6:15**.

I. DISCUSSION:

1. Question: What does Paul mean by the phrase "*with the preparation of ...*"
Answer: The phrase "with the preparation" means "to be made ready or equipped."
- a. What Paul is saying is that your feet, my feet, should be made ready by being shod.
- b. If **our** feet are shod with the "*good news of peace*," **we will be able to stand our ground!**
Questions: What does "*stand your ground*" mean?
Do all of us have to do this --- or just our parents, or the elders, or the preacher?
What happens if we don't stand our ground?
Song, Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus
- c. With firm footing and a strong foundation, we can stand up in the face of evil without slipping and sliding, etc!
- d. This is why Paul said in **Ephesians 6:11**, "*...be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to **stand**.*"(KJV)
2. Questions: What does the word "*gospel*" mean? **Romans 1:16**
What does "good news" mean in reference to the gospel
Why is the gospel good news?
Is it good news to you?
3. Question: What does Paul mean in our text by "*the gospel of peace*?"
Ephesians 6:15.
Answer: The "*gospel of peace*" is simply "*the good news of peace!*"

Question: So, what is the good news of peace?

Answer: **Romans 5:1-11**. You see, we were enemies of God (**v.10**). The "*gospel of peace*" is that we who were at war with God have made peace through Christ's death and our obedience!

a. Very simply --- we were enemies, now we're friends of God. Now, we are on His side!! We've made peace!

4. Guess what --- It is this gospel of peace that we firmly stand on! And, **it is for this reason that Satan hates this Gospel!**

Questions: If Satan hates this gospel, what are the implications of his hating it?
Is he glad to hear it preached?
Is he glad to see it affect people's lives?
Does he want you to hear it and obey it?

Answer: Read **Luke 8:5-8, 10-15**

Questions: Can you see the role of Satan in this parable?
How do you think Satan hinders the receiving of God's word by people?
Does he try and hinder those who have chosen to serve the Lord?
How?
Does he ever try to influence you?

5. Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 15:58**

6. When Satan tries to take you on --- and he will --- stand strong with the confidence that God is on your side!

a. Take your stand on the gospel of peace and the God of heaven will provide you with what you need to defeat the enemy.

b. Read **1 Corinthians 10:13**

Questions: What does this verse mean?
How important are the truths of this verse to you?
If you believe them and use them, you will come out a winner!

7. Examples:

a. Gideon against the hosts of Midian (**Judges 7**).
Gideon knew who was on his side!

Questions: Do you?
Whose side are you on?
What shoes are you wearing? Those of the world, Satan, or the Lord?

- b. David and Goliath (1 **Samuel 17:23-50**)
David knew who was on his side!

Questions: Do you?
Whose side are you on?

8. We (you and I) can stand in absolute confidence when we realize that God is on our side! When Satan comes to attack, our feet should be firmly rooted on the solid ground of the "*gospel of peace.*"
Note: Don't try and wait till the battle begins to look for your shoes! It will be too late. **Matthew 7:21-23**
9. No matter what Satan brings, we "*can be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.*" **Ephesians 6:10b.**

CONCLUSION:

1. Confidence in God **Philippians 4:13**, not ourselves **2 Corinthians 10:12** will enable us to prevail / win over our adversary / enemy, the Devil, and to ultimately spend eternity with the Lord!
2. The Roman soldier entered into battle every day with his feet properly protected! The Christian soldier will do the same thing!
3. Don't let someone sell you a cheap imitation or look-alike! They won't last!
 - a. Choose the gospel of peace! Choose God's will, His way, **Matthew 24:35** for His Word cannot and will not be destroyed!
4. Yes, we are the army of the Lord. Let us lace up our shoes of peace and march to the will of our Commander, for **we've won the Victory!**



truth
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ON YOUR KNEES ... PRAYING ALL THE TIME

Text: **Ephesians 6:18**

INTRODUCTION:

1. We have learned a great deal in this series of studies about how to be a good soldier in this great spiritual war we're engaged in!

Question: What are some of the things we've learned?

Answer: There is a war! We're on one side or the other. No middle ground!
Satan is our enemy! He doesn't play fair or by the rules!
There are pieces of equipment we must wear!
Each one has its place!
With them on --- Victory!
Without them --- Defeat!

2. Immediately after Paul describes in Ephesians 6 the armor a Christian soldier has available, Paul makes an appeal for Christian soldiers to pray! **Ephesians 6:18.**

Questions: Why do you think that is so?

Is prayer important?

Why? Why would a soldier in the Lord's army, with all this armor and the sword of the Spirit, even need to pray?

3. I'll tell you why: prayer is not only another powerful and important weapon in our warfare --- it is the avenue through which we receive the strength to wear the armor and wield the sword!
4. You see, prayer is not added onto the armor --- **it is woven into and throughout the armor!**
 - a. Think about this statement!
 - b. All through the demands of battle, whether **before** the fight, **during** the fight, or **after** the fight --- prayer should be there!
 - c. Luke writes in **Luke 18:1**

5. So, in light of these thoughts, let's look a little more closely at the place of prayer in all of this study. But before we do, a few personal questions for each of us to answer to ourselves:

Questions: Do **you** believe in the power of prayer?
Do **you** pray as often as you should?
How often do you pray?
Do you ever pray for others?
Do you always pray for yourself?
Do you ever pray for your parents?
For your brother(s) and sister(s)?
For the leaders of the church?
For the members of the church?
Do you ever just pray to offer thanksgiving to the Lord?
To praise Him?

