

The Battle For Men's Souls

Marshall Reid

In Ephesians 6:12, Paul says, *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”*

There is a war going on, and each of us are right smack dab in the middle of it. It's a battle that is being fought between Satan and his armies and Jehovah and his armies. The Bible has already told us God wins the war, but there are battles being fought over individual souls, and unfortunately, Satan will win many of those battles. God wants our souls to be saved, but Satan wants our souls too. Paul recognized this, which is why he encourages us to *“take up the whole armor of God, that [we] may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil”* (Eph. 6:11). If we go into battle unprotected, we have no chance of surviving. Let's be prepared.

But the battle we're fighting is not just to save ourselves. There are too many others who are being overcome by Satan. Do we really want him to win those individual battles? Do we want to see our family and friends vanquished by the devil? Let's join forces and fight against Satan and help win some souls for Christ. With the armor of God, we can do this.

Our preparation begins with putting on the belt of truth (vs. 14). Without the truth, we will be easily drawn away from God and to the lies of Satan. But with the truth, we will recognize false teaching and not be carried away when men try to deceive us. There is only one truth, not many as those in the religious world would have us believe. *“There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all...”* (Eph. 4:4-6). Truth is so important that Solomon wrote, *“Buy truth and sell it not”* (Prov. 23:23).

We also need the breastplate of righteousness (vs. 14). We are fighting a battle against everything that is unrighteous, and it's a battle for our hearts. Jesus said that all sorts of unrighteousness proceed from the heart, such as *“evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander”* (Matt. 15:18-19). If we are diligent to protect our hearts with the breastplate of righteousness, we will not be defiled by such sins. Since this world is filled with all kinds of unrighteousness, let's be beacons of righteousness, shining the light of the gospel so others can find their way to God. After all, the righteousness of God is revealed through the gospel (Rom. 1:16).

Proper footwear is important too (vs. 15). We need something that is going to protect our feet from the rocks, burrs, and thorns, as well as help us in taking us where we need to go. If we walk in the statutes found in the gospel of peace, then it will protect us from the snares that Satan has put in our path. And that command from Jesus to the apostles to go preach the word was not just to them. It's to you and me. Let's put on our shoes and take the gospel to our family, friends, schoolmates, colleagues, and neighbors!

The shield of faith is vital to our survival. It's with our faith in God and his word that we are able to *“extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one”* (vs. 16). Satan is constantly trying to get us to doubt. He will use every method he can to attack us, wear us down, and make us question what we've been taught. God does not expect us to have a blind faith. He has given us plenty of evidence for his existence, and the evidence for the authenticity of the Scriptures is overwhelming. Sometimes, Satan just wants you to doubt that God will deliver his part of the deal. However, the Bible makes it perfectly

clear that God is faithful. Put your faith in him, and it won't matter what Satan is throwing at you – you'll come out of the battle alive, and not just alive, but stronger.

As a helmet defends the head of the soldier, the helmet of salvation defends the soul and keeps it safe from the blows of the enemy (vs. 17). The hope of salvation is what will keep us fighting, even when the fighting gets more difficult. As long as we have that hope, then no blow by the enemy can kill us or knock us off course. You remain protected as long as you have that helmet on, so don't ever take it off!

The sword of the Spirit (vs. 17) is both an offensive and defensive weapon. Equipped with the word of God, there is no battle we can't win. Bringing people to Christ is not done through recreational means or feel-good sermons. It's done through the Scriptures. People need to know God's word, and it's our responsibility to share it with them. Let's get offensive! But we need the word of God for defense, too. How did Jesus resist Satan's temptations? With the word of God. Every answer he gave began with "*It is written*". And it's with the word of God in our hand that we can "*make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you*" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Are you ready to fight? Let's get to work, and together, we can accomplish much in the battle for men's souls.