

## Weapons of Our Warfare

Dr. Casey Smith, Founder

Whole Armour Ministries



## Weapons of our Warfare

"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds" (2 Corinthians 10:4)

Dear Christian,

When the Apostle Paul spoke these words, others thought he was being too harsh. Just as in Paul's day, modern thought leaps to snuff out any attempt to expose sin because sinful mankind has become so comfortable in rebellion against God. Christians must be aware of our own infirmities, and think humbly of ourselves, even when men mock and ridicule our efforts to share the Gospel with them, in love. The gospel call to be "living epistles" among men involves a spiritual warfare with spiritual enemies, and for spiritual purposes.

Strong preaching on sin, the cross and blood of Jesus with personal testimony, and demonstration of the Spirit are the means by which the Church of God will spread the Gospel if it is to do so according to God's will.

A Christian's conscience is accountable only to God; and people must be persuaded to God and their duty, not driven by force. The weapons of our warfare are very powerful; the evidence of truth is convincing. Knowing that, we should never be surprised when opposition is made against the gospel by the powers of sin and Satan in the hearts of men!

Remember and treasure the victory the word of God gains. The appointed means, however feeble they appear to some, will be mighty through God. The preaching of the cross, by men of faith and the prayers of the faithful have always been and are assured to be fatal to idolatry, impiety, and wickedness.

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## EPHESIANS 6:11-20 (KJV)

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 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, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

## THE BELT OF TRUTH

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about you with truth" (verse 14)

The first piece of armour is our belt. A belt made of truth, holding up and keeping in place all the other pieces of armour. Naturally speaking, a belt is used to hold things in place; spiritually the belt of truth does the same thing. Truth keeps us secure in Christ and makes effective all the other pieces of armour.

The belt of truth involves the sincerity of the heart. That sincerity can lead us to be open to God while keeping our motives pure and devoid of wicked thoughts towards others. The belt of truth involves truth in two key places – in our hearts and minds.



## WHAT DOES TRUTH MEAN HERE?

· Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Corinthians 5:8 KJV)

· For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. (2 Corinthians 1:12 KJV)

### IN THE HEART

In the heart - 1 Corinthians 5:8 and 2 Corinthians 1:12 describes truth and how it relates to our hearts. This kind of truth should influence our whole attitude. Holding malice and bitterness against other Christians puts a big dent in our armour. It also leaves us wide open to demonic attack. Our prayers of faith will be rendered ineffective if we do not wear the belt of truth. Truth in our hearts means serving God with the right motives, and loving and serving our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ with sincerity. One way we can examine our hearts is to answer the following questions honestly. Does your heart yearn to see your neighbors come to salvation? Do you hate sin? Are you grieved by sin in your own life and are you moved to repentance? Look deep, look often, and look with the Word of God in view as you compare your heart to God's heart – the Word of God. IN OUR MINDS

Truth in the mind means having clarity of sound doctrine. What do you believe? Are you aware of what Christ has done for you? Does the knowledge of Christ victory on the cross translate into godly living in your life?

Truth in our heart makes us teachable before God. Truth in the mind helps to strengthen our wills to serve the Lord. These two, a sincere heart and a determined will combine to give us a firm girdle that keeps us rooted and grounded in Christ. A heart devoid of sin towards God and bitterness towards man is a heart full of truth. Truth in the mind is exerting our will in serving the Lord. It is acting on what we know is true. Truth is not a mental perception of the truth by rather an embracing and living of the truth. The following Scriptures drive this point further:

· "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy: for I am holy. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:13-19 KJV)

· "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15 KJV)

## HOW TO PUT ON THE BELT OF TRUTH

Knowing that the belt of truth involves our hearts and minds, we must to make an adjustment in both these places to put it on. Make it a daily habit of checking your armour of truth. Are you right with the Lord? Is there any untruth lingering in your heart? Are you embracing known sin? What about your relationship with men or women? Is there any bitterness towards others? Is there compromise ruling your heart or are you walking the "narrow way?"

