



**ABUSED WOMAN
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[ABUSED WOMAN MINISTRIES' INC. SCHOOL OF HEALING]

“Healing through recovery with God’s truth”

“Biblical Foundations of Freedom Destroying Satan’s Lies With God’s Truth” was written by Dr. Art Mathias:

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About the Authors:

Dr. Mathias has lived in Alaska for more than twenty five years. He is a businessman, bush pilot, outdoorsman, and has authored several books and booklets. He and his wife Patti, of 38 years have two grown sons. Patti is an accomplished teacher and along with her husband are founders of Wellspring Ministries. Dr. Mathias has earned his master and doctorate degrees in counseling. Both Patti and Dr. Mathias travel extensively teaching about and demonstrating a powerful God that has answers.

I had the opportunity to attend one of Dr. Mathias’ “Biblical Foundations of Freedom” seminars a couple of months ago and it was a life changing event for me. I saw firsthand what God was doing at his seminars; I witnessed how powerful forgiveness is – people were getting set free because they decided to forgive – some had been holding onto unforgiveness for years - and that is why I decided to adapt his book into my Recovery program. Forgiveness is powerful because when we decide to forgive, we are obeying God’s Word and when we obey God, we will be blessed.

I am using these materials from Dr. Mathias’ book and other training aids by permission from him and his wife Patti.

Welcome to the journey that is going to change your life!

God bless,

Dr. Dorothy E. Hooks, PsyD



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Class Dates & Topics:

February 21st, 2010 – June 19th, 2010 - all classes will be held online:

- Preface & Introduction (2 hour) – February 21st – 27th.
- What Is Sin – Chapter One (2½ hours) – February 28th – March 6th.
- Discernment – Chapter Two (2½ hours) – March 7th – March 13th.
- Accusing Spirits – Chapter Three (2½ hours) – March 14th – March 20th.
- The Major Strongholds, or Principalities, of Satan – Chapter Four (1½ hours) – March 21st – 27th.
- Principality of Bitterness – Chapter Five (2½ hours) – March 28th – April 3rd.
- Principality of Self-Bitterness, Unloving Spirits – Chapter Six (3½ hours) – April 11th – April 24th.
- Forgiveness – Chapter Seven (2 hours) – April 25th – May 1st.
- Principality of Jealousy & Envy – Chapter Eight (2½ hours) – May 2nd – May 8th.
- Principality of Rejection – Chapter Nine (3½ hours) – May 9th – May 15th.
- Principality of Fear – Chapter Ten (2½ hours) – May 16th – May 22nd.
- Principality of Occultism, Pharmakia, & Sorcery – Chapter Eleven (2½ hours) – May 23rd – May 29th.
- The Kinsman Redeemer – Chapter Twelve (1½ hours) – May 30th – June 5th.
- **The Armor of God – Chapter Thirteen (5½ hours) – June 6th – June 12th.**
- Our Power and Authority in Christ – Chapter Fourteen (3 hours) – June 13th – June 19th.

Class Location: www.recovery4abusedwoman.org – Main Web Site



**Winter Semester 2010
BFOF Class Syllabus
June 6th – June 12th**

Instructor: Dr. Dorothy E. Hooks, PsyD

Campus: www.recovery4abusedwoman.org

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Topic & Goal:

- **The Armor of God – Goal:** to define and explain God’s Spiritual Armor for warfare. **To accomplish this goal, we will:**
 - ✚ Define The Belt of Truth
 - ✚ Define The Breastplate of Righteousness
 - ✚ Explain What The Scripture Teaches About Immorality
 - ✚ Review Forgiveness
 - ✚ Explain How To Put On The Breastplate of Righteousness
 - ✚ Define The Gospel of Peace
 - ✚ Define The Shield of Faith
 - ✚ Define The Helmet of Salvation
 - ✚ Define The Sword of The Spirit



The Armor of God

God gave us spiritual armor to use in our warfare with Satan. Many books have been written and sermons preached about this armor, but it is a subject that is greatly misunderstood and, therefore, misapplied. God's armor is not some sort of magic that our minds apply to fend off the devil. It is not something that we apply or take off each day. We need a clear idea of the make-up, purpose and use of the armor of God.

Ephesians 6:10-18 says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of right; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

In Ephesians 6:10, Paul says to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." "Be strong" is the Greek word *endunamoo*, meaning empowered. So to be strong is to be empowered by God and to appropriate His strength. Paul prays in Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21 that we would recognize that the power of the resurrection is ours. He commands us to act accordingly.

Ephesians 6:11 says to "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." **Scripture lists two kinds of armor:**

1. Defensive armor, for protection:

- The helmet: protecting the head, comes in various forms embossed with many kinds of figures
- The girdle, or belt: protecting the loins to brace the armor tight against the body, and support daggers, swords and other weapons
- The breastplate in two parts: one covers the breast and the other covers the back, protecting the vital organs of the body; it extends down to the legs
- The greaves, or sandals, cover the shins: a form of a sole was often used to protect the feet from rocks, thorns, etc.
- The shield: to protect the entire body from blows and cuts

2. Offensive armor for conquest:

- The sword is used to destroy the enemy and bring his surrender. Besides the sword, other weapons of offense included the spear, lance, battle-axe, club, bow and arrows, and sling.

The phrase, "that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil;" **describes three blessings received from the armor of God:**

1. The ability to stand against all enemies (Ephesians 6:11-14)
2. The ability to withstand all attacks (Ephesians 6.13)
3. The ability to quench Satan's fiery darts (Ephesians 6.16)



The Armor of God

"Having done all to stand," or "to stand" is a military term meaning to hold one's position; having already conquered, stand ready again to do battle.

"Wiles" is the Greek word, *methodeia*, referring to the methods one would use to accomplish a task. In this context, it includes the different means, plans, and schemes used to deceive, entrap, enslave, and ruin men's souls.

The defensive armor is a soldier's personal armor, used for protection. The offensive armor is for conquest, bringing the enemy into surrender, or slaying the enemy. Paul uses these common military tools to make a spiritual application. Eph 4 and 5 encourage us to appropriate the things that are of God. It warns us of many ungodly practices as well. Paul tells us to take up, or put on, the armor of God giving us the power and authority to do those things that we should do, and not do the things that we should not do.

Putting on the armor doesn't just happen; it takes effort. It is not a ritual of some kind. As believers, God gives us access to His armor, but we are commanded to put it on — all of it. This is a result of doing, believing, embracing, responding, and studying to gain knowledge and truth.

Until Jesus comes, as long as we breathe we will be in continuous warfare. Satan will do anything to defeat God, including attacking us. In verse 12, Paul says that we "wrestle not with flesh and blood." The word for "wrestle" in Greek is *pale*. It indicates a hand-to-hand fight, a wrestling match. Wrestling is a type of fighting that includes trickery, cunning, strategy and often, using an opponent's own strengths against him. Satan has **three objectives** in this wrestling match.

First, he wants to destroy our unity with God, the body of Christ, and our families. If he persuades us that we are cut off from the Father, he knows we will question the source of our hope and our power. If God is not for us, we might as well give up. People who believe their sin is so grievous that there is no way God will forgive them will give up. They may even believe that they have blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and are now cut off from God forever. They buy into Satan's lies and half-truths, instead of clinging to God's truth.

