

# *The Christian Soldier and the Art of War*

## *by Pastor Robert McLaughlin*

### **Forward**

The Christian Soldier and the Art of War is a book that I have been inspired to write from the book entitled: *The Art of War* which is a compilation of the works of Sun Tzu who was a Chinese general who lived in approximately 500 B.C. Sun Tzu's ideas spread to the rest of Asia, in particular, to Japan. In fact, the Japanese quickly adopted Sun Tzu's teaching into their military manuscripts. Sun Tzu has played a major part in this development of military strategies in the natural realm. In this book we will deal with many of these principles of "the art of war" as it relates to the believer living the spiritual life as a Christian soldier.

2TI 2:4 No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

The most fundamental principle of Sun Tzu's military teachings for the conduct of war is that "*all warfare is based on deception.*" This principle of deception in war is why the Bible has so many passages that prepare us to handle the deceptions by the kingdom of darkness. With this in mind, I would like to acknowledge and thank my fellow member of the Royal Family of God, Mick Nipper (What's up Doc!) and his daughter Rachel Nipper for the tremendous hard work they both exerted in the editing of this book. Of course, this has all been made possible from our face-to-face congregation and non face-to-face congregation of those who are members of Grace Bible Church and Robert McLaughlin Bible Ministries for their dedication and devotion as serious students of the word of God.

In His Name  
Pastor Robert R. McLaughlin

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Christian Soldier

As a prisoner of the Roman Empire for over five years, the Apostle Paul was often chained between Roman soldiers, PHI 1:13. His daily exposure to the Roman army and its way of life provided Paul with many insights into warfare; he then applied these concepts to the believer's spiritual conflict when writing his letters to the Church. Paul's prison epistles include the letter to the Ephesians. Ephesians chapter 6 is one of the clearest passages on spiritual warfare in Scripture and will figure prominently in this book.

2TI 2:1 "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

2TI 2:2, "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

2TI 2:3, "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

2TI 2:4, "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."

2TI 2:5, "And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules."

Now, as believers, we have been commanded to "fight the good fight of faith" under the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1TI 6:12. Notice what Paul wrote to Timothy in 2Ti 4:7: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;" Paul continued in 2Ti 4:8 by saying, "In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing." The point of this passage is that every believer has been enlisted in the spiritual army of God as a soldier of Jesus Christ. However, it is a sad truth that most believers have not and do not listen to God's Word. They have not been digging in the Scriptures for the precious metals and valuable gems of Bible doctrine. Most believers have not been sensitive and respectful to God's Book. They have not learned His truths. And, in fact, they have gone AWOL (absent without leave) from the Word of God and the spiritual life. They have been side-lined or put on the injured list and are casualties in the Angelic Conflict. They have not been living like Christian soldiers.

There are many interesting analogies within the Word of God between a soldier in the natural realm and a soldier in the spiritual realm. For example, a soldier must give up his personal freedom in order to serve his country. Similarly, a believer is directed to give up his freedom to serve The Lord Jesus Christ. This voluntary surrender of personal freedom in order to serve God is the principle behind such passages as Matthew 16:24 where Matthew recorded, "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'" Matthew further quoted Jesus in Matthew 16:25 and wrote, "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it."

In Galatians 5:13 Paul declared, “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through [impersonal] love serve one another.” And in 1Peter 2:16, Peter stated, “Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.” So, we conclude that a soldier must give up his freedom to serve his country. Similarly, the Christian soldier is directed by Scripture to give up his freedom to serve The Lord Jesus Christ. A soldier must leave all of his worldly affairs behind as he goes forward to serve his country. This principle of unfettered service is what Paul cited in 2Timothy 2:4 when he wrote, “No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.”

Now, intensive training is the first thing a soldier undergoes after enlistment in the military. Likewise, the first thing all believers need is spiritual training accomplished through the intake of Bible doctrine. As believers, we are to be armed with the full armor of God. Please note the corrected translation of Ephesians 6:10 and following verses: “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.” Ephesians 6:11, “Pick up and put on the full armor ‘from’ God, so that you may be able to ‘hold your ground’ against the ‘strategies’ of the devil.” The next verse in this passage, verse 12, explains why we need to put on the full armor from God – because we have formidable enemies. The following is my expanded translation:

EPH 6:12, “For our warfare is not against blood and flesh [against human beings], but against the rulers [demon generals, commanders like Abaddon and Apollyon, Beelzebub], against the authorities, against the world rulers of this darkness [demon ambassadors to world rulers and demon conspirators], against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens [rank and file demons].”

EPH 6:13, “Therefore, pick up and put on the full armor from God, so that you may be able to hold your ground in the day that evil attacks you, and having done everything, hold your ground.”

EPH 6:14, “Hold your ground therefore, after you have buckled on your combat gear around your waist with truth [a reference to the perception and application of Bible doctrine] and [after] having put on the breastplate of righteousness,”

EPH 6:15, “[hold your ground] after you have put on your combat boots on your feet with the readiness [or preparation, equipment] of the gospel of peace.”

EPH 6:16, “In addition to all [all of these items of military equipment], taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish [intercept and destroy] all the flaming missiles of the evil one.”

EPH 6:17, “And take [or receive favorably and welcome] the helmet of salvation, and [receive favorably and welcome] the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”

Now, the point emphasized in these verses is that there is a great and powerful enemy kingdom surrounding you. This kingdom is doing its best to stop you from going forward in the plan of God for your life and to hinder your spiritual growth. This kingdom is called “the kingdom of darkness” and is controlled by your adversary, the devil, in 1Peter 5:8. Satan is a very powerful king ruling on earth with a desire to first seduce and to ultimately defeat the believer.

The potent spiritual attacks from Satan and his “kingdom of darkness” are why so many believers are seduced today. The god or king of this world, Satan, continually throws the darts of his many philosophies at the believer until he finally sees one hit the target – the soul. We know that Satan is a king because he has a kingdom according to Matthew 12:26. Furthermore, he is the ruler of that dark kingdom. You can try to ignore this situation as much as you want, but if you listen long enough to the shouting of the king, King Satan, the god of this world, eventually your life will fracture. And his shouts keep coming from all directions of life.

Satan’s cosmic philosophies are thrown at the believer from every angle. For instance, human viewpoint rationalization often comes from family and friends. Remember what our Lord said to the religious Jews in John 8:23, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.” If you live the life The Lord Jesus Christ has called you to live, you will live a life from above. If not, you will end up being attacked by the great king of this world. He will besiege your soul and attempt to stop your momentum in the Christian way of life. You will know that Satan has succeeded in hindering your spiritual life when you find that you have lost your peace, composure, poise, happiness, or contentment.

Now, this great and powerful king, Satan, uses thoughts and projections to carry out your defeat. Satan’s attacks on the spiritual life of the believer are why Paul told the Ephesian believers, “in addition to all [the armor of God], taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one” in Ephesians 6:16. Those “flaming missiles” are the philosophies of life from the devil’s world. Those “flaming missiles” are the weapons used by the king of this world to surround your soul and demand surrender. Satan has invisible missiles that attack the soul of the believer and cause human viewpoint thinking on the part of the believer; this strategy neutralizes the believer and draws him away from the plan of God. The kingdom of darkness throws worldly thoughts and ideas at believers through the media, friends, family members, other believers, unbelievers, enemies, and sometimes even from our own presumptuous ideas. And then, if these external attacks do not work, there is a direct attack made upon the believer that is much closer to the soul, as we shall see later in our study of the Christian soldier.

The kingdom of darkness constantly attacks the believer’s soul; its ultimate goal is to do whatever it can to take the believer away from the plan of God and the inculcation of Bible doctrine. Why? Because Bible doctrine exposes the lies from the devil’s world. In 2Corinthians 2:11, Paul exhorted believers to know Bible doctrine “in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.” Now, as the ruler of this world, Satan places foolish individuals in positions of authority in an attempt to control the entire world system. This strategy is exposed in the prophecy found in Revelation 12:9, “And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world...” An individual cannot deceive the whole world unless he has control over most of it. Satan has the power and the ability to put whomever he desires in prominent positions. Please realize that believers are not commanded to fight with earthly rulers or those men in positions of authority. Instead, we are instructed to become more occupied with God’s plan for our lives. There is no passage in any part of the Bible where we are commanded to fight the devil, try to dethrone him, or try to dethrone those who are in positions of authority by his choice. But rather, we are told to rise above it all and execute God’s predesigned plan.

Paul stated this principle in Ephesians 6:11, "Pick up and put on the full armor from God, so that you may be able to hold your ground against the strategies of the devil." And in Ephesians 6:13 we find, "...hold your ground in the day that evil attacks you." Also in Ephesians 6:14, "Hold your ground..." In James 4:7, James instructed believers to "submit therefore to God [execute the Predesigned Plan of God (PPOG)]. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Or as Peter stated in 1Peter 5:9, "But resist the devil by being firm in your doctrine." The conclusion from these verses is that believers are not supposed to attack the rulership of this world, but to resist the attacks the world makes upon their souls by rising above it all and living the Christian way of life in spite of the pressures placed upon them.

Furthermore, a soldier is known by his discipline, his armor, and his weapons. So also, the Christian soldier must be disciplined, wear the armor provided by God, and know how to use his spiritual weapons. A soldier is trained intensively, doing the same things over and over again with the purpose that, through repetition, he will be able to automatically do what he has been trained to do under pressure. The goal of this training is to assure that he can fully function even if he finds himself in a crisis situation and cannot pause to think. Through this method of training, even if a soldier is not thinking clearly, he will automatically do what is right because of the discipline that comes from repetition.

Such training provides security for the believer because, even under intense pressure, he will think the right thing, do the right thing, and apply the right doctrine to the specific situation. This right thinking resulting in right action is a result of repeatedly learning to think and do the right thing under normal circumstances. And the more doctrinal thinking and actions the believer can do automatically, the greater his life will be. If a believer practices making good decisions from a position of strength in normal times, he will be able to make good decisions from a position of strength during times of pressure and disaster.

The difference between fear and courage is the ability to concentrate under pressure. This concentration constitutes the believer's focus on the doctrine he already possesses in his soul, not preoccupation with his problems. If a person has trouble concentrating under normal situations, he will have trouble concentrating under pressure situations. If a believer does not think doctrine under normal circumstances, he will be filled with fear during abnormal circumstances. But those of us who undergo the course of doctrinal training under normal circumstances have a chance to use that training to handle disaster. However, this does not necessarily mean that we will succeed when faced with disaster. For instance, there are many who will sit through the course but will not metabolize the lesson or, if they do, will fail to apply it at the proper time.

In order to succeed in combat, a man has to be trained for the job. This training takes time. A soldier has to know how to do his job under normal conditions before he is given the job under abnormal conditions. And it is the training that makes him victorious, not his lack of fear or his courage. Soldiers are also clothed by the military they represent; in a similar manner, the Christian soldier is said to be clothed by The Lord Jesus Christ. In a familiar passage, Matthew 6:25, our Lord said, "For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, [as to] what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, [as to] what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing?"

MAT 6:26, "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and [yet] your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

MAT 6:27, "And which of you by being anxious can add a [single] cubit to his life's span?"

MAT 6:28, "And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,"

MAT 6:29, "Yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these."

MAT 6:30, "But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is [alive] today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, [will He] not much more [do so for] you, O men of little faith?"

MAT 6:31, "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?'"

MAT 6:32, "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

MAT 6:33, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you."

This passage, then, delineates God's promise to clothe the believer in the natural realm. In the spiritual realm, Galatians 3:27 indicates, "For all of you who were baptized into [identified with] Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Every believer has been enlisted in the spiritual army of God and is a spiritual soldier of Jesus Christ. A soldier is also told whom he will fight; he understands who his enemies are. In the same way, the Christian soldier has his warfare appointed to him and the Scriptures make his enemies known to him. Basically, the believer's enemies are said to be the world, the flesh, and the devil. For example, we are told that the devil makes war against the Lamb and His followers. Revelation 17:14 records, "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

The world is the enemy of the Christian soldier insofar as the things of the world (such as the pleasures or the profits of the world) take the believer away from the plan of God. This is why John wrote in 1John 2:14, "I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one."

1JO 2:15, "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

1JO 2:16, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

1JO 2:17, "And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever."

A soldier is also supplied logistically. His basic needs are met as he goes forward in training, discipline, and warfare. Similarly, God provides the Christian soldier with logistical grace for his spiritual walk and warfare. The military bears the expense of the war and furnishes the soldier with whatever is necessary for his calling. So also, Our Lord gives us clothes, armor, weapons, and whatever else we need to handle what we are going to face.

This logistical grace for spiritual combat is what the Apostle Paul described 1Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will

provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.” Everything we need, both in the natural realm and in the spiritual realm, has been provided for us by God.

As previously mentioned, training is the first thing a soldier undergoes after he has enlisted in the military. So also, the first thing all believers need is spiritual training through the intake of Bible doctrine, 1TI 4:6-8.

In 1Timothy 4:7-8, the Apostle Paul used physical exercise as an example of self-discipline. In 1Timothy 4:7, “But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women.” “Old women” seem to take a beating in the Bible. However, there is an escape for you ladies because no one has ever properly defined what an “old woman” really represents. I personally believe that an old woman is a woman who is old in her soul – one who is bitter, harsh, caustic, sarcastic, hostile, resentful, jealous, suspicious, and covetous. She is filled with malignity, hatred, and revenge motivation. She is a gossip or rumormonger and loves to spread rumors; she is a scandalmonger.

So, in 1TI 4:7 Paul warned Timothy, “But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness [*eusebeia*, the spiritual life].”

1TI 4:8, “for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”

Thus, we see the importance of self-discipline in our spiritual walk. The organization of your time and the ordering of your priorities as a believer are very important for the spiritual life. The “godliness” mentioned in verse 8, the Greek word *eusebeia*, is simply a lifestyle for the spiritual believer. Now, why does this passage say to discipline oneself for the purpose of godliness? Because it requires self-discipline and organization to execute the Predesigned Plan of God (PPOG), even if you have Bible doctrine as your first priority. Now, there are many times when you do not want to come to Bible class. Many legitimate and illegitimate excuses are given by believers who do not study consistently under their right pastor-teacher. It takes great self-discipline to get to class regularly! Then, once you get there, it takes more self-discipline to listen, especially if the lesson is not your favorite subject. 1TI 4:8, “For bodily discipline is only of little profit [lasts for a short time]...” There is profit in physical exercise, but the results last only for a short time. Paul went on to make this observation about godliness in 1TI 4:8, “For bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things...”

The reason why Paul used exercise as an analogy for godliness is because exercise requires self-discipline. A person must make time for exercise. It must take priority over other activities. If you take exercise seriously, you must do it even when you do not feel like doing it. Our inconsistency in exercise is why there are all kinds of gadgets and pills on the market today. These “short cuts” are an attempt to monopolize on people’s inconsistencies; however, there is no “spiritual pill” to replace the consistent intake of Bible doctrine. So, you have to be disciplined in order for physical or spiritual exercise to be profitable. Again, in 1Timothy 4:8 we read, “For bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things...” “Godliness,” or living the spiritual life, is the result of consistent perception of Bible doctrine. A believer’s consistency is crucial because the doctrine he learns today will carry him for a short time only. This is why doctrines are stated again and again in certain books of the Bible. This is also why your pastor-teacher repeats doctrinal principles from the pulpit. So, repetition of doctrine is important; even the Bible repeats doctrine. Repetition, therefore, becomes vital in the Christian life.



Once again, in 1 Timothy 4:8, we find “For bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things...” In other words, the most important thing in your life is your consistency in the spiritual realm. So we repeat, 1 Timothy 4:8, “For bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” Godliness holds the key to this life for the believer. Your happiness depends on godliness or spiritual living. Your capacity for life depends on godliness or spiritual living. Your success in life depends on godliness or spiritual living. Your promotion in life depends on godliness or spiritual living. Thus, Paul concluded at the end of verse 8 that godliness holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

The “life to come” is a reference to all eternity. “For all eternity” means that because some believers were consistent and faithful in the little things, they are going to have the uniform of glory, the order of the morning star, the various different crowns, and their names recorded in the historical section of heaven. Because of a consistent spiritual lifestyle, they are going to rule cities for 1,000 years in the Millennium. Godliness is profitable in time, but even more, it is profitable for the life to come.

1 TI 4:8, “[godliness] holds promise for this life and the life to come.”

The one thing you have in this life as a believer that will be profitable to you forever and ever is “godliness” or “consistent spiritual living.” So, Paul compared godliness, or spiritual living, to physical exercise. Exercise tones up the muscles; godliness, or spiritual living, tones up the spiritual life. In truth, the believer needs spiritual power much more than he needs physical power. Physical power is relatively easy to achieve; almost anyone can have it if he is sufficiently determined. But, spiritual power is harder to attain and more difficult to keep than physical power.

So, self-discipline includes the following:

- a. Dedication
- b. Commitment
- c. Instruction
- d. Discipline

Discipline is of no value unless it is consistent. The word “discipline” found in verse 8 is the Greek word *gymnasia* and means “to drive on” or “something performed or practiced in order to develop skill.” Anyone can exercise, even in the spiritual realm, but it takes character for a person to consistently persist in the study of Bible doctrine. Spiritual exercise takes training. Spiritual exercise takes self-discipline. Exercise in the spiritual realm takes character and commitment.

Exercise for the Royal Family in the congregation of the local church means:

- 1) Exercising self-discipline
- 2) Assembling together
- 3) Concentrating on the teaching
- 4) Having good manners
- 5) Remaining silent
- 6) Not commenting during class
- 7) Not disturbing others
- 8) Not moving around
- 9) Practicing objectivity
- 10) Persistence in spite of distraction

All of these actions during Bible class are part of the discipline of spiritual exercise that takes us from salvation to spiritual maturity. To repeat, a soldier is told who to fight and he understands who his enemies are. Likewise, the Christian soldier has his warfare appointed to him and the Scriptures make his enemies known to him, 2CO 2:11. As mentioned before, a soldier is supplied logistically as he goes forward in training, discipline, and warfare. So also, God provides the Christian soldier logistical grace for his spiritual walk and warfare, 2PE 1:3. The military bears the expense of the war and furnishes the soldier with whatever is necessary for his calling. Likewise, our Lord has given us clothes, armor, weapons, and whatever we need to handle what we are going to face. Everything we need, both in the natural realm and in the spiritual realm, has been provided for us by God. A soldier must be an expert and well-skilled in his field. Similarly, the Christian soldier ought to be well-skilled in all things necessary for his calling, LUK 14:31.

LUK 14:25, “Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,”

LUK 14:26, “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”

LUK 14:27, “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

LUK 14:28, “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it?”

LUK 14:29, “Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him,”

LUK 14:30, “Saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’”

LUK 14:31, “Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand [men] to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand [men]?”

LUK 14:32, “Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace.”

To be well-skilled as a soldier requires much discipline and wisdom; so it is in the spiritual realm. A good soldier must understand the word of command and be ready to obey his officer instantly. As the psalmist declared in Psalm 119:60, “I hastened and did not delay to keep Thy commands.” It is a very sad situation in our day and age when the Christian soldier hears the commands from The Lord Jesus Christ and then delays obedience to them.

A soldier must know his position in his unit and how to keep both rank and file. Just so, the Christian soldier must know his place and particular station. That is, he ought to know where God the Holy Spirit has placed him in the body of Christ, 1CO 12:18. Military discipline has appointed every officer in the army to his proper place. Moreover, every private soldier is to abide in the same rank and file, the place appointed to him by his commander. In the military, a soldier is not free to change his station or post on his own. This is especially true in a time of battle when he would expose himself and others to great danger if he did not follow his orders

accurately and precisely. The Christian soldier must also keep his place and particular station in the body of Christ as appointed by God the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 12:18, Paul wrote, “But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.” The believer should not abandon his post whenever he pleases. Neither is the believer to quit his position because he does not like the personality of the officer in charge of him. The average Christian soldier has gone AWOL (absent without leave) because of a lack of humility; this is especially true when it comes to keeping his place in the body of Christ.

Instead, the Christian soldier should persist in his training; he should stay with his commitments. He should continue with the intake of doctrine and the execution of the Predesigned Plan of God (PPOG). The Christian soldier must discover God’s plan for his life and persist in that plan while he grows spiritually. Pastors must keep their places, deacons must keep their places, and members of each church must keep their places and refrain from withdrawing whenever they please. This does not mean that you will not eventually be promoted out of your current position; it simply means that you need to hold the ground you have gained.

A soldier must also follow his leader. Likewise, every Christian soldier should follow The Lord Jesus Christ and ought to have his eyes upon Him through the intake of doctrine, MAT 10:38. For example, in Revelation 14:1 we read of a great and famous army, consisting of “one hundred and forty-four thousand who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.”

REV 14:1, “And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.”

REV 14:2, “And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.”

REV 14:3, “And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.”

REV 14:4, “These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.”

So, every Christian soldier should follow The Lord Jesus Christ and ought to focus upon Him through the intake of Bible doctrine. As Christian soldiers, we must be willing to follow The Lord Jesus Christ in His reproaches, afflictions, difficulties, and even dangers, if necessary. Remember that the Church Age is the intensified stage of the Angelic Conflict where believers strive to become invisible heroes. Therefore, these principles apply to the invisible realm of spiritual conflict. This is why the Christian soldier ought to be well-skilled and an expert in God's wisdom so that he is not ignorant of Satan and his devices.

In 2Corinthians 2:11, Paul exhorted believers to know doctrine "in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes." There is a spiritual war waged by the devil against the soul of the believer. None of us can afford to be ignorant about it. And nothing is more essential for spiritual soldiers than wisdom and power from God, especially when we are faced with internal adversaries. For example, you need to understand that not only does the kingdom of darkness try to put worldly thoughts in your mind, but in reality, its best work is done by keeping things out – namely doctrinal viewpoint. Remember that our adversary, the devil, is compared to a serpent because he is sly and deceitful. The devil is a subtle enemy whose main target is the Christian soldier. And without doctrine resident in the soul and obedience to that doctrine, all of us are in danger of succumbing to the craftiness and deceitfulness of the devil.

