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BATTLE ARMOR



What are some “tools of the trade” you rely on most days?

QUESTION #1

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THE POINT

God equips us for the spiritual battles we face.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

The TV character MacGyver is known for his uncanny ability to get out of harrowing circumstances with mundane objects. Whether he's defusing a bomb, rescuing people, or escaping from a deadly trap, all MacGyver needs to save the day is his knowledge of science, a few paper clips, and some chewing gum.

Of course, the show is pure fiction. But sometimes it would be nice if we could save ourselves from life's problems and attacks by quickly grabbing whatever is at hand and creatively crafting tools to free ourselves. Right?

Thankfully, God has given us all we need to do just that. He's equipped us with the tools we need to stand strong in the face of attacks that come against us. Better than any tool we can create on our own, God has given us spiritual armor and weapons.

Yes, life is often a battle with Satan coming against us. But we are guaranteed victory when we trust in Christ and in the tools He has provided.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Ephesians 6:10-13

¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. ¹³ For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand.

Jesus never promised the Christian life would be easy. Life by itself can be full of difficulties, but that difficulty is compounded by an enemy who is “prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). Therefore, Paul called us to “be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength.” Our own strength is insufficient! This call to embrace the strength God gives echoes His words to Joshua: “Be strong and very courageous” (Josh. 1:7).

We, too, must embrace that same trust in God’s strength if we hope to live the Christian life victoriously. But we’re not in a battle to gain victory; we’re strengthened in the Lord and we engage in spiritual warfare from a position of victory. The victory over Satan was won on the cross. Still, though Christ has defeated our enemy (see Rev. 12:10-11), defeated enemies don’t always give up easily. When an enemy has nothing more to lose, he can even attack with greater intensity.

Paul reminded us why we need the Lord’s strength: we face a powerful adversary who attacks strategically. Paul referred to “the schemes of the devil.” Satan knows where, when, and how to target each of us. Our enemy is also organized; he works against us through his army: “the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.”

What have you been taught about spiritual warfare?

QUESTION #2

Yes, we have victory in Christ. But Paul still called the battle we face a “struggle.” The Greek word is actually tied to the sport of wrestling, which reminds us that we don’t battle the spiritual forces of evil from a distance. Our fight is a close, hand-to-hand type of struggle—only we’re not struggling in a physical context. Our fight is not “against flesh and blood.” It’s supernatural.

So how do we take on these evil forces that seek to harm us? We stand. In a position of Christ-centered confidence, Paul told us to “take your stand.” We do that when we “take up the full armor of God.” By doing so, we become active participants, not passive observers, in dealing with spiritual attack.

Ephesians 6:14-17

¹⁴ Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest, ¹⁵ and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In every situation 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.

God provides His armor for the battles we face in His name:

- 1. Belt of truth.** The belt secured the rest of the soldier’s armor and held his weapons. Truth is the belt of preparation for the believer. Everything we do is held in place when we accept and trust in God’s Word.
- 2. Breastplate of righteousness.** A soldier’s breastplate covered the chest and protected the vital organs from arrows. Paul wasn’t referring to our righteousness in Christ, which can never be taken away. Instead, he was referring

***Which piece of
God’s armor most
resonates with you?
Why?***

QUESTION #3

to living in righteousness (see Eph. 4:24; 5:8-9)—our daily walk with Christ. The way we live protects us against spiritual attacks.

- 3. Feet sandaled with readiness.** Roman soldiers were issued quality footwear: studded boots that allowed them to travel great distances and yet stand firmly in the heat of battle. We can stand firm or move forward because of His gospel of peace. Our standing is secure because of what Christ has done for us.
- 4. Shield of faith.** A company of soldiers could interlock their shields and form a solid wall as they moved forward. Our shield is comprised of our faith—our trust in the promises and power of God. The enemy can fire his arrows of lies, doubts, accusations, and temptations at us, but our faith in God keeps us from falling prey to such attacks.
- 5. Helmet of salvation.** A soldier protected his head with a heavy helmet of metal. Our helmet is our hope in Christ, which rests in the future we have in Him. Because of that hope, we refuse to succumb to the standards of this world.
- 6. Sword of the Spirit.** The soldier's sword was short, like a dagger, and used for close combat. Our sword is God's Word; it's our only weapon that is both offensive and defensive. We rest in its promises to defend us, and we apply Scripture to specific situations to resist the enemy's attacks and send him running. (See Matt. 4:1-11.)