Satan uses our lack of assurance of God's power and love to separate us from God. He causes us to question the reality of our faith. It is imperative that we examine ourselves to make sure we are believers, but once that is settled, we need to believe and trust what God has said. Trust and obey and you shall be saved! Believe it. Rely on it.

Another common satanic tactic is making us wonder if God is withholding something good from us. By so doing, Satan causes us to think that God is somehow evil. It's what he did to Eve with the fruit, and what he tried to do to Jesus in the wilderness when he challenged Him to turn stones into bread.

Satan's **second objective** is to entice us to sin so he can gain a place in our life. I John 3:8 say, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." He wants us to sin so that we will be destroyed.

Satan's **third objective** is to put us under the influence of false teaching. He strives to keep us from the light of truth and lure us into greater darkness. The rise of cults, New Age mysticism, Eastern religions and even atheism indicate a multi-directional assault by false teachers. Satan's false teaching especially affects our children through the influence of godless teaching; he seeks to destroy our nation. Public schools are filled with violence, illegal drugs, open sexuality, and all fed by perverse textbooks.



The Armor of God

The most serious deception is within our own churches. A serious study of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 would reveal that we are facing an even greater challenge today. Why are there as many divorces in the church as out? Why is the use of pornographic materials no different in the church or out? Why are alcohol or drug addictions no different in the church or out?

Where is the power of God in our lives? It is missing because we have been taught that obedience is good, but not absolutely necessary for salvation. We have been taught a form of Godliness that denies His power in the doctrines that teach the gifts of the Holy Spirit have passed away. We have been given a false security with the "once saved, always saved" theology. If there is not fruit, if there is not a change in attitude and behavior, there is no salvation. Salvation is not just a verbal assent; there must be a change of heart.

Have you ever been taught how to be a vessel of honor fit for his service? Have you ever been taught what it means to be an overcomer? Do you know how to achieve these? I strongly suggest that there is nothing more important to learn.

Either the devil keeps us blind to his existence and his activities, or tries to take us to the other extreme, of taking our eyes off of God and focusing them on him and his evil influences. He gains a perverse sense of joy when we credit him for all our problems and defeats. "The devil made me do it" is among Satan's favorite testimonies. Satan is very deceptive in how this manifest.

Satan assumes responsibility for all sorts of power so that we live in fear of him, rather than in reverential fear of God. In contrast, Jesus told us not to fear the one who is able to kill the body, but to fear Him who is able to cast both body and soul into hell (Matthew 10:28).

The Belt of Truth

In Ephesians 6:14, Paul names the Belt of Truth as a primary piece of the Armor of God. Why begin with the Belt? Why not the sword or the shield? Satan's first tactic is to cast doubt on God's Word. That is why our defense begins by having girded our loins with truth.

Truth must dominate our lives. In the first three chapters of Ephesians, Paul explains the relationship and position of a person saved by Grace. As believers, each of us becomes a member of the body of Christ. God gives us resurrection power, and seats us with Him in the heavenly places above all earthly rulers, power and authority. Our position is set forever in heaven. Though we gain this position in Christ, we still must live out our faith in our daily lives.

In the first three chapters, Paul makes six doctrinal statements that spell out our position in Christ:

1. God has selected us. God chose us. Ephesians 1:4 says, "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." When Satan whispers or screams in your mind that you have been cut off from God, remind him that God chose you. God has chosen every man, woman and child that He created in His image.
2. God not only selected us, He saved us. Ephesians 1:7 says, "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." God spent His Son's blood to redeem us, giving us forgiveness of sins. Satan holds no power of death over us. James 4:7 instructs us to resist the devil and says he will flee. Because He saved you, Jesus gave you His power to use against Satan. But you must use it.



The Armor of God

The Belt of Truth (continued)

3. We are sealed. Ephesians 1:13 says, "In Whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Satan wants to demoralize us, taking away our hope. He wants us to doubt the security of our relationship to God. God gave you His Holy Spirit to seal your faith and guarantee your redemption.
4. Positionally, we are seated at the right hand of God. Ephesians 2:6 says, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." As you survey the battlefield, what better place to sit than immediately next to the Supreme Commander of the Earth. This is your position.
5. We are secure. We will be seated with Christ for all eternity. Why? Ephesians 2:19 says, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Ephesians 3:6 says, "that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." You are a citizen, heir, and of the same body as Christ.
6. Our position is one of strength. Ephesians 3:16 says, "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." You need to be strong in the Lord and stand firm on the authority of these truths. You never have to run away, or be defeated! You put on the full armor of God to be able to resist the enemy, and taste God's victory. If you don't resist, Satan loves it.

Roman soldiers wore at least one of three different kinds of belts or girdles. One was like a leather apron worn to protect the lower abdomen; the second carried the sword; the third was a special belt, or sash, that designated the rank of an officer or high-ranking official.

The belt that carried the sword was absolutely necessary when going into battle. No soldier would purposely go to war without his weapon. Besides holding his sword's scabbard, this belt kept his tunic in place so he would not get tangled in it. And it secured the breastplate, which protected his chest. The belt kept everything else in place. The spiritual belt of truth performs a similar function in our lives. Truth lets us discern right from wrong, or recognize a violated standard.

All our lives, we have been subjected to Satan's lies, and he is the father of lies. We have believed and lived lies. We have told lies. But when we came to faith in Christ, God's Grace opened our spiritual eyes so we could see the Truth ... and the Truth set us free. We no longer fell under the authority of Satan's lies. God's truth, as found in His Word and our response to it, sanctifies us and sets us apart for his service. His truth continues the sanctification process.

John 17:14-17 says, "I have given them thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth." God the Father chose each of us. He sanctified or set each of us apart, and we are also required to sanctify ourselves. We are required to set ourselves apart to God.



The Armor of God

The Belt of Truth (continued)

1 Peter 5:8-9 says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." The truth of God's Word gives us the power and authority to defeat Satan.

II Peter 1:19-21 says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. "

Satan leads us into false beliefs so that we doubt God's Word. We actually help him in this, because many believers keep God in a tiny box, limiting what He can do in their lives by putting some areas off-limits. We must let God be God. Who are we to limit Him? We must decide whether or not we will believe the Bible and act on it, or continue to be tossed about by Satan.

II Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Matthew 5:17-18 says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Jesus did not come to destroy or set aside the law. He came to give us a way to fulfill the law. We can fully keep the law, thus accomplishing the purpose of the law, which was sanctification. Salvation or justification has always been by faith. But true faith is never alone (James 2:17).

Luke 24:25-27 says, "Then He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself? "

When Jesus reached back into time, quoting from the law and prophets, did He believe them to be true? Did Jesus lie to those He taught? When the Gospel writers recorded their words about Jesus' life, did they make it all up? Can we count Scripture to reveal truth? Yes we can!