Note: Take a few minutes to think about this list and how you measure up!

I. DISCUSSION:

1. God has provided --- that statement alone is full of encouragement, isn't it.
 - a. Read **Philippians 4:19**.
Questions: Do you speak of the Lord in such a personal way, "*my God shall ...?*"
What does the word "*supply*" mean?
What does the word "*all*" mean in this verse?
What are the "*needs*" He supplies?
2. Yes, God has provided us with strong and complete armor, but He wants us to strengthen this armor through prayer!
 - a. He wants us (you and me) to understand that when we put on the armor with prayer --- we are soldiers, warriors --- with incredible power.
 - b. Read **James 5:16b**
Question: How much is "*much?*"
Answer: All I know is, he didn't say little or nothing!
3. Read **2 Corinthians 10:3-4** carefully.
 - a. Satan is constantly trying to build "*strong places*" in each of our lives. There are no exceptions. Discuss.
 - b. A repeated struggle with doubts about faith, or with the same sin, or with a frequent failure in some area(s) of life, may really become Satan's "*strong places*" in our lives! Some place where he finds a weakness, a crack --- and he will capitalize every way he can!

Warning: Don't ever underestimate Satan's power — or overestimate your own apart from God!

c. This passage tells **us** that God's "weapons can destroy the enemy's strong places."

Question: Isn't that encouraging?

4. Read **Ephesians 6:18** again. Now read **1 Thessalonians 5:17**.

Questions: What does it mean to pray "*always*" or "*without ceasing*"?

Does this mean I go around all day long with my head bowed and my eyes closed?

Answer: It is to be of the disposition of heart and mind that at any time, day or night, you can pick up on your conversation with the Lord.

a. You see, it is like leaving the telephone receiver off of the hook ... you keep in touch with God so that your praying is part of a long conversation that is not broken.

b. Take a minute --- think about this illustration for a minute and apply it to your own life! Are you thinking? Are you applying?

5. Our lives should have prayer so entwined in them that we see everything in reference to Him. For example:

a. If you see something good -- praise and thank Him for it!

b. If you see something evil --- ask Him to make it right!

c. If you see someone without Christ --- ask Him to draw them to Himself!

d. If you see trouble --- seek His deliverance!

6. Are you starting to see the picture? Let's color the picture in a little more.

a. All of **your** thoughts, words, deeds and even circumstances become a cause or a point of communication with God!

b. This is the whole point of the Christian life!

The reason God offers us salvation is in order for **us** to have fellowship with Him. **1 John 1:3**

c. And there is no greater expression of fellowship than prayer! You and I talking with God in prayer!

CONCLUSION:

1. Each day of your life and mine, we must do battle with the Devil and his army.
 - a. We don't know from which direction he may try to ensnare us, trip us up, injure us and cause us to fall! So we must be prepared!
2. Preparation for battle means putting on the "gospel armor" --- "each piece put on with prayer!"
3. Young people --- learn to "pray without ceasing." Learn to "pray always." Learn to pray in the morning, to pray at the noon time, to pray in the evening --- pray all the time.
4. If you will learn this lesson while you are young, as you grow older, life will be easier to bear. Discuss.
5. So --- pray as you **buckle** on the Belt of Truth!
pray as you **take up** your Shield of Faith!
pray as you **put on** the Helmet of Salvation!
pray as you **put on** the Breastplate of Righteousness!
pray as you **take up** the Sword of the Spirit!
pray as you **lace up** your Shoes of the Gospel of Peace!
6. Yes, **we are the army of the Lord and we've won the victory!** May the Lord help each of us to be the very best soldier that we can be!



truth
for today's youth



A REVIEW ... AND A CALL TO ARMS!

INTRODUCTION:

1. **Ephesians 6:10-18** is a perfect conclusion to what the apostle Paul had already written by inspiration in chapter 1 through chapter 6, verse 9.
2. The intended message of this great Book is this ... if you are a true and sincere Christian as defined in chapters 1-3 ... and if you are genuinely living the way in which a Christian should live ... then you can be sure of one thing ... you are going to run into the enemy!
Questions: Why would this conclusion be true?
Can you see yourself in this type of a situation of running into the enemy?
How do you think you would come out?
3. You see ... it is impossible to live in the manner that Ephesians describes without having conflict with Satan!
Questions: What does it say about us if we don't experience any conflict?
Does this mean we go looking for a spiritual fight?

Questions: How would you define 'living a Christian life?'
Do all Christians live as Christians should be living?
If not, why not?
4. The apostle Paul concludes Ephesians with the exhortation ... with a call to arms ... get ready for war!
 - a. He is telling Christians that since we are in a spiritual war (like it or not) ... we need to be strong in the Lord!
 - b. And we become strong in the Lord by putting on the whole armor of God and by wearing it and using it daily!

