



THE PRAYER CLOSET

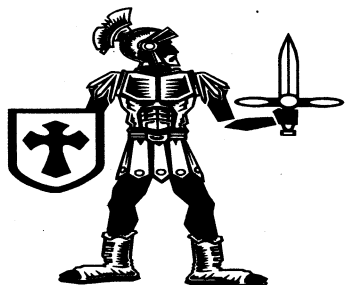
*Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting*

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THE ARMOR OF GOD

You are in a spiritual war. When you surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, you automatically became the enemy of Satan and his demons. Satan and his demons hate you and want to destroy you. The Word of God states that believers “wrestle” against the forces of Satan, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).” The word “wrestle” refers to Greco-Roman or Olympic wrestling. It is a fierce, hand-to-hand, face-to-face struggle. This is a conflict that every believer faces. No believer is exempt from the battle.

In this war, Satan has schemes that he uses to fight against you. The Bible states in **Ephesians 6:11**, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” The word “wiles” translates the Greek word “methodeia,” from which we get the English word “method.” This word describes a settled plan. Satan follows a prescribed method to deceive, to enslave, and to destroy. Satan is like a roaring lion seeking to devour all that he can (**1 Peter 5:8**). He would love nothing more than to destroy your witness through sin and create guilt, hopelessness,

and despair in your life. He is a murderer and wants to destroy you (**John 8:44**). He has schemes to attack you and destroy you. He knows you and his plans to attack you are those that he feels will be the most effective against you. He knows your weakness and exploits them. He knows your strengths and batters them.

Because Satan wants to wound and destroy you, you are commanded to resist him (**James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9**). The word “resist” in **1 Peter 5:9** is a military term that speaks of taking a firm stand against an enemy. You have to stand firm against the attacks of Satan in your life. You may be thinking, “How can I resist Satan? How can I stand against his attacks in my life?” You can do this by placing the armor of God on yourself and using the weapons that He has given you for this battle. You can resist and be victorious over the attacks of Satan in your life through the armor of God.

Spiritual warfare is a difficult and demanding business. Your enemy is the second-most powerful being in the universe. He is highly intelligent, clever beyond measure, and cannot be outwitted. He is filled with hate and will do whatever is necessary to attack you and destroy you. The most effective weapon that you have to defend yourself from and to fight against this

pernicious, persistent enemy is the armor of God. It is your strength and mighty power in this battle (**Ephesians 6:10**). It is only through the authority of Jesus Christ and your spiritual armor that you can resist your enemy and be victorious over him and his forces.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on the believer's spiritual armor. I want you to realize that you are in a war and that you need to wear this armor daily. You also need to grow in your effectiveness in using these weapons. **In writing on spiritual warfare, I do not intend to exalt Satan, but to expose him.** He is your enemy and you must not be ignorant of his schemes. You must learn how to resist him and how to use your armor. It is my hope and prayer that this issue will help you prepare for the daily battle that you face.

Why Do I Need The Spiritual Armor?

You need the spiritual armor described in **Ephesians 6:10-18!** *The most basic reason you need this armor is because you are in a war!* I cannot stress this enough to you. When I teach on the subject of spiritual warfare, I often encounter a spirit of unbelief in my listeners. They simply do not believe that they are in a spiritual war. They do believe in a devil and demons. Yet, they do not feel that this devil and his demons have any influence in their lives. Yet, the Word of God presents a contrary picture. The Bible pictures a spiritual war between the believer and Satan and his demons. The Word of God reveals that this enemy seeks to gain a stronghold in the lives of believers (**2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Ephesians 4:27**).

Maybe this describes you. Perhaps you have never given serious thought to the fact that you are in a spiritual war. Perhaps you have never realized that Satan and his demons do affect your life. You would have to confess that you have never put the armor of God on, or at least, not consistently. You need to realize that you are in a war and that this armor is a necessity.

You may be saying, "Wait a minute! Jesus totally defeated Satan and his demons at the Cross. Now, why do I have to fight? If Jesus has already won the war, why do I still have to fight?" It is true that Jesus Christ has completely defeated Satan and his demons by His death and resurrection (**Colossians 2:13-15**). The Word of God clearly teaches that Jesus Christ has broken Satan's destructive grip on your life (**Colossians 1:13**). The end of World War II illustrates the answer to this question. Even though victory was won and Hitler was defeated, German troops remained in different areas of the nation. Although these troops were defeated and greatly weakened, they still continued to fight. These troops had to be conquered. In the same way, you must maintain and appropriate the victory that was won at Calvary. Satan and his forces are defeated. Yet, they are still fighting. You then must fight so that the victory of Calvary can be a living reality in your life.

The Word of God teaches that you were the slave of Satan in your lost condition (**Ephesians 2:2**). You were held captive by him (**2 Timothy 2:26**). You were under the reign of darkness (**Colossians 1:13**). Yet, when you surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, your position changed. Jesus Christ demolished Satan's grip in your life. You were delivered from Satan's kingdom of darkness and placed in Christ's kingdom (**Colossians 1:13**). Christ is now your Lord and Master. You are the purchased possession of Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 6:19-20**). Satan has no claim to any part of your life now.