The validity of God's Word is a central issue. If it is God-given, God-breathed, God-protected, and God-preserved, then we must study and obey it. If we pick and choose which parts of it we believe, then all of it fails. Satan likes to get us to doubt parts of Scripture, especially those parts that make us uncomfortable. Once he's got us doubting, he will devour us and we will at best become lukewarm Christians. God says he spews lukewarm Christians out of His mouth. We have a choice to make. Either we walk in our own understanding with Satan as our tour guide, or we can walk in God's truth with the Holy Spirit leading the way (this is what I chose to do; how about you?).

John 14:6 says, "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

John 17:17 says, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth."



The Armor of God

The Belt of Truth (continued)

John 8:32 says, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." If we refuse to accept God's truth, then we are not heirs to God's kingdom; instead, we inherit Satan's eternal damnation. There is no middle ground.

John 8:44 says, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

Make up your mind. Whom will you trust and follow? With whom will you walk? God gave you a free will to choose to manifest His Spirit, or manifest Satan's spirit.

II Corinthians 11:2-15 says, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. For I suppose I wasn't a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself. As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth. But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

Never forget that our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against Satan and his kingdom. Never forget your real enemy.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

What happens to us when we refuse to put on the belt of truth and tighten it up for battle? From the beginning of the Christian faith it has always been a challenge for believers to become well established in the Word of God. In Ephesians 4, Paul exhorts believers to stay unified in the Spirit until all of us come to unity in faith and reach spiritual maturity. Zealous Christians who step into positions of leadership before they have a solid understanding of truth spread much error.



The Armor of God

The Belt of Truth (continued)

Ephesians 4:13-15 teaches that properly equipped believers won't be like children who are tossed around by waves and winds of false doctrine, or by men's trickery, craftiness or deceitful scheming. The one behind all these tactics is our enemy, Satan, who wants to lead us away from the simplicity and purity of God's Word and simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why he disguises his servants and himself as angels of light.

When a believer is led astray, what should we do? Ephesians 4:15 says, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

When we see Christians in our fellowship or circle of influence that are doctrinally wrong, we must refute their error. We do this in a spirit of unity, peace and love. Peace and love are key motivations. We must approach an erring brother with patience, instructing him in truth, with humility. We must avoid spiritual pride and arrogance, being sure not to fall into the same doctrinal error or one even worse. Galatians 6:1 teaches us to gently restore a fallen brother, thereby protecting ourselves from falling into the same sin.

I've taken quite a bit of time with the importance of wearing the belt of truth. I want you to have confidence that God's Word is truthful, and the source of all truth. God doesn't mind if you test His Word. Apply it and it will work. I pray that you have taken the reliability and truthfulness of Scripture to heart, as a primary step toward winning the victory in the struggle against Satan.

How do we put on or take up the belt of truth? Do we say a magical prayer or visualize picking it up and putting it on? NO!

Putting on the armor is not a passive action. The armor is not automatically put in place when we accept Jesus. It requires an act of doing, believing, embracing, responding to, and studying God's Word, and is accomplished over time. This is the most basic foundational principal of spiritual warfare.

Ephesians 6:12 says, "we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." As it concerns each individual believer, the high places referred to here are between our ears.

II Corinthians 10:5 says to hold all of our thoughts captive to the subjection of Christ. What does this mean? It means that we are to examine each thought that enters our mind, and compare it to the plumb line (inerrant truth) of Scripture. We ask, "Does this thought come from God or Satan? Is it a good or evil thought; the truth or a lie? "

Hebrews 5:12-14 says to quit feeding on the milk of God's Word and start to feed on the meat. We are to become mature in our walk with God. Verse 14 describes discernment, saying that we should exercise our senses to know the difference between good and evil. Exercising our senses implies hard work. Christian maturity requires discernment and obedience to the truth. It requires us to know truth to be able to recognize error.

We put on the belt of truth by studying and applying God's Word to our lives.

James 4:7 says to "submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee." There is a very specific order to this verse. It starts with submission. If we fail to submit and have sin in our lives, then the devil won't flee! How important is wearing the belt of truth? Nothing is more important if we desire to win at spiritual warfare and live a victorious, healthy Christian life.



The Armor of God

The Breastplate of Righteousness

The Roman soldier's breastplate covered all his vital organs, both in front and behind. It was usually made of metal. In Ephesians 6:14, Paul drew a very important connection to our life in Christ from the breastplate's purpose.

Paul called this piece of spiritual armor, "The Breastplate of Righteousness." Putting on this breastplate is a process requiring the identification and removal of sin from our lives. It is an active process that requires a strong will to put God first.

We must totally submit ourselves to God; seeking God's kingdom and righteousness must be our first priority.

God promised to draw nigh to us if we will draw nigh to Him (James 4:8). Drawing nigh to God requires that we deal with the stuff in our life that is not of Him. That means we must identify and remove sin from our lives.

One thing that separates us from God is sin. Many people knowingly tolerate certain types of sin, rationalizing that the sins we entertain are not as grievous as those we shun.

If you tolerate sin, deal with it now. Examine yourself to identify your sin. Name it, confess it, and ask God for His forgiveness. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

Many of us sin without realizing that our actions or attitudes constitute sin. We evaluate our sin based on the culture. Yet the culture constantly debates right and wrong. Today American culture calls good evil, and evil good. Cultural icons declare that there is no absolute truth, and since truth is relative, each person decides their own sense of morality. Eventually, a lack of moral consensus leads to chaos and instability. America needs a spiritual revival, but you need a standard. Look for your sense of right and wrong in the Scriptures, not the soap operas.

What Does Scripture Teach About Immorality?

Romans 1:22-27 says, "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."

I Corinthians 6:9-11 says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

I Corinthians 6:18 says, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. "



The Armor of God

What Does Scripture Teach About Immorality? (continued)

Ephesians 5:1-13 says, "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth ;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light."

I Corinthians 5:1-5 say, "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

What does Paul mean when he says, "for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"? The purpose of delivering a sinner to Satan was to destroy the flesh. Christians were to withhold their fellowship and spiritual guidance from him, and to quit praying for him. Thus Satan had freedom to afflict his body. After suffering for a time under Satan's oppression, Paul believed such a person would come to repentance, receiving forgiveness and salvation. This Scripture teaches the power of prayer.

Destruction means to ruin, or a plague (I Corinthians 5:5; I Thessalonians 5:3; II Thessalonians 1:9; I Timothy 6:9). This kind of destruction did not kill the man; it brought him to repentance (II Corinthians 2:7). That the spirit may be saved means that physical affliction could not save a man's spirit unless it brought him to repentance. It wasn't the physical torment that saved the soul, but the repentance it stimulated. It is a consequence of disobedience and sin that allows Satan to have access to our lives (Deuteronomy 28).

Leviticus 20:10-22 describes God's attitude toward immorality. Verse 22 says, "Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them: that the land, whither I bring you to dwell therein, spue you not out."

If God's commands took preference in our culture, AIDS wouldn't exist. Neither would abortion, murder, violence, hatred, suicide, rape, emotional and physical abuse, addictions, etc. The list of human maladies related to moral offenses is lengthy. If we obeyed God's commands, these things wouldn't be a major concern in our culture.

What we once condemned we now condone. People committed sinful acts in prior generations, but shame and cultural condemnation kept these sins from plaguing the society.