Why do you think the majority of believers are AWOL? They have been deceived by Satan's craftiness and worldly policies. If Satan could overcome the man and the woman in the Garden of Eden, a place where they resided in a perfect state without an old sin nature (OSN), just think of how easily he can do it now. Hence, divine wisdom is crucial for life in the Church Age; otherwise, believers will become the devil's fools. For this reason, Paul remarked in Ephesians 5:14, "Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you." Paul warned against ignorance of doctrine, a lack of biblical wisdom, in chapter 5 of his letter to the Ephesian church.

EPH 5:14, "Awake [from your ignorance], sleeper, And arise from the dead [operational death from lack of doctrine], And Christ will shine on you."

EPH 5:15, "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise,"

EPH 5:16, "making the most of your time, because the days are evil."

EPH 5:17, "So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

Satan is a master at choosing the proper time and the most advantageous season for tempting and attacking the believer. Satan knows how to make his attacks most effective. He knows the times when he is most likely to prevail. For example, he will attack when a believer first becomes interested in doctrine. No sooner do individuals discover doctrinal truth than temptations and worldly things for which they have searched for years are brought in to distract them and entice them back into the cosmic system. For instance, an individual may have been searching for years for someone or something, and then, when he becomes involved with doctrine, the kingdom of darkness brings just what he was searching for right to his doorstep. So, Satan will attack believers when they first begin to study doctrine, as many of us can affirm.

Secondly, he also attacks when the believer is plagued by some great affliction. For instance, Satan may attack the believer in times of sickness or physical weakness! Thirdly, he will attack the Christian soldier when that believer is about to enter into some significant venture for God's glory. As Moses declared in Genesis 49:17, "The devil will be 'like a serpent in the way, A horned snake in the path, That bites the horse's heels, So that his rider falls backward.'" For example, Satan stood at the high priest Joshua's right hand to resist him in Zechariah 3:1-4. The right hand represents the area where a believer follows God.

ZEC 3:1, "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him."

Notice that Satan stood on Joshua's right hand in order to accuse him. The right hand represented the area where Joshua was to follow the Lord.

ZEC 3:2, "And the Lord said to Satan, 'The Lord rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?'"

ZEC 3:3, "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel."

ZEC 3:4, "And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him saying, 'Remove the filthy garments from him.' Again he said to him, 'See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.'"

Satan standing at the right hand of Joshua illustrates his desire to hinder believers from their spiritual calling. Satan also attacks the Christian soldier when the believer is ignorant of doctrine and when the believer is out of God's geographical location, just as he deceived Eve when she was near the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Apostle Paul stated this concern in 2Corinthians 11:3 and wrote, "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."

Furthermore, Satan will attack after a great manifestation of God's love. For example, Satan set upon Paul with his strong temptations when Paul was exalted by an abundance of revelations from God. Paul recorded this event in 2Corinthians 12:7, "And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me – to keep me from exalting myself!"

So the kingdom of darkness will do whatever it can to assault the soul of the Christian soldier. For example, the kingdom of darkness may come to the believer and display false colors in the guise of a friend or "angel of light" communicating false doctrine. Or, Satan may try to get the believer to feel sorry for himself. "False colors" mean that the devil does not reveal his "true colors." He may even put on the same uniform as the believer to make the believer think that the devil is on his side.

Remember, the Bible teaches that there are even times when people are sent by the kingdom of darkness to the local assembly. These "false brethren" are not really a part of that assembly, but are there to spy out believers and return them to slavery in the cosmic system. Paul described this subterfuge in Galatians 2:4, "But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage."

So, we see that there are evil individuals designated “false brethren” described in God’s Word who seek to hinder the spiritual growth of believers. In 2Corinthians 11:26, Paul declared, “I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren.” John described these false brethren in 1John chapter 2.

1JO 2:18, “Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that Antichrist is coming, even now many Antichrists have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.”

1JO 2:19, “They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us.”

1JO 2:20, “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know [meaning that God the Holy Spirit will give you the discernment that you need to identify these people].”

Satan also has an intelligence service dedicated to discovering what those who have positive volition towards doctrine (PVT), faithful Christian soldiers, are doing. This intelligence service is described in Ephesians 6:12 as the “spiritual forces of wickedness.” The devil’s cosmic system has spies who are acquainted with the thinking of its enemies, God’s people. For example, Satan has demons whose job is to find out “the sin that so easily entangles” a believer or the sin pattern to which a believer is most prone, HEB 12:1. Each person has a sin that so easily entangles him. And Satan is a master at discovering which particular sin it is so he can use it to attack that individual if needed! In Hebrews 12:1, the author of Hebrews warned, “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

Another important principle concerning the kingdom of darkness’ king and his subtlety is the fact that the devil gradually approaches the soul of the believer as he makes his attack. When the devil first comes to tempt the believer, either through the world, the flesh, or his demons, he is “unassuming” and will demand very little from an individual knowing that is all he can accomplish at that time. If he were to ask for your allegiance and devotion to him all at once, he would be denied, so he implements his attacks gradually. If you don’t believe this fact, look at some of your old doctrinal friends or even family members. How did they get into the reversionistic state they are now in? This abandonment of doctrine happens gradually and, according to the Scriptures, it continually progresses to a worse state without rebound (confession of know sins, 1JO 1:9) and recovery (returning to the study and application of Bible doctrine).

This insidious process of reversionism (backsliding) is what Paul described in Galatians 5:9 when he said, “A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.” Mark recorded this same principle given by our Lord in Mark 8:15, “And He [our Lord] was giving orders to them, saying, ‘Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.’” The leaven of the Pharisees is legalism and hypocrisy. The leaven of Herod is worldliness or carnality.

In Song of Solomon 2:15, Solomon admonished, “Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom.” Notice that Solomon says it is just a little fox that ruined the vineyards! Or as the Teacher observed in Ecclesiastes 10:1, “Dead flies make a perfumer’s oil stink, so a little foolishness is weightier than wisdom and honor.” The kingdom of darkness, under the rulership of Satan, starts out very subtly, maybe with just some trivial issue, to draw the believer slowly but surely away from doctrine and the spiritual life. Initially, it may just be a single wrong thought, a flaming missile fired into the mind of the believer. Then, after the thought is allowed to stay in the mind for a while and is free to wander, it goes from the mind to the tongue and then to someone’s ear and then to his mind and so forth.

Paul emphasized the importance of resisting such thoughts in 2Corinthians 10:5-6, “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.”

After the soul has entertained and accommodated the thought for a while then the principle of Jam 1:14-16, becomes a reality: “But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death [operational death, the state of being ineffectual]. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.”

As a shrewd warrior, Satan also has his reserves. He always has fresh troops at hand because he is a user of others. If his first temptation fails, he has a second, a third, a fourth, and many more! Now remember, his attacks are not concentrated on the majority of believers, but upon the Christian soldier. The majority of believers do have problems; however, their problems are not from Satan but from self-induced misery. Paul wrote of this condition in 1Corinthians 16:22, “If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed.” But the advancing believer, the Christian soldier, is also besieged by Satan’s cosmic system.

Another strategy that Satan utilizes is to make the Christian soldier think that he (Satan) has been defeated and is in retreat. In reality, Satan deceives the believer into thinking that he has a spiritual victory in an area in which he truly does not. For example, Scripture records events where Satan or his demons are cast out, but it also records situations when the unclean spirits leave voluntarily only to come back stronger than before!

LUK 11:21, “When a strong [man], fully armed, guards his own homestead, his possessions are undisturbed;”

LUK 11:22, “But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied, and distributes his plunder.”

LUK 11:23, “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.”

LUK 11:24, “When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’”

LUK 11:25, “And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.”

LUK 11:26, “Then it goes and takes [along] seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.”

As Matthew recorded in Matthew 12:44, “Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order.” A soldier should also know the distinct beats of the drum, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm, and the call. A Christian soldier must understand the distinctly different sounds from the Word of God as taught by his pastor-teacher. In Isaiah 58:1 we read, “The communicator of doctrine is told to ‘Cry loudly, do not hold back; Raise your voice like a trumpet.’” The pastor-teacher is a spiritual trumpeter. And just as a trumpeter needs to be well-skilled on how to blow his trumpet, so the pastor needs to be well-skilled in his communication of Bible doctrine! As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:8, “For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?” In the same way, if the pastor does not rightly divide the Word of God and communicate doctrine accurately, how will the Christian soldiers under his command know what to do or how to respond?

The Christian soldier may need an alarm sounded in his ears when danger is near or an enemy is approaching; therefore, he needs to recognize the distinct sound of the bugle – the proper doctrine needed at the proper time! The alarm may be a call to duty. The sound may be a call to prayer. The good Christian soldier will be able to identify the distinct sound of the spiritual trumpet; sometimes it sounds out reproof, sometimes counsel, sometimes warning, and sometimes comfort. But all calls are carefully observed by the well-trained Christian soldier.

A soldier should also be a man of courage, bold and determined, not easily discouraged nor dismayed by the threats, malice, or strength of an enemy. So the Christian soldier ought to be courageous, not unassertive or emotional, especially when the pressure becomes great. As God said to Joshua, His courageous soldier who was about to go into the promised land, in Joshua 1:7, “Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.” The Christian soldier ought to be courageous and cultivate the attitude that David had in Psalm 23:4, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me;” In Psalm 56:4, David stated his faith thus, “In God, Whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can [mere] man do to me?” In Proverbs 28:1, Solomon observed that “the wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

Now, there are certain principles which will impart boldness and augment courage in the Christian soldier in the midst of danger. He is subject to such danger because of his involvement with doctrine and his participation in the Angelic Conflict. First, there is the virtue of his calling. Motivation and zeal are given to the Christian soldier when he realizes the privilege of fulfilling God’s plan for his life. When he considers that he is “fighting the good fight of faith” and that he has the honorable opportunity of glorifying Christ, he is motivated to advance spiritually. An example of such spiritual motivation in the early church is found in Acts 5:41, “So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.” The Christian soldier is motivated to stand up for the cause of Christ, the Word of Christ, and the people of Christ. He is someone who does his part to gather for Christ. In Matthew 12:30, our Lord stated that “He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.” Every believer should ask himself, “What am I doing to gather for Christ?”



A second principle which imparts boldness and increases courage in the Christian soldier is an understanding of the power and the strength of God, EPH 6:10. The Lord promises to stand by him and help him in all his conflicts, even those battles with the worst of his enemies. This perspective is found in Isaiah 41:10, “Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

ISA 41:11, “Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; Those who contend with you will be as nothing, and will perish.”

ISA 41:12, “You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, Those who war with you will be as nothing, and non-existent.”

ISA 41:13, “For I am the Lord your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’”

ISA 41:14, “‘Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you,’ declares the Lord, and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.”

As the Apostle John commented in 1John 4:4, “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”

A third principle which will impart boldness and augment courage in the Christian soldier is an understanding of his calling from God. Every Christian must take the time to learn how to use his talent to glorify God as well as to learn the nature of his spiritual gift. No matter what we do in Christianity, if we realize that we are doing it with the talent that God has given us or the spiritual gift He has imparted to us, then we will find boldness and added courage.

A fourth principle which will impart boldness and increase courage in the Christian soldier is a good conscience. A good conscience made Paul bold in the presence of his irate adversaries, ACT 23:1.

ACT 23:1, “And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, ‘Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day.’”

A soldier who is besotted with guilt cannot engage or face an enemy with the courage that is needed! This is why Satan loves to make accusations against God’s people, to condemn them and make them feel guilty! And his accusations are true! But, never forget that “a man after God’s own heart” does not quit when faced with failure. And remember, a woman after God’s own heart does not quit in the face of adversity. Peter also remarked on the value of a good conscience in 1Peter 3:16.

1PE 3:15, “But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;”

1PE 3:16, “And keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”

The fifth principle which will impart boldness and augment courage in the Christian soldier is the assurance of victory for him. The Christian soldier knows and trusts in the perspective of Paul in Romans 8:31 which states, “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?”

ROM 8:32, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

ROM 8:33, “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;”

ROM 8:34, “Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.”

ROM 8:35, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

ROM 8:36, “Just as it is written, ‘For Thy sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’”

ROM 8:37, “But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.”

ROM 8:38, “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,”

ROM 8:39, “Nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The Christian soldier believes that he is “more than a conqueror” before he enters spiritual conflict because his Captain has revealed to him that if he is faithful, then he shall overcome in the end and receive the crown of life, REV 2:10.

REV 2:10, “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Continuing the analogy between the natural soldier and the spiritual soldier, we are now ready for the next principle. A soldier must expect to endure hardship and therefore he prepares himself for it. Likewise, the Christian soldier must concede to a life attended with many hardships and difficulties if he desires to bring glory to Christ. Just as soldiers must often lay in a field and experience hardship that others know nothing about, so the Christian soldier experiences personal hardships without others being aware of his trials. This is why Peter exhorted believers to “humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” in 1Peter 5:6.

1PE 5:7, “Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.”

1PE 5:8, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

1PE 5:9, “But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”

Notice in verse 9 that, even though we may think that what we are going through personally is something no one else can understand, the Bible teaches that those same experiences of suffering have happened and are happening to believers throughout the world.

1PE 5:10, “And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect [mature you], confirm [prove you], strengthen, and establish you.”

Hence, the Christian soldier’s life is accompanied by many difficulties and afflictions that he must endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. If he cannot endure hardship, he is not a good soldier. For example, what type of hardness or hardship does the Christian soldier need to endure? First, he must learn to endure the hardship that comes from his personal sins. Many times our own iniquities bring great sorrow and trouble upon us. We do things to ourselves and then we end up looking for someone else to blame. As the Lord revealed through Jeremiah in Jeremiah 2:17, “Have you not done this to yourself, By your forsaking the Lord your God, When He led you in the way?”

JER 2:19, “‘Your own wickedness will correct you, And your apostasies will reprove you; Know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter For you to forsake the Lord your God, And the dread of Me is not in you,’ declares the Lord God of hosts [armies].” Sin not only hinders the Christian soldier, but many times his own conscience lashes out at him and wounds him spiritually. Sin not only brings hardships upon the soul, but many times distress and anxiety upon the body. The Christian soldier must also learn to endure the hardship that comes from self-denial. We are not called to asceticism, but we are called to self-denial.

MAT 16:21, “From that time Jesus Christ began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.”

MAT 16:22, “And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘God forbid [it], Lord! This shall never happen to You.’”

MAT 16:23, “But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.’”

MAT 16:24, “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’”

MAT 16:25 “For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it.”

MAT 16:26, “For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

MAT 16:27, “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.”

There are times when denying yourself may mean to deny yourself of prosperity, riches, wealth, success, sleep, rest, things you enjoy, whatever is necessary in your pursuit of victory. In fact, if something is taking you away from your relationship with God, God will ask you to part from it. An example of this principle is stated in Matthew 19:16 where Matthew records, “And behold, one came to Him and said, ‘Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?’”

MAT 19:17, “And He said to him, ‘Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is [only] One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.’”

Jesus said this to the young man because this man had a high opinion of himself.

MAT 19:18, “He said to Him [the man said to the Lord], ‘Which ones?’ And Jesus said, ‘You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness;’”

MAT 19:19, “Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

MAT 19:20, “The young man said to Him, ‘All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?’”

MAT 19:21, “Jesus said to him, ‘If you wish to be complete [spiritually mature], go [and] sell your possessions and give to [the] poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’”

MAT 19:22, “But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieved; for he was one who owned much property.”

MAT 19:23, “And Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.’”

MAT 19:24, “And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

MAT 19:25, “And when the disciples heard [this], they were very astonished and said, ‘Then who can be saved?’”

MAT 19:26, “And looking upon [them] Jesus said to them, ‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

MAT 19:27, “Then Peter answered and said to Him, ‘Behold, we have left everything and followed You; what then will there be for us?’”

MAT 19:28, “And Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’”

MAT 19:29, “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life.”

MAT 19:30, "But many [who are] first will be last; and [the] last, first."

In this passage, our Lord is not stating that being rich is evil. Rather, the young man's riches served as a stumbling block to his spiritual life. And God will ask the believer to repudiate anything, including wealth, which is a hindrance to his relationship with God.

A third principle that the Christian soldier must also learn is to endure the hardships that arise from relationships with people. He must learn to endure all the vicious and cruel reproaches, the slanders, the criticism, the taunting, the scoffing, the backbiting, the lies, etc. The Christian soldier must endure all the things that the so-called "lovable brethren" and the "sons of the devil" can invent and thrust upon him. And, by the way, if you think this principle is an unlovable attitude intended to cause division in the body of Christ, remember what James wrote to the early Church.

JAM 3:8, "But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison."

JAM 3:9, "With it we bless our Lord and Father; and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God."

JAM 3:10, "From the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way."

This principle of hardship arising from people is part of New Testament doctrine and not a matter of personal opinion! Jeremiah recorded in Jeremiah 9:8, "Their tongue is a deadly arrow; It speaks deceit; With his mouth one speaks peace to his neighbor, But inwardly he sets an ambush for him." Be careful of the hypocrisy found among born-again believers. The tongues of some men are like cruel weapons. David wrote in Psalm 42:10, "As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, While they say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'" Being mocked and ridiculed and judged ranks among the great sufferings of the godly. In Hebrews 11:36, we are told that the great believers of the Old Testament endured many of these things. Others experienced mocking and scourging, chains, and imprisonment.

"They" shouted at Joseph and hated him because of the calling God placed upon his life. Remember what "they" said about our Lord. "They" said He was of the devil. "They" accused Him of being an alcoholic. "They" said he hung out with prostitutes. "They" said that He blasphemed. "They" said He was insane. "They" said He was demon possessed, that He stirred up trouble, that He was a cult leader, and many other vicious lies. In Acts 24:5, "they" said of Paul, "For we have found this man a real pest and a fellow who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes."

By the way, in every case just mentioned, "they" who said these disparaging things were religious people. Ever since Cain killed Abel, religion has been trying to kill the grace-oriented believer. This is why the Lord said to the religious leaders of His day in John 8:44, "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own [nature], for he is a liar, and the father of lies." Likewise, Paul observed in Galatians 4:29, "But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also." At times, these things are hard to bear, but the Christian soldier must learn to endure them.

A fourth principle that the Christian soldier must also learn is to endure the hardship perpetrated by wicked men. We do not really see this hardship at this time in our nation, but we may see it someday. For example, looking at Hebrews 11:35, where the author described male and female heroes in the Old Testament, we find that “women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection;”

HEB 11:36, “And others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.”

HEB 11:37, “They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated;”

HEB 11:38, “(Men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.”

HEB 11:39, “And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,”

HEB 11:40, “Because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.”

The Christian soldier must also learn to endure the hardship that comes from God withdrawing from the believer. This hardship is a difficult one to understand at first, but it is true. For example, God withdrew from Job so Job could be tested by Satan. This disengagement by the Lord is actually a compliment to the mature believer. God speaks through His Word. The highest compliment to be given to a member of the Royal Family is for God to withdraw from him so that he can use the greatest power in the world: Bible doctrine! There are times when God’s withdrawal is manifested by all the “doors” in your life being closed; for then, you must make your own decisions. With this hardship, God is testing the doctrine that is resident in your heart (mind)!

The Christian soldier must also learn to endure the hardships that come from his particular calling and place in the body of Christ. Some believers have harder service than others in the same way that, in the military, one soldier might have more responsibility or pressure than the rest of his unit. In the same manner, both those on the front lines and those in leadership positions face more difficulties than those in the rear or those who are subordinate to leadership. This principle is seen in every local assembly. Some members of a congregation do their best to support the local assembly through service, giving, praying, teaching, ministering, and helping out in any way they can. However, others are simply too involved with fraternizing with the enemies’ army to have time to serve God. Some believers willingly accept the pressure and are willing to be sent on a dangerous mission. Others willingly stand guard. But, some simply do not want any assignment whatsoever. And although some endure more hardships than others, all must take what occurs in their lives in the place and station assigned to them from the hand of God.

Pastors who communicate doctrine, as well as those who are vital to their ministries, are the ones most exposed to these hardships. And sometimes, others in the doctrinal ministry suffer similar intense hardship. However, each one must see to it that he executes his responsibility in his respective position. Those who are on guard must not quit their watch because of exposure to the elements or because danger approaches. Having motivated his soldiers to persist despite difficulties, a leader must also refrain from withdrawing from his duties no matter the circumstances. Leaders must not proclaim that Jesus Christ is the answer to all difficulties and that with doctrine in your soul, you can handle anything and then, when pressured themselves, retreat and fall away or quit and run away.

So whatever comes, pastors must teach, the Christian soldier must hear, the worship of God must be maintained, the banner of the Word must be displayed, and saints must keep their ground and station designated by Jesus Christ.

This principle is what Paul had in mind when he wrote to Timothy in 2Timothy 4:1, “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom,”

2TI 4:2, “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

2TI 4:3, “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,”

2TI 4:4, “And will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.”

2TI 4:5, “But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Additionally, the Christian soldier exposes himself to hardships voluntarily, patiently, courageously, constantly, and sincerely. He does not have to be dragged or forced into his duty to undergo difficulties for the gospel’s sake. Instead, he does it freely and, with a ready mind, engages in the work. The Lord does not want soldiers who feel forced to do things. His soldiers are volunteers! They endure patiently as their Captain, The Lord Jesus Christ, exemplified. A good soldier will keep with his colors [keep his uniform on], just as a good soldier of Christ will keep and abide with the banner of truth. Now, under martial law, “death without mercy” was the punishment for a soldier who left behind his colors and went AWOL. When Peter strayed from his colors and realized his folly, he wept bitterly for having deserted the Lord at the Cross. Similar to the soldier who goes AWOL, it will be “death without mercy,” the sin unto death, for the believer who has departed from the truth and has embraced heresy or idolatry, 1JO 5:16. All believers should take heed, lest our enemies also deceive us.