Examine yourself Christian! Examine your heart and your mind in light of God's Word to make sure you are embracing sound doctrine. This will help to equip your will in serving the Lord. Below are seven helpful aids in embracing sound doctrine as given by one of the old-time teachers of the word - William Gurnall, a Puritan who lived in the 17th century in England. These points have been rewritten in modern day English.

1. Be sincere in seeking the truth. Approach it with a sincere heart. This will make all the difference - 1 Tim 1:5
2. Receive the ministry of the Word from those God has equipped to serve it. God has given gifts to the body of Christ. A sincere heart will aid you in discerning the truth - Eph 4: 11 - 12
3. Accommodate the whole body of Christ. Don't restrict yourself to the teachings or doctrines of any one particular group or denomination in your quest for the truth. God has not given the totality of His truth to any one particular group. We must discern the body if we are to grow.
4. Beware of curiosity 2 Tim 4:3  
Strange and sometime obviously wrong doctrine will appear. Witchcraft, New Age and all kinds of teachings will be repackaged as Christian doctrine. Don't let curiosity take you beyond the bounds of your hearts warning.
5. Be a humble seeker. Never assume perfection in any doctrine or teaching. Watch out for pride. Pride can make you a stranger to the throne of grace and turn humble praying for the truth into ambitious arguments.
6. Do not be offended at different opinions. It will only allow bitterness and malice to fester.
7. Know the value of truth in your heart. When you find truth embrace it and keep it. Let nothing tear it away from you. More importantly live it.

## THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

...and having on the breastplate of righteousness" (verse 14)



The second piece of armour is the BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. A breastplate covers the chest. For the Christian, the breastplate of righteousness is not made of iron, but is made of righteousness. The righteousness is not our own, but is imputed upon us by Christ through the Holy Spirit.

A soldier goes boldly into battle full of confidence when covered in such an awesome attire. What's more, the Christian who is clothed with the righteousness of Christ may stand boldly before the Lord knowing we "sit with Christ in heavenly places." Because of the righteousness of our Saviour, we are clothed with the protection we desperately need in the spiritual battles we fight daily. Praise be to God!

Whereas the belt of truth shows us what is ours and what we can do, righteousness allows you to do it. Without the breastplate of righteousness, our faith would be like any mere religion - a form of godliness but no power to act. Satan would knock us down with one word of condemnation if we did not have God's righteousness imparted to us through his grace. Without it, we would not have the boldness to go before the throne room of God's grace nor of men to plead our position in Christ.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS IS TWO FOLD** (Imputed & Imparted)

**Imputed:** something we are given free of charge without effort

**Imparted:** something that Christ works in us and with our cooperation.

### IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

Imputed righteousness is the righteousness God puts on us. It is not earned but given. Let scripture explain.

· "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:6-7 KJV)

· "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2 KJV)

· "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans 3:21-25 KJV)

In the Old Testament, we are taught that Abraham believed God, and God considered this righteousness. In other words, God treated Abraham as if he had done nothing wrong simply because of Abraham's faith in Him. Now, this is often difficult for us to comprehend especially when you consider that; according to Scripture, all our sins are forgiven and all our unrighteousness deeds are not held against us.

How can that be? As the Scriptures confirm that we are not saved by our good works, but "by grace through faith", that faith is given to us by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit draws us to Christ and our faith appropriates the blood-atonement by which the Lord Jesus Christ has redeemed sinners who come to him for salvation. When sinners come to God through "repentance and faith" in Jesus Christ, they receive His righteousness as if they had done nothing wrong. God makes us right with Him because we believe and accept as ours the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins.

This is only part of the story. Righteousness goes further than that! You see, Imputed righteousness is the first investment of God into our life. It is something given to us to get us going. Treat it like a permanent grant. It comes with some expectations attached. The expectation is that you invest it to make your own profit. In this case imparted righteousness.

## IMPARTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

This is what Christ is working in us with our cooperation. The imputed righteousness gives you the boldness and access into His presence. His presence gives you the power to change your life and put sin away from your life. It imparts something of God into you. This has always been God's ambition.

Let the scripture explain.