What are some real-life situations in which this armor is essential for followers of Christ?

QUESTION #4



Ephesians 6:18-20

¹⁸ Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. ²⁰ For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should.

We have one more tool at our disposal as we engage in spiritual battle: prayer. God has supplied us with all we need to stand, but we never stand alone. We need constant communication with the One we serve.

Prayer is more than mere *communication* with God; it's our *communion* with Him. Prayer is taking the promises of God and speaking them back to Him. It's a continual dependence upon Christ. We are to do this "at all times." Paul told the Thessalonians that Christians are to "pray constantly" (1 Thess. 5:17). Even as we're working, playing, and going about our daily routine, we are to be praying.

Why should we pray continually? Because we're in a battle. Soldiers know they can't slack off; they must remain vigilant. Paul called us to "stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints." We pray continually, ever alert to the attacks of the devil. But we don't just pray for ourselves; we pray "for all the saints." We pray for the strength of our fellow believers in this shared battle against evil. We also pray "in the Spirit with every prayer and request." As we pray for others and ourselves, we include praise, worship, thanksgiving, and confession—in addition to the requests we lay before God.

Notice that Paul made prayer personal. He said, "Pray also for me." Paul, the great apostle and evangelist, asked others to pray that he "might be bold enough to speak" the gospel. Paul knew any boldness he had came from God, and he was well aware of his need to remain dependent on Him.

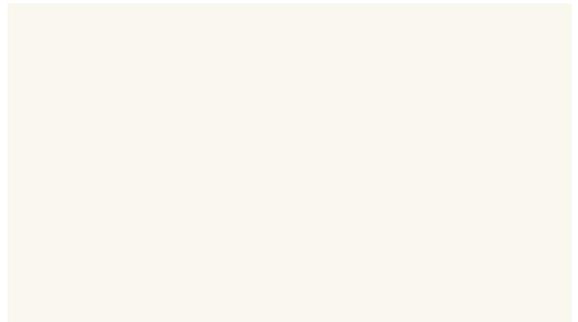
We need boldness, too. Fortunately, the same Source that provided Paul's boldness sustains us, as well. We can move forward in the boldness Christ freely offers. But make no mistake: we cannot be bold for God until we have been bold with God in prayer.

How does prayer contribute to our efforts in spiritual warfare?

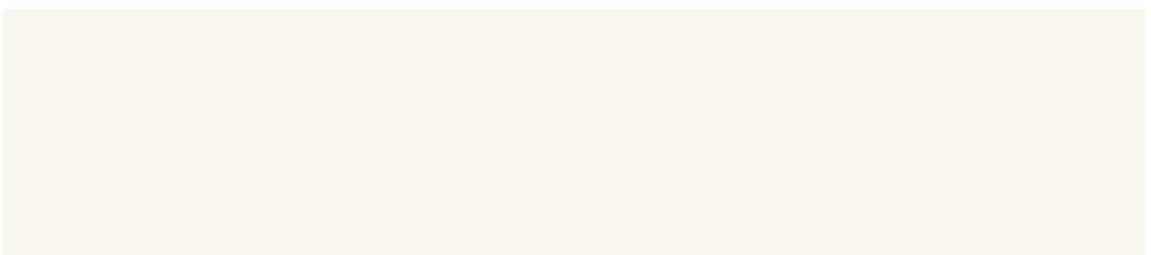
QUESTION #5

STANDING FIRM

What does it look like to stand firm against the spiritual forces of evil? Choose the image that best represents your understanding of what it means to stand firm. Or, use the blank box to draw your own image.



Who comes to mind as an example of someone who has taken a firm stand against the spiritual forces of evil? Why?



LIVE IT OUT

What will you do this week to trust in Christ and rely on what He has provided? Consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ **Pray.** Take everything to God in prayer. Everything. Your victories begin with prayer. Make prayer a regular part of your day, knowing you need to continually look to God for strength.
- ▶ **Stand.** If you find you're susceptible to "the flaming arrows of the evil one"—his lies, doubts, and temptations—use God's armor. Identify several promises from God's Word on which you can stand against spiritual attacks.
- ▶ **Stand together.** Meet with someone you trust this week to talk about mutual accountability. Discuss ways to support and encourage each other in the spiritual battles you face.



Don't lose sight of the fact you're in a spiritual battle that doesn't include just you. You have help! You have the support of your friends and family. More importantly, you have the support of God, who empowers you to stand.

My thoughts

Share with others how you will live out this study: **#BSFLdarkside**