

The Good Fight

1 Timothy 6:12 – Fight the **good fight** of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a **good profession** before many witnesses.

2 Timothy 2:3 – Thou therefore endure hardness, as a **good soldier** of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 4:7 – I have fought a **good fight**, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

The Christian life is a battlefield, not a playground!

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

Ephesians 6:10-12 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 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.

There are no recorded cases of demon possession in the Old Testament, but you will find it is rampant in the New Testament. This is because the war that is being waged between God and the devil is a spiritual conflict for men's souls. Israel had a physical covenant; we have a spiritual one. We enter into its spiritual blessings, but also into its spiritual battles! That warfare moved from heaven to earth at the incarnation, and we are still fighting ground warfare even today!

No matter how our circumstance may look on the outside, our battle is not against human beings. We are wasting our time fighting people when we ought to be fighting the devil who seeks to control people and make them oppose the work of God. The ancient advice of the king of Syria to his soldiers when they went out to fight can be applied to us:

1 Kings 22:31b Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king.

In Paul's day, a wrestling match was not mere entertainment; it was a fight to the finish with the loser having his eyes gouged out. Our battle with Satan is a life or death conflict with eternal consequences! The bad news is that the devil is a formidable opponent, and you cannot defeat him by human strength or religious resolutions. But the good news is that you CAN defeat him – if you do it God's way!

Ephesians 6:13-18 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;

Did you get dressed before you came to church today?

Since we are fighting against enemies in the spirit world, we need special equipment both for DEFENSE and for OFFENSE. God has provided the "whole armor" for use, and we dare not omit any part. Satan is always looking for an unguarded area where he can get a beachhead in our lives from which to launch an attack.

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

Ephesians 4:27 (TEV) Don't give the Devil a chance.

Ephesians 4:27 (GW) Don't give the devil any opportunity {to work}.

Ephesians 4:27 (NIV) Do not give the devil a foothold.

THE GIRDLE OF TRUTH

Satan is a liar, but the believer whose life is controlled by truth will defeat him. The girdle was a belt that held the other parts of the armor together, and it also held the sword. Unless we live the truth, we have no right (and no confidence) to use the Word of truth! The loins encircled by the girdle are the central point of the physical system, and in Scripture are described as the seat of power. "To smite through the loins" is to strike a fatal blow. "To lay affliction upon the loins" is to afflict heavily.

THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The breastplate was made of metal plates and covered the upper body in front and back. Satan is the accuser, but he cannot accuse the believer who is living a godly life by the power of the Spirit. The life we live either fortifies us against Satan's attacks or makes it easier for him to defeat us. It is God's righteousness lived through us, but we must allow it to work in our everyday lives!

THE SANDALS OF THE GOSPEL

The Roman soldier's leather sandals bound around the ankle and studded with hobnails so his feet would not slip in the battle. If we are going to be secure in our relationship with God, we need to stand on the gospel. It's not the gospel of "peace" when you hear it, or even when you understand it – it becomes the gospel of peace when you OBEY it!

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

The shield was large, usually about four feet by two feet, made of wood and covered with tough leather. It protected the soldier from burning arrows. The edges of these shields were constructed so that a line of soldiers could interlock them and march into the enemy's forces like a solid wall. If your faith is weak, stand beside me! Sometimes we just have to push through the enemy ranks!

THE HELMET OF SALVATION

The helmet was made of leather, strengthened with bronze or other metals, and furnished with a visor to protect the face. It refers to the mind that is controlled by God's Spirit, one who doesn't live for God just by FEELINGS (up and down), but by their CHOICES (consistent). We must have God's protection over our minds!

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

The sword is the only offensive weapon provided in the Christian's armor – but it is enough because it is the Word of God!

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Paul uses RHEMA instead of LOGOS here, in other words a SPECIFIC portion of the Bible that the Holy Spirit leads us to use in a specific battle with Satan. The Holy Spirit quickens the passage to "come alive" in our lives in order to withstand Satan's attack.

PRAYING ALWAYS!

Prayer is the energy that we take into battle. We cannot fight against the devil in our own strength. "Praying always" doesn't mean "always saying prayers" – it means "always stay in communion with God!" (keep the receiver off the hook!) That way you'll be ready for any surprise attack from the devil.

THIS IS A GOOD FIGHT BECAUSE IT JUST MAKES US STRONGER!

Exodus 23:22 But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

Exodus 23:29-30 I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.

1 Corinthians 2:7-8 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

THE DEVIL DOESN'T REALIZE HE IS PLAYING INTO GOD'S HANDS