· "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (.Jeremiah 31:33- KJV)

· "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18 KJV)

The life and power of Christ changes us gradually into His likeness. That is to say that we become more like Christ in our actions towards sin. Our desires become focused on doing that which pleases the Father and brings honor and glory to Him.

In our humanity, we must realize that in all points, Jesus was "tempted" as we are, but "without sin." That must be declared to affirm that there has never been, is not presently, nor ever shall be one like unto the Son of God! We dare not compare ourselves with any other likeness but that which is imparted to us by His grace. For, Jesus alone is worthy of praise. That must be precisely pointed out today with so much pride lurking behind pulpits and ministries across the country. When you see men and women take credit for any good work, you will know of their doctrine as that which is in diametric opposition to Christ. Run from these people that bring attention to themselves while blaspheming the only One worthy of adoration – Jesus Christ.

God wants us to live holy lives as we are commanded to "be ye holy, for the Lord your God is holy." Christians must not continue walking in sin or compromising our faith. The power of Christ inside you equips you to be "more than conquerors" through Jesus. So, as you submit yourself to the leading and power of the Holy Spirit, sin will no longer have dominion over you.

### THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURE FROM ROMANS 8 MAKES CLARIFIES IT FOR US

· "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

· But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:1-11 KJV)

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ on calvary's cross washed away our sins and made us right with God. This allowed the Holy Spirit to come and live within us. Now, for the Christian, the Holy Spirit within gives the life and power to live above sin. He imparts in you godly living. This is the breastplate of righteousness. Halleluiah!

### HOW TO PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS?

Putting on the breastplate of righteousness is something we do consciously and willingly. Become aware of who you are in Christ Jesus. Come boldly into His presence (Hebrews 4:16). Don't cringe in His presence. Accept the truth that Christ has made you a pleasure in the presence of God. Expect Him to hear your prayer. Change your attitude and relationship with God in the light of what Christ has done for you. The Holy Spirit will bear witness to you whereby you will "know" in whom you have believed. Trust the Lord Jesus Christ to give you the power to live above sin. Do this and you wear the breastplate of righteousness.

## FEET SHOD WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL



**"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (verse 15)**

The third piece in the armour of God involves the feet. The feet must be "shod" which is to say covered, preserved, and prepared with the Gospel. What exactly does that mean? Well, the Scripture specifically says our feet are to be clothed with the "preparation of the gospel of peace." This piece of armour is to aid our movement and defense and not our appearance.

Christians must have a clear understanding of the gospel of peace if we are to appreciate the material of which these shoes are made. By now the saint is dressed with a belt made of truth and a breastplate made of righteousness.

The gospel of peace is good news (Luke 2:10). God forgives and then He gives. What could be greater? The gospel takes a hopeless being and fills him or her with an eternity of glory. Even the afflictions of this world are too thin a veil to darken the joy of the good news of Jesus.

### WHAT IS THE GOSPEL OF THE PREPARATION OF PEACE?

How long can anyone walk a hard and stony road without a decent pair of shoes? Well, not far if the proper shoes are not on. Many have gone into battle without preparation. This kind of preparation comes only from the gospel. Again, just like we saw with the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness, there are two aspects to the shoes we wear. The soles that keep us going over hard ground, and the soles which equip us with something to offer to the needy souls along the way. Thinking about this would cause me to ask "what kept the so many of the martyrs going?" What was it that kept the apostle from giving up?

The foot is to the body what the will is to the soul. We go wherever our will takes us. Preparation for trials and tribulations create seasoned Christians whose feet are prepared with the gospel of peace. The Scriptures make this clear when we look at the book of Romans through the Apostle Paul's teachings about hardships and suffering.

### WE WALK WITH JESUS BY FAITH – NO MATTER WHAT!

· "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39 KJV)

The Gospel of Jesus Christ sets the will of the Christian. It gives us a purpose and a focus. It presents us with the message and the task. It gives meaning to life and nothing else seems to matter. In fact, without the Gospel, there is no calling. A barefooted man shrinks when his feet touch the hot sand and shrieks when he stumbles on a sharp stone. But when the will and heart are prepared and ready to serve the Lord, the Christian's foot is shod: prepared and equipped to face any trouble he must go through to answer the call to spread the Gospel, no matter what obstacles the devil might put in front of him.

