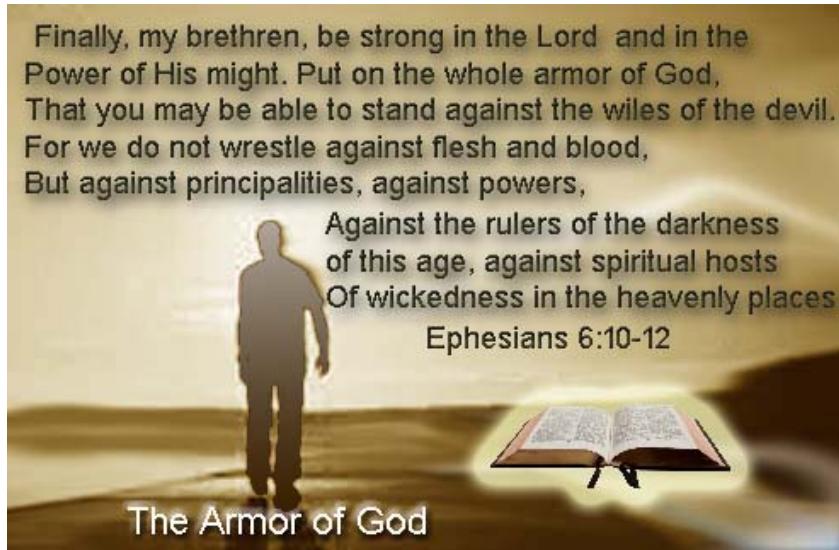


THE ARMOR OF GOD

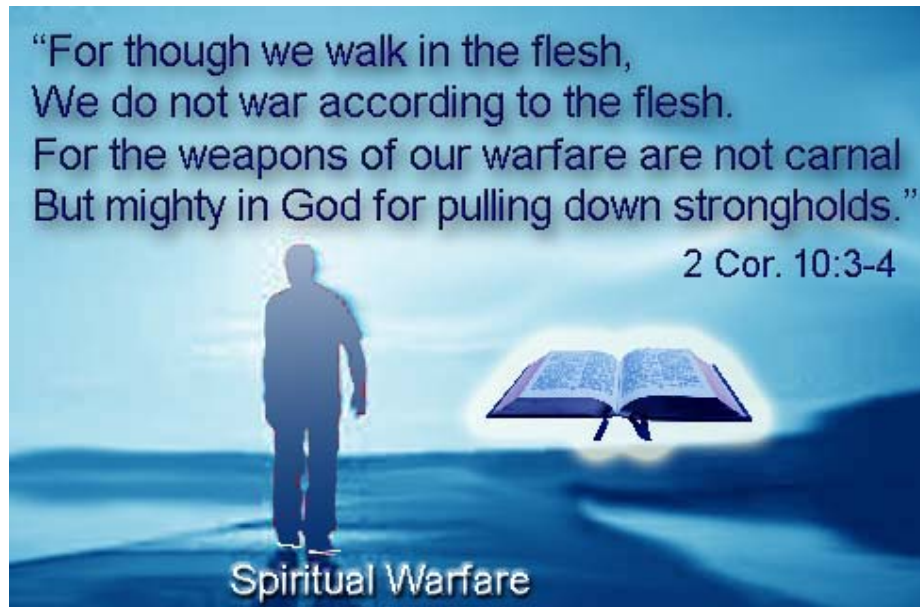


“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:13-17.

The bible is full of visual representations of life’s situations and challenges, that illustrate and guides us on how to work our way through life, to conquer fear, and have faith that God will guide us in all situations. The parables that Jesus used are exactly those clear pictures that gives us insight into God’s plan and will for our lives. Failure to heed those commands and warnings, could bring negative and disastrous consequences spiritually.

Paul’s comparison of asking we take on the armor of God is one such clear picture in describing how using the gifts that Christ has put at our disposition, can bring us the necessary elements to live our Christian life victoriously. Ready to put on and use God’s armor to His Glory?

