

Di122 Essentials of Christianity

Lesson Di122-17 The Christian Life: Putting on the Armor of God

Jesus promised that until he returns, wars will continue between nations. Until Jesus changes human hearts and brings justice to the earth, wars will go on. As followers of Jesus, we too are at war, not against people, but against spiritual forces led by Satan. In the battle against Satan and sin, the apostle Paul has written that God has given us all that we need to be “more than conquerors through him who loved us.” He said, “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom 8:37-39).

In this lesson you will learn about becoming spiritually victorious over Satan, using the spiritual weapons God has given us. We will learn these truths through the eyes of an imaginary believer we will call Jacob. As a new Jewish believer in Jesus, we imagine Jacob actually heard the apostle Paul teaching. Young Jacob belonged to the church at Ephesus where Paul had taught for more than two years (Acts 19:10).

Paul spoke of a war going on against Satan, but Jacob saw no soldiers and heard no commands. He could see, however, that an unseen enemy was at work in people’s lives. Jacob had friends who had come to the church when he did, but for some reason they had begun to miss the believer’s meetings. Something or someone was drawing them away from God. In some cases Jacob’s friends had refused to change their sinful lifestyles and eventually they left their faith altogether. For them the war was lost because they had forgotten they were in a battle.

Paul taught that Satan was not happy when anyone came to believe in Christ. Satan would use his oldest weapon, temptation, to get them back. Paul informed the Ephesians about the defensive and offensive weapons to use against their unseen enemy.

Jacob soon understood that the power to stand against temptation is found only in the Lord. He pondered these words of the apostle Paul: “Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph 6:10-13). We know that these wicked beings have limited power, for they were created beings. Yet they cause many who are not prepared, to give into temptation and sin.

Human effort is inadequate, but God’s power is invincible. We dare not lash out against human opponents as though they were the real enemy. We cannot assume that the battle can be fought using merely human resources.

Jacob was excited to think that God loved him so much that he would give him what he needed to defeat Satan in his life. Armor is what he needed, just like the Roman soldiers he saw every day in the city streets. Jacob wondered exactly what type of armor Paul was talking about. Paul seemed to be talking not about a massive invasion, but about an individual soldier being able to withstand attack.

The first piece of armor was the “belt of truth.” Every soldier started with his belt to hold his weapons and armor in place. Paul said, “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist.” On it rested the believer’s strength in his battle against temptation. Living a lie—or trusting in a lie—always leads to defeat, for the Bible says God hates lies. Character, not brute force, wins the battle.

The second weapon is body armor that protects the vital organs in battle. A Roman soldier would never go into battle without his metal breastplate. The breastplate of God’s righteousness protects the heart. God covers us with his righteousness and reminds us that we are forgiven. We are at peace with him. He covers us with his Holy Spirit’s power. Jacob, while listening to Paul, decided that he would live a life that was right before God and be led by the Holy Spirit.

But this was not all the armor Jacob learned about that day. Another part was the shoes, which signified “readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.” The Christian soldier is commanded to stand firm and not surrender to temptation. He is not to give away his ability to stand against the enemy. His message is the good news of God’s peace to those who are lost. He must never give any other message. The Roman soldier’s sandals were of leather with metal studs to grip the ground. He could dig in and fight. Believers can stand firm and proclaim freedom to those bound in sin. God did not leave his people without protection nor without a message.

Paul continued, “In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the fiery darts of the evil one.” This shield describes the large Roman shield covered with leather, which could be soaked in water and used to put out flame-tipped arrows. The shield of faith stops the fiery arrows that set the Christian on fire with temptation. Paul taught that believers must be totally dependent on God. Real faith and a commitment to do God’s will is the shield that stops all the enemy’s arrows of doubt, anger, lust, despair, vengeance, hate, and unforgiveness. Trials and problems may still come, but God will enable the believer to triumph over them.

The Roman soldier was the best fighting machine in the known world. He had one more defensive weapon, his helmet. No weapon could pierce a strong helmet. Paul called the Christian’s head covering, “the helmet of salvation.” Without the hope of eternal life, a person may be easily defeated. But with the assurance of salvation protecting his mind, Jacob knew that he could stand against Satan’s attacks.

Jacob was getting equipped for defense in battle, but he still lacked one thing, an offensive weapon. The only offensive weapon needed, according to Paul, was “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” The Holy Spirit makes this weapon especially lethal to the enemy. Double-edged and sharp, the Word of God has the power to send the enemy on his way. We must remember that the battle is spiritual and must be fought in God’s strength, depending on the word and on God through prayer.

For Jacob, the message was all coming together. It made sense, especially when Paul added, “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." With the Holy Spirit's help to communicate with God and to hear his response, every Christian soldier can win their spiritual battles. Paul knew that the Holy Spirit would give him the words "to fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel" as people prayed (Eph 6:14-19).

This lesson is **important** because it helps us understand the spiritual armor God has given us to defeat our spiritual enemy, Satan. Prayer helps each one to put on the armor and take up the sword to overcome in the battles of life.

The **main point** of this lesson is that God has given us everything we need to overcome the temptations of this world and live a victorious life for Jesus our Lord.

Your **review** questions are:

1. Why do we need all the spiritual weapons mentioned in this lesson? [Pause]
A. If you answered that we need to use all the spiritual weapons God provides us for the battle so that we can stand firm in our faith, you answered correctly.
2. What are the armor pieces mentioned in this lesson? [Pause]
A. If you answered, "The armor pieces mentioned are the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God," you are right.
3. Who are the enemies that each believer is fighting against? [Pause]
A. If you answered that the believer is fighting against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens," you are correct.

Your **assignment** is to listen to the lesson several times until you understand the spiritual weapons available for your spiritual battles. Remember that you are victorious in Jesus Christ. Then share with someone the good news of peace using the Spirit's strength.

Memorize the following verses of scripture:

"Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).