

How to Put on the Armor of God

by Mike Bennett

In our war with Satan, his society and our human weaknesses, we need spiritual help. God provides the powerful armor of God to protect us—and give us victory!



What is the armor of God?

Ephesians 6:14-17 lists six pieces of the armor of God:

1. Belt of truth.
2. Breastplate of righteousness.
3. Shoes of the gospel of peace.
4. Shield of faith.
5. Helmet of salvation.
6. Sword of the Spirit.

God provides these six aspects of the Christian life, plus prayer (verse 18), to strengthen and protect us and ultimately help us to triumph in our spiritual battles. Each piece is essential, and the Bible tells us how to put them on and use them effectively.

How to use the armor of God to defend against the attacks of Satan

The Bible tells us we are in a war, and our adversary, Satan the devil, is bent on destroying us. The apostle Paul warns us to beware of Satan's devices and tactics (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Paul addressed this in Ephesians 6:10-20 where he talks about putting on the whole armor of God. Ephesians was one of Paul's letters written from prison. During Paul's time in prison he obviously became well acquainted with the armor worn and carried by his captors in the Roman army. Following Isaiah's lead (Isaiah 59:17),

“For He put on righteousness like a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon His head. And He put on the garments of vengeance *for* clothing, and was covered with zeal like a cloak.”

Paul drew a powerful comparison between a soldier's armor and the spiritual armor of God.

Paul wrote: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might” (verse 10).

You see, we don't have to be discouraged by Satan's devices or by his power and stealth. We aren't in this battle alone. We have access to the greatest power in the universe!

Verse 11 continues: “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”

This is a comprehensive defense strategy, and we have to pay attention to all parts of this armor God offers. But if we do, we will be able to withstand Satan's attacks.

Fighting spiritual battles today

“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” (verse 12).

The Bible describes unseen spiritual battles, such as the titanic battle at the end of the age that the apostle John witnessed: “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was any place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world” (Revelation 12:7-9).


All this is happening behind the scenes in the spiritual world, but it has great influence over the physical world. Satan and the demons are invisible, and he is a master of camouflage. He is able to convince people that he doesn't exist, and he is able to sway society and suggest wrong thoughts to us without our even realizing he is there.

Paul continued in Ephesians 6:13: “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”

What does he mean, “to stand”? He was emphasizing that with God's help, we will be able to hold the line, to not retreat, to not give up an inch of God's territory.

Now Paul starts to list the individual elements of this spiritual armor. The Bible also tells us how to put on the armor of God. Here is how you can use each piece of armor to fight against the powers of Satan.


1. What is the belt of truth?

	<i>verse 14</i>	BELT
	STAND THEREFORE, HAVING GIRDED YOUR WAIST WITH TRUTH	

A belt was the first piece of equipment put on, and it secures all the other pieces of our armor. Wearing the belt showed that the soldier was ready for action, since he would only loosen his belt when he went off duty.

Truth should surround us like a belt. Knowing God’s truth is the surefire antidote to Satan’s lies and deception. And to be truly ready for the battle, we must be completely truthful ourselves in our inner being, like our Creator.

2. What is the breastplate of righteousness?


	<i>verse 14</i>	BREASTPLATE
	HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS	

Next, Paul tells us to “put on the breastplate of righteousness.”

Without righteousness, we leave ourselves open to Satan’s attacks. To be righteous is first of all to repent and be forgiven of our sins, and then to do what is right in God’s eyes. Psalm 119:172 tells us that God’s commandments are righteousness. So to be righteous is to obey God’s laws of love.

Isaiah 59:17 says that God Himself puts on righteousness as a breastplate! This may be part of what inspired Paul to use this analogy. Isaiah 59 starts by explaining that “your iniquities have separated you from your God” (verse 2). Iniquity is the opposite of righteousness, so when we give in to sin without repenting, we are removing our breastplate and leaving ourselves open to more of Satan’s attacks.

