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### The Christian's Warfare Ephesians 6:10-20 5. Putting on the Belt of Truth

*The well-equipped American soldier or marine on the modern battlefield will often carry 90 lbs. or more with their uniform, protective gear, weapons, and equipment. All of it is designed to both protect the soldier and allow them to fight effectively and defeat the enemy. Each piece is important. When the soldier knows there is a war on and that he is certain to make contact with enemy, he will carefully check out each piece of gear, make sure it is in working order, and place it in its proper place. He knows his own life and the success of the mission depends on it!*

*Paul has challenged us to realize there is a war on – a spiritual battle every follower of Christ must face. He now comes to the point where he lists the equipment and the weapons God has provided for us. Sure, we must fight, but God has given us everything we need to protect us and give us victory in the battle. We are in a war zone. We are going to contact the enemy. Let us learn how to “Put on the full armor of God, so that we will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”*

Let us once again read Paul's challenge to prepare ourselves for the spiritual battles we face:

*<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, <sup>19</sup> and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

#### Putting on the Full Armor of God

Paul emphasizes the importance of arming ourselves by twice exhorting us to put on the armor of God. In verse 11, “**Put on the full armor of God**”; and in verse 13, “**Take up the full armor of God**”. In both instances, he emphasizes putting on the **full** armor of God. He says we must put on all the armor, availing ourselves of every piece that God has provided.

The list of the armor points us to every area of biblical teaching: truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer. We need to read, study, and learn all the truths of our Christian faith. Law and grace. Justification and sanctification. God's work and our work. As Paul was saying his farewells to the leaders of the Ephesian church for the last time, he reminded them that he did not neglect to teach them “**the whole counsel of God**” (Acts 20:27).

Paul refers to our resources for battle as “the armor **of God**”. This speaks of its source – it is given to us by God. The same glorious grace that provides for our salvation and justification also provides for our sanctification and the victory we can experience in our daily spiritual battles. The fact that these articles are “of God” also tells us of their power and supernatural character.

The putting on and use of each of these pieces of armor consists of learning, understanding, and applying with of these biblical gospel truths. Let us look at each of these items so that we may put them on and use them effectively in the battles we face.

## Putting on the Belt of Truth

The first piece of the armor Paul shares is the foundational piece, basic and important to preparing ourselves for the battle. He exhorts us to **“stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth”** (6:14).

As Paul is referring to a Roman soldier, “girding our loins” seems foreign to our understanding of a soldier’s uniform and weaponry. *In Paul’s day soldiers wore a tunic, which was a large square piece of material that had holes for the head and arms. It hung low and loose, so the soldier cinched it around his waist with a belt. When he was ready to fight, he would pull the four corners of his tunic up through the belt. That was known as “girding one’s loins”. It gave the soldier the mobility and flexibility he needed for hand-to-hand combat* (MacArthur, J. *How to Meet the Enemy*. P. 77).

The first thing the Roman soldier would do when preparing for battle, he would gather all this clothing together and fix it firmly in position by means of a tight belt which then held his clothing in position. This very act braced him up and prepared him for action.

Another translation tells us **“stand firm, having fastened on the belt of truth”** (ESV). While this may help us understand better what is meant, it seems to miss the idea of readying ourselves for battle with this foundational piece of our armor. This thought is also given us by Peter when he exhorts believers to “gird the loins of your mind”. (1 Peter 1:13). Peter is advising us to “prepare our minds for action” as we face the trials and temptations of life.

### What is Truth?

The struggle to grasp the nature of truth has been going on for ages. Pilate, at Jesus’ trial asked the all-important question, **“What is truth?”** (John 18:37-38).

We must determine what Paul means here by the word “Truth”. Obviously, it could refer to the source and content of all truth – God and His Word. However, some believe since we have a later reference to the Word of God as the **“sword of the Spirit”** (vs. 17) it must refer to something else. They believe it speaks of “truthfulness” – the honesty, sincerity, and commitment expressed in the life of the Christian soldier. However, it is difficult to see how such a foundational piece of our armor depends at all upon anything within us or our own commitment. We should likely agree with M.L. Jones that this simply refers to a different aspect of God’s truth than we see in the “sword of the spirit” (Jones, Martyn-Lloyd. *The Christian Soldier*. P. 186). In the use of the sword we see the particular, specific use of the scriptures to ward off Satan’s attacks and send him fleeing. In the “belt of truth” we see the understanding and commitment to the whole of God’s truth, and along with His truth, His authority.

Our infinite and holy God has chosen to reveal Himself to us through His Word (the Bible) and through His Son Jesus Christ. As our creator, He has authority over us. Human history is one long account of our rebellion against God and His authority. God’s greatest revelation of Himself is in His Son who came as a man, lived a perfect life, suffered and died, and rose again so that we might be rescued from our own rebellion and be made part of His kingdom. Now as our loving Father, God has provided everything we need to live the Christian life and fight the battles we must face each day. These are the truths Paul so well taught in Ephesians 1-3. This is the “belt of truth” with which we must arm ourselves each day.

One of the devil’s greatest schemes has been to put forth the idea that there is no such thing as absolute truth or authority. This scheme is commonly called relativism or postmodernism. Relativism is the idea that all points of view are equally valid, and all truth is relative to the individual. All moral positions, religious systems, or political ideas are relative, or true, to the individual who holds them. Of course, this rejects a God of absolute truth and His authority as He has revealed Himself in His Word. Postmodernism is the systematic application of these ideas to every area of our society such as morals, politics, education, and religion.

The belief there is no such thing as absolute truth seems to be particularly followed and expressed when it comes to religion. “All roads lead to God” or “It doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you are sincere” are well-used expressions of this belief. When we stand for God’s absolute truth and authority, we will be attacked as arrogant, divisive, narrow minded, and bigoted. This is the battlefield which we must enter each and every day.

What prepares us for battle is our understanding of and commitment to the absolute truth and authority of God as revealed in His word and in His Son, Jesus Christ. Martyn Lloyd-Jones sums it up well:

*This means nothing less than that we should know whom we have believed, and we should know what we believe. The belt is truth – looked on, understood, and appropriated in such a manner that it governs my life in every respect. Only in this way can we fight a successful warfare against the enemy.* (Lloyd-Jones. Pg. 189).

## CAPITOL BIBLE STUDIES

Thursdays,

8:00 AM Sec. of State’s Conference Room (SOS ofc, Grnd. Floor)  
12:00 PM Senate President’s Conference Room