Remember that Satan sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light. He puts out false colors that come with an overt banner or standard of “truth.” He and his false ministers make use of Scripture for the purpose of deceiving the Church. These false ministers are the so-called “love crowd” who say, “Put aside your doctrinal differences and let’s love each other!” In 2Corinthians 11:3, Paul warned, “But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

2CO 11:4, “For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully.”

Moreover, Paul stated in 2Corinthians 11:13, “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.”

2CO 11:14, “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”

2CO 11:15, “Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.”

A good soldier will not turn his back on the enemy to the dishonor of his captain. Although his life may be in danger, he will not run away and, as a coward, betray his captain’s trust. Remember, in chapter 6 of Ephesians, among all the parts of armor provided for the Christian soldier, we read of no “back-piece.” So, if he turns his back, he is unprotected.

HEB 10:38, “But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.”

Another interesting principle regarding the Christian soldier is that a soldier is greatly encouraged in all his encounters and sharp conflicts with the enemy by considering the reward and honor he shall receive if he holds out to win the victory. Many people in our passive society reject such an idea, but it is true! In the same manner, the Christian soldier attains much intensity and courage by the consideration of the eternal rewards he shall receive in the end. This motivation was one of the things that made Moses despise the glory of Egypt and refuse to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, the heir-apparent of that royal family. Moses saw Him Who was invisible and had his eyes on the rewards reaped by serving God.

HEB 11:24, “By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,”

HEB 11:25, “Choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,”

HEB 11:26, “considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.”

Furthermore, some soldiers of an army are singled out as champions to engage an enemy alone. And, though every champion is a soldier, not every soldier is a champion. A captain will not choose just any soldier for hard work; instead, he will pick experienced and courageous men for such important tasks. Just so, The Lord Jesus Christ sometimes calls forth one in His spiritual army to engage the enemy alone and, as a champion of the truth, to sacrifice his life on the behalf of that truth. And what greater honor can be bestowed upon a Christian than this? We see this “selection for intensive service” happen to Stephen in Acts chapter 7 and to Antipas in Revelation 2:13.

The fact that no soldier knows the final outcome of a battle in which he is called to fight is another analogy between the ordinary soldier and the Christian soldier. The Christian soldier needs to operate in faith and trust in the sovereignty of God. A soldier cannot know beforehand whether he will be victorious. Even though he may be valiant and courageous in his service and faithful and true to his captains and leaders, the outcome is not certain until the end of the battle. In victory or defeat, the fate of the individual soldier is uncertain. Just as the ordinary soldier may lose a limb or even his precious life in a fight, the Christian soldier may be wounded or even killed for the cause of Christ! A soldier may possess the greatest weapons and still lose the fight!



All this leads us to examine the analogy between the Predesigned Plan of God (PPOG) and what is known in the military as “The Nine Principles of The Art of War.”

The principles behind the preparation for war and direction for war are termed strategy. In the military sense, strategy is defined as the science and art of military command used to meet the enemy in combat under advantageous conditions. In other words, in any war there must be a plan and method designed to defeat the enemy. God’s strategy is found in the divine power and operating assets which He has prepared for believers in eternity past. This divine strategy includes the following:

- a. His plan, which we call the Predesigned Plan of God (PPOG)
- b. His method, the use of His power, which we call divine omnipotence

Paul told the Corinthians that one of the signs that he was a servant of God was the fact that he operated according to 2Corinthians 6:7 which states, “In the Word of Truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left.” In summary, God’s strategy for our spiritual warfare includes operation inside the Predesigned Plan of God (PPOG) and reliance on divine power.

A second principle of warfare involves the use of tactics. Military tactics consist of the science involved in the organization of a military force and the techniques for using weapons or military units in combination to engage and defeat the enemy in battle. In other words, tactics refer to a device for accomplishing an end or a method of employing forces in combat. So, tactics involve the techniques and abilities to put strategy into operation.

It is important to understand these two military terms before continuing discussion. “Strategy” refers to the method and the plan of attack or defense; “tactics” refers to putting the plan into operation. God’s strategy is found in the Predesigned Plan of God. God’s tactics involve the mechanics of operating in the divine power which He has made available to every Church-age believer.

Our Lord Jesus Christ won the strategic victory over Satan in the Angelic Conflict during His first advent by His saving work on the Cross. Tactical victory in the Angelic Conflict has been assigned as a goal for every Church-age believer. As a member of the Royal Family of God, you are assigned the responsibility of tactical victory. The believer is directed by Scripture to put into operation the method and the plan that The Lord Jesus Christ has made available to him for victory in spiritual warfare.

2Co 10:3, “For though we walk in the flesh, We live in human bodies in the natural realm in this world, We do not war according to the flesh, We do not fight our battles in human strength,”

2Co 10:4, “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.”

2Co 10:5, “[We are] destroying speculations [false doctrines and theories] and every arrogant thought raised up against the knowledge [the doctrine] of God, and we are taking every thought captive [making every thought surrender to obedience] to Christ.”

You are responsible to put into operation the plan that the Lord has made available to every Church-age believer. And remember, never has so much been given to so many as in the Church Age. This vast portfolio of assets available to the Christian soldier is part of the uniqueness of the Church Age. So, we have begun to note the analogy between the Predesigned Plan of God and what is known in military science as “The Nine Principles of the Art of War.”

## Chapter 2: The Art of War

We will begin this chapter about spiritual warfare and “The Art of War” by further analyzing the similarities between the military life of the Roman soldier and the “soldier of Christ” as found in the Word of God. What is “The Art of War?” One author made this statement – in essence, the art of war is the art of life. Our Lord made an important statement in John 16:32 when He said, “Behold, an hour is coming, and has [already] come, for you to be scattered, each to his own [home,] and to leave Me alone; and [yet] I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.”

JOH 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

For the believer, saying that the art of war is the art of life is not a bad statement. Actually, *The Art of War* is a compilation of the works of Sun Tzu (pronounced “Sue”). Who was Sun Tzu? Sun Tzu was a Chinese general who lived in approximately 500 B.C. Sun Tzu’s ideas spread to the rest of Asia, in particular, to Japan. In fact, the Japanese quickly adopted Sun Tzu’s teaching and then added a few chapters themselves. Therefore, it is no accident that Asian cultures are referred to as cultures of strategy; Sun Tzu has played a major part in this development. *The Art of War* has been applied to business, sports, diplomacy, and personal lives and has been popularized in American business as well.

The most fundamental of Sun Tzu’s principles for the conduct of war is that “all warfare is based on deception.” This principle of deception in war is why the Bible has so many passages that prepare us to handle deception by the kingdom of darkness. And, in fact, the opposite of deception is loyalty – something which is not that common!

In 2Timothy 1:15, Paul spoke of disloyalty when he stated, “You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me.” And he made this statement in 2Timothy 4:16, “At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.”

2TI 4:17, “But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion’s mouth.”

2TI 4:18, “The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Another key principle observed by Sun Tzu is that “the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.” This axiom is a perfect analogy for certain principles found in the Word of God such as:

EPH 6:11, “Hold your ground against the strategies of the devil.”

EPH 6:13, “Hold your ground in the day that evil attacks you.”

Furthermore, James 4:7 records, “Submit therefore to God [execute the Predesigned Plan of God]. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

There are at least nine principles of warfare in the natural realm which have an application in the spiritual realm.

1. First, there is “the principle of objective.” The purpose of a military operation is the attainment of a certain objective assigned to a designated force. All Church-age believers have been assigned to be a member of a designated “force” by God. You have been chosen by God to serve in a local assembly that has been assigned certain spiritual objectives.

JOH 15:16 “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you.”

The purpose of a military operation is the attainment of a certain objective assigned to a designated force. This objective constitutes the guide for the interpretation of orders, for the formation of decisions, and for the employment of the means available. And just as a certain objective exists in the natural realm for a military unit, so an objective exists in the spiritual realm for a local congregation. Our main objective in spiritual warfare, the war in which believers are called to fight, is to glorify The Lord Jesus Christ. This objective is found in Revelation 4:11 – “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.”

1CH 16:28, “Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.”

1CH 16:29, “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him; Worship the Lord in holy array.”

The main objective of the believer in the Angelic Conflict is to glorify The Lord Jesus Christ. So, in the Christian way of life, the principle of the objective is the fulfillment of the Predesigned Plan of God through the attainment of spiritual growth inside God’s plan.

2. The second principle of war is “the principle of offensive action.” Offensive action is the only means by which a decision is accomplished in warfare. And, when successful, the offensive brings victory; in contrast, defensive action can only avoid defeat. Therefore, the only effective way to win a war is to go on the offensive. In 1Timothy 6:12, Paul told Timothy, “Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.” Now, Paul did not say fight the devil. He said fight “the good fight of the faith,” a phrase which means the execution of the Predesigned Plan of God. We can ascertain the definition of “fighting the good fight” from an earlier passage in Paul’s second letter to Timothy. 2Ti 4:7, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;” so the goal of offensive action in the Predesigned Plan of God is advancement to spiritual maturity. Advancing to spiritual maturity results in the conveyance of your escrow blessings (rewards in eternity) to your account and the opportunity to participate in the wonderful privilege of suffering for blessing whereby you become a witness to God’s integrity in Satan’s appeals trial (human history). Paul referred to these escrow blessings in

Ephesians 1:3 – “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,”

EPH 1:4, “Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”

3. The third principle found in warfare is called “the principle of mass.” The term "mass" is used in the military to define combat power. The concept of mass involves the numbers, the weapons, the tactical skill, the fighting ability, the determination, the discipline, the morale, and the leadership of a military unit. In other words, mass takes into account all the assets and weaponry that a group of soldiers has at its disposal. The proper use of mass determines success in battle. Success in warfare is attained by the employment of mass in a main effort, at the proper time, and at the proper place for the accomplishment of a definite purpose. So, notice four things in this explanation:

- a. There must be a main effort
- b. There is a proper time
- c. There is a proper place
- d. There is a definite purpose

The main effort of the Christian soldier is to love God with all his strength, DEU 6:5. The proper time refers to “redeeming the time” by being filled with the Holy Spirit, EPH 5:16. The proper place is inside the Predesigned Plan of God, ROM 12:2. The definite purpose is the glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2TH 1:12. Successful use of “spiritual mass” to glorify Jesus Christ can only be accomplished by using the weapons and the power that God has made available to the believer. In the Christian life, there are many distractions from the use of divine power. So, by analogy, mass in the Christian life is the utilization of divine power delegated by God the Father in the Predesigned Plan of God and the function of the power of the Holy Spirit inside that plan. In the spiritual life, the principle of mass is directly related to the omnipotence of God. Remember that we have the ability to fulfill His will only when we are living inside the Predesigned Plan of God for our lives. And whenever believers use human power or Satan’s cosmic power to accomplish a task, they grieve, or even quench, the Holy Spirit. All of Satan’s power and all of Satan’s energy come from two sources. First, his power arises from the fact that he was created the supreme creature of all times. Satan was created a super-genius. He possesses the greatest energy of any known creature. And his energy is absolutely, totally, and completely dynamic.

EZE 28:11, “Again the word of the Lord came to me saying,”

EZE 28:12, “Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre [possessed by Satan], and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God, You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.’”

EZE 28:13, “You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared.”

EZE 28:14, “You were the anointed cherub who covers [Satan was the personal bodyguard of Jesus Christ], And I placed you [there]. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.”

EZE 28:15, “You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created, Until unrighteousness was found in you.”

All of Satan’s power and all of Satan’s energy come from two sources. First, his power and energy derive from the fact that he is the supreme created being in all of history. And secondly, Satan’s energy has been renewed from day to day for tens of thousands of years. His day-by-day renewal of energy comes from one source – ARROGANCE. Arrogance is a great energizer among both fallen angels and human beings. For instance, arrogance can motivate a church to do overtly amazing things over a long period of time. However, arrogance is a wrong motivation and such acts are of no account to God. Arrogance motivates all kinds of human good as well as evil and sin. Moreover, arrogance is the most effective human energy system for destroying the fulfillment of God’s plan for one’s life. In fact, the main sin that leads believers to withdraw from the spiritual life is arrogance. The use of human intellect and false concepts, whereby one quenches the Holy Spirit, is almost as common a problem as arrogance for the believer.

Again, “mass” in the Christian life is the utilization of divine power delegated by God the Father in the Predesigned Plan of God and the function of the power of the Holy Spirit inside that plan. Therefore, in the spiritual life, the principle of mass is directly related to the omnipotence of God. When you realize these important principles and avoid the pitfalls of arrogance and human viewpoint, you can say what David said in 1Samuel 17:47 – “For the battle is the Lord’s.” Or, as found in 2Samuel 22:40, you may say, “For Thou hast girded me with strength for battle; Thou hast subdued under me those who rose up against me.” The principle of “spiritual mass” is also taught in Ephesians 4:11-16.

EPH 4:11, “And he gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastor-teachers,”

Notice that the purpose behind the appointment of these officers in the spiritual army of the Lord is given in verse 12.

EPH 4:12, “for the equipping [equipping for battle] of the saints for the work of service, to the building of the body of Christ,”

In this verse, the word “equip” is the Greek word *katartismos* and means to prepare, to equip for battle, or to enable. Also, the word “service” is a synonym for “armed forces,” those who are equipped to fight.

EPH 4:13, “Until we all attain to the unity of the faith [that which is believed, Bible doctrine]...”

The only true unity we will ever have as believers is the unity that comes from thinking alike by means of correct doctrine.

EPH 4:13, “Until we all attain to the unity of the Christian faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature believer, to that full measure of development which belongs to the fulfillment of Christ.”

Verse 13 records the definite purposes behind the principle of mass in spiritual conflict – unity of mindset, knowledge of Bible doctrine, and personal spiritual growth. Then, the results of growing up spiritually are given in verse 14.

EPH 4:14, “As a result, we are no longer to be children [immature believers], tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;”

And here, by the way, is part of your spiritual warfare – tossed here and there by waves, carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, or by craftiness in deceitful scheming. But, in spiritual maturity, the believer can have a stability of soul leading to steadfastness of duty and the awareness of deception by the enemy as the basis for spiritual combat.

EPH 4:15, “But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects unto Him, who is the head, even Christ,”

Verse 15 again reveals the definite purpose of spiritual mass for the Christian soldier – advancing to spiritual adulthood through the inculcation of Bible doctrine taught by a communicator who is motivated by virtue-love.

EPH 4:16, “From whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that [doctrine] which every joint [the pastor who is prepared] supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, and this causes the spiritual growth of the body for the building up of itself by means of the spirit of love.”

In this verse, “the spirit of love” is a reference to the filling of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, in verse 16 we have a description of a properly functioning military unit where each man knows his place and knows how to effectively carry out his duties; the result is edification of the body and spiritual advancement for the members of the body. So, the concept of mass involves the numbers, the weapons, the tactical skill, the fighting ability, the determination, the discipline, the morale, and the leadership, which are all part of the power of the military principle of mass.

4. “Economy of force” is the fourth principle of war. Economy of force may be defined as the application of the principle of mass. Economy of force is the means by which military mass is deployed or arranged in a main effort. First, the time and place of the main effort are determined. This determination falls under the principle of preparation. The principle of preparation and the ordering of priorities were explained by our Lord in Luke chapter 14.

LUK 14:31, “Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand [men] to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand [men]?”

LUK 14:32, “Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace.”

LUK 14:33, “So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.”

This last verse does not refer to taking a vow of poverty, but rather emphasizes the setting up of priorities; a believer’s commitment to the Lord must take precedence over all other issues in his life such as his possessions. Then, in verse 34, we have the principle of the believer losing his effectiveness by wrong priorities.

LUK 14:34, “Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?”

In the ancient world salt was used for preserving and seasoning food. A lack of saltiness in this passage is analogous to reversionism (backsliding). The reference to tasteless salt is used to portray the divine discipline of the reversionistic believer in Luke 14:35.

LUK 14:35, “It [the tasteless salt of reversionism] is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Again, economy of force is the means by which military mass is deployed or arranged in a main effort. What does economy of force connote in the spiritual realm? It means that the Christian soldier should not allow himself to be distracted from the plan that God has designed for him. Remember that when we do become distracted, He has made provision for our failures through rebound and recovery. Therefore, there is no place for guilt in the Christian way of life. In the Christian way of life, the economy of force principle is tantamount to the following four things:

a. The perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine

This allows an understanding and use of the divine assets made available to the Church-age believer in the Predesigned Plan of God. A believer must know the means by which his spiritual power is deployed in the main effort of advancing towards spiritual maturity.

b. Making God the first priority - Establishing the priority of our relationship with God over our relationships with people is paramount; this principle must be understood and lived by the believer in order to advance spiritually. And, interestingly, our relationships with others will suffer unless this priority is recognized.

c. A believer’s use of the correct source of power - The utilization of divine power rather than the function of human power in the cosmic system is the key to spiritual success. Following this principle is the main reason for blessings in time and in the eternal state.

d. Living inside the Predesigned Plan of God - The utilization of divine power must occur inside the Predesigned Plan of God for the successful fulfillment of that plan. Thus, spiritual economy of force entails the establishment of biblical priorities. First, priority is assigned to a relationship with God over relationships with people. The second priority is an application of the first priority – the use of divine power in the Predesigned Plan of God over the use of human power in the cosmic system. Therefore, this principle of economy of force emphasizes the importance of proper preparation. And preparation comes from Bible doctrine.

PRO 20:18, “Prepare plans by consultation [of the Scriptures], And make war by wise guidance.”

A Christian soldier should consult the Word of God for guidance in every circumstance.

PRO 24:6, “For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors [doctrines from God’s Word] there is victory.” The Christian soldier’s counsel comes from wise guidance – Bible doctrine.

5. The fifth principle of warfare is “the principle of movement.” “Movement” is a technical military term that refers to the maneuvering of combat arms and their support units. Now, movement for the believer is based upon the believer’s understanding of God’s plan for his life.

Remember that there is a general plan for all believers and then there is a precise, accurate plan for each individual believer. Under the principle of taking the offensive, the principle of movement means to bring military mass into close contact with the enemy to secure a decisive result. For the believer, this involves bringing his divine operating assets close to the spiritual battles that he faces. This is why the word “wrestle” is used in Ephesians 6:12.

EPH 6:12, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood.”

The concept of “wrestling with the enemy” connotes close contact. But, recall that our wrestling is in the spiritual realm, not in the natural realm. The principle of movement is also used for placing a force where it can attack with advantage. This spiritual movement falls under the concept of preparation – preparing oneself for the day of battle. Now, movement is most effective when it is concealed. Therefore God has designed a plan for the Church Age whereby your spiritual growth is concealed. Only at certain stages of spiritual growth are results of your spiritual advance apparent to others. This concealment emphasizes the privacy of your own priesthood in living your own life as unto the Lord. Remember that the Lord does not need to see overt changes in you to discern whether or not you have been moving forward in your spiritual walk. He knows all. By contrast, man needs to see overt change in you to perceive your spiritual growth. However, the Lord is the One who counts! Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart (mind), ISA 16:7.

ISA 16:7, “But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

In the Predesigned Plan of God, movement refers to momentum in His plan with the result being the invisible impact of the believer on history. This spiritual momentum is tantamount to attacking from a concealed position. This momentum, utilized by the pivot (mature believers in a nation, ROM 11:4), has sustained our country for all these years. Our country has been sustained as a client nation to God because of the principle of concealed movement by invisible, spiritual champions.

Believers advance in the spiritual life by using divine power. Divine power is invisible. And when we attain the objective of spiritual momentum, we have invisible impact that is not found in any history book. Until the believer attains spiritual self-esteem (self-esteem derived from understanding that you are what you are by the grace of God), such movement in his life is concealed but still effective. Only when he reaches spiritual self-esteem will anyone notice his spiritual advance. Until then, people will only observe the ups and downs of spiritual childhood. But the effectiveness of the Christian life is not in spiritual childhood. And yet, while still in spiritual childhood, most believers mistakenly become involved in Christian service.

Another aspect of the principle of movement is that it is most effective when covered by the capable employment of firepower. This principle involves the concept of artillery support for troop advancement. Now, at the point of spiritual self-esteem, movement is visible and must be supported by maximum artillery fire. Firepower, as defined in the Christian life, is the utilization of certain logistical grace principles and certain problem-solving devices (Appendix A) such as rebound, recovery, the faith-rest drill, and the confidence that is derived from spiritual self-esteem. While in spiritual self-esteem, you have the motivation of impersonal love along with your personal love for God and occupation with Christ. But you do not, as yet, have the full function of impersonal unconditional love as the greatest problem-solving device in life. God provides your artillery barrage through these problem-solving devices. He also provides



opposition in the form of suffering to allow you to exercise these devices. With firepower such as the problem-solving devices, along with momentum testing through suffering for blessing, you can advance through each stage of spiritual adulthood to the point of maximum glorification of God. And so, all of these concepts fall under the principle of movement.

So, we conclude that a believer advances in the Christian life only when he utilizes the power of God inside the Predesigned Plan of God.

2CO 10:4, “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses [winning spiritual battles].”

6. The sixth principle of warfare is termed “the principle of surprise.” Surprise, in some form, is essential to obtain maximum effect in battle with minimum casualties. This is why we are told by Peter not to be surprised at the trials and the temptations that come our way.

1PE 4:12, “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you,”

1PE 4:13, “But to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.”

Surprise occurs in many categories of military activity – time, place, direction, force, tactics, and weapons. The great captains of history all used surprise – Hannibal, Caesar, Adolphus, Frederick the Great, Napoleon, and Macarthur. The surprises to Satan during the Church Age are the tactical victories of believers from varying races, cultures, mentalities, talents, and handicaps. Equal opportunity and equal privilege for the believer provided by God in time means that he is not handicapped in any way by race, culture, mentality, talent, etc.