3. What are the shoes of the gospel of peace?

	<i>verse 15</i>	SPIRITUAL FOOTWEAR
	AND HAVING SHOD YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE	


Shoes might not be the most exciting piece of armor, but the *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary* highlights their importance:

“The military successes both of Alexander the Great and of Julius Caesar were due in large measure to their armies being well shod and thus able to undertake long marches at incredible speed over rough terrain.”

The word “preparation,” denoting *readiness*, reminds us that we are to be eager to preach the gospel of peace. The Church of God is sent to announce the good news of God’s Kingdom, which will spread His way of peace around the whole world. Having our spiritual shoes on, we will be ready to spread the news to others.

Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible tells us that the sandals of the Roman soldier “often were fitted with nails, or armed with spikes, to make the hold firm in the ground.” God’s good news and our mission—our marching orders—to preach it serve as our firm foundation.

4. What is the shield of faith?


	<i>verse 16</i>	SHIELDS UP
	ABOVE ALL, TAKING THE SHIELD OF FAITH WITH WHICH YOU WILL BE ABLE TO QUENCH ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED ONE	

When our faith in God's power and love is strong, it is impossible for Satan to break through our shield and land a blow. Faith means more than just believing that God exists, of course. It includes a firm belief that everything God does is truly for our good. Also, faith is the absolute conviction that God will always do what He has promised (Romans 4:18-21).

Faith protects us in many ways. Think about Daniel in the lions' den. Faith was like a force field to protect Daniel from those vicious teeth! And Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego were protected from the fiery furnace! Faith is powerful and protects us not only from those physical dangers, but from the spiritual temptations and dangers.


The shield of faith is not just for personal protection. The Roman soldiers had a strategy of joining their shields together. If we join *our* shields—that is, strengthen each other with our faith, building up and serving as we are able—we will be able to take on any challenge.

5. What is the helmet of salvation?

	<i>verse 17</i>	HELMET
	AND TAKE THE HELMET OF SALVATION	

We can receive tremendous hope and comfort by focusing on the incredible sacrifice Jesus Christ gave to save us and the wonderful Kingdom that is the goal of our salvation. This hope protects our minds from the discouragement and despair in this world.

6. What is the sword of the Spirit?


	<i>verse 17</i>	OUR ONLY OFFENSIVE WEAPON
	THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD	

The sword of the Spirit, like the Roman *gladius*, can also help us to conquer all our enemies, including that most difficult one, our entrenched human weaknesses. Hebrews 4:12 explains: “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Remember how Jesus used the Word of God to defeat Satan (Matthew 4:1-10)? Christ used scripture quotes three times. He brought to mind the scriptures that dealt with the situation, that showed what He should do and that strengthened His resolve. And so should we.

Our sword won't stay sharp on its own. We must continually sharpen it with regular and focused Bible study.

Praying always with all prayer and supplication

	<i>verse 18</i>	THE POWER OF PRAYER
	PRAYING ALWAYS WITH ALL PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION IN THE SPIRIT	

Paul ends this section encouraging us to pray fervently for ourselves, for each other and for the work of the Church.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Ephesians 6:18-20).

The Church, and each of us individually, moves forward on our knees. Praying reminds us of the battle, reminds us of the source of our strength and defense, and reminds God that we are fully committed to following Him as obedient and faithful soldiers. Prayer and Bible study are the most powerful tools for combating Satan's weapons.

When we put on this whole armor of God, we will be prepared for Satan's attempts to attack us with pride, envy, lust for forbidden pleasures, itching ears, disappointment, discouragement, doubt or division—or any other tricks he may use.

There is so much more we can learn from this powerful list of defenses God makes available to us. Hopefully, this article has whetted your appetite to study this important subject in more detail. Make it a goal to study the armor of God in greater depth.

Remember, we're at war. Let's be alert to Satan's devices, and let's put on the whole armor of God!