REMINDERS ...

1. We need to remember the reality of Satan's attack ... because it is for real!

Note: **James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8,9; 2 Corinthians 2:11; Acts 20:29-31.**

2. We need to remember that the stakes are high ... because it is really a matter of life and death!
 3. We need to remember that each of us are right in the middle of this spiritual war between the Lord and His church on one side ... the devil and his sinister army on the other side!
 Questions: Whose side do you want to be on?
 Whose side are you on at this time in your life?
- Note: Remember ... there is no middle ground (**Matthew 12:30**)!
- Question: Why would someone want there to be middle ground or try to find some sort of middle ground to stand on?

LESSONS FROM 1ST CENTURY CONGREGATIONS ...

1. The Lord in His wisdom gives us insight into just how effective Satan has been in the past by showing what happened to five of the seven churches of Asia Minor.
2. Out of the seven letters, five of them are serious warnings! The two congregations which didn't need to be warned were ...
 - a. Smyrna ... the persecuted church (**Revelation 2:8-11**).
 - b. Philadelphia ... the evangelistic church (**Revelation 3:7-13**).
3. We must be aware that what happened to these five congregations can also happen to congregations in the 21st century!!!
 Questions: Should this cause us to be unconcerned?
 What if we are not concerned about these things happening today?
 What are the implications of indifference to these matters?
4. There are at least five ways in which Satan attacks the Lord's church ... the body of Christ ... which is made up of individual members. (**Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:20**).

Number One: The church at Ephesus (**Revelation 2:1-7**) ... they left their first love!

- A. This is the church where love died! They had organization and doctrine ... but they forgot that they could not be effective for God apart from loving the Lord with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength!
- B. If we ever get to the place where what we do is an orthodox, formal service without the inclusion of the heart and the involvement of love ... we have allowed Satan to get a foothold in the church!

- C. Look at your own life ... is the enthusiasm for Christ there? Or is the thrill gone?

Number Two: The church at Pergamum (**Revelation 2:12-17**) ... they compromised with the world!

- A. They began to indulge in worldly things instead of being separated from them (**2 Corinthians 6:14-15**).
- B. You see ... this congregation decided that they could court the world ... and in so doing allowed immorality (**2:15**).
- C. The church today must be extremely careful not to become accommodative to worldly thinking and worldly views!
- D. Satan attacks the church in a very subtle way:
 - (1) First, we lose our first love!
 - (2) Then ... all of a sudden we're compromising with the world!

Number Three: The church at Thyatira (**Revelation 2:18-29**) ... they tolerated sin!

- A. This was an active, working church. They abounded in many good works of love, service, faith and patience!
- B. They became a victim of a false teacher and false teaching! They allowed sin into the camp! People within the church were committing fornication and they tolerated it ... instead of dealing with it!
- C. The church must deal with sin! There are times when we must be confrontive ... and times when we simply must discipline members!
- D. Mark it down ... it all starts with a loss of love ... pretty soon when one doesn't love anymore you're willing to compromise ... and compromise becomes tolerance ... and then sin floods the camp!

Number Four: The church at Sardis (**Revelation 3:1-6**) ... they were content with their efforts!

- A. All they had left was their form ... the church was functioning ... but everybody was dead!
- B. Everyone was busy ... but God wasn't there!
- C. The obvious sequence has developed:
 - ... when you lose your first love ...
 - ... you begin to compromise with the world!
 - ... when you compromise, sin floods in and you begin to give in to it and tolerate it!

... And when sin takes over the church, the spiritual life is choked out!
... What remains is a dead church!

Number Five: The church at Laodicea (**Revelation 3:14-19**) ... they were lukewarm!

- A. These folks may have been the worst of the congregations!
 - B. They weren't cold ... but they weren't hot either!
 - C. These were the hypocrites playing Christianity!
 - D. They were satisfied right where they were!
5. Now ... do you see how effective, deceptive, sneaky and persistent our enemy is!
6. What about the church at _____ (your town)? Can you describe the congregation where you attend? _____
-

CONCLUSION:

1. May we determine in our own hearts with deep resolve to put on the whole armor of God!

To buckle on the belt of truth and to see ourselves and the world through the eyes of the Lord and not be deceived by Satan's eyes!

To put on the breastplate of righteousness and to understand the very real need to be a righteous soldier in His army!

To put on the shoes of the gospel of peace and to realize that we have made peace with the Lord and can lead others to do the same!

To pick up the shield of faith and to be confident of its ability to protect us against whatever Satan may use against us!

To put on the helmet of salvation with the confidence that our sins have been forgiven and that we can know that we don't ever have to belong to Satan again!

To take up the sword of the Spirit which is God's Word and to always remember that it is truth to defeat every lie Satan may ever try to tell us!

2. May each of us pray ... and pray daily ... to be a mighty warrior in the Lord's army!
3. **We are the army of the Lord ... and victory awaits us!**