As the ruler of this world, Satan is not only surprised, but also shocked every time a believer enters into spiritual maturity. The Church Age with its unique factors such as the indwelling of the believer by the Trinity is a complete surprise to Satan. When the Church Age began and its unique factors began to multiply, Satan experienced the greatest shock since he was thrown out of heaven in prehistoric times. And no greatness by any Old Testament saint has so shocked, surprised, and defeated Satan like the most "insignificant" of Church-age believers attaining spiritual maturity in the Predesigned Plan of God. The Church Age is the single greatest period for the utilization of divine power in all of history. And this power is available to you right now.

The life of the Apostle Paul provides the greatest example of a Church-age believer making use of this divine power. The mystery doctrine of the Church Age was not known to Old Testament authors (thus, the “mystery!”), nor was it known to Satan and the fallen angels. Mystery doctrine is part of the “progressive revelation” of Scripture and is the doctrine that Church-age believers are meant to utilize in living the Christian way of life.

ROM 16:25, “Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,”

ROM 16:26, “But now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;”

Every factor related to the Predesigned Plan of God (PPOG), the unique life, the lifestyle of wisdom, has taken Satan completely by surprise. Despite this surprise, Satan counterattacks with his cosmic system in every generation of the Church Age. Satan, as the ruler of this world (John 12:31), uses the cosmic system to attempt to control or defeat believers. This control is his policy for the rulership of the world. Satan's cosmic system is composed of two power systems. "Cosmic one" is Satan's exploitation of believers by use of their personal arrogance. This is his chief means of controlling the human race. Satan invented arrogance, for arrogance was his original sin. "Cosmic two" is the devil's "propaganda and indoctrination college" used to promulgate cosmic thinking and promote antagonism towards God, especially towards the grace policy of God. So, Satan promotes the cosmic system as a direct response to the Predesigned Plan of God.

The cosmic system as we know it did not exist in Old Testament times. The cosmic system exists now, in the Church Age, as Satan's greatest genius. He uses it to distract believers, to counterattack the PPOG, and to neutralize the effectiveness of God's power. And in our day, this counterattack is highly successful! The devil counterattacks from his cosmic system with temptation, with human good, and with evil. Today, Satan's counterattack is effective because the average believer fails to learn Bible doctrine. The failure of the believer in spiritual "childhood" to establish and continue the habit of perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine greatly aids the devil in his schemes. Unfortunately, today most believers are living out their lives in a "Madison avenue public relations-look at me" type of attitude using the energy of the flesh rather than God's power.

Perhaps the greatest surprise to the devil is the fact that there is positive volition towards doctrine in every generation of believers during the Church Age. In each generation, there are believers who pass the test; they suffer for blessing and they testify as a witness for the prosecution in the appeals trial of Satan. When a believer passes this type of testing, it is the maximum blow to Satan. This battle with Satan's world system is described by the Apostle John in John chapter 15.

JOH 15:17, "This I command you, that you love one another."

JOH 15:18, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before [it hated] you."

JOH 15:19, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you."

JOH 15:20, "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also."

JOH 15:21, "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me."

7. The “principle of security” is the seventh principle of war. Security is defined in military science and tactics as all measures taken to guard against the enemy’s attempts at observations, surprise, and hostile interference with effective maneuver of your troops. Security is designed to gain and maintain a military unit’s freedom of action. The analogy of security for the Christian soldier includes eternal security for every believer at salvation and further emphasizes the fantastic problem-solving devices available to the believer. Our security from satanic opposition in spiritual warfare is given in such passages as Isaiah 54:17, ““No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication is from Me,’ declares the Lord.”

PRO 21:31, “The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the Lord.”

EXO 14:14, “The Lord will fight for you while you keep silent.”

JOB 5:19, “From six troubles He will deliver you, even in seven evil will not touch you.”

In Scripture, six is the number of man and represents all the different actions that mankind attempts in order to harm the believer.

JOB 5:20, “In famine or economic disaster He will redeem you from death, and in war from the power of the sword.”

In the following verses, Job listed four disasters as illustrations of security – depression, warfare, sins of the tongue, and death.

JOB 5:21, “You will be hidden from the scourge of the tongue [social disaster], neither will you be afraid of violence when it comes.”

The New English Bible provides this translation of verse 21: “You will be shielded from the lash of slander.” Now verse 22 reduces the disasters to two – economic disaster and death.

JOB 5:22, “You will laugh at violence or death, neither will you be afraid of wild beasts.”

“Laughter” refers to a believer having a relaxed mental attitude in time of disaster. “Wild beasts” actually represent men who live in selfish ambition and inordinate competition. These men act like animals in order to prosper in life. Wild beasts were also instruments of violent death in the ancient world, just as drugs and automobiles are today. Remember that the believer cannot be removed from life apart from the sovereign decision of God. In other words, until God decides it is time for him to depart, nothing will remove the believer from this life. And, once God has made the decision to remove him, nothing can keep the believer here.

Verse 22 indicates that no instrument of violent death can remove the believer from this life until the sovereignty of God permits it. No believer can be removed from this earth by death until God is ready to take him home. But once God, in His sovereignty, calls the believer home to heaven, nothing can keep him here. Death is the sovereign decision of God only. Therefore, the believer has no right to question the decision or the wisdom of God in regards to the death of a loved one. We have the right to mourn, but we have no right to feel or express bitterness or antagonism toward God. Death is His decision, His judgment call, and His wisdom.

JOB 5:23, “For you will be in league with the stones of the field and the beasts of the field will be at peace with you.”

This verse indicates that you will be at peace with “the weapons of this world” when you understand God’s security for the believer.

JOB 5:24, “And you will know that your tent [human body] is secure, for you will visit your abode, your final home, with no loss.”

Verses 24 and 25 signify that death does not terminate escrow blessings (rewards in eternity) for the winner believer, the spiritual champion.

JOB 5:25, “You will also know that your descendants [or seed] will be many [or prosperous] and your offspring as the grass of the earth.”

In verse 25, “descendants” or “seed” is not a reference to procreation, but to “blessing by association” with the invisible hero. When he dies, the spiritual champion or invisible hero knows that personal blessing will continue to be extended to all his loved ones and friends. So, the impact of the spiritual champion exists not only in his living phase of the Predesigned Plan of God, but also in his dying phase and even after death.

JOB 5:26, “You will come to the grave in full vigor or full age, like the stacking of grain or corn in its season.”

Because God’s wisdom and decisions are perfect, we must accept God’s decision regarding the time, place, and manner of the death of someone we love or in our own death. God is the Expert – He knows best about when and how we should die. And since God knows best, no one should ever question His judgment. This perspective should eliminate bitterness with regard to your death or that of a loved one. Bitterness towards God is tantamount to blasphemy. While we think of life in terms of longevity, God thinks of life in terms of His wisdom, love, integrity, and grace. In verse 26, the term "full vigor or full age" does not mean you will live a long life, but that you will die at the right time. God is perfect; therefore, His timing is perfect. In all matters of life and death, timing is important. Proper timing is portrayed by the illustration of “corn” in our passage.

The illustration of corn is taken from agricultural society in the ancient world. There is a right time and a wrong time to harvest and shuck the corn. Only the expert can determine the right time. God is the Expert of experts. Therefore, God decides when it is time for us to die, where we shall die, and how we shall die. All ears of corn do not ripen at the same time. But when an ear of corn is ripe, it is harvested and separated from its sheath; this is a perfect illustration of death. Likewise, man is separated from his physical body through physical death.

JOB 5:27, “Behold this, we have investigated it, thus it is: hear it, and know it for yourself.”

This passage deals with the principle of divine security in time and divine security in dying. Again, the seventh principle of war is security. And security is defined in military science and tactics as all measures taken by a military unit to guard against the enemy’s observations, surprise, and hostile interference with effective maneuvering.

8. The eighth principle of war is the “principle of simplicity.” “Simplicity” is used in a technical sense by students of military science. Simplicity means that all military plans, at any level of command, must be simple and free from complicated maneuvers. Orders have to be direct, clear, and free from surprise. The frequent changing of plans should be avoided and the unity of command should be observed. And what a wonderful application this has to the Christian life.

The practice of “frequent changes of plan” is repudiated by God. There is only one plan and it is constant throughout the entire Church Age. And the “unity of command” for us is in the hands of God the Father who authorized the plan. Entrance into the plan was provided by God the Son through the works of His hands. And finally, “the unity of command” is in the hands of God the Holy Spirit, Who provides the power for our execution of His plan.

The principle of simplicity with regards to the Predesigned Plan of God involves the mechanics of spiritual function of the believer inside of the plan. The principle of simplicity entails the clear and direct teaching of the Word of God.

PRO 30:5, “Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.” So, doctrine must be concisely taught and concisely followed.

9. The ninth principle of war is the “principle of cooperation.” In military terms, cooperation means that all elements of a mission work together for the accomplishment of that operation. Cooperation involves the concept of teamwork. Cooperation within a command is achieved when each soldier interprets his orders in an intelligent manner and executes them in accordance with the authority issuing the order. For the believer, cooperation is achieved by the guidance of the Spirit. In the spiritual realm, when a believer receives his commands from headquarters in heaven and executes them in the Spirit, he operates in cooperation with The Lord Jesus Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords. Between independent commanders, cooperation is achieved by each officer working for a common objective without concern for individual ambition.

PHI 2:5, “Keep on thinking this [doctrine] within yourselves which was also resident in Christ Jesus...”

This mindset commanded by Paul is the true unity that exists for those who have spiritual authority; they are not intimidated by others. This principle of cooperation reiterates the importance of the believer identifying his spiritual gift, utilizing his spiritual resources in prayer, and advancing in the privacy of his own priesthood while not interfering in the lives of others.

The greatest illustration of teamwork in the Church Age is the fact that all three members of the Trinity indwell our bodies together. This cooperation by the Members of the Trinity emphasizes the fact that God has a united plan for your life, a plan carefully designed by God the Father. Divine cooperation reflects God’s omniscience, His sovereign decisions, and the fact that God has not given us a plan which calls for us to operate by our own devices, our own personalities, our own concepts, or our own human dynamics. Instead, we are directed by Scripture to operate under divine power.

God has delegated His divine power to us so that we may fulfill His predesigned plan. Therefore, the nine principles of warfare have a direct application to all believers. Each of the nine principles of warfare can be summed up in one word.

- 1) The principle of objective = plan
- 2) The principle of offensive = victory
- 3) The principle of mass = power
- 4) The principle of economy of force = execution
- 5) The principle of movement = momentum

- 6) The principle of surprise = attack
- 7) The principle of security = support
- 8) The principle of simplicity = accuracy
- 9) The principle of cooperation = teamwork

## Chapter 3: Paul's Brand-Mark and The Vegetius' Discourse

In Paul's letter to the Ephesian church, Paul wrote, "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might." This verse, Ephesians 6:10, is a passage which deals with the believer's responsibility to use the divine power of God in both offensive and defensive action as a Christian soldier. As already noted, there is a time for offensive action and there is a time for defensive action. Now, in view of Paul's constant contact with Roman soldiers while imprisoned, it was inevitable that God the Holy Spirit would give the great apostle the necessary spiritual I.Q. to make analogies between the spiritual life of the Christian soldier and military life in the Roman army.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul used military terms to describe the Christian way of life. Many of the military metaphors in the Bible are found in the epistles of Paul. In this chapter, we will examine several of the military metaphors used by the Apostle Paul in Scripture. But first, we should note the definition of a "metaphor." A metaphor is defined as a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another in order to teach a certain principle.

The first area of military metaphor we shall analyze concerns the selection of recruits. As we have already noted, this selection is found in 2Timothy 2:3-4.

2Ti 2:3, "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus."

This verse indicates that soldiers undergo hardship. In fact, soldiers must be trained by hardship. And a true soldier learns to endure hardship. Likewise, God trains the believer with hardship, often through the problems that accompany the details of life. This is much like the training of a soldier by hardships. The details of life, often equated with "the charge of the mosquito," train believers to face "the charge of the elephant," which refers to spiritual warfare. A believer is going to have hardship whether he succeeds or fails in the Christian life. And whether a believer endures the hardship will depend upon the believer's training, the doctrine resident in his soul.

2Ti 2:4, "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier."

Now, remember that the Bible must be interpreted in the time that it was written. The last phrase "so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier" refers to the officer in charge of that soldier. In the spiritual realm, God is our Officer. In the ancient world, when a recruit had proven himself by graduating from basic training, the Roman army would do something very interesting; they would brand the graduate with a hot iron. One of the most honorable awards in Roman life was to receive that brand. Every man who made it through basic training and had the brand possessed an honorable mark on his life. And the brand could never be removed. Paul referred to a similar "spiritual brand" in chapter 6 of his letter to the Galatian church.

GAL 6:14, "But may it never be that I should boast, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

GAL 6:15, "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation."

GAL 6:16, "And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God."

GAL 6:17, “From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.”

Paul’s brand-marks signified that Paul had graduated from rigorous spiritual basic training. Again, the brand-mark was one the highest honors for a Roman citizen. That brand-mark meant that he had gone through the toughest military training in the ancient world, perhaps of all time. Now, there was a famous Roman general named Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus who wrote one of the finest works on the military institutions of Rome. He observed that “victory depends on training, not on numbers.” Vegetius’ insight into military life was profound.

Regarding military training, Vegetius remarked, “The recruit, however, should not receive the military brand-mark when first enlisted.” Since the brand-mark indicated that a soldier had graduated from rigorous basic training, Vegetius prohibited it from being done at the beginning of the training, knowing that some recruits would not graduate. This mark was imprinted on the back of the hand with a hot iron. It was “indelible” (lasting and unforgettable). So, the Roman army would brand the mark on the back of a graduating soldier’s hand and he would bear it all of his life.

Vegetius continued his thoughts on training the recruit by stating, “Before he could have the brand of honor, he must first be tried to see whether he is fit for service, and whether he has sufficient strength, energy and attitude, to see his capacity, to learn his duty, and whether he has the proper degree of military courage.” Furthermore, Vegetius went on to comment, “For any who have enlisted in the Roman army, although promising enough in appearance, are found unfit upon trial or testing in basic training, therefore, they are rejected and replaced by better men.”

For a recruit to “wash out” of basic training meant disgrace. This training process was active during Paul’s time on earth, and Paul was aware of it when he wrote his epistles to the Church. So, for the trainee to return home without the brand of honor actually “branded” him a loser! Regarding those who failed to complete training, Vegetius further noted, “They were rejected and they were replaced by better men, for it is not numbers but bravery which carries the day in combat.”

Vegetius then concluded, “After their completion of the basic course, after their examination, the recruits should receive that military mark and be taught then the use of their arms by constant daily exercise.” In other words, after a soldier graduated from basic training, he had to continue training to maintain his skills and to learn new skills.

This is why Paul wrote in Galatians 6:17, “From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.” He had gone through the testing and had passed basic training and was qualified. Moreover, he used doctrine the rest of his life. Remember that the Apostle Paul did not learn the mystery doctrine of the Church Age from Peter or John. According to Ephesians 3:3, Paul learned mystery doctrine by direct revelation from God.

EPH 3:3, “That by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief.”



Paul was quite a man, dedicated and devoted to the communication of Bible doctrine. So, the Apostle Paul had passed spiritual basic training and was qualified to use doctrine the rest of his life. The analogy in the spiritual life then is quite obvious; all believers are in full time Christian service, but not all believers have received their mark of graduation from the basics. The mark is tantamount to the spiritual skills, which must precede the production skills, for the performance of divine good. The production skills of the believer are already in place; they are part of the 40 things he received at the moment of salvation. But, the spiritual skills are not already in place at the moment of salvation. Therefore, when you have production skills minus spiritual skills, it equals the performance of dead works and evil.

The Apostle Paul, as a seasoned soldier who had been combat-tested in Christian service, should not have been troubled by the legalistic Galatians. This is what Paul meant in Galatians 6:17 when he commanded, "From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus." He was saying, "Don't bother me anymore!" or "Don't try to bug me with all of your silliness." Thus Paul, a veteran Christian soldier, was telling the "unmarked" legalists to "back off."

Legalism plus Christian service equals production skills minus spiritual skills. In other words, service performed by legalists is tantamount to no military brand with no honorable recognition. Thus, legalism can only produce human good (in the energy of the flesh), dead works, or evil. Paul's use of the brand-mark as a military metaphor illustrates the principle that only those believers who have graduated basic spiritual training are capable of performing divine good (in the power of the Spirit).

A metaphor is simply a figure of speech in which words or phrases are used to describe an important principle. So, let us take what Vegetius stated and, like Paul, apply it to spiritual warfare.

Vegetius further wrote, "Victory depends on training, not on numbers." This axiom is especially true in the Christian life; your training and discipline are of the utmost importance. Recall one of the principles that we covered earlier – now and then, a soldier is singled out as a champion who engages the enemy by himself. In the book of Job, for instance, God chose one man to confront Satan and his deceptions, one by one. Why? Because "victory depends on training, not on numbers." We see this principle again in Leviticus chapter 26.

LEV 26:3, "If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments so as to carry them out,"

LEV 26:4, "Then I shall give you rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit."

LEV 26:5, "Indeed, your threshing will last for you until grape gathering, and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land."

LEV 26:6, "I shall also grant peace in the land, so that you may lie down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land, and no sword will pass through your land."

LEV 26:7, "But you will chase your enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword;"

LEV 26:8, "Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword."

The Lord Jesus Christ sometimes calls forth one believer from His spiritual army to engage the enemy alone and, as a champion of the truth, to sacrifice his life on behalf of it. What greater honor could be granted to a Christian soldier than this?

Thus, we find an application and a principle as spiritual combatants from Vegetius' statement that "victory depends on training, not on numbers."

In addition, Vegetius stated, "The recruit, however, should not receive the military brand-mark as soon as he is enlisted." In other words, becoming a Christian is not enough. You must be trained. I have actually heard people teach about Psalm 81:10 which states "I, the Lord, am your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt; Open your mouth wide and I will fill it." And they said, "You don't have to get involved with all that doctrine stuff. Just open your mouth and God will fill it with the words He wants you to utter." What utter nonsense!

HEB 5:14, "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern between [divine] good and evil."

In this verse, evil does not refer to immoral sins. You do not need to have your senses trained to discern what constitutes immorality; your conscience automatically knows that. Evil refers to Satan's policy, as the God of this world, to defy God – his deceptions, his lies, his schemes, and his false doctrine.

Vegetius rightly concluded, "The recruit should not receive the military brand-mark as soon as he is enlisted." Then he remarked, "This mark was imprinted on the hand of the soldier with a hot iron. It was indelible (lasting and unforgettable)." So, this brand-mark is a picture of the believer producing divine good that will last for eternity. Whenever you produce divine good, it has eternal value. You cannot lose your reward for the production of divine good in time.

ROM 6:13, "And do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

Vegetius went on to note, "Before he could have the brand of honor, he must first be tried to see whether he is fit for service, and whether he has sufficient strength, energy, and attitude to see his capacity, to learn his duty, and whether he has the proper degree of military courage." As we have noted, Vegetius' observations reflect biblical principles as well. For example, before you can be honored by the Lord and receive what Paul calls the brand-marks or what Vegetius calls the brand of honor, you must first be tested to see whether you are fit for service. Your testing in the spiritual life comes in the realm of perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine.

1CO 11:19, "For there must also be factions among you, in order that those who are approved may have become evident among you."

If you pass the pressure testing, you are qualified to receive the brand-mark. And what will be tested in your life? Well, as Vegetius stated, "whether you have sufficient strength, energy, attitude, and the proper degree of courage." Vegetius went on to conclude, "For any who have enlisted in the Roman army, although promising enough in appearance, are found unfit upon trial or testing in basic training." This last conclusion is an illustration of man looking at the outward appearance, but God, as the training officer, looking at the heart (mind). Many believers are found to be unfit upon trial and testing in the spiritual realm. They have gone AWOL; they have withdrawn and quit the spiritual life.

The faithful and good soldier of The Lord Jesus Christ does not run from adversity, but freely and with a ready mind, engages in the battle. A true soldier for The Lord Jesus Christ will not turn his back to flee from the enemy and depart from the truth, no matter what happens. His love for The Lord Jesus Christ and his zeal to glorify Him motivates him to persist in spiritual combat. The true soldier of The Lord Jesus Christ knows what HEB 10:38 records – “If any man turns back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.”

Vegetius also went on to comment, “Therefore, they are rejected and replaced by better men.” So, even if we are not faithful to God, there are others who will be. To reiterate, one of the most disgraceful things in the ancient world was for a soldier to “wash out” of basic training. Paul was aware of this fact and used it as a metaphor in spiritual warfare. Again, to return home without the brand of honor branded the recruit a loser! Vegetius further remarked, “They were rejected and they were replaced by better men, for it is not numbers, but bravery, which carries the day in combat.” God is not interested in “how many” and “how much.” He is interested in the motivation of the believer. Proper doctrinal motivation should promote bravery in the Christian soldier. In spiritual warfare, the Christian soldier must understand that his battle is not against people, flesh, or blood. And how does the Word of God tell us to handle this spiritual warfare? We are not supposed to retaliate. We are also not supposed to run away or withdraw from combat. What are we to do then? In Ephesians 6:11 Paul counsels the Christian soldier to “put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”

Vegetius then concluded, “After their completion of the basic course, after their examination, the recruits should receive that military mark and be taught then the use of their arms by constant daily exercise.” By analogy, after the Christian soldier graduates from rigorous basic spiritual training, he must still train regularly. All of these principles relate to what Paul said in Galatians 6:17 – “From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.” Paul had gone through the testing. He had passed and was qualified as a Christian soldier. Yet, Paul continued to use doctrine routinely for the rest of his life. A soldier in the army of God should consider the following Scriptures:

PHI 1:29, “Because to you it has been graciously given with reference concerning Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on behalf of Him...”