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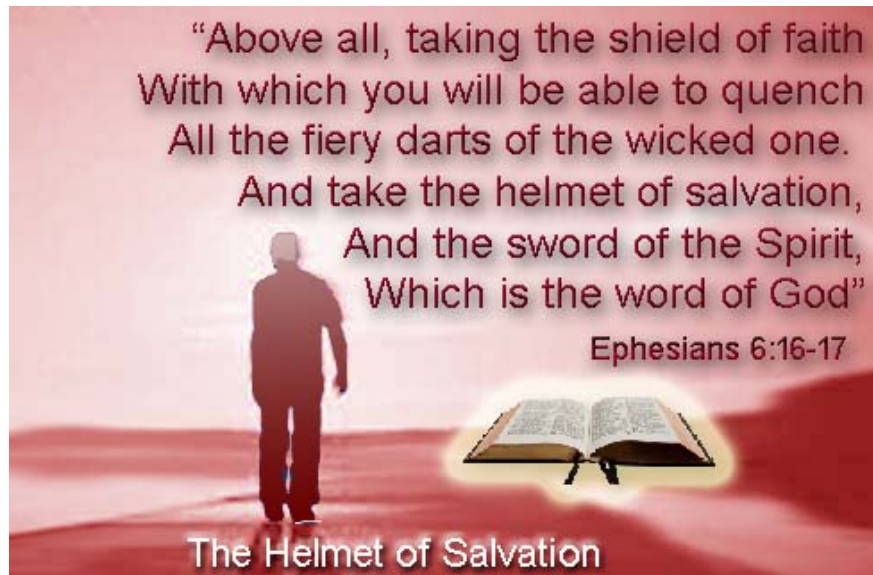


Our need for a spiritual armor is necessary to both protect us from the enemy's attacks, to carry out the mission of the gospel, and be victorious in Christ. Because our world is pervasive with aggressive temptations for sin, we are involved in a constant spiritual battle. This battle requires that we stand with God, and reject sinful lifestyles and all that offends God, the reason we are attacked for our faith and rejected. The enemy has indeed influenced our world to the point that it glorifies what God calls murder, sin or abominations.

Thus, we need to protect ourselves spiritually, as described by Paul in Eph. 4:14: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." In Romans 13:14 he added, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts." 1Peter 5:8-9 says this: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

Let's not be foolish but rather realize we need protection against the temptations of the world, and move forward to carry on the commission that Christ gave us.

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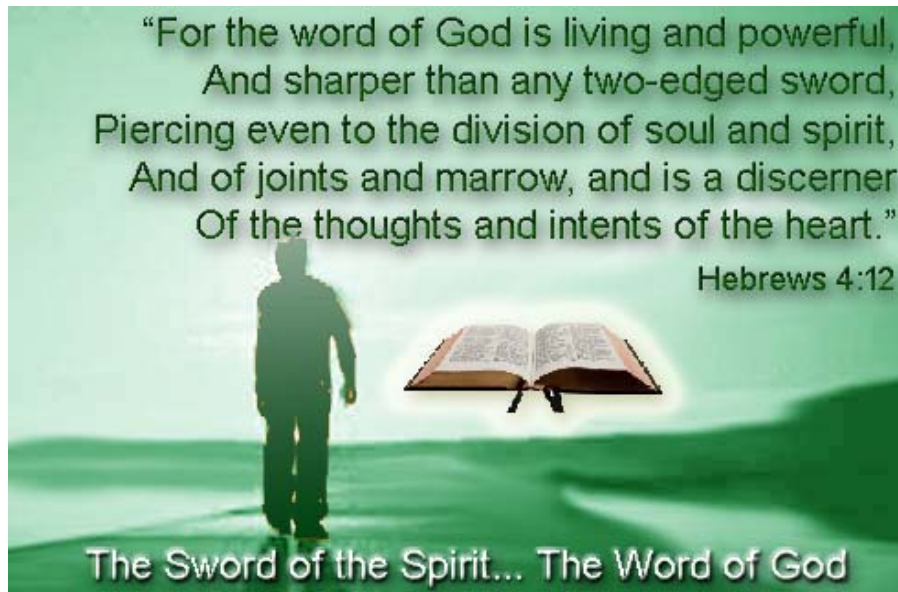
Interestingly enough, in mentioning the complete armor of God, Paul insisted that above all, we take on the most important elements of our armor, the helmet of Salvation being one of them.

The dictionary defines a helmet as a form of protective gear worn to protect the head and the human brain. The word **helmet** is diminutive from helm, a medieval word for protective combat headgear." We know that armies throughout history and even now require soldiers to wear a helmet for protection, because if the head is destroyed, death follows.

Our spiritual helmet in God's Word is defined as salvation. Consequently, those without salvation belong to the evil kingdom of Satan. As a result, those without God's salvation through Christ have no protection against the satanic attacks because they are directed at the mind. That's why, by believing and confessing Christ as Lord, salvation is imputed to us and we thereby have put on the helmet of salvation for protection.

The helmet of salvation represents to the enemy that we belong to the Kingdom of God, and that he has no power over us. Our spiritual warfare is 24 hours a day, and thereby necessitate that we not expose ourselves to the world's temptations.