However, Satan is sentimental. He longs for the "good 'ole days" when he controlled your life. He wants to reclaim control in your life. In order to do this, he will tempt you, hurl lies at you, and labor to gain strongholds in your life. He does this to hinder your growth as a Christian and your witness for Christ. If he cannot control you and destroy you, he will attempt to neutralize you. This is the war that you are facing as a believer. This is why God has given you this armor. It will enable you to overcome temptation, destroy his lies, and prevent him from gaining any ground in your life.

If you are not in a spiritual war, why would God give you armor? Why would God give you something if you did not need it? I ask you these questions to show you that God gives you the armor because you are in a war and you need this armor to fight. He has given you weapons so that you can defend yourself and resist the enemy. It would be suicidal to go into a battle without your weapons. You are placing yourself in a dangerous position of great danger if you are not wearing and using your spiritual armor. The war that you are in demands that you use the armor God has given you.

You also need your armor because God calls you to stand firm in this war (Ephesians 6:13). The believer is not to retreat from temptation or the lies of Satan. The believer is to stand against these things, resist them, and overcome them. The only way that you can stand against the evil one and his attacks is through your spiritual armor. It is sufficient to help you stand and be victorious. This armor that God has given you will not fail you if you will put it on and learn how to use it. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, it is mighty and invincible. It will protect you and enable you to be victorious.

The fierceness of your enemy makes using the armor a necessity. Satan is a cruel and vicious enemy. He has no mercy or pity in him. The Lord Jesus Christ declared that he was a murderer and a liar (**John 8:44**). He is not afraid to attack you. He hates you and wants to destroy you because of your relationship to Jesus Christ. There is a tract entitled, "God Loves You And Has A Wonderful Plan For Your Life." Another tract could be written on a similar subject, "Satan Hates You And Has A Terrible Plan For Your Life." Every plan of God is for the good of His people; every plan of Satan is for their destruction. Satan despises you and would love nothing more than to destroy you (**1 Peter 5:8**).

He will attempt to deceive you. He will strive to lead you into sin. He will look for an opportunity to gain an advantage in your life. He is going to be persistent in these things. He is driven to do these things because of his hatred for you. He

is a spiteful enemy who is against you and wants to hurt you. You need the spiritual armor of God to stand against such an enemy. His hatred of you and his plans against you demand that you wear and use your armor.

A final reason that you need the spiritual armor is because you are powerless on your own. Through the spiritual armor and Christ's authority, you are a conqueror; you are invincible (**Romans 8:37**). Without these things, you are powerless and helpless in this war. You did not break Satan's grip in your life by your own strength or wisdom. It was Jesus Christ who did this. You cannot keep yourself free from his evil grip. It is only through Christ and this armor that you will be able to stand and be victorious. This is not a war that you can fight in your own wisdom or strength. You must wear and use the armor that Jesus Christ has given you through your salvation.

What Is The Spiritual Armor?

Your evil enemy and his unholy servants are determined to deceive you and destroy you. In preparing to do battle with this evil enemy and his unholy servants, you must acknowledge and use your spiritual armor. If you are going to be victorious in this battle, you need to know what your weapons are and how to use them. To vividly communicate the spiritual truths necessary for fighting this spiritual war, the apostle Paul uses the imagery of the armor of a Roman soldier. He declares that there are six pieces of armor. If you will wear--believe and use these truths--you can win spiritual battles.



The Belt of Truth

The first piece of armor is the belt of truth (**Ephesians 6:14**). The belt, or girdle, of a Roman soldier in New Testament times was critical. It was

wide and protected the lower torso which is frequently referred to in the Bible as the "loins." This belt also held the sword of the Roman soldier. In biblical times, men did not wear pants, but instead wore robes. While these robes were needed for the parched and scorched Middle Eastern climate, they were impractical and even dangerous for battle. So, before going into battle, a soldier would "gird his loins." This meant that he would pull the hem of his robe up between his legs and tuck it into his belt. By doing this, it would give him greater mobility and enable him to fight.

You are to put on the belt of truth for this war. The Word of God states in **1 Peter 1:13**, "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." This means that you are to be committed to truth and truthfulness. It is having a commitment to know and obey the Word of God. Most interpreters are divided on the interpretation of what the belt of truth is. Some declare that it is objective belief in the Word of God, while others feel that it is referring to truthfulness or personal integrity. I contend that the belt of truth refers to both. Knowing God's truth should lead to a life of personal integrity. A commitment to the truth of God's Word should motivate you to a life of truthfulness.

Putting on the belt of truth requires that you be committed to God's Word as absolute truth. You must believe the Word of God. It also requires you to live a life of personal integrity. You are to live out the truths of God's Word on a daily basis. This must be firmly settled in your mind. Just as a Roman soldier made sure that his belt was firmly fixed on him, you must make sure that you are absolutely committed to the Word of God as truth and to a life of truthfulness. You are not to have anything to do with lies or half-truths.