ROM 8:17, “If indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.”

1TH 3:4, “For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.”

1PE 2:19, “For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.”

1PE 2:21, “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps...”

MAT 5:11, “Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.”

JOH 15:20, “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘a slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you...”

MAT 5:12, “Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

1PE 3:8, “To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit...”

1PE 3:9, “...not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”

1PE 3:10, “For, ‘let him who means to love life and see good days refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile.’”

1 PE 3:11, “And let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.”

1PE 3:12, “For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

1PE 3:13, “And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?”

1 PE 3:14, “But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled.”

1PE 3:15, “But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

1PE 3:16, “And keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.”

1PE 3:17, “For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”

## Chapter 4: More Military Metaphors

Let us look at several more military metaphors used by the Apostle Paul.

1. The Military Metaphor of the Distinct Sound of Bible Doctrine - In 1Corinthians 14:8, Paul used another military metaphor to describe part of the Christian way of life.

1CO 14:8, “For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?”

In the military, there are trumpet commands for assembly, there are trumpet commands to put on your equipment, there are trumpet or bugle commands to fall in, and there are trumpet commands for moving out and for forming in line. All of these commands were conveyed to the troops by trumpets during battle.

There were two types of military commands in the Roman army.

- a. Voice commands, for situations where the voice could be heard
- b. Trumpet commands, which were used in combat situations where there was a great deal of noise

In this passage from Paul, the indistinct sound, not sounding a clear call, is analogous to speaking in tongues. The gift of tongues was temporary and is no longer in effect today. The gift of tongues (languages) was never designed for teaching Bible doctrine to believers, but was meant to evangelize Jewish unbelievers from other countries who spoke a foreign language, ACT 2:5-6. So, Paul indicated that the use of tongues produced an uncertain sound that is not useful in spiritual battle during the Church Age. Furthermore, this military metaphor was recognition of the fact that the Holy Spirit uses distinct sounds to communicate the mystery doctrine of the Church Age. Therefore, rejection of the distinct sounds of mystery doctrine of the Church Age leads to failure to execute the Predesigned Plan of God.

Again, in the context of this passage, the “uncertain sound” indicated involvement with tongues. That is why Paul wrote in 1Corinthians 14:6, “But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?”

1CO 14:7, “Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp?”

1CO 14:8, “For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?”

1CO 14:9, “So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.”

This is what the average “holy-roller” does today – he speaks nonsense into the air.

1CO 14:10, “There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages [tongues = a foreign language, not a “secret uttering”] in the world, and no kind is without meaning.”

1CO 14:11, “If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me.”

1CO 14:12, “So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church.”

Spiritual gifts should edify or build up the body of Christ, not oneself. We see in 1 Corinthians 14:4 that “one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies [teaches doctrine] edifies the church.” And we are not placed in a local assembly to edify ourselves but to edify others.

1CO 14:13, “Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.”

1CO 14:14, “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.”

1CO 14:15, “What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also.”

1CO 14:16, “Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the ‘Amen’ at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?”

1CO 14:17, “For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.”

1CO 14:18, “I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all [Paul knew more languages than them];”

1CO 14:19, “However, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.”

Why does Paul make this statement in verse 19? Because Paul knew that the gift of tongues was directed at the unbeliever for communication of the gospel in a foreign language, not at the believer as indicated in verses 21 and 22 (below).

1CO 14:20, “Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature.”

1CO 14:21, “In the Law it is written, ‘By men of strange tongues [foreign languages] and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me,’ says the Lord.”

1CO 14:22, “So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy [teaching doctrine] is for a sign, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe.”

1CO 14:23, “If therefore the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?”

1CO 14:24, “But if all prophesy [speak the truth of Bible doctrine], and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all;”

1CO 14:25, “The secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.”

The military metaphor of “distinct and indistinct sounds” emphasizes the need for accurate communication of Bible doctrine. The trumpeting of distinct sounds, the clear

communication of biblical truth, fulfills the principle of “doing a right thing in a right way.” And it can be accomplished even though we are not perfect. And so we see that God has a right way to do the right thing. The distinct sound, therefore, means the perception and metabolization of doctrine resulting in the momentum by which we execute God’s plan. The distinct sounds involve learning God’s procedures. But, learning God’s procedures is hindered by the two great enemies of the Christian – ignorance and arrogance. The energy of ignorance and arrogance comes from life in the cosmic system. And remember that at any given moment, you, your mate, your friends, your companions, and your associates are living either in the Predesigned Plan of God or in the cosmic system of Satan, but not in both.

This principle is stated by James in James 4:4 – “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” And, in 1John 2:15, John admonished, “Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Moreover, Paul’s use of the principle of the distinct sound refers to the perfect accuracy of the plan of God. This principle is illustrated in Leviticus 22:21, where Moses wrote, “And when a man offers a sacrifice of peace offerings to the Lord to fulfill a special vow, or for a freewill offering, of the herd or of the flock, it must be perfect to be accepted...”

DEU 32:4, “He [the Lord] is the rock, His work is ‘perfect.’”

PSA 19:7, “The Torah [the doctrine of the Lord] is perfect, restoring the soul;”

ROM 12:2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is...”

In verse 2, the Apostle Paul describes the will of God – that which is “good and acceptable and perfect.” In 1Corinthians 13:10, Paul wrote, “But when the perfect comes [a reference to the completed canon of Scripture], the partial [signs and wonders] will be done away.” JAM 1:25, “But one who looks intently at the perfect law [doctrine], the law of liberty...” Also, take notice of the events surrounding Apollos in Acts chapter 18.

ACT 18:22, “And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch.”

ACT 18:23, “And having spent some time [there], he departed and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.”

ACT 18:24, “Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.”

Act 18:25, “This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;”

Act 18:26, “And he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”

2Timothy 2:15 is also a “distinct sound” passage – “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of Truth.” Note what these previous verses indicate about God, His work, and His Word. In Leviticus 22:21, the offering must be “perfect” to be accepted. In Deuteronomy 32:4, God’s work is “perfect.” In Psalm 19:7, the doctrine of the Lord is “perfect.” In Romans 12:2, the will of God

is “perfect.” In 1Corinthians 13:10, the completed canon of Scripture is “perfect.” In James 1:25, we have the “perfect” law. In Act 18:26, the way of God is “accurate.” In 2Timothy 2:15, the pastor is instructed to handle “accurately” the Word of Truth. The point is that, in battle, the trumpet sound must be distinct. That is to say, when Scripture is taught, the message must be accurate and clear. The isagogics, the categories, and the exegesis used by a pastor-teacher must be correct. We live in a day and age when the accuracy and the perfection of the Word of God are rejected by most believers. Most believers think that sincerity alone will impress God. However, accuracy is the order of the day, especially in the Church Age. And so the distinct sound of accurate Bible teaching is a crucial issue. Therefore, if your pastor is not accurate in what he teaches, you will not have the accurate information needed to live in the Predesigned Plan of God. The pastor must be accurate and precise in his doctrinal communication.

Please notice how important it is for the believer to be under a strict system of procedure based upon the accurate teaching of the Word of God. As an example, let us examine Noah’s ark as described in Genesis 6:14-22.

In light of these verses, could Noah build the ark any way that he felt it should be built? Could Noah make the ark with any material that he wanted to use and change the dimensions as he went along? The answer, of course, is “no!” Could Noah say, “I want to do things my way?” This is what most of God’s people want to do; they want to do it “their way,” not God’s way. But God gave Noah perfect and accurate instructions in Genesis chapter 6.

GEN 6:14, “Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.”

GEN 6:15, “And this is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.”

Notice the word “how.” The right thing must be done in the right way.

GEN 6:16, “You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.”

GEN 6:17, “And behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.”

GEN 6:18, “But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark-- you and your sons and your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.”

GEN 6:19, “And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.”

Finally, in Genesis 6:22, “Thus Noah did, according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.” Noah followed the correct procedure precisely; he followed the distinct sound of God’s commands. If he had not done so, the ark would not have been able to float and the animals would not be here today. As another example, we find precise instructions for making



the Ark of the Covenant and constructing the tabernacle in the next book of the Bible. Exodus chapters 25 and 26 record these directives. The exact directions and accurate dimensions of the Ark of the Covenant were given in chapter 25 verses 10-21. Notice what the Lord promised to do when all these accurate, precise procedures were followed by Israel in the following verse:

EXO 25:22, “And there I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.”

The Lord would only meet with Israel above the mercy seat if the accurate and precise directions were followed during construction of the tabernacle. Then, in verses 23-39, the directions and the precise, correct procedure for the table of shewbread and the golden lampstand were recorded, down to the minutest detail. And notice what the Lord said in the last verse of this chapter, verse 40.

EXO 25:40, “And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which was shown to you on the mountain.”

Notice the word “pattern.” The Lord did not say, “Get all the people working together and loving each other and tell everyone that they don’t have to be too concerned about the pattern.” Neither did the Lord say, “Tell everyone that they should put aside their differences concerning the ‘pattern’ of things and love each other.” And the Lord did not say, “Let’s get everyone in the tabernacle and let’s have a nice time of fellowship and gushing, mushy human activity.” “Accuracy” was the order of the day from the Lord. The distinct sound of the Lord’s accurate instruction had to be followed. “For, if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?” And, in fact, following the distinct sound of accurate doctrine is proof of the believer’s admiration towards God.

PSA 119:7, “I shall give praise to thee with integrity of heart [only] when I learn your doctrines.”

Chapter 26 of the book of Exodus records more instructions for making the tabernacle. Notice that, in verses 1-29, detail after detail is given concerning the tabernacle. Did you ever wonder why details are given precisely and accurately as a part of the Word of God? Details are given precisely and accurately as a part of the Word of God to reveal to us the importance of “a right thing done in a right way.” God’s desire for us to pay attention to the details is reiterated in Hebrews 8:5 – “See that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.” And so, God warned Moses “to do the right thing in the right way” regarding the Ark of the Covenant and the tabernacle. This principle of “a right thing done in a right way” emphasizes the importance of the accurate communication of the Word of God which, in another military metaphor, is also known as the sword of the Spirit.

In the Old Testament, accuracy existed in the tabernacle of God. Therefore, you should understand the importance of accuracy in the Predesigned Plan of God. Do you believe that accuracy did and should exist in the tabernacle of God? If you do, then notice what is stated in Revelation 21:3 – “Behold the tabernacle of God is set up among men, and he shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them.” In the Church Age, your body is the tabernacle that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit all indwell.

The importance of accuracy and precision is also revealed in the accurate, precise details and directions found in the Levitical offerings, the Feasts, the Holy days, the New Moon, etc. This is why Jeremiah warned the children of Israel in Jeremiah 49:20 and 50:45, “Therefore hear

[accurately understand] the plan of the Lord!” Just like in the days of Jeremiah, most believers today have developed “hardness of heart.” Their attitude is much the same as that of the reversionists of Jeremiah’s day expressed in Jeremiah 18:12.

JER 18:12, “We are going to follow our own plans, and each one will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart.”

King Solomon built the temple for the Lord.

1KI 6:38, “The house was finished throughout all its parts and according to all its plans.”

The temple was built with extreme accuracy and devotion to detail. Do you believe that it was important for accuracy to exist in the temple? Of course it was! Well, you are currently the temple of the living God as a believer in the Church Age, 1CO 3:16 and 6:19.

1CO 3:16, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”

1CO 6:19, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?”

Therefore, if accuracy was the order of the day for the temple in the Old Testament, think of how much more important accuracy is for the temple in the New Testament – you!

2. The Military Metaphor of Marching - In Galatians 5:25, we find “drill and discipline” used by the Apostle Paul as another military metaphor.

GAL 5:25, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk [march] by means of the Spirit.”

Verse 25 does not say “walk by the Spirit.” Rather, the Greek says “march by the Spirit.” The Greek word for “walk” (*peripateo*) is not used here. Instead, *stoicheo*, the Greek verb for “march” is used. *Stoicheo*, as a military metaphor, emphasizes the importance of logging maximum time in the filling of the Spirit. Marching by means of the Spirit involves spending maximum time living and functioning in the Predesigned Plan of God, tantamount to logging maximum time with the Holy Spirit in control of your soul.

In this verse, we have the Greek word *stoicheo* which means “to be in line, to advance in rank, to march, or to advance under a system of discipline.” The concept of marching also connotes “to be drawn up in a line with, to hold, to agree, to follow.” The ancient Greeks were the first to use the word *stoicheo* to refer to military troops who were arranged behind one another. *Stoicheo* also means “to follow a leader or the example or the pattern.” There is no advance in life unless there is a clearly defined system of authority and leadership. There must be an appointed officer (the pastor-teacher) in command, responsible for giving orders such as “Form line!” and “Forward, march!” He must lead his troops towards the objective (of glorifying Jesus Christ) as defined by precise and accurate orders (found in the Word of God).

GAL 5:25, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also march by means of the Spirit.”

Furthermore, in this verse, “march” is the present active subjunctive of the Greek verb *stoicheo*. The present tense is the durative present, which implies or expresses endurance and continuation. So, the Christian soldier is supposed to “keep on marching by means of the Spirit” or “keep on marching by enduring through the power of the Spirit.” Again, remember that a

soldier of The Lord Jesus Christ will keep and abide with the banner of truth. A good soldier of The Lord Jesus Christ will not turn his back on the enemy. In other words, he will not go AWOL (absent without leave). He will not turn his back to flee from the enemy and depart from the truth, no matter what he faces. The faithful Christian soldier will not “fall out of line” or disobey his “marching orders.” The present tense used in Galatians 5:25, then, is a durative present which means to keep marching by means of the Spirit or by enduring through the power of God. The active voice used in this verse indicates that the Church-age believer produces the action of the verb and keeps on marching. The subjunctive mood used here is known as a hortatory subjunctive used for exhorting or trying to persuade the believer to march by means of the Spirit. Thus, Paul is urging all believers in the Church Age to join him in this course of action – being filled with the Spirit and continually marching by means of the Spirit. To “advance in ranks” involves using the first two spiritual skills to execute the third spiritual skill, living in the Predesigned Plan of God. The first two spiritual skills are as follows:

- a. The filling of the Holy Spirit, which enables the use of divine power, ACT 1:8.
- b. Cognition of Bible doctrine, which also enables the use of divine power, HEB 4:12.

The power available from the first two spiritual skills enables the believer to execute the third spiritual skill.

- c. The third spiritual skill is the execution of the Predesigned Plan of God by use of divine power, GAL 5:25.

Using these three spiritual skills requires discipline by the believer. A principle demonstrated many times in history is the fact that a small group of disciplined individuals are often able to dominate a larger group of undisciplined men. Paul also used this military metaphor in Galatians 6:16 where he wrote, “And those who will walk [march] by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.”

So, marching is part of military training. Marching takes discipline. It takes time and commitment to learn to march precisely and correctly; the soldier must learn to fully understand and obey the various orders of drill given by the commanding officer. Marching in a group takes cooperation and coordination. To march is to advance, and so it is in the spiritual life of the Christian soldier.

3. The Military Metaphor of Good Discipline -- Colossians 2:5 records the next military metaphor used by the Apostle Paul to describe part of the Christian way of life. In this verse, Paul spoke like a drill instructor reviewing the marching order of the Colossian believers.

COL 2:5, “For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in Spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.”

The first phrase in this verse to notice is “good discipline.” Good discipline is the Greek noun *stereoma* which means “a good solid phalanx” and refers to an ordered body of heavily armed soldiers. And so Paul remarked, “For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in Spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline [your heavily armed phalanx] and the stability of your faith or doctrine in Christ.”

There are several more important terms in this verse, so let us examine each one. For instance, the prepositional phrase “in Christ” is the Greek word *eis* with the accusative of purpose from *Christos*. This phrasing is different from many verses translated “in Christ” where the Greek word *en* and the locative of *Christos* are used. But, in keeping with the doctrine of the

inspiration of Scripture, the Holy Spirit wanted us to understand something unique in this verse. So, He used *eis Christos*. *Eis*, along with the accusative of purpose of *Christos*, indicates the objective. Therefore, this phrase should be translated “for the purpose of Christ” or “for the purpose of glorifying Christ.”

Here we see that Paul was pleased with the battalion formation at Colossi. The Colossian believers there were marching well; that is, they were advancing spiritually. They were glorifying Christ. In addition to the definition given above, the term “phalanx” (*stereoma*) is also used of an offensive or defensive action, depending on the tactical situation. So, the Christian soldier may be on the offensive in certain circumstances, but on the defensive at other times. So, we find that there is a proper time for offensive action and there is a proper time for defensive action in spiritual combat. For example, we have rebound (confession of known sins), found in 1John 1:9, as a defensive action. By using rebound and recovery (returning to the study and application of Bible doctrine), a believer avoids defeat. But these defensive actions alone do not move him forward in the spiritual life.

Recall that offensive actions bring victory, but defensive actions only avoid defeat. In the spiritual realm, offensive action is analogous to Paul’s goal to “press on” or “advance” as found in Philippians 3:14.

PHI 3:14, “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

The Church-age believer must know when to use offensive action and when to use defensive action in the Christian way of life. For instance, the divine orders recorded in Scripture regarding attacks from Satan and his fallen angels usually call for defensive action – “Stand your ground.” However, offensive action is indicated for several categories of the spiritual life.

- 1) The evangelism of mankind
- 2) The function of the problem-solving devices
- 3) The understanding and use of your very own invisible assets available in your escrow account
- 4) The execution of the Predesigned Plan of God
- 5) The effective function of Christian service in the production of divine good rather than dead works

Throughout the Bible, there are commands for defensive action as well as commands for offensive action. For example, the command for both actions is found in James 4:7 – “Therefore, submit to God [His plan]. Stand your ground against the devil and he will flee from you.” Submission to God’s plan is the believer’s offensive action in this verse; standing his ground against the devil is his defensive action. So, this imperative from James is a command for the believer to be on the offensive and on the defensive. As with the devil, there are also times to be on the defensive in our dealings with difficult people.

Ephesians 6:11-17 is one of the greatest passages in Scripture which uses military metaphors to accurately portray spiritual combat for the Church-age believer. This passage describes the “defensive action of the Church.” As noted earlier, Scripture records many offensive actions for the believer in relationship to the human race. However, divine mandates for the believer regarding Satan and his kingdom of darkness call for defensive action. The four major principles of defensive action in Ephesians chapter 6 are as follows:

- a. The first principle concerns defensive action against Satan, EPH 6:11-12.

Verse 11 reveals the means of defensive action – putting on the full armor of God. Verse 12 reveals the need for defensive action – Satan’s fantastic order of battle arrayed against the believer.

b. The second principle of defensive action describes the function of defensive action, EPH 6:13. The function of defensive action is holding your spiritual ground by means of the full armor from God.

c. The third principle from this passage is the provision for defensive action, EPH 6:14-16.

This provision includes truth and virtue in verse 14, preparation for true evangelism in verse 15, and the problem-solving devices in verse 16. By way of military analogy, Paul likens these provisions to the equipment of a Roman soldier.

d. The fourth principle Paul defines in this passage is the defensive position, EPH 6:17. This defensive position is, in effect, a “wall of fire” surrounding the believer.

Ephesians 6:10 is the actual beginning of this section; this verse reminds the believer of the importance of using divine power in spiritual warfare. Divine power must be utilized on a daily basis to accomplish the Christian way of life.

EPH 6:10, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”

While the command of verse 10 is clear, it does not indicate “how” to be strong in the Lord. Well, this verse is simply a conclusion of how to accomplish the commands found in the latter part of chapter 5 and the first part of chapter 6. These verses reveal “what” God demands in relationships. But “how” are we to accomplish these commands? With divine power!

Let us analyze this verse further. The word translated “finally” is actually two Greek words, *tou loipou*, and should be translated “from now on.” Now, what is Paul talking about? Earlier, in Ephesians 5:22-31, Paul taught the Ephesian church the principles of relationship in marriage. Then, in Ephesians 6:1-4, he covered the principles behind parenthood and the parent-child relationship. After that, in Ephesians 6:5-9, he delineated the principles involved in management-labor relations. And so, after elucidating these important principles regarding relationships, Paul said *tou loipou* – that is, “from now on.”

Paul used “from now on” to encourage believers to “pick themselves up and dust themselves off” after being convicted over their poor handling of relationships in light of the content of the prior verses. If a believer spent the appropriate time studying these passages beginning with marriage, he would be hit hard in some way. There are many convicting principles taught concerning the role of the man, the role of the woman, the parent-child relationship, and the labor-management relationship in the latter part of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. So, if a believer becomes discouraged by the conviction resultant from failure in his relationships, Ephesians 6:10 is a call to him to “pick himself up out of the dust” and move forward from that point.

All believers, in some manner, have failed to measure up to the principles of relationships recorded by Paul. And so *tou loipou* indicates that “from this moment on” we are still alive; therefore, we can make adjustments in our relationships that better align with the Scriptures. In other words, now that we have learned these things and we realize how the Bible says we should be operating in our relationships, we can “pick up the pieces.” *Tou loipou* means that God still has a plan for the believer’s life. *Tou loipou* means that recovery is possible. And so, Ephesians 6:10 gives us the conclusion *tou loipou* – “from now on.” Now, do you see the grace in that?

Alright, suppose that you have failed in marriage. Perhaps you have failed as a wife or you have failed as a husband. Maybe you have failed as a parent or as a child or in labor or management. But *tou loipou* (“from now on”) means that, beginning right now, you can move forward spiritually knowing the marvelous information about God’s integrity and divine power available to you. *Tou loipou*, then, is a grace idiom. And the idiom implies that many believers in the Roman province of Asia in Paul’s day were not utilizing divine power. They were giving “lip service” to doctrine and the spiritual life, but they were not using the power of God.

