

# The Believer's Weapons (Part 1)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Our text tonight, same as last Wednesday night, is Ephesians chapter 6 and particularly verses!

I want to begin by reading the passage again. As I said last week, a very familiar passage in Ephesians. I guess when you think about the book itself, the parts of Ephesians that are maybe most familiar to us would be those passages in Ephesians 5, dealing with the filling of the Holy Spirit, and also passages dealing with the family and so forth. Those are pretty familiar, 5 and 6, but then when we get into 6, this passage on putting on the whole armor of God is something we've heard a lot about. Probably have heard a number of sermons over the years, maybe have gone through some study courses on that, and very, very familiar. And I would also say sometimes misunderstood, either taken further than Paul intended for it to be taken, you know, getting into the realm of the demonic and so forth, demonic warfare and so forth. Almost to the point that I've met some people in the churches over the years that basically see a demon behind every bush and under every rock. And I think that's carrying it way too far. Not that there is not a somehow a demonic world around us, and there are angels. There's an unseen part of this world. I agree with that, understand that, but we don't live in fear of thinking that a demon's going to get us at any moment. Or if somebody looks at us a little cross-eyed and says, well, you know, that person must be demon-possessed or something. Making judgments like that, and I've met people like that. In fact, a number of years ago, and I've shared this, parts of this with you, never will forget one year that I taught January

Bible study in Wyoming, and it was in January. I keep, always mention that. What a ridiculous thing to do, go to Wyoming in January. But it's January Bible study, so when else are you going to teach? But anyway, it was part of a ministry of our association when I served and pastored up in Tennessee. And so, you know, I went. And so I'm at this particular church, and this church has been led by a number in their church to kind of over into a more of a charismatic flavor. And several of them in there were avid followers of Kenneth Copeland. It's a Baptist church, and if you don't know that there's a problem with Kenneth Copeland, then you need to talk to me about it. A big problem. And so it had that kind of a flavor there. And so I was constantly having to deal with it. And had a couple, in fact, the very first night that I was there, and we were having dinner at one of the houses of one of the members. And so there were a lot of the, kind of that group within the church at this dinner. And after, actually before we ate, we're all sitting around the living room, and they're kind of going around the room talking about the visions that they've had, and the demons that they've seen, and the evidences of those things, and dreams, and all these kind of things.

[ 3 : 52 ] And one of the ladies said, you know, we were at the church social the other day, and I looked over at Miss, our sister so-and-so, and I looked down, and an alligator tail fell out, dropped out from underneath her skirt. And so she proceeded to speculate about what that meant, you know, in terms of the spiritual and demonic. And, you know, I had just met these people. I'm sitting over there, kind of in the corner of the room, and kind of wondering when this is going to be over, and I can start teaching the next day. That was on a Saturday night. I was going to be teaching on Sunday morning.

I'm not going to tell you how the rest of the week went. It was terrible. But, you know, I think the very first session, after Sunday morning, we had a session that Sunday evening, and, you know, it was 1 Timothy. I was teaching you the 1 and 2 Timothy. And it begins by talking about doctrine, sound doctrine. In fact, the whole book's about that. And no sooner had those words come out of my mouth, as I'm kind of introducing the study, that one of the guys there around the table said, we just don't need to talk about doctrine. That's not important. Oh, boy.

You can imagine my blood pressure at that point. And most of what I said, not only did they disagree with, they didn't like it at all. I think they were ready for me to go home. But not as much as I was ready to go home, wanting to go home. All right, I'm tending tonight to chase rabbits. So let's get to the study here of the believer's warfare. And so let me read the text, starting with verse 10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armor of God. All right, there's the phrase. He's going to repeat it here in a little bit, too. There's the familiar phrase. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. And we kind of covered this ground last week. 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. And we talked about that last week, just basically understanding that our enemy is well organized. And so, therefore, verse 13, 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. Almost kind of redundant, isn't it? Stand, withstand. Stand therefore. In fact, stand therefore is a command. 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. 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, that 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. So I include those last few verses in there, and we'll understand that why, or I understand why not tonight, but next Wednesday night, when we get to those few passages. We want to focus tonight, though, on the armor itself. The armor. Now, remember, and I mentioned this last week, that in this portion of