The Armor of God

What Does Scripture Teach About Immorality (continued)

The acts committed by past generations haven't changed in ours, but our cultural standards have ratcheted downward so they are no longer condemned. In fact, many of them are promoted. Homosexuality produces tremendous physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual suffering, yet our culture now calls it gay rights. Abortion kills the baby's body and leaves a huge moral vacuum in the heart of the mother, yet our culture calls it a woman's choice. Unbridled sexual images create sexual tension, and when compounded by confusion of gender roles, raise the incidences of rape and sexual abuse. Divorce divides families sometimes into three or four extended units, and Christians are just as vulnerable as non-Christians. We pay a terrible price for the abandonment of God's moral standards.

When we don't know the truth, or shun the truth, Satan's lies fill the void. Failing to put on the belt of truth gives Satan a huge edge in spiritual warfare. Without truth, we can't identify sin. Without first putting on the belt of truth, we cannot put on the breastplate of righteousness.

To be righteous, we must be forgiven. A forgiven person is blameless. I John 1:9 say, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I Thessalonians 5:23 says, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

II Peter 3:14 says, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

Satan commonly attempts to conceal and pervert God's truth so that he can lead us into sin. He leads us to question whether or not we have really been forgiven of our sins. Satan nags us about our sins, constantly reminding us of how terrible we are, rendering us worthless to God and ourselves. He wants us to believe we are beyond God's forgiveness. Believing these lies removes our breastplate of righteousness leaving us susceptible to Satan's fiery darts.

To counter Satan, we must never forget God's promises. If we confess, He will forgive and cleanse us. As a forgiven person, we are blameless and declared righteous by God. His is the highest authority. Romans 8:1-2 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

A Review of Forgiveness

In Matthew 6, Jesus taught us to forgive others and said that unless we forgive, God won't forgive us. In Matthew 18:34-35, Jesus said that if we don't forgive from our hearts we would be turned over to the tormentors. If we carry resentments, bitterness, and unforgiveness toward others or ourselves, the tormentors come in droves.

Through self-evaluation and inspection, we see how Satan's tormenters have attacked our peace and damaged our sound minds. Instead of peace, we have turmoil. Instead of health, we have ulcers caused by anxiety.

Our endocrine system responds to thoughts and emotions. The primary endocrine system has nine different glands that secrete more than one hundred different hormones, neurotransmitters or interleukins. If these glands secrete too much or too little hormones, it dramatically affects our mental and physical health. Now might be a good time to review the chapter on forgiveness.



The Armor of God

A Review of Forgiveness (continued)

James 5:16 instructs us to confess our faults to one another to receive healing. We don't need to live in bondage. God made a way for us to be free! John 8:36 says, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Romans 8:31-39 says, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Amen! Knowing this truth gives us strength, but we still must take it into our heart so that we walk in it. God expects us to live righteously. Doing so requires that we confess our sins so that the devil has no opportunity to attack and put us back into bondage.

Ephesians 4:17-18 says, "not to walk as the gentiles walked." The Greek word for gentile means "pagan" or "heathen." Gentiles, the unsaved, take their walking instructions from Satan, not God. Whose kingdom are you taking instruction from?

Ephesians 4:22 says to put off the old man. The old man is Satan's spirit and nature. Romans 6:6 also refer to the old man. He is, "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9; John 8:44; I John 3:8, 5:18).

Ephesians 4:23 says we need to be renewed. Being renewed means that the whole course of life flows in a different direction (II Corinthians 5:17-18). We renew our mind by renouncing its vanity (Ephesians 4:17), its darkness and blindness (Ephesians 4:18) and learning of Christ (Ephesians 4:20-21).

Ephesians 4:24 says to put on the new man. The new man is the Spirit and nature of God (Ephesians 4:23-24; II Peter 1:4; Romans 8:9, 14-16). Verse 25 says to lay aside the old man and put on the new man. Here we see a characterization of the two kingdoms. In an earlier chapter we listed behaviors identified with each kingdom. We have choices to make. We can manifest the fruit of the Holy Spirit, or the fruit and nature of Satan and his demons. What will your choice be? We put aside the old man each time we repent or forgive; each time we choose to do His will. This is called sanctification.

Ephesians 4:27 says, "Neither give place to the devil." This verse provides a very important insight and principle needing more attention. Sin gives Satan a place or opportunity to occupy our minds and affect our spirits. These are strong words with serious implications. The Greek word for "place" is *topos*, meaning "place, opportunity, position, home, license or room."



The Armor of God

A Review of Forgiveness (continued)

Warren Wiersbe wrote in *The Strategy of Satan*:

If the believer cultivates in his life any known sin, he is giving Satan an opportunity to get a foothold, a beachhead in his life. Satan will then use this opportunity to invade and take other areas. Any sin that we harbor in our lives, that we know is there and yet we refuse to acknowledge and confess, will give Satan a beachhead for further attacks. It has been my experience that includes material objects that are definitely related to Satanism and the occult. No Christian has any right to possess such objects because they give Satan the foothold he is looking for. When the Ephesian Christians burned their magic books (Acts 19:18-20), they were taking a giant step forward in defeating Satan.

Finally, we must never look upon any sin or questionable object as a "little thing." Nothing is "little" if Satan can use it to attack you! I recall counseling a Christian student who had an obsession for food. She was ruining her health and her studies, and her anxiety was only making the problem worse. I her if she had anything in her possession that was related to the occult. She confessed that she did, and I urged her to get rid of it, confess her sin to the Lord, and claim the victory of Christ over whatever demons were using object as a beachhead. She did all of this, and the Lord gave her wonderful victory. Illustrations of this kind of victory can be multiplied by pastors have confronted occult powers.

Tolerating any sin in our lives opens the door to Satan, separating us from God. This is a great opportunity now for you to review the chapter on occultism (Chapter 11 – lecture I taught a couple of weeks ago) and go through the extensive checklist of occult practices. Check off the ones that pertains to you and go through the prayer for each one so you can be delivered and walk in the freedom of God.

Exodus 20:5 says the sins of the father are passed on to the third and fourth generations. In Nehemiah 9:1-3 and Leviticus 26:40-45, the people of Israel confessed the sins of their fathers. I believe it is just as important to do this today. I don't want Satan to gain any foothold, beachhead, place, opportunity, stronghold or entry point into my life.

When we work through the occultic checklist, renouncing and repenting of any participation by ourselves or in previous generations, two things happen: first, we identify sin that we had not understood to be sin; secondly, we are set free from sin through forgiveness. Praise God!

How Do We Put On The Breastplate of Righteousness?

1. Make sure that we are God's child in accordance with Scripture.
2. Ask God to reveal any place where we have tolerated or opened ourselves to sin. Jeremiah 17:9 says that our heart is deceitful, who can trust it. God will let us know.
3. Apply 1John 1:9. Confess our sin, specifically naming it, and agree with God that it is sin. Quit doing it. Ask God for His strength and discernment not to repeat the sin.
4. Thank God for His forgiveness, and what He continues to do in our lives.
5. If we have stolen, or if we have wronged others, we need to set these situations right. Sometimes we don't remember these situations. Ask God to reveal whom we need to make restitution. If the person has died, or if we have no way to make contact with them, go to God and ask for forgiveness. Ask for His supernatural peace.