By the way, notice that two types of relationships were not mentioned here – friends and siblings. Why? Because, in each of the prior relationships listed, the issue of authority was involved. Friendships and sibling relationships involve no authority issue or, at least, they should not. So we have this wonderful grace phrase, *tou loipou* (“from now on”), meaning that, if you are still alive, you have the opportunity of executing the divine commands for the relationships described earlier in Ephesians. And what are these divine commands for relationships which can only be accomplished by divine power?

EPH 5:22, “Wives, obey your own husbands.”

EPH 5:24, “Wives, be subject [obedient] to your husbands in everything.”

EPH 5:25, “Husbands, unconditionally [*agape*] love your wives.”

In EPH 6:1, “Children, obey your parents.”

EPH 6:4, “Parents, do not provoke your children to anger.”

EPH 6:5, “Labor, be obedient to management.”

EPH 6:9, “Management, treat labor fairly.”

Most of us have failed in at least one of these areas of relationship. From the moment we realize that we have failed, we should get up, dust ourselves off, and pick up the pieces by rebound and recovery. The realization that there is divine power available to the believer which will allow him to fulfill these relationships properly motivates him to begin to move forward in the spiritual life again. The implication behind the latter part of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is important to understand – if we cannot properly handle relationships with people, then we are too unstable and unprepared to handle spiritual warfare. But once we learn how to handle relationships in marriage, the family, and the business world, then we are in a stabilized condition.

EPH 6:10, “Finally [from now on], be strong in the Lord...”

In this verse, the Greek word “strong” is the present passive imperative of the Greek word *endunamoo* which, in the passive voice, means “to acquire power,” “to become strong,” or “to be enabled.” Since this power belongs to The Lord Jesus Christ and He produces the action of the verb, “strong” could also be translated in the middle voice. The middle voice indicates that we benefit from becoming strong. The latter part of Ephesians, starting with the passage on marriage, emphasizes relationships in which we are weak along with the divine solutions for those relationships. But in Ephesians 6:10, we come to a place of strength where we are ready to put on the armor from God. This armor will not just allow us to handle relationships in marriage,

family, and the work place, but also to engage in spiritual warfare. So, in verse 10, “strong” is the present passive imperative of *endunamoo* and should be translated “start becoming strong.”

EPH 6:10, “From now on, start becoming strong in the Lord...”

Therefore, this verse is a reference to the utilization of divine power. Furthermore, the present tense of *endunamoo* is a tendentious present which indicates “an action commanded, but not taking place.” This condition of failed potential is revealed by the adverbial genitive idiom *tou loipou* (“from now on”). In other words, verse 10 should read, “From now on, start becoming something that you have not been, start becoming strong...” So Paul commands the Ephesian believers to begin acquiring the divine power which is available to them for the execution of the Predesigned Plan of God. The passive voice for the subject, the Church-age believer, indicates that the subject receives the action of the verb. This is accomplished by use of the first two spiritual skills – the filling of the Spirit and cognition of Bible doctrine. The imperative mood of this verse signifies that God is making a demand on the volition of each one of us. So, since we are still alive, this verse demands that from this moment on, we should start becoming strong by learning how to use God’s power and setting aside our power. Our power is related to failure; God’s power is related to victory. The victorious results of God’s power are brought out in the next phrase in our verse – “in the Lord.” The phrase “in the Lord” is the Greek word *en* along with the instrument of agency from the Greek word *kurios*. It should be translated “by means of [the] Lord.” There is no definite article (“the”) before “Lord” in the Greek; it is added in the English translation.

EPH 6:10, “From now on, start becoming [something that you have not been] strong by means of Lord...”

The absence of the definite article emphasizes the quality of the noun, that is, the high quality of the Lord. The Lord is not only the heavenly Supreme Court Judge, but He is our Lord and Savior. The instrumental case in Ephesians 6:10 expresses personal agency; the Lord is the Agent, the One Who keeps on strengthening us. Paul stated the same principle in chapter 4 of his letter to the Philippians.

PHI 4:11, “Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.”

PHI 4:12, “I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.”

PHI 4:13, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

So we see that the accurate observation of orders from The Lord Jesus Christ, marching in rank with fellow believers to advance for offensive or defensive actions and self-discipline leading to utilization of the power of God, are all necessary for the Christian soldier.

## Chapter 5: Know the Adversary and His Deceptions

EPH 6:10, "From now on, start becoming strong by means of the Lord, and in the strength of His might."

In corrected translation, this verse reveals that divine power or the omnipotence of God is available to each one of us as Church-age believers. The greatest power functioning today is the power of God described in chapter 6 of Ephesians. Why does the Christian soldier need this power? Because his adversary, the devil who rules over this world, has great power which he uses to accomplish evil, EPH 6:12. This evil power is often deceptive and the people involved may use a façade of good works, religion, "sweetness of life," or sincerity. Satan's power of evil is found in many passage of the Word of God.

For example, Satan's power is revealed by the fact that he is the highest of all angels and ruler of all fallen angels in Matthew 9:34 and 12:26, as well as Luke 11:18-19. In Matthew 9:34, he is called "the ruler of demons." Matthew 12:26 indicates that he has a kingdom. Satan is the most beautiful creature to come from the hand of God. He has a voice like a pipe organ. He has superior genius, beauty, personality, and persuasiveness and he is invisible. Satan is a prehistoric super-creature, as described in Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:11-19. And he was so brilliant with his defense in his first trial before God that God granted him an appeals trial which is being carried out in human history. Thus, God created man to resolve the Angelic Conflict.

ISA 14:12, "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!"

ISA 14:13, "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.'"

ISA 14:14, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

ISA 14:15, "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit."

ISA 14:16, "Those who see you will gaze at you, They will ponder over you, [saying,] 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms,'"

ISA 14:17, "Who made the world like a wilderness And overthrew its cities, Who did not allow his prisoners to [go] home?"

Satan's power and genius are revealed by the fact that he has a fantastic organization of demons, EPH 6:10-12. He is the originator of murder and promotes violence in the human race, GEN 6:4-11 and JOH 8:44. He doesn't play by any established rules. He makes up the rules as he goes along. And so Satan's power is revealed by his rulership of the earth. Satan has greater power than any human and rules the world through his cosmic system. Since the fall of Adam, Satan has been the ruler of this world; his rulership is documented in Luke 4:5-7; John 12:31,14:30,16:11; 2Corinthians 4:4; and Ephesians 2:2. In Luke 4:5-6, Satan offered our Lord all of the kingdoms of the world. This was a legitimate offer!



LUK 4:5, “And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.”

LUK 4:6, “And the devil said to Him, ‘I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.’”

In John 12:31, our Lord said, “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out.” And in John 14:30, “I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in Me;”

2CO 4:4, “In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

EPH 2:2, “In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”

The devil rules all fallen angels. And the devil rules all unbelievers. Moreover, the devil rules many believers though demon influence and cosmic involvement. However, the body of Christ, which is ruled by the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ, has received the delegated divine power to resist the devil. This delegated power is a result of our Lord’s victory on the Cross, a victory which overflows into the Church Age, 1JO 4:4.

1JO 4:4, “Greater is He who is in you [omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit in the Predesigned Plan of God] than He who is in the world [power of Satan as ruler of the world and cosmic system].”

As the ruler of this world, Satan has two designations since his fall. Originally, Satan was called “Heylel” which means “the morning star” or “the son of light.” Heylel is often translated Lucifer as we find in the KJV of Isaiah 14:12. He was the bright and shining angel guarding the throne room of God, the highest ranking creature of all time, and the most beautiful and attractive creature in appearance and personality. After his fall in prehistoric times, Heylel was called Satan. In the Hebrew, Satan means “enemy and adversary” and signifies that he has greater power than us. However, Satan’s power is not greater than God’s omnipotence. And God’s power, which is available to the Church-age believer, leads us to the topic of God’s grace.

In grace, God has made His divine power available to believers. As humans, we are an inferior rational creation compared to angels. Satan is the archon (ruler) of all fallen angels, so his power is much greater than our human power. But God has made His power available to Church-age believers. God’s power is derived from all three Persons of the Trinity. We have the omnipotence of the Father in providing our escrow account. We also have the omnipotence of God the Son who preserves the universe and history daily. And we have the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit who provides the power to execute the Predesigned Plan of God. Through God, we have greater power than Satan. And, even for the unbeliever, God in His grace has provided a power to resist the power of Satan under the laws of divine establishment.

The second title given to Heylel after his fall is the Greek word *diabolos* which means slanderer, traducer, or false accuser. And one of the main activities of the devil, as the ruler of this world, is the expression of his antagonism, slander, and enmity towards God and His people; this he does from a position of great beauty and attractiveness.

So, although Satan is far superior to man in every way, God has two grace provisions for man which allow man to combat evil. The first provision of protection for all men is accomplished by the laws of divine establishment evident in human government. These laws

protect the freedom, privacy, property, and life of all men, including unbelievers. Throughout all dispensations, even in the Tribulation, man continues to live on the earth because he is protected by the laws of divine establishment and by the third divine institution, the family. Man needs this protection because the power of Satan, as the ruler of this world, is far greater than any power man could ever muster. Furthermore, the presence of the Church, which is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, restrains Satan currently. With the rapture, that restraint is removed; the results are evident in the tremendous violence and warfare of the Tribulation, 2TH 2:6-12.

The second provision of protection is for believers only, the provision of divine power which includes the problem-solving devices (Appendix A). Paul describes the mechanics of this power in Ephesians chapter 6 starting in verse 10.

EPH 6:10, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”

We are now ready to begin a study of the military equipment that Paul encouraged the Christian soldier to don before executing spiritual warfare.

EPH 6:11, “Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”

As we have already noted, “to stand firm” is a defensive action and emphasizes the importance of resisting, not attacking, Satan and his kingdom. Let us begin this discussion with analysis of several background passages such as Ephesians 4:27.

EPH 4:27, “And do not give the devil an opportunity.”

In the Greek, verse 27 actually states, “Stop giving the devil an opportunity.” The Ephesian believers were (incorrectly) trying to go on the offensive against Satan. And, many believers today try to do the same thing, but attacking the devil is never commanded by Scripture. So this is the first warning – stop doing something you are already doing, stop trying to attack Satan. Therefore, a better translation of this verse is, “Stop giving the devil an opportunity.”

The second warning from this verse involves the meaning of “opportunity.” The Greek noun for “opportunity” is the accusative singular direct object from the word *topos*. *Topos* means “an opportunity,” “a room,” “a chance,” “a place,” or “any portion or space marked off from a surrounding space.” The last part of the definition is important to note. What Paul had in view was a Christian soldier leaving his assigned defensive position to attack Satan. If a soldier does this, he gives the kingdom of darkness an opportunity, a room, a chance, a possibility, a portion or space marked off from a surrounding space. In doing so, he has left a “gap” in the defensive line. In the spiritual life, a believer can have all his bases covered except one and that one “space” is where the kingdom of darkness will strike. Satan and his kingdom will look for that opportunity, that opening, that room in your soul, that place that most people keep secret.

God is certainly aware of our weaknesses and He has provided a defensive position for us, knowing that Satan will do his best to exploit those weaknesses to take us out of the plan of God. In this defensive position, God has provided a “wall of fire” for the believer.

ZEC 2:5, “For I, declares the Lord, will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.”

God's "wall of fire" is designed to protect us from Satan and his demonic cohort and is necessary because of their superiority to us. Remember, we do not personally have the power to deal with these attacks. Therefore, it is important that we remain in fellowship with God and inside the Predesigned Plan of God. So all of these goofy things that the emotional hallelujah crowd does are absolute nonsense and all of this "rebuking" of Satan is absolute nonsense. These activities are absolute absurdity, foolishness, and insanity. The Lord is the only one who has the power or authority to rebuke Satan, so He is responsible to take care of rebuking Satan. On the other hand, God has put the believer behind a wall of fire, a place where he should stay. We find an example of this principle in Jude 1:9 – "But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.'"

So, believers should be on the defense when it comes to Satan and his demons. When we stick our necks out beyond the wall of fire, we leave ourselves open to being clobbered by the kingdom of darkness. When we leave our post, we give the devil an opportunity, a room in our soul. Now, what is meant by "a room?" The believer's soul has rooms – spiritual rooms, as it were.

PRO 24:3, "By wisdom [metabolized doctrine] a house [an edification complex or soul structure] is built, And by understanding [doctrinal insight] it is established [one prepares himself];"

PRO 24:4, "And by knowledge, the rooms [of the soul, the seven compartments of the soul] are filled with all precious and pleasant riches [which means something of value and something stimulating]."

PRO 24:5, "A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power."

In PRO 24:5, the Hebrew noun incorrectly translated "man" is "geber," which means a soldier, a warrior, or a valiant person. Proverbs 24:5 actually states, "A wise soldier is strong [which means he lives in the power of doctrine], And a man of knowledge [doctrinal insight] increases power [the power to resist the kingdom of darkness and hold his ground]."

PRO 24:6, "For by wise guidance [guidance from doctrine] you will wage war [know when to be on the offensive and know when to be on the defensive], And in abundance of counselors [counsels from doctrine] there is victory."

Thus, we see that the Bible teaches that the believer's soul has spiritual rooms. And, in Ephesians 4:27, Paul warns, "Stop giving the devil an opportunity [a room]." The average believer is ignorant of this important topic; he is not even aware that such problems as a hidden room in his soul reserved for Satan exist. David understood this danger and the need for God's help with it.

PSA 19:12, "Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults."

The NKJ version of Psalm 19:12 reads, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults." So, there is a secret room in every believer's heart where the soul hides its skeletons. And, in many cases, the believer refuses to even admit that there is a problem. There are issues in the soul of every believer that he never reveals. On occasion, God may bring those issues to the surface where they can be seen. Sometimes others will see manifestations of those issues, but through impersonal love, will remain silent. But, if a brother does speak out,

remember that Proverbs 27:6 states, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.”

However, even those nearest and dearest to us, those closest to us, are not aware of these hidden issues. And in some cases, these things are so contrary to the general character of the individual that he strives to suppress knowledge of them. He keeps them hidden in the secret chambers of his heart. These secret issues either contribute to an individual’s low self-esteem or produce arrogance in his soul through self-justification. So, these secrets can weigh down the heart with guilt or cause transference arrogance. But worst of all, they hinder or sometimes destroy a believer’s confidence in his relationship with God.

The Apostle Paul knew about these secret rooms in the soul which are hidden or ignored by the believer. This is why he wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:4, “For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.” He said, “I am not conscious of anything that I am doing which is wrong, but that does not acquit me or vindicate me. The one who is fit to judge me is the Lord.” Now these hidden faults or secret sins differ among various individuals and sometimes differ in the same person at different times.

Many believers have “a skeleton in their closet” – that is, a secret room which they keep private, confidential, undisclosed. This secret closet is a mysterious room concealed, hidden, isolated, and secluded. Many times, believers deny the room’s existence or they justify themselves by saying, “Everyone sins.” But, this room is not just an isolated sin; it is a lifestyle. And we are warned by Scripture to keep the kingdom of darkness from getting a stronghold in this room.

PRO 2:10, “For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;”

ECC 7:12, “For wisdom is protection just as money is protection. But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the souls of its possessors.”

PRO 19:8, “He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who keeps understanding will find good.”

On the other hand, rejection of Bible doctrine produces destruction.

ISA 5:13, “Therefore My people go into exile for their lack of knowledge;”

HOS 4:6, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.”

The principle, then, is very simple – just as doctrine gives the rooms of the soul pleasure and freedom, a lack of doctrine in the rooms of the soul produces slavery and bondage. In Psalm 139:23-24, David said, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.” Unless a believer is free from the chambers of imagery in his soul, these rooms filled with secret faults, he will never enjoy true freedom. That secret room will be like a dungeon or a prison to the life of the believer.

Returning to chapter 6 of Paul’s letter to the Ephesian church, we find:

EPH 6:11, “Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”

Verse 11 begins with the aorist middle imperative of the Greek verb *enduo* which means “to pick up and put on equipment” or “to clothe oneself.” *Enduo* was a military word which the Apostle Paul heard and saw in action on many occasions. For instance, in the Mark Anthony barracks, there would be a rack that was filled with equipment. And the command *enduo* would be used for the Roman soldiers picking up and putting on their equipment. The aorist tense here is a constantive aorist which views the action of the verb in its entirety. The constantive aorist indicates that once the believer learns a certain amount of doctrine, he arrives at the point where he can put on the full armor of God. The aorist tense speaks of that point in time when we are commanded to pick up the items, put them on as a part of our equipment, and move to our defensive positions. The middle voice describes the subject, the Church-age believer, as participating in the results of the action.

While the active voice emphasizes the action, the middle voice emphasizes the agent. In verse 11, the agent is every believer as a soldier of God. Furthermore, this is an indirect middle voice, which indicates that the subject acts for himself on something that belongs to him. In other words, the armor belongs to you but you have to put it on yourself. And, therefore, the subject produces the action for his own interest. The imperative mood is the imperative of command in which God makes a positive demand on every Church-age believer as a soldier of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 6:11 should say, “Pick up and put on the full armor of God.” “Full armor” is the Greek noun *panoplian*, which refers to the entire equipment of the Roman soldier. This full armor of the Roman soldier included a helmet, breastplate, belt, shoes, shield, sword, and spear, plus 60 pounds of tactical equipment. Along with *panoplian*, we have the ablative of source for two words in this verse. First of all, the definite article *tou* placed before the proper noun for God, *theos*, is an ablative of source which should be translated “from God.”

EPH 6:11, “Pick and put on the full armor from God...”

This command to arm oneself is followed by a purpose clause which reveals the reason for the command – “that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.” The phrase “may be” is the present active infinitive of the Greek verb *dunamai*, which means “to be able,” “to have the power,” and “to have the power by virtue of one’s own ability or resources or by virtue of a state of mind.” The last part of the definition for *dunamai* is important because a spiritual battle takes place in the soul where a believer does his thinking. All issues begin with thought. This is why thought testing occurs at all stages of Christian experience and as a part of suffering for blessing. To pass thought testing at any stage of the Christian life, the believer must have the following:

- 1) Pertinent metabolized doctrine to meet thought testing at a given stage
- 2) The filling of the Spirit at the time of thought testing to make the correct application of metabolized doctrine
- 3) Concentration, that is, the ability to resist distraction by false issues and avoid being misled with wrong priorities

Recall that the world provides frequent distractions to the Christian way of life. When a believer becomes distracted, he accumulates a tremendous amount of self-induced misery under the law of volitional responsibility (reaping what you sow). A single thought can make or break you, depending on the nature of the thought. And your thinking is either derived from metabolized doctrine in your right lobe (of the mind, heart, soul) or thinking derived from the propaganda of Satan. One will improve you; the other will break you apart.

EPH 6:11, “Pick and put on the full armor from God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”

This verse indicates that nothing is more important than donning God’s equipment when you are dealing with Satan and his kingdom of darkness. The armor from God enables you to withstand “the schemes of the devil.” This means that the devil uses his demons and his world system to attack the believer. Very few individuals have the privilege of getting personal attention from Satan. Nevertheless, the point of this verse is that you must be fully equipped and in your assigned position, behind the wall of fire, when dealing with Satan’s schemes. And you are always “able” to defend yourself against the devil’s attacks with the full armor from God at your disposal.

The present active infinitive of the Greek verb *dunamai* means “to be able,” “to have the power,” and “to have the power whether by virtue of one’s own ability and resources or from a state of mind.” The present tense in this verse is a progressive present which signifies that you are constantly progressing in your ability to handle spiritual warfare. The active voice indicates that the believer produces the action through the utilization of the power of God. And the infinitive is an infinitive of intended result in which the result fulfills a deliberate divine objective related to our defense against the power of Satan and his fantastic army. Remember that Satan has an army of millions of angels that are free to operate in the Church Age (Scripture teaches that God has at least 204 million angels and that Satan has half that number of demons). In Ephesians 6:11, we read, “Pick up and put on the full armor from God, that you may be able to stand firm.” “Stand firm” is the aorist active infinitive of the Greek verb *histemi* which means “to hold your ground,” “to stand firm,” or “to be immovable.” *Histemi* is a technical military word used of “one who does not waiver,” signifying that the Christian soldier should hold his ground against Satan and his demons. The verb *histemi* is in the constantive aorist which views the action of the verb in its entirety. In this verse, the constantive aorist signifies that you have arrived at a point of spiritual growth where you are able to handle spiritual warfare. And the task that you are able to handle is standing your ground against the devil’s schemes. The active voice of this verb indicates that the believer produces the action of the verb. Then, the infinitive of purpose of *histemi* specifies the purpose of wearing the full armor of God – “that you may be able to hold your ground.” And so, *histemi* should be translated “to hold your ground,” “to stand firm,” or “to be immovable.” And standing firm can only be accomplished by divine power.

EPH 6:11, “Pick and put on the full armor from God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.”

The phrase “against the schemes” is actually the Greek word *pros* along with the accusative plural of relationship of the Greek noun *methodeia*. *Methodeia* is in the plural and should be translated “strategies.” *Methodeias* also refers to craftiness, deceitfulness, or deceptiveness. This word refers to the craftiness and devices used by the kingdom of darkness for the purpose of deceiving the whole world, including many believers. Now recall that Sun Tzu observed that all warfare (including spiritual warfare) is based on deception. So, *methodeias* is yet another military term that, in this verse, refers to the deceptive attacks made by Satan against the Christian soldier. *Methodeias* is in the plural, which signifies that these attacks are constantly repeated towards the believer who begins making progress in the Predesigned Plan of God. And Paul indicates that the full armor from God is the believer’s only successful defense against these attacks.

Kittel’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, volume 5, page 103, states, “They (the devil’s attacks) are distinguished not so much by technique or strategy as by refinement and insidiousness.” Refinement indicates that the devil’s plans are well-organized; Satan is a master

of organization, as we shall see in this passage. Insidiousness connotes the idea of sitting and waiting for the purpose of entrapping – an ambush!