Paul's letter to the Ephesian believers, he reminds us of our opposition. You know, we've kind of been rocking along in the book and talking about the church and relationships and so forth, and maybe kind of lulled into a place of security and where we're familiar and comfort zones, and then kind of almost like a whiplash taking place. Let me tell you, though, there's major opposition. Major opposition.

[ 8 : 36 ] And so we need to be mindful of that opposition. We need to know our enemy, and that was kind of our focus last week. We need to be prepared for that opposition. Our enemy need to be prepared, and God gives us instructions on that, albeit really they're not vague, but they're kind of broad categories.

And so we need to know how to deal with our opposition. And so we started to look at that, all of this last week, and I've divided the text into three parts. And first of all, our warfare, kind of describing the warfare itself, our enemy and so forth. And then second, that's what we studied last week. And then second, and this will be our focus tonight, our weapons. Our weapons or our weaponry.

And then finally, and we'll get to this next week, our, what I want to call our war cry, and it centers on prayer. I might as well go ahead and tell you here up front, as we go through these various parts or pieces of the armor. Oftentimes, various studies on this text will include prayer as one of the pieces of the armor. But I think the prayer is something separate. In fact, not so much separate as it is the overarching thing. It kind of, it's kind of understood that all of this fits under prayer and must be bathed in prayer. And so we'll kind of separate that out and we'll get to that next week.

All right, so our weapons. We've already looked at the warfare, kind of a general look at it. And now, more specifically, our weapons and verses 13 through 17. Verse 13 is a good introduction for this portion of the, of Paul's teaching here. It really introduces, I think, how Paul answers the challenges. Challenges that are made in verses 10 through 12, because there are challenges there. And so verse 13 is, begins or kind of introduces Paul's answer to that. He says, therefore, and you know, I, you know, every preacher, brings this up, how important therefore is. Anytime you find it. And so that's why I've put the question, what is therefore, therefore? So you, you know, what needs to be put in the blank. Well, all we have to do is just look back at the preceding verses. And so we could kind of think of it in these terms. Since we are, according to Paul, we're to be strong in the Lord and the power of his might. That's verse 10.

[11:30] Therefore. All right, so it attaches it to that challenge. That is a challenge, isn't it? To be strong in the Lord and the power of his might. I don't know. Maybe I'm the only one, but that seems pretty challenging to me. And then we could go a step further. Verse 11. Since we need to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, we must stand against his wiles, his deceptions. Therefore, all right, that's a challenge, that's a challenge, to stand against the wiles of the devil. He's crafty.

He's deceiving. He's very, very, I always hesitate to use the word wise, but in a sense, he is wise. Very wise, very smart, conniving, crafty. You know, I don't know how many other adjectives I could use.

But that's a challenge. It's more of a challenge than I think most of us consciously admit. And then we could go a step further on in verse 12. Since our enemies are not flesh and blood, therefore.

That poses a challenge. Because, you know, we think we know how to deal with people.

And we don't even know how to do that. But at least we can see them and we, you know, we, you know, you can talk to them. You know, you can kind of evaluate a person, you know, those kind of things. But we're not dealing with an enemy that's flesh and blood. That poses a challenge. It's even a little bit scary. Like I said earlier, we can even let our thoughts go amok. I think, you know, think some pretty wild and weird things. You know, I don't know how many of you read Peretti's book, Present Darkness, years ago. I don't recommend it. I think it goes too far with it. But, but, and especially I have discovered and firsthand for some younger people, it has caused some fear, fear in their hearts and lives to think about these unseen forces, you know, and so forth. And what Peretti desired to do there, I think is somewhat lost in his very creative description of the forces of darkness. And, and so, especially for younger people, immature, spiritually immature people, then, you know, it's the sensational part of the book that they remember the most and it scares them.