The Armor of God

How Do We Put On The Breastplate of Righteousness (continued)

6. When Satan comes to accuse, take the sword — God's word — and tell him out loud he is gone. Show him your affidavits, reminding him and yourself that you have forgiven others and that you have forgiven others. Satan must obey your command to leave you alone. Speak out loud to Satan as he cannot hear your thoughts. Only God can hear our thoughts.

If we harbor sin in our lives, choosing not to forgive others or ourselves, then we lose our peace and fellowship with our heavenly Father. We cannot experience the joy of walking with God. This brings us to the next piece of armor Paul wrote about in Ephesians.

We put on the Breastplate of Righteousness through forgiveness: first by receiving God's forgiveness for our sin; and second, by forgiving those that have hurt us. Forgiveness quenches the fiery darts of the devil. Forgiveness removes the pain from memories and experiences. Forgiveness is how God intended each of us to protect ourselves.

The Gospel of Peace

Ephesians 6:15 says, "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Peace and a sense of wellbeing are two of the greatest blessings of this life. If we live in peace with others and ourselves we can withstand almost anything life throws at us. But if that peace is disturbed, we are tormented. The parable of the rich man in 18:21-35 illustrates this very well.

Paul uses the soldier's shoes to teach us about the Gospel of Peace. The best equipped and most highly trained soldier will lose the battle if he is unable to stand on his feet.

Roman soldiers wore sandals that were bound by thongs over the instep and the ankle, and the soles were thickly studded with nails. A common military practice of their day was to put sharpened sticks in the ground, concealing them — their version of land mines. A soldier who stepped on one of these ran the risk of receiving a severe, debilitating puncture. Unable to walk, he was effectively removed from battle.

The Greek word for "shod" means "to bind under" or "to strap on." How do we strap on our spiritual shoes to protect us from spiritual land mines? How do we put on "the preparation of the gospel of peace"?

Isaiah 52:7 says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

Romans 10:15 says, "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

These two passages refer to spreading the gospel. But the context of Ephesians is spiritual warfare. The Greek word for "preparation" means, "to be prepared in readiness." It suggests making peace with God before the battle begins, being ready to meet Him. It also means having a solid foundation, a readiness of mind, flowing from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a message of peace. Paul used the word "peace" in other verses in Ephesians as well.

Ephesians 2:14-17 says, "For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."



The Armor of God

The Gospel of Peace (continued)

Ephesians 4:3 says, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Ephesians 6:23 says, "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul teaches that our relationship with God should be one of peace. We should also live in peace with other Christians and with ourselves. Peace is required to be able to stand and fight. Living in peace with God and others assures me of withstanding the spiritual land mines that threaten to take me out of the battle.

Satan is a murderer and a destroyer. Anger, unforgiveness, bitterness and depression are four of the most common methods he uses to destroy us. All of these are listed in Ephesians 4:25-32 as things given no "place" in the life of children of God. Let's review these verses.

Ephesians 4:25 says, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."

The lie must be put away. This also puts Satan away, he who is the father of lies (John 8:44, II Thessalonians 2:11). Heathen teachers have long declared that a lie is better than the truth when it is profitable and less hurtful. This is not Scriptural.

Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." This refers to being provoked to sin by Satan, but we are told not to yield to such provoking, or give any place to the devil (Ephesians 4:26-27). The only way to "be angry and sin not," is to be angry at Satan and evil. Even this anger needs to be put away before nighttime.

The words "anger" and "angry" are used 278 times in the Bible, but only twelve in the New Testament. The emotion of anger is God-created and perfectly sinless in itself. Its misuse is what God condemns. We are never to be angry with others or ourselves. Righteous anger or hatred is only directed at Satan or evil.

God displayed anger many times, but His anger was a result of or directed at sin (Numbers 11:1, 10, 33, Numbers 12:9, Numbers 14:11; Psalms 7:11). If we express anger, our cause must be just (Matthew 5:22; Romans 1:18; James 1:19). The Gospel gives place to anger (Mark 3:5) but not to sin.

When anger rules us, we fall into trouble. According to Galatians 5:19-20, an angry outburst is one of the "works of the flesh," and when the flesh controls you rather than the Spirit, it is sin.

Harboring anger is sinful. Anger, justified or not, must be given to God. Harboring anger gives the devil a place in our lives. Anger wears away at relationships, and destroys our physical health. After giving it to God we are to stop being angry; we are to choose to stop sinning. A moment of anger should bring an opportunity for reconciliation.

Verse 27 says, "Neither give place to the devil." If we allow sin to have a place in our life, then Satan also has a place.

God says in verse 28, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needth." We are to work to satisfy our needs.



The Armor of God

The Gospel of Peace (continued)

Verse 29 says, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." This refers to useless, putrid and obscene communications (Matthew 7:17-18; Matthew 12:33; Matthew 13:48; Luke 6:43). God intended our words to edify others, to build up one another by our speech.

Verse 30 says, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." We will not grieve the Holy Spirit if we refuse to practice these forbidden things taught in Ephesians 4:17-18.

Verse 31 says, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."

Hebrews 12:15 warns us not to let a root of bitterness spring up in our spirit. If we go to bed with unresolved anger or resentment, a root of bitterness will be evident the next morning. This is why Ephesians 4:26 tells us not to let the sun go down on our wrath.

Do you have any unresolved anger in your heart? Unresolved anger results from unforgiveness and leads to resentment, bitterness and depression. This is a very high price to pay for sin. Jeremiah 17:9 says that our heart is deceitfully wicked, and not to trust it. Ask God to show you if you any unresolved anger is still lurking in your spirit. Add it to your forgiveness list, confess it and renounce it. Resolve the issues that spawned it.

To gain peace you must give your anger to God. Ask and receive His forgiveness; ask Him to heal you of that memory or hurt. Then you can break Satan's power over you regarding this memory. Speak out loud telling Satan that in the name of Jesus his power over you is broken. Ask the Holy Spirit to come and heal the memory and the hurt. When you stand and resist the devil in this manner, he will flee. God promises it! Healing begins when we are willing to forgive!

Verse 32 says, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Colossians 3:12-15 says, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

II Corinthians 2:5-11 says, "But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

This why we have been studying spiritual warfare, so that we would not be ignorant! We are God's children and He has set us free by His forgiveness. If we don't forgive others and ourselves, we move back under Satan's power.



The Armor of God

The Gospel of Peace (continued)

Matthew 18:21-35 tells the story of a man whose master forgave him a very large debt, but he refused to forgive another of a very small debt. When the master heard of his unwillingness to forgive, he turned him over to the tormentors until his debt was paid in verse 35, Jesus says the same thing will happen to us if we don't forgive others.

In the Lord's Prayer we are instructed to ask God the Father to forgive us in the same manner that we forgive others. Do you really want to pray this prayer? Each day and in every situation in life we are setting the standard for our own forgiveness.

We'd like to think that God will forgive all our sins if we just ask in faith. But these two teachings from Matthew indicate we have a role to play: forgiving others. These are tough lessons, but they are from God's Word. And they're vitally important, given that lack of forgiveness results in bitterness and resentment, two torments that steal our peace and health.