The Apostle Paul was convinced that nothing could separate him from the love of Christ. He understood the love of Christ. He knew the good news and no bad news could ruin it. The time he had spent preparing himself in the Word of God was bearing fruit during time of great trouble.

Christians often face or take on certain spiritual battles before they are ready. There are times and seasons for everything. Take the time to prepare with prayer, fasting, and the study of God's Word! Remember that as you draw closer to the Lord and His Word, the better equipped you will be when the enemy comes rushing in like a flood. When those troubles find their way to you, remember the words from the Lord: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13 KJV). Halleluiah!

## EQUIPPED WITH THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

We need to remind ourselves the reason for the battle we are engaged in. Christ has brought you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13). He has put His spirit in you that you might work the works of GOD. Satan would love to draw you back into his domain. Satan hates a witness for Christ. Hence the battle. We should never forget the message we are to proclaim. Let the scriptures explain

· "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:6-11 KJV)

I know few other scriptures that explain the nature of our salvation so adequately. Mediate on the above. Have a good understanding of it. Be prepared to explain it to others. See the love and spirit behind it. Look not just at the words but also the heart that it flows from.

The gospel gives us the message. Let your life radiate this message. If Satan can get you from being a testimony in word, works and deed he has taken away a great weapon. No matter what a Christian's position is in life, he is called as a Christian to bring honor and glory to Jesus Christ. We all must seek to point others to Jesus every day, so before you go out into the world each day, remember to put on your gospel shoes!

## THE SHIELD OF FAITH



**"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (verse 16)**

The fourth piece of armour is the Shield of Faith. The Shield of faith moves with the attack! A skilled soldier can use the shield to block the arrows of the enemy. If the shield is down, the other weapons are exposed.

The shield of faith not only defends our whole body but also our armour. It keeps the darts of the enemy away from the head, chest, waist, arms and legs. No wonder the Bible says we should have it "above all!".

The shield of faith has a very specific function, which the Bible makes abundantly clear: quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Not some of them but all of them. None of the other pieces of weapon mentioned so far are exalted as highly as the Shield of Faith.

### WHAT IS THE SHIELD OF FAITH?

Christians must understand that faith is of God. It is a "gift" of God as salvation is which is to say that the work of our salvation is a work of God. The Holy Spirit birthed faith in our hearts when we received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Faith most assuredly is what allows us to call God "Father" (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:4-6)

The following Scriptures shed more light for us:

· " whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" ( 1 John 5:4 KJV)

· "And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20 KJV)

· "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:1-3 KJV)

Faith is the confidence and assurance we have in the crucified and risen Christ. Faith is lifting our eyes up to God and relying on the greater on in us to see us through.

Study the different characters mentioned in Hebrews 11. Not all of them had great personal success stories from the world's point of view. In fact, as you get to the latter part of the chapter you will discover some of them suffered cruel persecutions. However they never lost their confidence in the Lord whom they served. They were persuaded of the victory they had in Christ.

Faith is what God has given us to receive from Him. Determination alone will never get you to heaven. Good works will never get you to heaven. No other person ever born will ever get you to heaven! No, only faith in Jesus Christ will. You can pray from now till next year but see no answers to your prayer if you have not the faith to receive it. Remember Zacharias and Elizabeth? They may have been good people, but Zacharias did not have the faith to believe the word of God sent by an angel (Luke 1:11-19).

Having all the other pieces of armour without faith will not bring us into the promises of God. Remember that!

### SOURCES FOR INCREASED FAITH KEEP A FIRM GRIP ON THE SOURCE - 1 Peter 1:23 – 25

· "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:23-25 KJV)

The Word of God will preserve us and keep us in the faith. The word breeds prayer and praying increases our faith. Never allow anything to take the place of God's Word in your life because it is the source of your faith. The mystery of faith is hidden in the Bible. It does something in your heart that your mind and intellect is not always aware of.