[14:15] Anyway, I'm, I'm chasing another rabbit there. And then finally, since our enemies are organized, and they are. And not only that, but deeply rooted in our world. And that's, you know, what we get from the latter part of verse 12. They're very organized principalities and powers and, you know, all these, that's a description of, of the organization, Satan's organization. He's, he has his generals and lieutenants and sergeants and captains and privates. And they're all, and they have infiltrated key places in our world, governments and, and not just the back alleys where, you know, evil slinks around there, but even in the White House. So, since our enemy is organized and rooted in the world, that, therefore, see, these are challenges that we're confronted with, revealed to us in, in the first few verses here. So, what's Paul's answer? Therefore, put on the whole armor of God. There, there is the answer to the challenge. And then Paul goes from there to detail for us, though we would kind of like to have more details. You know, these are just, he's not really describing as much as he is naming the, the certain pieces of the armor, the armor of God that we need to put on. But he names, he puts enough in the name for us to understand the nature of these pieces of armor. And so he's going to go on from there because this is his answer to these challenges that we face in, in our world.

And by the way, I don't think that I've mentioned this anywhere else in the rest of my study here tonight. And I don't know why I missed it, but I, I very much want us to understand that what Paul is commanding us to do as believers, we must do every day, every day. And you can kind of visualize a soldier putting on his armor or her armor and, and then at some point taking it off, setting aside and it has to put it back on. So it's not something that we just do and it's done. It's something that is a constant thing that we do. We're putting on and keep putting on. In fact, some people, I think it's, it's, it's valid. Maybe not every single day, but some people are compelled, and I've even done this over the years at junk, at certain junctures or particular challenging times to pray that armor on and ask God to, to give me the, the, the strength and the, the determination to keep myself clothed in the armor of God. All right. So we don't need to look at this armor. I want to give you some, or have us consider some kind of some preliminary things about the armor that we can glean from the first verse or two here before we actually get into the basic elements or the particular elements.

And number one, because our enemies are not flesh and blood, that's what we learned in verse 12. We cannot defeat them in the power of our own flesh and blood. If the enemy is not flesh and blood, then our flesh and blood weapons won't work. We have to understand that on the front end. That's something to consider. We don't have the weapons for this, not in ourselves. And I, I included this passage in second Corinthians 10, again, where Paul is talking about this, this spiritual warfare.

And let me just read it to you very quickly. You have it there before you, but he said, for though we walk in the flesh, I mean, we do, we live in the flesh. I mean, that this is not Paul talking about the

evils of the flesh. This is just the reality. We're flesh and blood people and we live in the flesh. And so though we do, he said, we do not war according to the flesh, which is the point I'm making here. Our enemy is not flesh and blood. Our weapons against him cannot be flesh and blood. We don't war in the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal.

They're not flesh and blood, but mighty in God for the pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. That's a tremendous passage there and really delves into some very specific areas of warfare and that maybe we can study some other time. The second thing to consider is that we are commanded. I've already mentioned this, but this is a command. The words take up, that's how it's translated in New King James. Those words take up one word in the Greek and it's an imperative. It's a verb that's an imperative and that means it's a command. And so we are commanded to put on how much of the armor? All of it, the whole armor. So, you know, that's crucial that we include every element of God's armor listed in the following verses because they're not just simply separate pieces to the armor. They all work together. In fact, some, as we're going to discover, are even crucial to hold all the armor together. And we'll talk about that here in a minute if I get to it. All right, number three, the goal for taking up the whole armor of God is twofold.

[ 20 : 14 ] Though they are, in many ways, kind of parallel thoughts. They're kind of the same, same, same, different way of saying the same thing. But one is to withstand in the evil day.