All of this analysis gives us some idea about the schemes, the strategies, and the deceptions of the devil. Remember, Satan has one goal with regards to the life of every believer, and that is to lead him astray from God's plan. Any area of life which is not founded on sound doctrine is open to the devil's deceptions; it is an unlocked room that he is able to enter, a "gap" in the believer's defense through which he can attack. Any thought we have or act we do that is not aligned with God's thoughts or God's method is open to Satan's deception. This is why the Apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 2:4, "I keep on communicating these things in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument."

So many individuals think they are intelligent and wise, when in reality they are under extreme deception and delusion. This arrogant thinking is the worst kind of deception because it is self-deception. And in 1Corinthians 3:18, Paul warned, "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become foolish [realize that he is a fool] that he may become wise." Remember that even the woman in the Garden of Eden, who was perfect and who did not have an old sin nature, ended up being deceived by the craftiness and subtlety of Satan. Paul commented on this in 2Corinthians 11:3, "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray [deceived] from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ." Notice that it is the "mind" which is led astray, not the body. The only hope for protection against deception is doctrine resident in the soul. Paul made this point in Ephesians 4:14 when he remarked, "We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;" Peter also warned about deception in 2Peter 3:17 when he wrote, "You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the deception of unprincipled men [men with no principles], you fall from your own steadfastness." Only the truth of Bible doctrine can keep false thinking and false doctrine out of the soul.

There are several principles in Scripture that describe how a believer should act to avoid being deceived.

### **1) Avoid evil company**

The Apostle Paul warned believers about the deception of evil company in 1Corinthians 15:33 when he admonished, "Do not be deceived: evil company corrupts good character." And evil company does not just refer to the common inclination of immorality, but it entails anyone who is under the influence of evil including those who are legalistic. The word for "corrupt" in this verse is the Greek word *phtheiro* and refers to the destruction and ruin of the inner life of an individual through the communication and impartation of "garbage" to his soul.

### **2) Avoid false teachers**

The Apostle Peter cautioned us about the characteristics of a deceptive teacher in 2 Peter 2:15.

2Pe 2:15, "Forsaking the right way [the Predesigned Plan of God] they have become deceived, having followed the way of Balaam [personal gain], who loved the wages of unrighteousness."

The Goodspeed translation of this verse says that "they set their hearts on dishonest gain." In other words, failing to gain anything by his own effort or merit, the deceptive teacher lies, cheats, and steals that which belongs to others. The Williams translation observes that "they

fall in love with the profits of wrong-doing.” These false teachers are deceived by the kingdom of darkness and they are willing to “sell out” others for the sake of personal gain. Rejection of doctrine (reversionism) and forsaking the right way, the Predesigned Plan of God, leads to deception.

Deception is a serious topic addressed in the Word of God; there are myriad warnings for the believer concerning deception and delusion. In Matthew 22:29, The Lord Jesus Christ warned us about deception when He remarked to the Sadducees, “You are deceived, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God.” Be sure to notice that deception comes from not understanding the Scriptures or the power of God. God made a similar statement about the Old Testament Jews in Psalm 95:10 when He said, “They keep on being deceived in their hearts, and they do not know my methods.” Take notice of the place of deception – the heart (the right lobe of the mind). Also note the reason for their deception – “they do not know my methods.” We find this principle stated again in the book of Hebrews.

HEB 3:10, “They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know My ways.”

Where is the place in which they go astray? “In their hearts.” And why do they go astray? “They do not know My ways.” Even signs and wonders are used by Satan and his kingdom of darkness to deceive believers as well as unbelievers. In Matthew 24:24, The Lord Jesus Christ stated, “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” In Revelation 13:14, the Apostle John indicated that false signs and wonders would be one method used by Satan to deceive the world.

REV 13:11, “And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke as a dragon.”

REV 13:12, “And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.”

REV 13:13, “And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.”

REV 13:14, “And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.”

REV 13:15, “And there was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast might even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”

### **3) Avoid self-deception**

Gal 6:7, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.” In fact, self-deception is the belief that grace will stop the law of volitional responsibility (you reap what you sow) and abrogate the consequences of sin or poor judgment. In 1John 1:8, the Apostle John also admonished believers about lying to themselves regarding personal sin.

1JO 1:8, “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and truth is not in us.”



Scripture reminds us that deception is a reality in our day and age. In fact, according to the Word of God, the majority of your family and friends are deceived by the devil's world. We find this principle in Revelation 12:9.

REV 12:9, "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world."

The greatest form of spiritual deception today is religion. Religion is by far Satan's greatest "trump card." The Lord Jesus Christ made serious and solemn statements about the greatest religious system of all time which will operate in the tribulation in Revelation 18:21-23.

REV 18:21, "And a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, 'Thus will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.'"

REV 18:22, "And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer;"

REV 18:23, "And the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery."

Notice some principles concerning "religion" in this passage. First of all, these religious people had a "light," a message. But they strayed from the message so that "the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer." They lost the light. Secondly, in deception, they stopped teaching doctrine – "the voice of the bridegroom [Jesus Christ] and the bride [the Church] will not be heard in you any longer." Inevitably, it is the rejection of Bible doctrine that causes any organization to lose the light it once possessed. Therefore, commercialization, money-making schemes, and gimmicks are needed for the perpetuation of the religious organization that is without sound teaching.

Moreover, this verse states, "For your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery." "Sorcery" refers to demonic influence and the doctrines of demons, indicating that Bible doctrine has been replaced by the deceptive thoughts of the devil's world. And then, finally, Isaiah observed that this demonic "garbage" allowed into the heart (right lobe of the soul) results in complete self-deception.

ISA 44:20, "He feeds on ashes [garbage]; a deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver himself, nor say, 'is there not a lie in my right hand?'"

Thus, Isaiah paints a picture of an individual who keeps on mentally "feeding" on deceptive thoughts with no substance to them. This individual fills his soul with garbage. As a result, this person cannot tell lie from truth; he does not know that there are lies in his right hand, the hand of power.

## **Chapter 6: Putting on the Full Armor from God**

In this chapter, we will analyze the utilization of the divine equipment provided by God for the Christian soldier.

EPH 6:11, “In the future, keep on becoming strong in the Lord, even by means of the inner rule of His endowed power.”

EPH 6:12, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

The word “for” is the subordinating conjunction of the Greek word *hoti* which may also be translated “because.” So, why are we to put on the full armor of God? And why are we to hold our ground against the strategies of the devil? Because our struggle is not against flesh and blood. You may think that the armor from God is meant for visible warfare, but it is not.

“Our struggle” is a nominative singular subject consisting of two Greek words: the definite article *he* and the noun *pale*. *Pale* means “warfare,” not “struggle.” And the definite article identifies this warfare as “the warfare” or “the spiritual warfare,” which is the good fight of faith that we are called to fight and endure. The definite article also distinguishes this spiritual warfare from all other types of combat in life.

*Pale* also refers to “a contest between two individuals in which each endeavors to throw the other, and which is decided when the victor is able to hold his opponent down with his hand upon his neck.” Now, wrestling with an enemy does not mean that we have physical contact with the devil or his demons; rather, it denotes the closeness of the battle – it is personal! *Pale* is an example of a *hapax legomenon*, a word that occurs only once in a text. The uniqueness of such a word draws attention to its importance. *Pale* is not found in any other part of the Bible.

What does this Greek noun *pale* mean? It is an old Greek word, and from the time of Homer, it referred to a unique wrestling match that was really a form of combat. The penalty for losing this personal combat was permanent blindness; the loser’s eyes were gouged out! The analogy for spiritual warfare is obvious – the Christian soldier who fails to hold his ground against the devil’s schemes by using the full armor from God becomes blind and defeated. The result is emotional revolt of the soul, blackout of the soul, and scar tissue of the soul, EPH 4:18-19. So, in context, *pale* refers to personal spiritual warfare or spiritual combat.

The phrase “is not” is the present active indicative of the Greek word *eimi* along with the strong Greek negative *ouk*. In this form, this phrase means that our warfare “keeps on being not” against flesh and blood. So, whatever our spiritual warfare is, there is something it is definitely not – it is not against flesh and blood. Thus, a principle emerges – one of the easiest ways for a believer to fail in spiritual combat is to get his eyes on people, that is, flesh and blood.

This usually means that he blames other people for his problems. The believer who has failed in spiritual combat becomes bitter and angry with people. He becomes vindictive and revengeful. He does not want what God desires for him – reconciliation or restoration with God and with men. The point, then, is that Satan and his kingdom of darkness love to destroy the believer’s focus. He loves to entice the spiritual warrior to become preoccupied with people, JER 17:5.

JER 17:5, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind And makes flesh his strength, And whose heart turns away from the Lord.’”

When the Christian soldier focuses on “flesh and blood,” he reacts to people and becomes angry when he thinks that they have failed him or when he thinks his battle is with them. Satan

and his kingdom of darkness also promote preoccupation with oneself, 1KI 19:10 and 1CO 1:10-11.

1KI 19:10, “He [Elijah] said, ‘I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.’”

1CO 1:10, “Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

1CO 1:11, “For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe’s people, that there are quarrels among you.”

Let us return to Ephesians 6:12 which states in part, “Because our struggle is not against flesh and blood...” The word “against” is the Greek word *pros* in the accusative singular of relationship. In this form, *pros* is an idiomatic expression for opposition and may be properly translated “against.” There are two Greek nouns at the end of this phrase. The first noun in the Greek is *haima* which is the word for “blood.” In fact, this phrase does not say “flesh and blood,” but rather “blood and flesh.” The second noun “flesh” is the Greek word *sarxz* which means “flesh.” Now, every detail in the Word of God is important. Important details in Scripture include the word order, the way the words are related. Remember that “the word of God is alive and powerful,” HEB 4:12. And our Lord taught in Matthew 5:18 that not one dotting of an “i” or crossing of a “t” in Scripture will pass away.

The word “blood” is placed first to emphasize the person rather than his sin nature. Blood is mentioned first because a person cannot function in his soul without the circulation of blood to his frontal lobes where thinking takes place. The solutions to all of the problems that a believer faces are found in the *psuche*, the soul. And those solutions come by means of the circulation of metabolized doctrine in the soul. So, “blood” must come first. Blood is what circulates through the body. Blood carries oxygen which is analogous to thought or Bible doctrine. Without oxygen, a person cannot think. So, as the circulation of blood is important, the circulation of doctrine in the soul is essential.

Next in this phrase, we find the noun for “flesh” (*sarxz*), which refers to the old sin nature of man. The obvious conclusion from this phrase is that we are not in combat with people or with their sin natures. There are times when it is appropriate to go on the offensive against people – “A time to fight,” ECC 3:8. But Scripture never directs us to be the aggressor against Satan and his kingdom. We have blood before flesh because blood represents the concept of reaching the soul. It is the soul that is eternally saved.

EPH 6:12, “Because our struggle is not against blood [people’s souls] and flesh [their old sin nature]...”

Another principle emerges – the believer’s spiritual warfare is not against a visible enemy. Instead, the Christian soldier is directed to be on the defensive against the invisible enemy. Thus, we find ourselves in a state of warfare, exposed to the attacks of an invisible enemy. Naturally, if we attempt to battle the enemy in our own strength, we will find that we are not prepared. This is why we must be equipped from God’s armor, for no weapon of our own will be able to defend us. The enemy we have to contend with bears an incurable hatred against us and he seeks nothing less than our complete destruction. And his hatred is due to the fact that

the Trinity lives in us; Satan hates the Trinity, especially The Lord Jesus Christ. Satan with his kingdom of darkness is mightier than us. Unless we have help from above, we are no match for them. The devil is an artful enemy, invisible and nearby. And, to make matters worse, he has a contact, a strong agent within us – our old sin nature.

EPH 6:12, “Because our struggle is not against blood [people’s souls] and flesh [their old sin nature], but against the rulers...”

We now come to Paul’s description of Satan’s table of organization and equipment (TOE), which is divided into four categories. These categories in Satan’s demonic military organization are important to understand because they describe our enemy and they give us insight into the devil’s schemes. A sound understanding of Satan’s TOE impacts the Christian way of life by allowing us to see what we can do and what we cannot do as believers. God has given us fantastic power for offensive action and he has also provided fantastic equipment for defensive action. However, we are going to see the fantastic power and authority that Satan has and the vital reason why we are given a greater power from God.

TOE is a military term and stands for “table of organization and equipment.” And God the Holy Spirit has seen fit to give us a list of Satan’s TOE, Satan’s military table of organization and equipment. In Satan’s TOE, we find four categories.

The first word in this phrase is “but.” “But” is the conjunction of the Greek word *alla* and is used to indicate a contrast between warfare with human beings and warfare against fallen angels. Now, recall that some of the believer’s spiritual warfare will be with human beings. Even so, if he uses the problem-solving devices and the virtue derived from divine righteousness, he can turn the curse into a blessing.

EPH 6:12, “Because our struggle is not against blood [people’s souls] and flesh [their old sin nature], but against the rulers...”

The word “against” is the Greek preposition *pros*, which indicates the identity of the true enemies to be confronted by the believer. Each category in the demon table of organization is introduced with the preposition *pros* followed by the Greek definite article *tas*. Together, these two words dogmatically indicate the identity of our spiritual enemies. Each time that the preposition *pros* is used, it connotes the idea of disadvantage, opposition, and a hostile relationship. Therefore, this idiomatic Greek preposition is properly translated “against.” Let us now briefly note the four categories of demons that war against the Christian soldier.

1) The “rulers” - The “rulers” are the highest-ranking demons in Satan’s organization and include Abaddon (Apollyon) and Beelzubul (Beelzebub). This category alone should motivate the believer to learn about the armor from God and to wear it habitually. Satan’s “rulers” have tremendous power; we need the full armor from God to be able to stand our ground against their power and deception.

2) The “powers” - The “powers” refer to demon officers who have phenomenal authority. Satan’s “powers” are well-trained and are part of the greatest systems of leadership and organizations that have ever existed among creatures. Because Satan is so well-organized, it is extremely important that the Christian soldier be well-organized and precise in his methods. Otherwise, the devil will be able to take advantage of the believer’s sloppiness and disorganization. This is why Paul cautioned in 1Corinthians 14:40, “But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner.”

3) The “world forces of this darkness” - These are the *kosmokrator* demons, Satan’s ambassadors who control many of the rulers of this world. These “world rulers” are invisible. They carry out Satan’s objectives for this world by influencing human beings who are in positions of great power. In fact, you would be shocked at what kind of people are demon possessed and demon influenced.

4) The “spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” - These “spiritual forces” are forces of evil present in the atmosphere around earth, the stellar universe, and, even, in the presence of God, where they represent Satan.

Now, this brief introduction should give you a rough idea of the necessity of habitually wearing the spiritual armor from God. Moreover, it should be clear why the Christian soldier is directed to be on the defensive against such powerful enemies. Let us look at some of these categories in greater depth.

First, the “rulers” represent the highest-ranking demons in Satan’s TOE. The word translated “rulers” is the Greek word *arche* and is found in the accusative plural form. *Arche* is taken from an ancient Greek word *archon* and refers to rulers, leaders, chiefs, or those in high-ranking positions. Scripture actually gives the names of certain demon rulers found in Satan’s table of organization.

For example, there is Abaddon (Apollyon); he is a demon king who resides in the abyss currently, REV 9:11. The abyss is part of Hades, which is commonly referred to as Hell. God has confined Abaddon there. So, right now, the abyss is the residence of a demon king, one of Satan’s right hand angels, called Abaddon or Apollyon. But, he will have quite a future role in the tribulation! In Revelation chapter 9, Abaddon will escape from confinement in the abyss with the help of Satan. At this point in the tribulation, Satan has been cast out of heaven and barred from returning. Releasing Abaddon from the abyss is part of Satan’s plan to “raise hell on earth.”

EPH 6:12, “Because our struggle is not against blood [people’s souls] and flesh [their old sin nature], but against the rulers [these are the archons like Abaddon and Beelzebub], against the powers [demon officers who have phenomenal authority]...”

The next category in Satan’s TOE is translated “the powers.” Satan’s “powers” are well-trained demon military officers who are part of the greatest systems of leadership and organizations that have ever existed among creatures.

EPH 6:12, “Because our struggle is not against blood [people’s souls] and flesh [their old sin nature], but against the rulers [these are the archons like Abaddon and Beelzebub], against the powers [demon officers who have phenomenal authority], against the world forces of this darkness...”

The third phrase in verse 12 used to describe a category in Satan’s demon organization is “against the world forces of this darkness.” “Against” is the Greek preposition *pros* and signifies that we are “face to face” with the enemy. With this preposition is the Greek definite article *tous* which emphasizes the nature of the enemy. Next, the “world forces” is the Greek plural noun *kosmokratoras* which means “rulers of the cosmos” or “world rulers;” it refers to Satan’s demon ambassadors who influence earthly rulers. The final word “darkness” is the Greek noun *skotous* and is correctly translated. Remember, each time you read “against” (*pros*), this preposition connotes disadvantage, opposition, and a hostile relationship – “our battle” is a spiritual battle where we are at a disadvantage without God’s armor and where we are opposed by a well-organized superior force that is extremely hostile towards us.

These demon “world rulers” are invisible, and yet they carry out Satan’s objectives for governing the earth. They influence world rulers to execute the policies and mandates of Satan. *Kosmokrator* demons are especially active in Arab nations as well as communistic and socialistic nations. In fact, there are some in the Moslem religion who teach that the quickest and easiest way to go to heaven is to kill a Christian. Some Muslims believe that killing a Christian will result in them automatically going to heaven where there will be women waiting to greet them and take care of their every want. How would they get such an idea? Well, the *kosmokratoras* are on the job! In fact, there are certainly *kosmokratoras* in Washington D.C. *Kosmokratoras* not only connote influence and control, but also intelligence; these demons are part of Satan’s spy system used to monitor both believers and unbelievers. So, *kosmokrator* demons are also assigned to attack and discredit establishment-oriented rulers and believers with spiritual momentum. They attack any nation operating under the laws of divine establishment. They attack any local assembly operating under the truth of Bible doctrine. And they not only attack spiritual VIPs like the Apostle Paul, but they also attack anyone in the vicinity of a VIP believer, like Timothy.

EPH 6:12, “Because our struggle is not against blood [people’s souls] and flesh [their old sin nature], but against the rulers [these are the archons like Abaddon and Beelzebub], against the powers [demon officers who have phenomenal authority], against the world forces of this darkness [*kosmokratoras* meaning demons who specialize in possessing or influencing the cosmos or world rulers], against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

In this last prepositional phrase, we see the Greek preposition *pros* (face to face with) along with the definite article *ta* (the) and the noun *pneumatika* (spirit forces). Then we have the Greek definite article *tes* (of the) with the Greek noun *ponerias* (wickedness or evil). Therefore, this phrase is best translated “against spirit forces of evil.”

The next prepositional phrase consists of the Greek word *en* along with the locative of the noun *epouraniois*. This phrase denotes that these demons operate in heavenly places and are not confined to the abyss like Abaddon. *Epouraniois*, which is translated “heavenly,” refers to the following three regions:

- a. The “first heaven,” the band of atmosphere around the earth
- b. The “second heaven,” the stellar universe
- c. The “third heaven,” the throne room or presence of God

These spiritual forces of evil reside in the earthly atmosphere and throughout the stellar universe. And, currently, they are also allowed to come into the presence of God to represent Satan before Him. These spiritual forces represent the rank and file demon forces under the command of Satan. They perform various duties for the devil. For instance, some indwell unbelievers to induce sickness. Other (*engastromuthos*) demons seize control of a person’s vocal cords and communicate doctrines of demons through that person. Some demons manufacture pressure situations against believers who have positive volition towards Bible doctrine and spiritual momentum. These rank and file demons also promote human good, evil, and sin. So, verse 12 lists Satan’s table of organization and equipment (TOE). In view of Satan’s extensive demonic organization designed to oppose God and His people, what should be the Christian soldier’s response?

EPH 6:13, “Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.”

Verse 13 emphasizes the importance of the believer's defensive position behind the "wall of fire" provided for him by God; God's armor is designed to protect the Christian soldier against formidable foes. This verse begins with the Greek prepositional phrase *dia* along with the accusative of cause of the demonstrative pronoun *houtos*. This phrase should be translated "because of this." Because of what? Because of Satan's vast resources listed in his TOE of verse 12. Because Satan has organized his massive resources and has a strategy to use them to oppose God and God's servants. Because of this opposition, the Christian soldier needs the following two things:

- 1) Defensive tactics
- 2) Divine equipment

In keeping with God's policy of grace, the defensive tactics and divine equipment have been made available to all Church-age believers. So, Ephesians 6:13 begins with the phrase, "Because of this." Next, there is a command given to the Christian soldier that is meant to be a response to "because of this great opposing demon organization." The command consists of the aorist active imperative of the Greek verb *analambano*. In this form, it demands that the believer "pick up and put on [the complete armor from God] again and again."

The Roman army had a specific trumpet sound or bugle call which would require the Roman legionnaires to immediately leave their tents, go to the equipment racks, pick up their armor, and put it on. The Greek word *analambano* has many connotations, but in the military context, it was used for picking up and putting on the equipment which had been stacked on nearby racks, ready for use. And, at the trumpet command, the Roman soldier was to pick up the equipment that was readily available and put it on.

The Romans had a rack of equipment nearby available for battle, but what do believers have? The "military rack" for the Christian soldier involved in spiritual warfare is the Bible where doctrine is "stacked" categorically. And, in effect, the Christian soldier does something analogous to the Roman legionnaire; he puts on the equipment provided for him by his Commanding Officer. In the spiritual realm, this equipment is categorical doctrine that is made available to the believer by study under his right pastor-teacher. The wise use of this categorical doctrine allows the believer to handle the onslaught of the enemy. And the "picking it up and putting it on" refers to the metabolization and application of Bible doctrine by the believer.