### KEEP A PURE CONSCIENCE - 1 Timothy 1:5

· " Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Timothy 1:5 KJV)

If faith is the treasure, then our conscience is the bag that holds it. The Holy Spirit within us makes our conscience alert to the promptings of God. If your conscience condemns you for doing something then stop it. Sin and faith do not go together. Sin will only allow holes in the bag that is supposed to be holding faith. A good conscience will lead you to live right before God. A clear conscience before God is vital if our faith is to develop.

### EXERCISE YOUR FAITH – 2 Timothy 1:6-8

· "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (2 Timothy 1:6-8 KJV)

We do this by telling people about our faith, doing good works, attending Christian gatherings, helping those in need, praying for others and participating in the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For us to sit quiet and keep the Gospel to ourselves is to keep the one and only cure to a sickness that brings death upon all humanity – sin. Shame of us for doing anything less than loving our neighbor as ourselves!

### TAKE HEED OF YOUR WEAKNESS - 1 Timothy 4:1

The devil will attempt to use your known weakness to his advantage. He approached Jesus after forty days of fasting. He thought he could use Jesus hunger to his advantage. If you have been set free from a drinking problem (alcohol), then don't spend your time around wine. You will only be tempted. If you are the curious type then give no time at all to reading strange doctrines or exploring the teachings of evil. Many Christians have been seduced by Satan's tricks, lured into all kinds of traps by the evil one who has taken advantage of their weakness. You know yours. Guard against it!

### HOW TO USE THE SHIELD OF FAITH

#### 1. By holding God to His promises - 2 Peter 1: 3-4

God's precious promises have been given to us. Use them to fulfil His will. Search them out in the scriptures. Believe them for the circumstances you are in. Read them out aloud and silently. Speak them to your circumstances. Hold onto them until they become a reality in your life. Use them to advance the will of God for the people and lives around you.

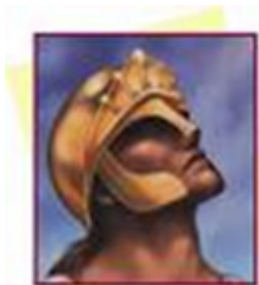
## 2. By being fervent in prayer - James 5: 15-17

Pray expecting God to answer. Pray until you see the answer. You would do no less if you were praying with faith. God's word will establish God's will in your heart. Prayer will fulfil that will on the earth. Jesus said we should pray for God's will on earth as it is in heaven. Let your prayer life reflect your faith.

## 3. Live the life of faith - Acts 17:28

Live your life as if it depends on God. Let your character, life style and expectations be governed by your faith in God. Faith is not something we do and say in church only. If you believe in God you will tell others about it. Share your Christian life style with your family. Pray and study the word together as a family.

# THE HELMET OF SALVATION



### “And take the helmet of salvation” (verse 17)

The fifth piece of armour is the HELMET OF SALVATION. The hope of salvation is for the head. It covers our minds, intellect and reasoning. Hope has a very different meaning from what we use the word for in the normal sense of the word. A soldier can survive with a broken arm, but a broken head, depending on the severity, would in most cases be fatal! The Apostle Paul helps shed more light upon the helmet of salvation for Christians:

· “But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (I Thessalonians 5:8 KJV)

### WHAT IS THE HELMET – THE HOPE OF SALVATION?

When we say 'I hope it does not rain' the very sentence itself contains doubt and an expectation we cannot do anything about. Hope from the Bible's point of view is much more powerful. Hope is one of the three essentials. Listen to the following scripture.

· “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity” (I Corinthians 13:13 KJV)

Faith, hope and love are all essential. Faith is of the heart. God gives it to us. We may not entirely understand all that God does but we can still put our faith in Him.

Hope on the other hand is of the mind. It covers the head. It is our helmet. A man can survive several days without food or water but take away hope and he will commit suicide immediately.