To withstand. The word is on, on this, on, what is it? On this day my. All right, you don't care about that and I don't either care about it, but I just want you to know that I know it. Even though I couldn't say it, couldn't speak it, it's kind of a tongue twister. I'm, I'm, I'm this, I'm this, demised. All right. And it means to set oneself against. So it's a, it's a, it's a, it's a word that, that suggests something very determined, very deliberate. And, and so this withstanding the evil day is something that we decide to do. We set ourselves against it. And so the basic idea, in fact, even some translations bring this out, use this as their, their translation, means to resist, to oppose. What, what is, uh, James promise if we oppose or resist the devil? What does he promise?

He will flee. He will flee. And, uh, by the way, it is the same word and it's the idea of, of resisting, pushing away. I've always kind of likened it to my football days when I played football and, uh, running with that ball and putting the stiff arm out there. And so when the, the, uh, defender comes, the one who wants to put me down, I, I push, push him away. And, uh, all right. So withstand is a very strong word. It's very deliberate. And then to, to stand in the evil day. So, so to withstand, to stand, is stay my, and that sounds very similar, but it is a different word. Well, the idea is somewhat similar. It means to make, to make something to stand. All right. So again, it suggests something very deliberate, premeditated. And the basic idea is to take a stand and not bend with the evil, not bend with it, not be swayed by it, to be pushed over by it, uh, not to give way to it.

And, uh, you know, that's pretty important, uh, you know, when we consider what is happening in our country today. The idea, number four, the idea of standing, uh, because this is the third time we see it in here, we have withstand, stand and standing or stand therefore, uh, there in verse 14, uh, it, it is command. Standing is a command and, uh, and also it becomes kind of the predate, a condition, this, this, it's a condition of standing, uh, or make yourself stand because it is a command.

Uh, but the very thing of standing in the evil day is predicated upon, dependent upon the putting on of the armor. Uh, so, so much so that if you don't put the armor on, then there's no way you can stand.

[ 23 : 37 ] Uh, no matter how hard you want to and much you want to. So it's predicated upon putting on all the elements of the armor that are listed in following verses. All right. So getting back to the outline that I gave you, uh, there are six pieces, uh, to this suit of armor. Let's see if I can get all the way through to that. Yeah, I think I can. Six pieces. Uh, do you love my picture by the way? Uh, yeah, if I had known that Jerry was going to bring a model of some armor, I could have just set that thing up here, you know, and that'd be a good visual. But no, I had to find a picture. I would say to you that, uh, um, uh, there's one problem with the picture and that's the cape. Uh, there's, there's nothing in the Bible here about the cape. All right. About the cape. In fact, I, I can't imagine, uh, that a soldier, uh, would wear a cape, uh, in actual battle hand to hand, uh, you know, hand to hand warfare, uh, cause the cape would be in the way. So just forget that there's a cape on there.

I noticed that Jerry's little model has no cape. Uh, so we'll just, we'll just act like there isn't one. All right. So the first one is the girdle or belt, uh, of truth. Verse 14, stand therefore, again, that's a command having girded or girdled. That's where we get the, the idea of girdle girded your waist with the truth, with the truth. All right. So the soldier's belt or girdle, uh, vital, very vital because, uh, actually the girdle itself secured all other elements of the armor. Uh, I mean, the belt is where the sword would hang. The belt was where the, uh, the, the, uh, uh, tunic that he would wear, you know, kind of the outer garment, uh, the belt would go around that so that it would be close to his body and he wouldn't, wouldn't be out here flopping around as he's trying to fight or run or whatever. So, uh, that would hold all that together and breastplate would fit there underneath that girdle just to keep it in secure place. And, uh, and so it's very, very vital. And that's why it's listed first. I think this belt, this girdle.

