

## 19. Learning to Wear the Armor of God

In our last three topics, we have seen how to help our physical and spiritual children learn to apply the principle of submission in six different situations. We saw that true “submission” means *to place our full potential at the disposal of another*. We also saw that Christ gave us an example of such submission by coming to pay the penalty for our sin by shedding His blood on the cross. He did this because it was His desire to do the will of the Father. As true Christians who are showing our children by our example what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we know that we can expect opposition from Satan. Our children will also face opposition as they walk in the Spirit. As a result, the last section of Ephesians shows us how to teach our children to stand against the devil.

In Ephesians 6:10-12, we see the opposition that we and our children will face. Those verses say, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.” Paul begins this section by reminding us that our strength is in the Lord and in the power of His might. In Philippians 4:13, we read, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Paul realized that he had to depend on the Lord for strength because he had no strength in himself. The same is true for us.

Paul also understood the power that is available through Christ. We see that we can be strong in the power of His might. The word that is translated “power” in this verse speaks of power or mighty works. This word is translated “mightily” in Acts 19:20 where we read, “So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.” The word that is translated “might” means *strength or ability*. This word is used in 1 Peter 4:11 where we read, “If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” We are to serve in the strength or ability that the Lord supplies and not in our own strength.

In order to carry out mighty works in the strength that Christ provides, we are told to put on the whole armor of God. Every piece of armor is needed if we are going to stand against the wiles of the devil. The word “wiles” speaks of the tricks of Satan. The only other place this word is used in the New Testament is in Ephesians 4:14 where we read, “That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.” In this verse, it speaks of false teachers that lie in wait so that they can deceive others. We realize that the conflict that we face as Christians is not against other people. Instead, this conflict is against all of the various levels of demons of Satan.

Ephesians 6:13-16 says, “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.” Here, we see that we are told a second time to put on the whole armor of God. God promises us that if we take all of the armor, we will have the power to stand at any time we face the evils of Satan.

The first three weapons were worn by soldiers at all times whether they were fighting or not. In the same way, we need to be equipped at all times with truth, righteousness and the Gospel of peace. Ephesians 4:15 says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.” Here, we see that we are to speak the truth at all times and we are to speak that truth in love. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Here, we are reminded that Christ took our sins on Himself so that when we repent and place our faith in Christ, He is able to put His righteousness on us so that we stand in His righteousness and not our own. Ephesians 2:14-15 says, “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is*, the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace.” Because we have peace with God through Christ, we know that God is always on our side and that Satan cannot stand against God.

The second three pieces of armor were taken whenever there was a possibility of battle. The shield was usually about 4 ½ feet high and 2 ½ feet wide so that it could protect the entire body from the enemy. We are to take the shield of faith. In Colossians 2:5, we read, “For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your *good* order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.” Here, we see that our faith in Christ protects us from the temptations and attacks of the enemy.

We go on to read in Ephesians 6:17-20, “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints--and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” The helmet provides protection for the head. 1 Thessalonians 5:8 says, “But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation.” Here, we see that the helmet is the hope of salvation. The word that is translated “hope” means *the confident assurance we have in the promises of Christ*. Instead of having doubts and discouragements, we can have confident assurance in the promises of Christ.

The only offensive weapon for battle is the sword of the Spirit. We see that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. That is why we want to help our children learn to use the Word of God instead of their own opinions in every situation that they face. Hebrews 4:12 says, “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The Lord knows the thoughts and the intents of people. Christ gave us the Holy Spirit to guide us when we speak to others. Then, in 1 Corinthians 2:13, we are told, “These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual

things with spiritual.” We see that we do not want to answer questions with our own wisdom. Instead, we want to answer any question with the Word of God, because God knows what He wants to do in the heart of each person and is able to speak through the Word of God to either a Christian or a person who is not a Christian.

In addition to taking the armor of God, we see that we are also to be praying at all times. We are to use all forms of prayer. We are to pray in the Spirit which means that we are to have our human spirit in submission to the Holy Spirit. When we have that attitude, we will seek the will of God and not our own desires. The word that is translated “watching” means *to be awake and ready*. This word is used in Mark 13:33 where we read, “Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.” In Matthew 26:41, Christ told the disciples to watch and pray so that they would not yield to temptation. We are also to pray with “perseverance”. That means that we are *to continue to pray and not give up*. “Supplication” means that *we pray with requests and not demands*. Finally, we see that we are to pray for all of the saints. Every Christian needs others who pray for him or her.

Paul also asked for prayer for a personal request that he had for his own life. We need to have this same personal request both for our own lives and for our physical and spiritual children. Paul asked that the Ephesians would pray that the Lord would give him the words to speak so that he could speak boldly as he shared the mystery of the Gospel. We also need to pray that the Lord will give us boldness to share the Gospel with others. Paul viewed himself as an ambassador for Christ. However, Paul is not the only ambassador. The only other place where this word is used in the New Testament is 2 Corinthians 5:20 where we read, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.” Every Christian has been called to be an ambassador of Christ. We all need to pray for one another that we will speak the Word of God with boldness.

Paul concludes the book of Ephesians by saying in Ephesians 6:21-24, “But that you also may know my affairs *and* how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and *that* he may comfort your hearts. Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.” Tychicus was the man who took this letter to Ephesus. He was a faithful and beloved brother in the Lord. Paul said Tychicus would tell them about him and also encourage them.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to stand in the armor of God so that they have the Lord's protection from the tricks of the devil. We also want them to learn to share the Word of God with boldness as they trust in the strength and power of the Lord instead of their own strength. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to stand strong in the Lord.