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Paul in Ephesians 6:17 tells us "And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." God's Word is useful to both defend ourselves against temptations, and as an offensive weapon to carry out Christ's commission, to proclaim the message of salvation to the lost. That's why in the featured scripture, it is called a powerful two-edged sword. The Bible tells us that God's Word is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path, Psalm 119:105. As well, it specifies that the knowledge of God is meant to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10:5.

That should bring us to realize the importance of studying God's Word steadfastly so we can equip ourselves and put His armor, and live by His Word and not by the world's deceptions. God's Word is our most powerful weapon, Jesus being the Word of God. And as Paul said in Hebrews 4:12, God's Word is a discerner of (judges) the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The knowledge of the Word of God is not only our most powerful weapon against the enemy, but as well our guarantee that whenever we stand on, proclaim, and live by God's Word, we have the power of Christ for protection and to sustain us while living towards our eternal reward.

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“Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”

Ephesians 6:16



"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"
Romans 8:31

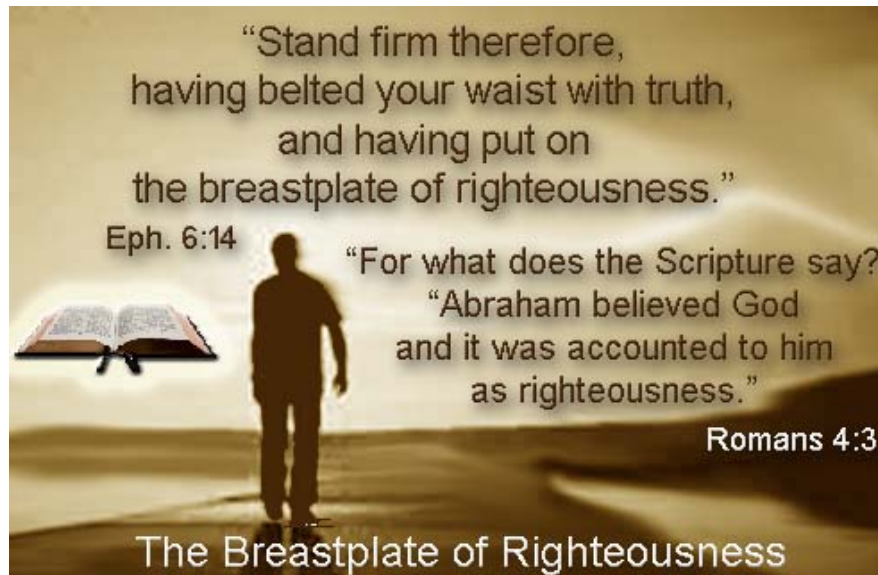
The Shield of Faith

The dictionary provides the Bible's definition of the shield of faith this way: "A shield large enough to provide full protection from attack, covering the believer from head-to-toe during hand-to-hand spiritual warfare." Since our faith is in God and Christ, we can definitely conclude that if we wear the full shield of God through totally relying on Christ at all times, in all circumstances and without doubt, we are assured of God's protection against the attacks of the enemy of our faith, no matter who rises up against us.

What does the enemy actually try to do in his attacks? Seeding doubt and temptation to sin are perhaps his best weapons. Then, how do we then apply the shield of faith as a defense? Being immersed in God's Word will bring us into the knowledge of God's powerful armor, which will build up our faith and reliance on God, becoming then our shield that will fend off all of the enemy's attacks against us. Proverbs 30:5 says, "He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him." The apostle John said this: "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world, our faith." 1John 5:4.

Finally, how does faith come? "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. Any Doubt?

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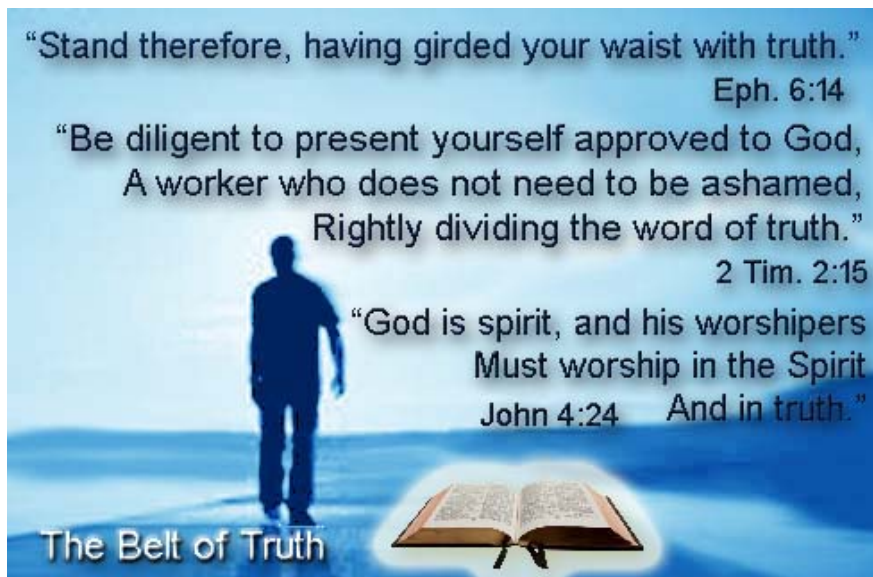
Is righteousness a virtue we should desire, and can a person actually become righteous? Ps. 143:2 says, "For in Your sight no one living is righteous." Then, what does the breastplate of righteousness refer to and where does it come from?