Now we know we're not talking about an actual belt. All right. Um, can't go to life way and, and, uh, you know, buy you one of these belts, uh, so that you'll be able to do warfare against the devil. Uh, it's not an actual belt. You know that. And it's, it's, it's, it's called the belt of truth or the girdle of truth. Now truth, what would he be referring to there? Well, yeah, the first thing that comes to mind would be, oh, here it is right here in my right hand. So what'd I do with my Bible? Uh, well, there it is, you know, the, the whole body of truth, the, the word of God, that would maybe, maybe would be our first thought as to, uh, what he's talking about there. The only problem is, well, a couple of problems, uh, he's going to mention the truth a little bit later, the scripture. And, uh, so that's where, uh, he's talking about the sword of truth, uh, here, even though it's implied. All right. So implicitly it, he, he, he can't be talking about the knowledge of the truth.

All right. Implicitly the knowledge of the truth. It's implied. I mean, Paul assumes that his readers know the truth. I mean, it's, he's not saying, you know, if you're going to do battle, you better get out your Bibles and learn God's word. He's assuming they understand that. He's going to talk about the scripture a little bit later, uh, but it is implied. It's almost assumed, but explicitly he's talking about the conviction, conviction of the truth. Another reason we know this is because there is no definite article before the noun there in the Greek text. So it's not the truth he's talking about as in the, in the sense of the whole body of the truth, God's word. Uh, the idea is the conviction, the conviction of what one believes. Uh, I'm, I have a conviction for the truth and it's that conviction concerning God's word, a kind of settled conviction in my heart and mind that I, this is God's word and I believe it. And this is what he has said about this and that and any other lie the devil, the devil might want to throw my way and tempt me to believe. I, I have the truth and it is my strong conviction that it is true. You understand what I'm saying? It's the conviction of the truth that tightly binds all the other pieces of the armor. And so if you are kind of wavering kind of wishy-washy, uh, about what you believe, then you're going to have, uh, well, you're going to have a terrible time in spiritual warfare. The devil just eat you alive. If you are not settled, uh, in, in, in, in your belief in, in conviction, uh, of God's truth.

Uh, all right. So that's the belt of truth. I better hurry up. Then the second one is the breastplate of righteousness, breastplate of righteousness. Verse 14, having put on the breastplate of righteousness. All right, now we can kind of see the picture there. We know what a breastplate looks like and it would be, uh, made of metal usually, although there were other materials that were used over the years. Uh, you know, ringlets, uh, sometimes used for a male, but not male, M-A-L. I mean, not a man or woman, but male ringlets. And, uh, but for the Roman army, and that would be, uh, you know, what Paul was thinking of in his day when he wrote this, it would be, it'd be that solid metal, uh, breastplate that would not just simply cover the front, but also go all the way around. And it would, would, uh, uh, have some latches along the back where it would come together. So it would protect all the vital organs, uh, of that soldier, uh, other than his head, but he's, he's got some armor for that as well. All right. So it's wrapped completely around the soldier's body, but this is the breastplate of righteousness. All right. So we're not talking about something made of metal.

We're talking about, uh, something, uh, uh, far more worth righteousness. And so the righteousness that we're to put on, basically what he's saying we're to do, we're to put on righteousness is, you know, it's not self-righteousness. All right. Just coming to the place where, you know, I've made it, I've arrived, I'm righteous, I'm good, I'm pure and trusting in, in your own self-righteousness.

Certainly, you know, that's not the case, but it also is not the imputed, imputed righteousness of Christ. Imputed righteousness of Christ is not something you put on. You can't put on, God puts that on. And that happens to salvation. When you're saved, then the righteousness of Christ is imputed to your account. And, uh, and so it's ridiculous to suggest that you could put that on at some point. Uh, so it's not talking about that righteous. So what is this righteousness? Well, it's, uh, basically it's

righteous living, uh, righteous living in obedience to God and his Holy word. So we're putting on the breastplate of righteousness through our obedience to God's word, living according to his word. This is part of our armor.