Why is truth so important in spiritual warfare? Truth and a love for truth are important because Satan is a liar and the father of lies (**John 8:44**). Satan's primary target is your mind. He will twist the truth, conceal the truth, and tell half-truths

which act as lies so that you will believe something that is false (**Genesis 3:1-7**). He desperately wants you to believe his lies. This will give him the opportunity to work in your life. Satan works through lies. His strength rests in the power of lies. You must remember this truth: **Satan has nothing to hurt you with but his lies.** If he can get you to believe his lies, he has an advantage in your life. Any time that you accept and acknowledge a lie, you are giving Satan and his demons an opportunity to work in your life.

For this reason, you must know the truth, be committed to the truth, live the truth, and declare the truth. How do you defeat the lies of Satan? You defeat lies with truth. Truth is the way to victory in the spiritual war. Satan does not want you to put the belt of truth on. He does not want you committed to truth and truthfulness. Have you ever told a lie convincingly and then suddenly the truth came out? Then you were caught in the lie and were totally devastated. That is what truth does to Satan. It devastates and totally defeats him. It exposes his deceptive, lying ways for what they are and breaks his power against you. This is why you must daily commit yourself to the truth of God's Word and to a lifestyle of truthfulness.

How do you put the belt of truth on? The following prayer is a guide for praying on the belt of truth. You can use this one or prepare your own prayer. *"Heavenly Father, by faith, I place the belt of truth on my life. I believe that You are true. I believe that Your Word is true. Enable me to believe Your Word, to trust Your Word, and to live in obedience to Your Word. Give me a love for Your Word and truthfulness. Cause me to hate any lie that I must face. Fill my life with Your truth and deliver me from the lies of Satan. Amen."*

You need to put the belt of truth on every day. However, you cannot stop there. You need to strive to become proficient and effective with this weapon. You need to mature in how to use this weapon against Satan. The following are some suggestions on how to be more effective with this weapon.

(1) *Saturate your life with the Word of God.* Read, study, memorize, meditate on, and obey the Word of God. Labor to have a growing understanding of the Bible. Strive to have a deeper obedience to the Word. The more truth you know, the more powerful you will be in this spiritual war. As you grow in your understanding of and obedience to the Word of God, you will be better able to discern and resist the lies of Satan.

(2) *If you have doubts about the Word of God, cry out to God about this.* Express your doubts to Him and ask Him to give you certainty and conviction about this. You might want to consider reading and studying about the accuracy and trustworthiness of the Bible. Call on God to enable you to get this matter settled in your mind.

(3) *Pursue a life of truthfulness.* Labor with all your strength to resist lies, gossip, and half-truths. Strive to speak the truth with love. Distance yourself from any persons who slander, lie, or gossip. Do not allow any place in your life for any lies. Ask God to give you the grace and power to live a truthful life.



The Breastplate of Righteousness

The next piece of armor that God has given you is the breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate was a metal cast of the human torso. This piece of armor protected the upper part of the body, including the soldier's heart and lungs from the spears and arrows of the enemy. It could always withstand the blows of the sword and the hurling of spears.

The breastplate of righteousness refers to the righteousness that the believer receives in salvation. This righteousness has two aspects. When you surrender to Jesus Christ, trusting in Him as your Savior and Lord, Christ's righteousness is "imputed" to you. This word means that something that belongs to one person (Christ) is put into the

account of another (the believer). God the Father puts the righteousness (the perfect life and obedience) of Jesus into your account. God sees you clothed in Christ's righteousness! He sees your sin as punished in Christ. Because of this, you are forgiven by God, accepted with God, and adopted by God. This takes place when you truly trust in Christ as your Lord and Savior (**Romans 4:4-9, 22-25; Galatians 2:16, 21**).

Satan is an accuser (**Revelation 12:10**). He wants to remind you of past sins. He wants you to focus on your sin and guilt rather than the grace of God and the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Have you ever heard his voice: "How can God love you? How can you expect any help from God? Look at how you have failed. Look at how you have sinned. God will not forgive you. God will never use you." Satan wants to instill fear and doubt in you about your standing with God. He wants you to feel that God cannot love you, that he will not forgive you, bless you, or use you.

Putting on the breastplate of righteousness means that you are daily reminding yourself of and resting in Christ's righteousness. It means remembering that God accepts you, has forgiven you, and loves you completely because of Jesus Christ. There is no stronger protection against Satan's accusations than to keep this truth ever before your mind. **Romans 8:1** must become a conscious, daily certainty in your life. This will powerfully protect you against Satan's accusations.

The other aspect of righteousness that the believer receives in salvation is "imparted" righteousness. This means that God is going to work in your life, enabling you to live a righteous life (**Philippians 2:12-13**). You are to strive to live a life that is conformed to His Word and that is pleasing to Him. When you trusted Christ, God declared you right with Himself--forgiven and accepted. Now, you are to live in obedience to Him out of gratitude for His grace and mercy in forgiving you and accepting you. God desires that your thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting be righteous or conformed to His Word. You are to mold your life to the Word of God. You are to