

Spiritual Warfare

Knowing your Authority and Knowing your Enemy

If you have ever listened in to the commentators talking together before the start of any team-sport match, you will hear them speaking about different strategies that they suggest each Coach will talking to their teams about. The reason they do that is because they all know what the various strengths and weaknesses that each team has, and how best to counter their strengths and try to capitalise on each other's weaknesses.

In other words, know the strengths of your opponent and know your own weak points where a cunning opponent is likely to try to expose and take advantage of those weak points. This is precisely what the devil and his demonic cohorts are endeavouring to do every day of our lives in our faith walk with Jesus.

The Bible references these very points:

1Pet 5:8-9 – (free from intoxicants - whether chemical, emotional, hormonal, or relational)
⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

1. Satan's Primary Modes of Attack

Of all the various names by which Satan is described throughout the Old and New Testaments, the most common traits are those of liar, deceiver, and false accuser:

Rev 12:9-10

⁹ The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. ¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

2. Understanding the Armour and Weapons God has Given Us

Eph 6:11

¹¹ Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

¹³ ...that you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Paul expands this thought in far greater detail with practical applications that relate to all of us in our faith walk with Jesus and our struggles against a persistent opponent:

Eph 6:14-18

(Read only)

¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

The Belt of Truth

A belt is what holds everything together to be at our most effective and functional best.

Jesus announced:

³¹ "If you hold to me teachings, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free"(Jn 8:31-32).

The Apostle John:

¹ "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ⁴ You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1Jn 4:1, 4)

James:

(Read only)

⁷ "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (Jam 4:7)

The Breastplate of Righteousness

A breastplate is that piece of vital armour that protects the heart and lungs!

This is about our identity in Christ making us 'right' with God. We have been gifted Christ's righteousness as part of our salvation:

¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!
(Rom 5:17)

Our righteousness is the perfect righteousness of Christ that has been gifted to us. This is massive protection against the false accusations of the devil that he endeavours to discourage us with, which we must remind ourselves and the devil about.

However, this gift of righteousness is not an entitlement to live carelessly, but provides the grace to seek God's help to increasingly live out of the righteousness we have been granted.

The Shoes of Peace

This is the work of the Holy Spirit within us developing the attitudinal fruit of peace, particularly in the relational arenas life. We have peace with God through Jesus – this is the foundation of truth on which we stand!!!

¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (Rom 12:18)

Therefore, this is our logical application in daily living!!!

The Shield of Faith

A shield is a protective means of deflecting the barbs of an enemy away from us. Attacks will come – be they straight-out lies, deceptive thoughts, or false accusations, whether from our own imperfect thinking, from others, or demonic promptings – our faith built on the truth of Christ's victory over sin and satan, and our acceptance of our status as a child of God.

⁷ "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (Jam 4:7)

The Helmet of Salvation

A helmet provides protection for the head – the command post of all our decision making. In terms of spiritual warfare, the primary concern is for our 'thinking', because what we are thinking will largely determine our feelings and our actions. (Remember CBT)

We must come back to the foundation of truth that we are choosing to operate from!!!

⁸ Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.
(1Pet 5:8-9)

The Sword of the Word which the Spirit Wields

The sword mentioned here is actually a short dagger, used in hand-to-hand fighting, and has both defensive and offensive applications:

¹² For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
(Heb 4:12)

Take a look at how Dr. Gordon Fee treats the last two verses of our Ephesian passage as an excellent translation of the actual Greek wording:

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (rhema) of God, ¹⁸ through every prayer and request praying at all times in the Spirit, and to this end staying alert with perseverance and prayer for all the saints. (Eph 6:17-18)

The whole point is that 'prayer in the Spirit', which is referring to being led by the Spirit at all times and includes praying in tongues, is the actual means by which we are being instructed to effectively utilise the armour and weaponry that we have been provided.