

Full Armour of God



"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil".

Ephesians 6:10-11

READYING THE DISCIPLE
FOR MINISTRY

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FULL ARMOUR OF GOD

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PREFACE

Welcome to the discipleship / leadership series. These little booklets were designed to give basic information concerning various topics about our Christian faith in Christ Jesus.

The purpose of this series is to stimulate thought and to foster a clearer understanding of discipleship and servant leadership. These booklets can be used as a discussion tool for personal study, family devotion, youth meetings or in cell groups. Our hope is that this information will stir the readers and encourage them to go deeper into personal research and study.

Our desire is that these booklets will be a blessing to the reader and a tool that can be shared with others as a gift of encouragement.

Please feel free to mail or e-mail us for more copies or to just write to us with any feedback concerning the content of these studies. We hope you enjoy this offering of knowledge and experience. We pray that Christ will draw you into an ever deeper personal relationship with Himself as you study.

Your servants in Christ,

Rev. Dr. James and Hkaw Win Humphries

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"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armour of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil".

Ephesians 6:10-11

Introduction:

When Christ walked on this earth He proclaimed and talked a lot about the “Kingdom of God”. The Gospel books of the Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John use this phrase and title over 40 times. When we become a disciple of Christ, at that moment we also became a member of Christ's Kingdom. We are not of this world but are pilgrims passing through. We have a call and purpose and that is to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and His righteousness. But Paul tells the Ephesian believers that because they are now in Christ and Christ is in them they need to be prepared for spiritual warfare.

God is calling His people to war. **We fight not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers** (Ephesians 6:12). The biggest battleground that the disciple face is the one between his head / mind and his heart / spirit. This is where so much anxiety, tension and stress come from. We have at least two internal voices trying to direct our thoughts and actions and throughout the day they do battle with one another. We as humans are made up of three different parts called, body, soul and spirit or to put it another way, the physical, mental / emotional and the spiritual, which is the heart or centre of man. These three areas are where the enemy attacks us.

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We are battling as individual but we forget that as a body, our local churches are also in a spiritual warfare as well. The goal of the enemy is always to divided and conqueror, to get the soldiers of the church to turn on each other and to destroy from within and if he cannot do that, he will try to separate us away from others and then attack. Or he may just get us to turn on ourselves to the place where we want to give up, give in and die.

There are some key words that the Scriptures and this little booklet uses that are important to our everyday life if we hope to succeed. It will be helpful it we take a moment to define them a little more in depth so we can see the bigger picture of what the disciple of Christ is involved in.

The word:

Soldier: warrior, fighter, combatant

Battle: action, attack, combat, encounter, engagement, fight, war, warfare, campaign, clash, conflict, contest, struggle, crusade.

Power: ability, capability, capacity, competence, potential, energy, might, strength, vigour, authority, command, control, dominion, influence, rule, authorization, privilege.

Stand: be upright, position, rise, be in force, belong, be valid, hold, obtain, prevail, remain, stay, abide, endure, experience, support, take, weather, withstand, attitude, determination.

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Prayer: communication, devotion, invocation, litany, supplication, appeal, petition, plea, request.

Ambassador: agent, consul, deputy, diplomat, emissary, envoy, minister, representative.

Schemes: system, plan, method, idea, plot, conspiracy.

Now that you have a better understand of these words let's look at the Scriptures from Ephesians 6:10-20.

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

*¹³Therefore, take up the **full armor of God**, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ¹⁵and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; ¹⁶in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with*

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this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, ¹⁹and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

From this text there are two important phrases that I would like us to keep in the back of our minds as we work our way through these verse texts concerning being a disciple / soldier of Christ.

First:

“be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might”

Second:

“that you may be able to stand”

One could say that the theme for this section of Scripture could be, “The disciple / soldiers are in battle for Christ's Kingdom and it is critical that we stand firm not in our ability or strength but in the ability and strength of Jesus Christ”. In some ways it is the same type of wording that God gives to Joshua, where He commands him to be strong and very courageous. (Joshua 1:6, 7, 9 and 18) Joshua was going to cross over into the promise land with all the people. This land had been promised to them when they left

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Egypt by God, but now they would have to go in and conquer it. God gives many promises but they are not ours until we are willing to go and fight for them.