Life's hurts can seem very unfair. Some people are severely abused through no fault of their own. Satan works to keep these things fresh in our minds, causing us to live under their bondage. As people in bondage, our peace is shattered. Is that your desire?

Hebrews 12:1-4 says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

Have you resisted Satan "unto blood"? Jesus bled during His prayer at Gethsemane, from the whips of Roman soldiers, and at Golgotha. He fought Satan with the blood of His own body. The blood carries life to every cell of the body, and carries away the body's impurities. Voluntarily giving up His blood became the ultimate sacrifice for our sins.

You will have no peace until you are willing to submit everything, including your life, to God. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and then you will receive His peace, a peace that passes all understanding. You receive the Gospel of Peace by being obedient to God's Word.

The Shield of Faith

Kay Arthur illustrates her study of the Shield of Faith with a story of an African bird and how it protects its young. She writes that the screeching of a bird perched high in a tree startled a hunter in the jungles of Africa. As the hunter watched the bird, he noticed a snake working its way up the tree. He saw that the bird had a nest and that there were baby birds in it. The mother bird made a tremendous racket but then, as suddenly as it began it quit. As the snake got close to the nest, the mother bird flew off as if it were abandoning the nest. However, she came back quickly with a leaf in her beak.

She placed the leaf squarely over the nest, covering all the little babies. When the snake got to the nest, it turned back and slowly wound its way back down the tree. The hunter stood puzzled. He did not understand how a leaf would make the snake and leave its meal.

Later he shared what he had seen with local people. The leaf the mother bird placed over the nest was poisonous to the snake.



The Armor of God

The Shield of Faith (continued)

This is a picture of what God does for us as we engage in spiritual warfare. He didn't leave us defenseless. He didn't leave us without a shield and a helmet to ward off Satan's fiery darts. He gave us the Shield of Faith and the helmet of our Salvation.

Ephesians 6:16-17 says, "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

In verse 14, Paul said to put on the belt and the breastplate. Now he says to take up the shield and the helmet. It makes sense that a soldier would put on the main articles of his armor before taking up his helmet and shield. A breastplate alone wasn't enough protection. The shield is movable and able to catch or deflect the enemy's arrows, knives and spears.

The fiery darts in Roman times included any thrown missile: a javelin, spear, arrow, or stone. Fiery darts could include the combustible arrowheads that set fire to fortifications, ships, houses and shields made of wood and leather. Roman shields were made of iron, and were usually shaped like a door. They were large enough to protect the soldier, and some were covered with layers of leather soaked in water just before the battle to extinguish fire from flaming arrows.

The shield provides another great word picture. The Bible often compares the Word to water. Ephesians 5:26 says, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word." Just as a Roman shield that had been soaked in water put out flaming arrows, so the shield of faith quenches all of the enemy's fiery darts. Faith comes from hearing, believing and applying the Word, and without faith we please God.

Knowing the truth is not good enough. We must apply it, taking up the shield of faith to deflect Satan's attack. Practically, this means using specific truths from God's Word to counteract various lies and accusations of the devil.

There is not a single lie or accusation of Satan that we cannot extinguish Word of God. If Satan's fiery darts burn us, it's because we haven't spent enough time in the Scriptures building up our faith. Just as the leather on Roman shields would dry out in the heat of battle, so will our shields of faith if we are not completely immersed in the Bible each day.

Satan's fiery darts consist of evil thoughts, lusts, passions and various temptations (I Corinthians 10:13-14; II Corinthians 10:4-6; James 1:13-15; Romans 6:12; I John 2:15-17).

How does Satan attack you? Have you examined your thoughts? Do you know their origin? Are they good or evil? Are they from God or Satan?

What do you think of yourself? What do you think of others? Write down every thought you have about yourself, your spouse and others you know. Write down how you feel about God. How do you feel about your earthly mother and father, even if they have died? Once you have done this, compare your thoughts to the truth of Scripture. Do your thoughts line up with the Word, or are some, or many, of them out of line?

Scripture commands us to examine our thoughts. II Corinthians 10:5 says, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."



The Armor of God

The Shield of Faith (continued)

Our thoughts are either curses or blessings. Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." How do the thoughts that you just wrote down compare to this verse? Do the thoughts you identified build up or tear down those on your list?

Hebrews 5:12-14 says that we need to quit feeding on the milk of the Word, and move to the meat. Meat is a metaphor for spiritual maturity. Verse 14 says, "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Being of full age means to be mature and maturity is defined as the ability to discern between good and evil.

Scripture commands us not to be ignorant of Satan's devices (II Corinthians 2:11). Not knowing the difference between good and evil reveals ignorance. This is why the command in II Corinthians 10:5 is so important. If we are to be successful in defeating Satan, we must examine our thoughts. We need to ask whether or not we are allowing Satan's lies into our hearts, or God's truth. If our thoughts are good and of God, then we need to readily accept them into our hearts with great joy. If they are evil thoughts, we are to reject them and rebuke Satan.

James 4:7 says submit to God and resist the devil and he will flee. Submitting to God starts with our total submission to God. This is an ongoing process. If submitting to God is our habit, then we will be able to resist the devil. To resist implies that there is something that we must actually do. God grants us the power to resist, but we must choose to do so. The mystery of the fellowship of the Church is that it is a partnership with God (Ephesians 3:9).

As we grow in our relationship with God our shield will also grow. As a young immature Christian our shield is small, unable to withstand all of the attacks of the devil. But as we mature and learn God's word by use and experience our faith grows.

The Helmet of Salvation

The belt is truth, the breastplate is righteousness, the shoes are peace, the shield is faith, and the helmet is the assurance of salvation. It is the confidence that comes from knowing our salvation is sure.

The helmet symbolizes our position in Jesus Christ, showing that we are a member of His family and joint heirs with Him. Putting on the helmet demonstrates that we know and embrace our position in Christ. We have been selected, saved and sealed by and in Christ; we are seated with Christ at the right hand of God; we are secure in Him; in Him we have a position of strength.

We are assured of salvation, if our faith is not alone (James 2:17). Are there works of Righteousness in your life? Are you being changed (sanctified) in your experience? In your daily life? If so, rest assured that you are His.

By putting on the Helmet of Salvation, we show the enemy that he cannot crush us, touch us, nor do anything to us. Yet sometimes we still feel defeated. Why? It requires us to search our hearts and minds to see if we have given the devil an opening, and then defeat him, sending him fleeing. Our salvation assures the ultimate victory through Christ.



The Armor of God

The Helmet of Salvation (continued)

The Helmet of Salvation demonstrates **three aspects of salvation**: I have been saved (justification), I am being saved (sanctification), and I will be saved (glorification).

The first is justification. This is our legal position in Christ. We were saved from the penalty of sin at the moment we accepted Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This aspect of salvation is past tense. Because we accepted His free gift, we are justified.

The second is sanctification. This is in the present tense. We are being from the power of sin. Sanctification is an ongoing process as we learn to walk with God and put aside sin and Satan's ways. It is a process of sharpening our ability to discern between good and evil, and then choosing the good (Hebrews 5:14). It is this process that we become "vessels fit for His service" (II Timothy 2:20-21). We can be overcomers or non-overcomers. If we choose to be overcomers great rewards are promised (Revelation 2-3).