Paul in 2 Cor. 5:21 said this: "For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." So in essence, Christ and Christ alone is the righteousness we put on. It is not how righteous we can become, but rather that Christ alone is our righteousness.

Paul 2 Cor. 6:7 tells us that we should be sustained by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness." What does that mean? It is to simply live the righteousness of Christ in us, and not wear the breastplate of the world which is pride, lust of the flesh, desire for power or to be self-righteous, and every sin that sets itself against God.

To wear the breastplate of God's righteousness is to live according to His Word, to love and seek God with all our hearts, so as to be protected against the arrows of temptation of the enemy of our faith. Salvation is God's gift. Wearing the breastplate of righteousness is standing with God, in thankfulness for His gift of eternal life through Christ.

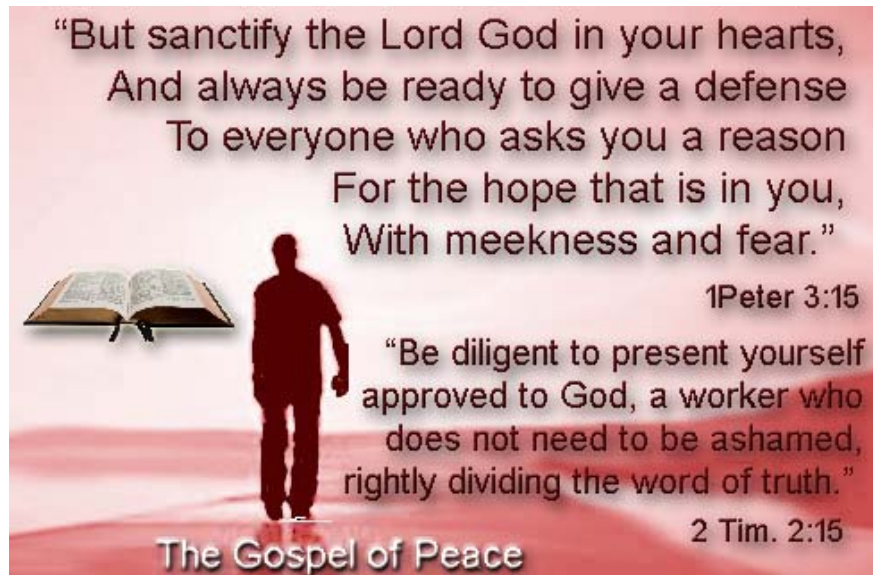
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Jesus, in John 8:31-32 said this: “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” As true believing Christians, the one TRUTH that we all hold on to is God’s Word, the Bible. Our responsibility is to study it, apply it to our lives, and share its truth with the world, just as Christ enjoined us to do, just before He went back to the Father.

Do we realize the importance of sharing God’s Word, and not personal opinions, or use deception to suit our lusts? Why do we hear false teachers tell us that God wants us to prosper in the material world, or declare sinful attitudes and atrocities committed by the world acceptable, when God declared such behaviors as lies, abominations and murder? How can we claim Christ as savior and live like the world? “My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” 1John 3:18. Then, Jesus, in John 17:17 asked the Father, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” In Eph. 4:25, Paul tells us “that in whatever things that are true,” obviously the Word of God is the only truth we hold on to, he says to “meditate on it and all other pure, virtuous and praiseworthy things that honor God.”

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In Ephesians 6:15, Paul tells us “And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace,” demonstrates the importance to realize we are indeed walking in God’s shoes whenever we share the gospel. In essence, God is offering us peace with Him through Christ, and He desires that we also present His message of salvation in the same manner Jesus did.

This is not to say we skip the consequences of refusing God’s offer of peace, but our attitude is to bring people the solution to the problem of sin, in the same manner that Jesus did. In 2 Tim. 3:16-17 Paul said, “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

We should as well heed the warning, “Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.” Prov. 30:5-6. Therefore, we are not to either sugar coat the message, nor leave off the consequences of rejecting it.

Let’s realize the importance God puts on the study of His Word, so we can be equipped to represent Christ in sharing it with the world.

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