[ 32 : 05 ] I mean, think about the opposite of that, you know, living in impurity, living in disobedience. Uh, well, you, again, the devil will eat you alive. You cannot do battle against the devil and win if your lifestyle is something contrary to the word of God. So this is just, you know, these are just very basic things, very, very logical things. So we don't have to look for some deep, dark, hidden meaning here. Uh, some mystical kind of armor, you know, that we're to put on and go through some kind of ritual to put on the breastplate. This is just simply living according to God's word, obeying him, living according to his, his, uh, uh, uh, commandments. All right. So we might call it a practical righteousness. And Paul spoke of it, I think in Romans 13, 12, the night is far spent the days at hand. He said, therefore, let us cast off the works of darkness.

Let us put on the armor of light. Kind of the same kind of idea here. Let us walk properly as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ. As you're putting on righteousness, not in the sense of the imputed righteousness, but in the sense of putting into your life and on your life, the things that are righteous, uh, according to Christ, put on the righteousness of Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lust. All right. The next one, let me go ahead with at least one other, the sandals of gospel of the gospel. You know, after I put that down there, I thought, you know, nowhere does it say anything about sandals. And, uh, and yet, uh, you do a little reading, you discover that, uh, even the soldiers wore sandals. Uh, now we wouldn't wear sandals today. You know, both, I've had two boys in the army and they still have their army boots. Uh, probably not anything like the army boots, uh, of, uh, uh, uh, your day, Jim and Oscar and, and, uh, uh, Jerry and, and Mike and Tom. Did I leave anybody out? Uh, and, uh, you know, I, in fact, I can remember my dad's army boots and, uh, they were so polished that I could see my reflection. Now today they don't have those kinds of army boots, but they didn't use army boots. They had sandals and they were a very heavy leathered, uh, sandal and they were hobnailed is the term that they use, hobnailed sandals. It means they'd, they'd have pieces of metal, uh, kind of like cleats, uh, so that they could climb, I mean, uphill and have sure footing, but more so, uh, when they were doing battle so that they could stand firm and have a good grip on the ground. That's pretty important. I mean, if you're in a sword fight, you don't want to be slipping around on your sandals, you know, if it's dusty or whatever it is. And so that kind of describes it. Now, Paul of course is referring then to the foundation upon which the believer stands, the foundation we stand upon. And we might say, well, that would be the word of God.

Well, in this sense, he's not talking about that, but certainly that, that is used elsewhere in scripture. And, and the word of God is a foundation, but he's talking about something else. He, this foundation is, is peace. It's one of peace with God. And it's interesting to me when you think about it, he said is the gospel of peace and gospel in the truest sense of the word, meaning the good news of peace. It's good news that you have peace. Now think about this. You remember our warfare is against the enemies of God. We need to have the right perspective. The devil is not first our enemy. He is God's enemy. Now we, we are, are caught up into this battle because we're followers of God. And, and, and so we then take part, uh, in that as enemies of Satan. All right. So the, the, the warfare is, is against the enemies of God. They are our enemies by virtue of our relationship with God. And therefore, here's the idea. You cannot do battle with God's enemies until you are fully convinced that you are no longer an enemy of God. You're an enemy of God. Now think about that in, in, in, in this term. If you don't have assurance of your salvation, a confidence in your relationship with God, and even doubting that there really has been reconciliation with God or that there is peace.

If you are wavering in that and not sure of your salvation, then you can't stand against the devil. That's why we need to put on the sandals or the shod our feet with the gospel of peace to stand in full assurance of your salvation. And, uh, and so remember you, all of us were once enemies of God. We're all enemies of him through unbelief, but through the gospel, by the grace of God and through faith, we've been reconciled to God. And so to have our feet shod with preparation of the gospel of peace, as Paul said, that means to stand with a firm assurance, a firm, a firm confidence of that reconciliation.

[ 38 : 05 ] If you don't have a confidence in your peace with God, then you cannot do battle against the enemy. And so that's why it is so important that, that we do that.

Thank you.

Thank you.