Sanctification comes as a result of submitting to His authority, and allowing the Holy Spirit to direct us. We can choose to walk by the spirit in God's Kingdom, or walk in the flesh in Satan's kingdom. We can choose to quench the Holy Spirit by not allowing Him to work through us to carry out His will. We can grieve the Holy Spirit by continuing to sin. Or we can walk as sanctified believers, in the power and light of the Holy Spirit.

Sanctification is the process of being trained to be His kings and priests for all eternity. We must learn to conquer the iniquity in us. In doing this we learn how to be His servants in all eternity.

The third is glorification. This is in the future. At the end of our earthly life, we will walk with our Heavenly Father and we'll be given a new body. The level of relationship and the level of authority that we have in heaven are determined by our obedience in this life.

I believe our new body will be just like Jesus' body was after the resurrection. He was recognizable, He still had the scars from His crucifixion, and yet He walked, talked ate. He appeared in rooms without going through a door, and traveled instantly from one place to another.

Our spirit and soul are eternal, and will live with Him forever. This is fascinating. Even walking on earth, we are really in eternity. Only our body dies, and it is replaced with a new and better model.

Hebrews 13:5-6 says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Whatever the spiritual battle in which we are involved, we can stand secure with our helmet on, confident in our identity in Christ. We are on the winning side. We have nothing to fear but fear itself. II Timothy 1:7 says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Scripture labels it "the spirit of fear." Notice, Scripture doesn't say *a* spirit of fear, but *the* spirit of fear. The spirit of fear refers to Ephesians 6:12, where we're told, we wrestle not with flesh and blood but with powers and principalities. Our triune God has given us His power through His Holy Spirit, and His love through God the Father, and a sound mind through Jesus Christ, the Word."

Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There are many other verses in both the Old and New Testaments that teach that we will always reap what we sow.



The Armor of God

The Helmet of Salvation (continued)

Job blamed God seventy-four times in the first thirty-one chapters for what happened to him. To blame means to belittle or curse. Job cursed the day he was born seventeen times. He wished he were dead or had never been born. He sinned greatly in each of these situations.

Additionally Job lived in fear. He had extreme fear that his children would sin in partying and curse God. He also had his own fears. Job 3:25 says, "For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me." As we have studied in the chapter on fear, it is unbelief. Fear is the opposite of faith. In his fears, Job was cursing God.

Moreover, in chapter forty-two, Job repented for speaking about things that he had no knowledge of and he forgave or prayed for his first three friends. He also completed the required animal sacrifice as covering for sins. Then God restored double what Satan had taken from him. If Job were not reaping what he had sown, why would he have to repent?

Elihu's response, in chapters 32-37, contains the answers to our problems in this life. I suggest that you study Elihu's wisdom from God with diligence. (Dr. Mathias has written a detailed study of Job in his book, "*The Continuing Works of Christ.* ")

Dr. Mathias says if you cannot agree with how he presents Job, at least remember that he did not stay sick and defeated for long.

Let's take a closer look at Paul's thorn in the flesh.

II Corinthians 12:7 says, "And lest I should be exalted above measure through abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."

What was Paul's thorn in the flesh? The verse says plainly that it was a "messenger of Satan." The Greek word is translated "angel" 179 times and "messenger" seven times. It's never translated "disease" or "physical infirmity." Such an interpretation would be wrong. An angel of Satan, one of the spirit beings that followed him when God threw him out of heaven, buffeted Paul, tempting him with self-exaltation. That spirit wanted Paul to exalt himself; watch out – that's what Satan try to get us to do today.

In II Corinthians 11:23-27 Paul lists some of the ordeals caused by this evil angel that kept him humble. There is not a disease in the entire list.

Paul's thorn must be understood in the same sense as Numbers 33:55; Ezekiel 28:24; and Hosea 2:6 where the same Greek word for thorn is found in the Septuagint. In these passages, the giants were called thorns in the sides of the Israelites. The giants resulted from the union of fallen angels with human women (Genesis 6:4; Jude 6; II Peter 2:4). They weren't diseases and plagues, bad eyes or a heart condition. They did cause suffering and war.

Those that teach that Paul's thorn was an eye disease use Galatians 6:11 to justify their case.

Galatians 6:11 says, "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand." They reason that since he wrote a large letter, Paul must have had an eye problem. Some have gone so far as to describe it with running sores. The truth is simply that he wrote a long letter. The writing style of the day was also to use letters large in size. To make this an eye disease is a total fabrication of Scripture.





The Armor of God

The Helmet of Salvation (continued)

Paul asked three times for the thorn to be removed and God refused. He refused because the thorn was an evil spirit that was tempting Paul. It is not yet time for Satan and his demons to be removed from the world. That will happen in God's timing which is the Day of Vengeances, the Second Coming of Christ. In truth each and every believer has the same thorn. We are all tempted and buffeted by Satan, and this will continue until Jesus put Satan away forever.

These examples show that God could never violate His holy nature by allowing or testing with evil. If we disobey God, Satan has a right to sift us as he did Job, Paul, and Peter. The curses of Deuteronomy 28, and elsewhere in Scripture, are delivered by Satan, not by God. Our enemy is Satan.

God made many promises to each of us. I Corinthians 10:13 says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

He has promised us a way of escape from the devil's wiles. This is a message of love, hope, and peace. Still, we cannot be ignorant of his devices. We must know the entire truth, seek forgiveness and obey God's Word. Then we will receive peace. Satan's thorns will still be thrown at us, but we will deflect and defeat them.

Satan's primary objective is to entice us to sin, thereby separating us from God and rendering us useless in spiritual warfare. He targets our minds, with sin beginning in our thought life. That's why Paul insisted that we take every thought captive and avoid being snared by the devil.

Satan even targets our dreams. Have you ever had evil dreams, or dreams with sexual overtones? They surely didn't come from God. How do you deal with these? First, submit to God. Ask if there is a reason for the dreams? Is there a sexual fantasy running amok in your thoughts? If so, ask for God's forgiveness, and ask Him to remove harmful dreams, binding and breaking Satan's power. Satan will flee.

If you hear voices in your minds, don't be afraid to talk about it; that does not mean you are insane. Dr. Mathias has found that there are people, who they minister too, who occasionally hear voices in their minds. Hearing voices is evidence of the spiritual warfare in which we engage. Satan attacks us with evil thoughts in order to drown out the voice of God's indwelling Holy Spirit. Here is where we must diligently practice discernment. What is the origin of these voices?

James 1:8 says, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." This speaks of someone who sometimes chooses God and His ways, and other times choose Satan and his ways.

James 4:8 says, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded."

If we submit to God and resist the devil, he will flee from us. Then the ungodly voices and dreams will stop.

Satan wants us to blame others or ourselves for these voices. He wants us to believe there is something wrong with us. But we need to blame him and his demons. In some way, we gave Satan an opening and he moved into our thought life. Just as we gave him an opening, so we can close him out.