· “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; <sup>3</sup> But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour” (Titus 1:2-3 KJV)

· “In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Colossians 1:22-23 KJV)

The above two scriptures help shed light on God's definition of hope. Our hope is based on the eternal life of God. Our hope is held out to us in the gospel. When Christians understand what God has promised us, we are lifted up by hope because it is based on Him! A Christian with the helmet of the hope of salvation will not get confused with the fleeting pleasures of sin. Nor will he trade his birth right (salvation) for the temporary lusts of he world.

### MEDITATE UPON THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES OF HOPE

· “Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day” (Psalm 25:3-5 KJV)

· “Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee” (Psalm 33:20-22 KJV)

· “My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word” (Psalm 119:81 KJV)

### HOW TO PUT ON THE HELMET OF SALVATION

Hope is the confidence we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. We develop it the same way we develop faith. God's word touches our hearts and minds. It is essential Christians have a clear understanding of what God has promised to His people, the Church. This will give hope; an unailing expectation in the ability of God to fulfil His promise.

Hope is something you think about and understand. Faith is something you believe and confess even if you cannot understand it.

· “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil” (Hebrews 6:19 KJV)

Hope provides us with an anchor. Something to hold unto with our soul (intellect, emotions and faith). Faith needs hope to sustain it. As the song goes, “my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness!” Halleluia! As you meditate upon God's Word, look to the words of Isaiah as you put on the helmet of salvation while marching boldly into battle against the enemy. Your family, friends and neighbors need you keep your helmet on as you share with them the reason “of the hope that is within you.”

· “But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31 KJV)

# THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT



### “and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (verse 17)

The sixth piece of armour is the glorious SWORD OF THE SPIRIT.

A sword is a weapon of offence. It can be used defensively, but naturally it is used to attack! The Sword of the Spirit is no ordinary sword. This sword is made not of metal but of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. In spiritual warfare, battles are fought by words. Every stroke of the sword of the spirit, the Word of God is backed up by the Holy Spirit Himself!

### WHAT IS THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT?

The sword of the spirit is the Word of God spoken with the power of the Holy Spirit. In understanding what the sword of the Spirit is, we must establish the importance of this weapon by referencing Scripture as follows:

· “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Corinthians 10:3-

6 KJV)

Strongholds, arguments and thoughts are all darts that the enemy uses against us. The Sword of the Spirit is equipped to deal with them all.

## HOW TO USE THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT - against arguments and thoughts.

The soul of the Christian is of principal interest to Satan. He will use thoughts and arguments to distract us from our faith. One of the greatest battles ever fought is recorded in Luke Chapter 4 - the three temptations that Satan brought to Jesus. Jesus overcame by the sword of the Spirit.

We can use the sword of the Spirit to protect and strike back at the enemy by

### 1. Provide ourselves with an understanding of the ugly and destructive nature of sin.

When you appreciate the true nature of sin it will be difficult for the flesh to tempt you down that route.

For example, lust hides under the darkness of ignorance. Like Jacob sleeping with Leah all night long expecting to see Rachel in the morning. A night of drunken passion cost him seven years of hard labour and a lifetime with an unwanted wife (Genesis 29: 16-29).

Before we laugh at the folly of Jacob, having a sexual delight with a woman he obviously could not see, hence making himself completely ignorant of the consequences of his action, let's examine our own life in the light of the lustful desires we have entertained, the consequences of which are painfully obvious to all those who would care to see them.

Why do we do it? Is it because we have not taken enough time to consider the consequences that Scripture so adequately warns us of? We need to think intently on these things until the filth and destructive nature of sin becomes a screaming siren that awakens us to seek the light of God's Word. The night is dark when the enemy comes under cover, but the Gospel light will expose him and cut to the quick of it by dispelling his notions that question the Word.

Lust leads us to believe that it is good, fun and exciting; whereas when we awake we discover we have been sleeping with the enemy.

### 2. Provide yourself with scripture answers to Satan's false reasoning's and arguments.

When the enemy presents us with false arguments, like Goliath before David, it is not the armour of Saul, representing the flesh, that will bring us the victory, but the stones in a sling, that which David had been using and practicing with as a Shepherd boy, that brings the victory. Have an answer to the common lies that the devil pokes with. Practice the Word by becoming familiar with it. It will equip you against the Goliath's of this life.