As we begin to study this text let us first look at some background information to what Paul was saying before he wrote these verses and to whom he was writing it to.

The church of Ephesus is located in Asia Minor (now the country of Turkey) close to Laodicea and Colossae. It was an important seaport for the Roman Empire on the Mediterranean Sea coast. It also boasted a large pagan temple to the Roman goddess Diana (Acts 19:10). Paul also made it as his center for evangelism for about three years. The book is thought to have been written around the same time as the book of Colossians AD 60 while Paul was in prison in Rome.

The book itself seem to have the purpose of helping the disciple to better understand the bigger picture of God's eternal purpose and grace, and see the importance of the church in its relationships with God and with each other. Paul starts off by telling the reader about the great blessing that we have because of being "in Christ." Paul prays that the church would have understanding of who they are in Christ and what their purpose is here on earth. He tell the believers that they must first **sit** with God, then **walk** with God and the result will be that they will be able to **stand** firm in Christ Jesus. He also teaches in the middle of the book on how we should react and live with other believers and how we should minister to our partner and children.

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One other point to add to our thinking comes from another book that Paul wrote. He shares with a fellow student, friend and co-labourer name Timothy about this whole area of being a good soldier of Christ. He tells him,

¹You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ²The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

II Timothy 2:1-4

The soldier of the church is to be prepared and equipped for Spiritual Warfare. We face daily battle and we face a war that has a life and death result to it. We will see from this section of Scripture, six important truths that can have a tremendous affect on how we live out each day of our lives. The purpose and goal is to ready you in, **“BEING A SOLDIER IN GOD’S ARMY.”**

I The Soldier’s Strength: vs. 10

One may ask, where does the soldier strength come from? How is he able to go out and fight a battle that seems to have so many enemies that are coming at us from all directions? The key comes from the one who lives inside our hearts. When we accept the call of Christ and invite Him into our hearts as our personal

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Savior, He then places within us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who is able to teach, guide, comfort but most of all empower us for this great battle that we all face. There are two kingdoms at war with one another and in the last days when Christ returns for His Church at that point the enemy will be bound and destroyed forever but until that time, Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit is here to empower us for service. He tells the Ephesians church that this empowerment can only come by us asking each day to fill our hearts (Ephesians 5:18).

Christ still calls people today to follow Him and become fishers of men. There is a need for labourers to go out into the highway and byway and compel people to come in but the enemy desires to oppose this and to bring rather destruction and death into peoples' lives. When Christ calls us, we can be sure He will also empowers us for service and give to us what we need to be overcomers. He tells us that greater is He that lives in us than he that lives in the world. (I John 4:4) Yes we do have an enemy but he has been defeated already by the work that Christ did on the Cross. His shed blood redeems us from our sins. When we call upon His name and confess our sins, we become His child.

The picture here is a lot like a policeman. He has strength and power not in himself but it comes through those that have sent him out. He is first trained in the various areas of what it means to be a policeman. As he goes out to work he knows that he will be backed up by those who are over him plus that he carries the authority of the state and country that he serves under. We as soldiers of Christ have our authority because of who Christ is. He

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told the disciples that as the Father have given Him authority, He now gives it to us (Matthew 10:1).

Paul tells us in verse 10 to be strong in the Lord and to walk and serve in His might. We as a believers carry within us the authority of Christ. When we speak things in His name and when we do this, the enemy has to leave. We need to realize that we serve a commander and chief whose name is Jesus Christ. Joshua had a mighty encounter with His leader and captain on the eve before entering into battle for the city of Jericho. We read, “

Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, “are you for us or for our adversaries?” He said, no; rather I indeed come now as captain of the host of the Lord. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, what has my lord to say to his servant? The captain of the Lord’s host said to Joshua, Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy. And Joshua did so.

Joshua 5:13-15

What a beautiful picture for the disciple of Christ. It shows to us that we are not alone in our warfare but the heavenly host is there to walk with us. The key is to be willing to join forces with Christ our King and fight.