The Armor of God

The Helmet of Salvation (continued)

As the time for Jesus to cast Satan into the lake of fire draws closer, spiritual warfare will escalate. Revelation tells us that Satan won't just peaceably surrender. He will unleash his worst. Likewise, he won't leave us alone without a battle, and **his primary battleground is our mind**. He will constantly attack our thoughts.

Remember II Corinthians 10:3-5: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds ;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

Taking every thought captive is a continual challenge, and forms an important aspect of spiritual warfare. Bringing thoughts into captivity means to bring them under control. Then we can submit ourselves more completely to God.

The devil shoots a fiery dart, a thought, to our mind: a lie, thought of rejection, wrong doctrine, self-condemnation, a suggestion to do evil, etc. At the moment we become aware of the thought, we must evaluate it and hold it up to God's Word. Does it meet the Philippians 4.8 test? Does it meet the Hebrews 5:12 test? If it doesn't meet these qualifications, we must reject it as instructed by James 4:7-8.

Sin occurs when a wrong thought turns into an action. This creates an appetite that becomes a weakness, then a habit. The habit brings oppression from the enemy. Jam 1:14-15 provides a warning about the steps that lead to sin.

Our families form another major battlefield for Satan. He is determined to destroy them. Families form the foundation of our nation and society. If they are destroyed, our children and all future generations will be destroyed. Exodus 20:5 warns us that the father's iniquity is passed on to the third and fourth generations.

Satan targets the family because the relationship between husbands and wives, parents and children, is an earthly example of the interaction of our heavenly Father with His family. If he can destroy your relationship with your earthly father, he has created a rift between you and your Heavenly Father. The habits and attitudes learn from our parents are passed on to our children. This perpetuates Satan's attack on the human race.

Even grown children don't have the ability to confront their dad. It lies with dads to examine their relationship with their children. What habits, fears, attitudes, beliefs or diseases have they learned or received from dad? If they have learned things that dad now regrets, then he must go to them and apologize, teaching them in God's way.

Our children reap the harvest of the sin sown by their parents. Satan works overtime to keep parents from loving their children, and to alienate children from their parents.

We need to take special care in our relationship with our spouse. Do we edify our mate, or tear him or her down? Do we neglect or take him or her for granted? Do we treat our spouse as a king or queen, or as our servant? We must guard our families. Ephesians 5:15-6:4 give instructions. Study what God's Word says about nurturing and loving your families.

The Sword of the Spirit

Ephesians 6:17 says, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."



The Armor of God

The Sword of the Spirit (continued)

The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. But the Belt of Truth and the Shield of Faith are also the Word. **How are they different?**

First, the sword is both a defensive and offensive weapon. You don't "put on" the sword and helmet, you "take" them.

The second difference is uncovered by a word study. The Greek word in Ephesians 6:17 for "word" is *rhema*. It refers to the spoken Word. When we put on the Belt of Truth or the Shield of Faith we put on the "logos," the entirety of Scripture. Using the sword of the Spirit requires quoting individual verses or passages as the Spirit brings them to mind when they are needed.

If we hide God's Word in our hearts, as we are attacked the Holy Spirit brings to mind a specific verse or passage of Scripture that we can use to defeat the devil.

The Greek word for "sword" is *machaira*. It means a knife or dirk, a short sword used by Roman soldiers in hand-to-hand combat. Its use required skill and practice. God's armor places the sword of truth in the scabbard hung from the belt of truth: individual verses held in the whole of His Word. The belt held the breastplate of righteousness in place. God has a plan that we can tap into to win this spiritual warfare.

In Luke 4:1-13, Jesus used specific Scriptures to defeat Satan. It is critical that we are skilled in knowing and using the Word of God. We must know how to test our thoughts and actions, comparing them to the **plumb line of God's truth**. We need to know which word to pull out to defeat Satan in each situation.

As we mature in Christ our sword or knowledge of His Word grows. We begin with a small dagger and hopefully grow to a large two-handed sword that will defeat every wile of the devil. We must study to show ourselves an approved workman rightly dividing the Word.

It is also important to recognize and use the gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in I Corinthians 12. Among those gifts are words of knowledge and prophecy. God desires to speak to each of us today. His spoken or *rhema* word has not passed away. But we must remember to test all things back to His written word.





BFOF Study Guide
Topic: The Armor of God
June 6th – June 12th

Study Guide Goals:

- To understand the significance of the armor or weapons we have available to use in our daily life.
- To take responsibility for the use of these weapons.

To Think About:

According to Ephesians 6:10-18, whom do we "wrestle against"?

Do we have anything to use in our defense?

Why do we need this armor?

Where does this armor come from? List the six pieces of armor.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

If we use this armor, name three blessings which will be received.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How do we "put on" this armor of God?

What are Satan's three objectives in this wrestling match?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Which piece of armor may well be the most important?

What does knowing truth do for a believer?

What must the believer use for a "plumb line" to establish truth?



BFOF Study Guide

Topic: The Armor of God

June 6th – June 12th

What six truths are established for the believer in the first three chapters of Ephesians?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Describe the believer who has put on the belt of truth.

How do we put on the breastplate of righteousness?

How do we exhibit "identification with God"?

How do we remove sin in our lives?

What is a "forgiveness affidavit"?

What is the purpose of a forgiveness affidavit?

If we harbor sin in our lives and choose not to forgive others or ourselves what do we lose?

What article of armor does the Apostle Paul use to teach us about the gospel of peace?

How do we strap on spiritual shoes and put on the preparation of the gospel of peace?

Why do we need our feet shod with the gospel of peace?

How do we receive the gospel of peace?

What does Eph. 6:16-17 say will quench all the fiery darts of the wicked?

How do we "take up" the shield of faith?

In what must the shield of faith be soaked?



BFOF Study Guide

Topic: The Armor of God

June 6th – June 12th

What does a person need to do with the shield of faith to make it effective against Satan's fiery darts?

List some of those fiery darts recorded in I Cor. 10:13-14; II Cor. 10:4-6; James 1:13-15; Rom. 6:12; I John 2:15-17.

How does James 4:7 suggest we put on the shield of faith?

The next piece of armor is the helmet. What does the helmet assure to the enemy?

What does the helmet symbolize?

What three aspects of salvation does the helmet demonstrate?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What happens at the time of justification?

When does sanctification take place?

What is sanctification?

When does glorification happen?

How do we "take on" the helmet of salvation?

What is the sword of the Spirit?

How does Eph 6:17 use the Greek word "rhema"?

How can we "take on" the sword of the spirit as a piece of armor?

List again all the pieces of armor, which God has given us for our battle against Satan.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____



BFOF Study Guide
Topic: The Armor of God
June 6th – June 12th

Again, how do we "put on" this armor of God?

Can this armor be "put on" as a quick, magical exercise, or will it take a longer, more disciplined period of time?

What will be the results and benefits of spending a longer period of time in God's Word?

Personal Responsibility:

Honestly examine yourself whether you are effectively using each and every piece of armor regularly.

Application:

- Write a letter of commitment to spend time in God's Word. Then devise a plan to implement this commitment. Make yourself accountable to someone.
- Write a prayer of thanks to God for each piece of armor and explain how you will use it for His glory as well as your protection.