For example, the enemy will say 'one little sin is harmless, do it quickly and repent, what harm can it possibly do'.

Much harm, you will hear the Scripture screaming. This is when you should pull out the sword of the Spirit; the Word of God, but only if you have sharpened it before hand. Let the following Scriptures speak to you. Then take time to meditate on the message and life they bring.

· "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10 KJV)

· "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16 KJV)

· "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:23 KJV)

· "Neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27 KJV).

The enemy hides the main point on purpose. It is not getting exposed that is the real damage of sin but the influence it has on you. Whether done in secret or in public, the influence of sin is the same. Ask Gahazi (2 Kings 5) or David (2 Samuel 11). They both sinned in private but still reaped the consequences.

However Jesus (Luke 4) and Joseph (Genesis 39) all faced their temptations to sin in private and overcame. Imagine what the result would have been if any of them had given into sin. Probably a forfeited ministry and even a lost soul. Is the price worth paying?

### 3. The enemy will show you scores of other Christians who have disobeyed or sinned against God and seem to have got away with it. 'You can do it too' he says.

Some people have no light in them. They appear godly and yet they are not of God (Isaiah 8: 20). There are also many old prophets around (1 Kings 11: 13 - 29). People who have made a decision to walk in disobedience. Their judgement will come! Meanwhile, you fall into more sin by following their example instead of God's Word. What danger, what folly.

## USING THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT – AGAINST THE POWERS OF DARKNESS

The enemy often comes against us directly. For example, bacteria and viruses do not cause all sickness. Not all circumstances are natural. Sometimes it is easy to discern that we are up against the forces of darkness. Satan will resist our attempts to preach the gospel and press into the will of God. The Sword of the Spirit is given us to enforce God's will. Let's see some practical applications of the sword of the Spirit.

### 1. SEE THE NECESSITY OF GOD'S WORD & HUNGER FOR IT.

· If you are one with Christ then His promises are for you (Galatians 3:29)

· Satan's lie brought the fall (Genesis 3:4) and God's word will enforce the victory (2 Peter 1:3 - 4)

· Place your hope and confidence in the promise. Don't break His word. Make this your desire (Psalm 119:114)

### 2. MEDITATE ON THE PROMISES OF GOD AND ASK HIM TO FILL YOU WITH HIS SPIRIT.

Wisdom and revelations comes to those who meditate upon God's Word. Don't ever treat His promises like a passing stranger; rather like Abraham did the angels, bid them to stay (Genesis 18:1-15). By this Abraham received the promise of a child. His persistence brought life. A great example in the Scripture is found in Luke where the people pressed Jesus to stay longer and share more with them. They dug in with their persistence and result changed many lives forever.

· "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke 24:27-32 KJV)

### 3. WATCH YOUR WORDS

Idle words can be destructive. The Word of God brings "life" and "truth" into any situation you might face. Martin Luther was once quoted as saying, "It is alive! I run to and fro and yet it draws me back into the loving arms of God!" He was referring to the Word of God. Luther later took God's Word to fight against the "doctrines of demons" espoused by the Roman Catholic religion.

In like manner, we must not keep the Sword of the Spirit sheathed, but hold it close to our hearts and minds daily.

· "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Revelation 19:15 KJV)

The "sharp sword" referred to in the book of Revelation refers to the place of judgement that the Lord Jesus Christ will hold when judging the nations for sin. This is a reminder that the world one day will be judged in light of Jesus, in light of the Cross, in light of His resurrection having overcome sin, death, the grave and the devil. Our words as Christians must align with the Word of God. We must take the Sword of the Spirit in our hands and deliver a daily death-blow to the devices Satan puts in front of us which attempt to draw us away from Christ.

An old minister once said, "If you're not threat to the kingdom of darkness, you're no help to the kingdom of God!" He was not far from the mark! Christians must be diligent to "redeem the time" by taking every opportunity they can to tell others about Jesus and the Good News of His Gospel! Our labour is not in vain!