Again, we have the aorist active imperative of the Greek verb *analambano* which means "to pick up and put on again and again." The aorist tense is a constantive aorist which views the action of being able to put on equipment for battle in its entirety. In other words, the constantive aorist views the believer reaching a place spiritually where the action of picking up and putting on the armor is complete. The constantive aorist does not refer to the verb's beginning, end, progress, or result. So, in the constantive aorist form, the action is simply stated as a fact with no reference to time. Thus, the constantive aorist form signifies that, once you have reached spiritual adulthood and executed the PPOG, you have the ability to carry this equipment in your very own soul at all times. Some believers will attain this ability; most will not. The difference in attaining this ability lies in the believer's motivation. A believer's personal motivation is part of the privacy of his priesthood. No other person can reach into your soul, turn it on "positive towards doctrine," and keep it there. Each one of us is responsible for his own decisions; therefore, each one of us is responsible for picking up and putting on his own armor from God. There are no personal valets in the spiritual life! The active voice indicates that the believer produces the action of "picking up and putting on again and again." This is achieved by the consistent and repetitive perception, metabolization, and application of Bible doctrine.

The prepared Christian soldier is not ignorant of Satan or of his devices. And, in effect, when he has picked up and put on God's complete armor, he is behind God's "wall of fire." Being "behind" a wall of fire is a defensive position. Therefore, the Christian soldier does not get involved in attacking or "rebuking" demons. Why? Because the Christian soldier is commanded to act "on the defense" against demons. The imperative mood of *analambano* signifies that it is a command; believers are commanded to "pick up and put on God's complete armor again and again." So, it is a divine mandate to every Church-age believer from headquarters in heaven to be armed and equipped for the intensive phase of the Angelic Conflict by understanding and relying upon Bible doctrine.

EPH 6:13, "Because of this, pick up and put on the full armor of God..."

Next in this verse is the Greek definite article "ten" which emphasizes the special equipment necessary for defensive action in the intensive phase of the Angelic Conflict. So, *ten* distinguishes God's complete armor from all other categories of equipment. The Greek word for God's specially-provided equipment is *panoplian* which refers to "all of the equipment," "the full armor," or the "complete armor." This includes both offensive and defensive weapons. And "all," "full," and "complete" refer to the whole realm of doctrine, not just the subjects that interest you personally.

EPH 6:13, "Because of this, pick up and put on the full armor of God..."

The next phrase, "of God," is the Greek definite article *tou* with the ablative of source of *theos*. Together these words indicate the source of the armor; so, this phrase should be translated "the full armor from God." The complete armor from God refers to the equipment and the wall of fire which God has provided for defensive action against Satan and all fallen angels. God's provision of this armor is yet another manifestation of God's grace towards man. The next phrase denotes the purpose of the believer picking up and putting on God's full armor. It defines the objective achieved by use of God's armor – successful resistance of evil.

EPH 6:13, "Because of this, pick up and put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day..."

EPH 6:14, "Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness..."

The principle developed in verse 14 is the integrity of the believer. Christian integrity is commanded as a part of the Predesigned Plan of God. So how does the believer attain integrity? There are three concepts given in this passage which shed light on Christian integrity. The three concepts are as follows:

- a. Truth
- b. Knowledge
- c. Thought

The first requirement for Christian integrity is a proper understanding of the truth. Personal knowledge of truth allows the believer to think truth. Then, when the believer "thinks truth," he comes to the point of personal integrity. And integrity is the key to the Christian way of life, not legalism, not social arrogance, not service. Christianity in our time has become a disaster. Why? Because there is one thing missing from the life of the average Christian –



integrity. And the lack of integrity is due to a lack of humility; integrity necessitates humility. Sadly, we live in a time of arrogance and subjectivity. There is no humility in the Church today.

A lack of humility signifies that there is no relaxed mental attitude by believers and no teachability in believers. The average Christian today does not want to be taught. He wants someone to compliment him and tell him what a great believer he is because of his service. There is nothing wrong with Christian service, per se. There is nothing wrong with a prayer meeting. There is nothing wrong with fellowship. But, if you participate in these activities without integrity, then they are wrong. And a right thing done in a wrong way is wrong.

PSA 15:2, “He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness [produces divine good] speaks truth in his heart.”

Without integrity there is no Christian way of life. And it is teaching, teaching, teaching that builds integrity. Integrity is greater than morality. And so you must have integrity first! And in the Christian way of life, the first integrity that you reveal is the integrity that you display when you assemble in church for Bible class. You must be teachable. You must listen to the pastor-teacher with concentration and without disturbing others. You must be filled with the Spirit. Teachability is just the beginning of spirituality because it is the means by which the believer moves towards integrity. Genuine integrity leads to personal love for God. Why? Because genuine integrity means that you are teachable. It means that you are objective, not subjective; therefore, you can be taught to love God in the proper manner.

The only way you can love someone you have never seen is to learn all about him. Thus, personal love for God in the Christian life is only accomplished by metabolization of doctrine. And what doctrine should the believer learn first? He must learn those things that give him a love for God. But, a person who is ignorant of Bible doctrine cannot possibly love God. Why? Because love requires thought. Love is a system of thinking! The thoughts that you have, your frame of reference, determine the love you will have for those in your life. And thought has content. Metabolized doctrine is the content of thought in the case of loving the Lord. Now, all of these points are in view in our passage.

## **Chapter 7 -- The Belt of Truth**

EPH 6:14, “Because of this, hold your ground, having buckled on your combat gear...”

We shall see an interesting principle regarding the “battle harness of truth,” namely that the rest of the spiritual armor was connected to it in some way. Furthermore, the aorist tense signifies that buckling on the belt of truth is something that should be done daily. So, the Christian soldier buckles on his belt of truth by the daily intake of Bible doctrine. This metabolized truth is the only basis for defensive action against Satan and offensive action in the Predesigned Plan of God. The middle voice of *perizonnumi* is an intensive middle voice which denotes the fact that the Church-age believer acts for himself upon something belonging to himself. Bible doctrine belongs to the Church-age believer, especially the mystery doctrine. And since doctrine is the greatest of all treasures belonging to the believer, it is far more important than anything else in life. How you think, how you handle life, what capacity you have for life, and your entire lifestyle all depend on making Bible doctrine your first priority in life. So, when you place doctrine first, you are learning how to buckle on your combat gear around your waist with truth. Again, the middle voice of *perzonnumi* is an intensive middle in which the Church-age believer acts for himself upon something belonging to himself. What can we conclude from

this? Paul concluded in 1Corinthians 3:21, “So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you,”

1CO 3:22, “Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you,”

1CO 3:23, “And you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.”

To repeat, “having girded” is the aorist middle participle of *perizonnumi* which means to buckle on a belt. And in verse 14, it means to put on one’s battle harness which is used metaphorically for equipping oneself with the knowledge of truth, Bible doctrine. The participle of *perizonnumi* is a temporal participle denoting that the action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb. Now, what is the main verb in verse 14? The main verb is “hold your ground.” But, you cannot hold your ground until you have buckled on the combat harness of biblical truth. Thus, we have the first principle from this verse – intake of doctrine must precede spiritual battle. We will see that the subsequent participles in this passage will indicate the same principle. You cannot hold your ground against Satan until you have Bible doctrine, the belt of truth. Later, we are going to see why the breastplate of righteousness is listed after the belt of truth. So, the verb *perizonnumi* refers to a combat belt issued to every Roman soldier as the “framework” for the rest of his equipment.

EPH 6:14, “Because of this, hold your ground, having buckled on your combat gear...”

To reiterate – in the ancient world, wearing a battle harness signified that a soldier was ready for battle. He was prepared or strengthened for action. In our verse, wearing the battle harness of biblical truth refers to a believer who is ready for spiritual battle; he has been prepared or strengthened by intake of Bible doctrine. The rest of the Roman soldier’s combat equipment was somehow attached to or connected with his harness. For instance, the combat belt or battle harness was worn, in part, over the breastplate. The bottom part of the harness that went around the waist (the belt) held the breastplate in place. This belt was called the “balteus” by the Romans. The breastplate would actually snap into slots on the waist belt. And the combat harness had a shoulder strap called the “baldric” which secured the breastplate to the soldier’s chest. So, the Roman soldier’s breastplate was supported and secured by the combat harness.

Thus, a second principle emerges from this verse – a Roman soldier must have his belt on before he could put on the breastplate. Otherwise, the breastplate would not be secured and it would move around, exposing the soldier to attack; it would be useless and, perhaps, even an encumbrance. The spiritual application of “putting on the belt before the breastplate” is obvious; the believer must have the truth of Bible doctrine before he can operate in the righteousness or the integrity of God. Therefore, we return to the importance of setting priorities. The harness of truth must come first. That is to say, the intake of Bible doctrine is the believer’s top priority. So, the belt is the part of the harness that fastens the breastplate; the belt supports and stabilizes the breastplate just as doctrine supports and stabilizes the believer’s integrity.

Let me be clear – when donning the complete armor from God, the belt of doctrine must be put on first. Only then can the Christian soldier don the breastplate of integrity. So, the combat harness was composed of a balteus (belt) and a baldric. A baldric is a shoulder strap, usually made of ornamental leather, which is worn over the chest to support other parts of the military equipment. The baldric would stretch over the top of the breastplate. This fact has spiritual significance, as we will see. So, the battle harness consisted of the following two parts: the “girdle” or belt was worn around the waist while the baldric was a leather strap which was slung across the chest and over the shoulder.

Another part of the battle harness was an “apron” or “codpiece” that attached to the bottom of the belt and extended below the belt to cover the loins. It protected the genital area of the soldier. Today, we would call this apron a “super-duper jockstrap.” This codpiece was attached to the bottom of the belt, again emphasizing that the belt must be put on first. Since the rest of the soldier’s armor attached to the belt, the belt was very thick and wide. Spiritually, a Christian soldier’s belt of truth must be “thick and wide.” He must have extensive doctrine in the right lobe of the soul attained by the daily intake of the Word of God. When the Roman soldier was buckled up for combat, all his armor was in place and the various parts of his armor coordinated together to protect him. The belt and the armor attached to the belt protected the vulnerable parts of the soldier. The complete harness was needed when heavy armor was worn; the heavy belt supported the breastplate and the baldric secured the breastplate to the soldier’s chest. The baldric was studded with metal plates and was fastened with a decorated buckle. The soldier’s sword scabbard hung from his belt. The belt also had loops to attach items such as ropes and rations. This system made all these items easily accessible when needed. The spiritual implication of the battle harness is clear – a Roman soldier’s equipment depended on the belt; just so, everything in the Christian way of life depends on Bible doctrine.

In addition to the items discussed, the Roman soldier also carried his most valuable possessions on his belt – silver, gold, and jewelry that he plundered from captured cities or enemy bivouacs. The harness itself was often decorated with precious or semiprecious metal plates. There is another spiritual analogy here – the Christian soldier who has put on his belt of truth will have a measure of blessing by following the Lord into spiritual battle. In our passage, Paul mentioned the belt first and foremost because he understood its importance. The belt was the key to the rest of the *panoplia*, the full armor from God. Thus, in Ephesians 6:14, the combat belt comes to represent Bible doctrine resident in the soul of the believer. As such, doctrine is the basic requirement that precedes the rest of the complete armor from God. A principle emerges – once the Christian warrior has buckled on his harness of balteus (belt) and baldric (shoulder strap), he is fully prepared for the charge of the unseen enemy. For example, Solomon wrote in Proverbs 20:18, “Prepare plans by consultation, And make war by wise guidance.” The Hebrew word for “consultation” in this verse is the noun *etsar*, which means advice, prudence, or wisdom. In the spiritual realm, it refers to the truth of Bible doctrine. However, we must always remember the principle found in Proverbs 21:31 – “The horse is prepared for the day of battle, But victory belongs to the Lord.” Our job as Christian soldiers is to be prepared by having doctrine resident in our souls; the Lord accomplishes the victory.

Let us return to our examination of Ephesians 6:14. When the alarm trumpet blew, the Roman soldier would run to the rack of equipment and the first thing he donned was his belt. He would pick up his battle harness, put it on and then don the rest of his armor. And once his equipment was in place, he would pick up his weapons and move to the FLOT line, the defensive area. FLOT is a military acronym for the “forward line of troops.” These troops were closest to the enemy. Now, how would the Roman soldiers handle being placed on the front line in warfare? They would lock their shields together against the enemy! The spiritual implication of this action relates to the fellowship found in the local assembly whereby believers “stand together” in unity of purpose against the devil’s schemes.

Ephesians 6:14 is more properly translated, “Because of this, hold your ground, having buckled on your combat gear...” The harness made up of balteus (belt) and baldric (strap) was the most important part of the Roman legionnaire’s combat gear. This fact is especially evident since the sword scabbard, the dagger, the breastplate, and the rest of his equipment were attached to it.

EPH 6:14, “Because of this, hold your ground, having buckled on your combat gear...”

Next in this verse, we find the accusative singular direct object of three Greek words. The first word is definite article *ten* used to distinguish this belt from all other belts. *Ten* indicates that the belt is a special type of belt. *Ten* is followed by the Greek noun *osphun*, which refers to the waist, hips, or loins. The next word is the possessive genitive of the pronoun *su*, meaning “your,” that is, “your waist.” To the Jews, *osphun* (the loins) signified the genital region and was considered the site where life was generated to perpetuate the race. The loins produced life. Furthermore, a blow to the loins often resulted in loss of life. The spiritual analogy is obvious – the believer’s “spiritual loins” generate spiritual life. His *osphun* is the heart (right lobe of the soul) where biblical truth resides. As such, the believer’s “spiritual loins” need protection. And a great blow to the right lobe of the soul may result in great spiritual damage.

Eph 6:14, “Because of this, hold your ground, having buckled on your combat gear around your waist with truth...”

Next we have another prepositional phrase in this verse. It is the Greek preposition “en” along with the instrumental singular of “aletheia” which means “truth.” *En* should not be translated “in,” but “by means of.” So, the means by which the Christian soldier buckles on his combat harness is truth. In other words, Bible doctrine is the means by which we reach our objective in the spiritual life. How does the Christian soldier get ready to hold his ground? “By means of doctrine!” The absence of a definite article before “truth” calls attention to the high quality of doctrine. Thus, the “belt of truth” comprises the entire realm of doctrine, all of its truths and all of its categories, as it is assimilated by daily perception, metabolization, and application. Therefore, if a Christian wants to attain the supergrace status of maturity, he must accept the challenge to learn Bible doctrine on a consistent, daily basis no matter what distractions or temptations Satan introduces to hinder him! And this objective, the high ground of supergrace, is well worth the effort!

*Aletheia* is the Greek word for “truth” or Bible doctrine. The absence of a definite article in the Greek emphasizes the quality of the noun. Thus, *aletheia* indicates the high quality of metabolized doctrine in the right lobe of the soul. Now, many believers ask, “How do I know if I am learning truth?” or “How do I know my pastor is teaching truth?” Well, a doctrinally-oriented pastor is not afraid to provide references; he also gives his flock the opportunity to examine the Scriptures themselves. Such a pastor has no problem with “Bereans” in his congregation. In fact, he is encouraged by them. They are sometimes his best students.

ACT 17:10, “And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went in the synagogue of the Jews.”

ACT 17:11, “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, [to see] whether these things were so.”

What is truth as defined by the Bible? First of all, truth is biblical information which causes the believer to be more stable, more certain, and more sure than ever before. Truth will produce stability and security in a believer’s life. It will cause him to be certain, confident, positive, and assured, without being arrogant; a vital part of truth is humility.

PSA 25:8, “Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He instructs sinners in the way.”

PSA 25:9, “He leads the humble in justice, And He teaches the humble His way.”

PRO 11:2, “When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.”

Truth will cause you to be certain, confident, positive, and assured, without becoming arrogant. Gesenius observed that truth will produce firmness, security, and integrity of mind. “Firmness” infers determination, steadfastness, steadiness, and establishment. “Security of mind” means strength, defense, and protection. And “integrity of mind” we have already covered.

The Greek noun *aletheia* also means “integrity of character.” It means that which is faithful and certain. When a believer has integrity of character he will be constant, dedicated, devoted, loyal, and steadfast by virtue of his integrity. Thayer’s Greek lexicon describes *aletheia* as “that which frees the mind from pretense, deceit, and falsehood.” When a person lives in *aletheia*, he will not be a hypocrite, a phony, or a deceiver. All these concepts regarding integrity are in view in EPH 6:14 and center on one word – *aletheia* (truth). Thus another principle emerges – it is impossible to serve the Lord apart from truth as your true motivation. You cannot just “be sincere” and serve the Lord; you must have truth, Bible doctrine resident in the soul.

JOS 24:14, “Now, therefore, respect the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth;”

ISA 12:24, “Respect the Lord and serve him in truth with all your heart;”

Truth or Bible doctrine is the first basic ingredient that the believer needs to serve the Lord. Truth or doctrine will enlighten the believer and guide him in the spiritual warfare of the Angelic Conflict.

PSA 43:3, “O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them [light and truth] lead me; let them [light and truth] bring me to Thy holy hill, and to Thy dwelling places.”

Notice here that David wrote that it is truth that gives us light and leads us to worship God properly. Truth is something that we must be taught, however; it does not come naturally.

PSA 25:5, “Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; for Thee I wait all the day.”

Truth must be taught. Truth protects us and keeps us from deception – not salvation alone, not Jesus alone, not the Holy Spirit alone – but truth! In fact, John stated in John 14:26 that God the Holy Spirit uses the doctrine we have been taught to protect us from deception.

JOH 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

Therefore, truth protects the believer from deception – not his feelings, not his emotions, not the so-called gift of discernment, but truth!

PSA 40:10, “I have not hidden Thy righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation; I have not concealed Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth from the great congregation.”

PSA 40:11, “Thou, O Lord, wilt not withhold Thy compassion from me; Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth will continually preserve me.”

Notice, then, that truth preserves and protects the believer.

PSA 61:7, “He will abide before God forever; appoint lovingkindness and truth, that they may preserve him.”

## **Chapter 8 -- The Breastplate of Righteousness**

EPH 6:14, “Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...”

Let us briefly look at several definitions of integrity to prepare ourselves for further analysis of this passage. The corrected translation of verse 14 reads, “Therefore, hold your ground after you have buckled on your combat gear around your waist with truth, and after you have put on the breastplate of righteousness...” The “breastplate of righteousness” refers to the Christian soldier’s integrity during spiritual warfare in the Angelic Conflict. Integrity begins with the believer’s relationship with God; without a proper relationship with God, there can be no genuine integrity in life.

JOB 8:20, “God will not reject a man of integrity, nor will He support the evildoers [those under the influence of evil].”

So far, the corrected translation of Ephesians 6:13 reads, “Because of this vast demon organization, pick up and put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to hold your ground in the day when evil attacks you, even after you have achieved or accomplished everything, hold your ground.” And Ephesians 6:14 reads, “Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...”

What is the essence of the integrity described by the Apostle Paul in this passage? There are myriad definitions and descriptions of integrity that are available, but let us look at integrity as defined in Scripture and as described in Roman society in Paul’s day. One of the best definitions of integrity is “the spiritual strength to put into operation that which one claims to believe.”

David wrote in 1Chronicles 29:17, “Since I know, O my God, that You test the heart and delight in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these things;” In a pressure situation, an individual with integrity willingly puts into operation that doctrine which he claims to believe. In fact, the believer’s integrity is one reason why God brings a believer certain tests, tests of the doctrine that is in his heart (right lobe of the mind). The Romans esteemed integrity and taught that integrity involves conformation to certain standards or rights. The Roman definition of integrity aligns with Scripture. In 1Kings 9:4, the Lord admonished Solomon with these words, “And as for you, Walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keep My statutes and My ordinances and I will bless you.” The Romans also defined integrity as the quality of life and the power needed to live. Integrity gives the believer the capacity to perform his duties properly. Christian service, prayer, giving, and witness are all part of Christian performance. And, integrity is the actor that plays out the part or the role. The basis for building personal integrity is consistent metabolization of Bible doctrine. So integrity can be described as the quality of life and power needed to live.

PSA 25:21, “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for Thee.”

This verse indicates that God will vindicate and preserve the believer who operates in integrity no matter what situation arises. But, without personal integrity based on doctrine, Christian activity has no worth. Remember, just because you participate in activities mandated by Scripture, it does not mean that you have fulfilled the Christian way of life. Divine good, Christian activity done in doctrinal integrity, is a result of the Christian way of life and not the means of the Christian way of life. So, a principle emerges – it is easy to do something wonderful for someone you love. It is not hard at all. You delight in doing it. You love to give to him, to spend time with him, to serve him, to wait on him, and so forth. When you serve someone you love, you do not consider it a sacrifice! And yet another principle is evident – actions motivated by love do not place strain on your life. If you are in love with someone, there is no real sacrifice or strain when you serve him. So, if you are in love with God, there is no real strain or sacrifice in service to Him. In fact, if you love God, you don't even consider your actions for Him sacrificial. If you are conscious of all the sacrifices you are making for someone, then you really do not have love for him. If you have true love, then service is not a sacrifice; you will love giving to the one you love.

Therefore, one of the most important goals in the Christian walk is development of integrity, which in chapter 6 of Ephesians is described by the phrase “putting on the breastplate of righteousness.” This personal integrity is directed two ways.

- a. Motivational integrity is personal love towards God.
- b. Functional integrity is impersonal, unconditional love towards all mankind.

Paul directs us to have integrity first. This integrity is based on Bible doctrine – “truth” from the Scriptures. Not love – integrity! Not fruit – integrity! Not works – integrity! If you perform all the so-called “great things for God” without integrity, what do you have? You have wood, hay, and straw that will be burned up before the judgment seat of Christ. You have a life where you have wasted your time.

1CO 3:12-13, “Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work.”

The value of your actions depends on your motivation, your love for God. You should ask yourself, “Do I personally love God?” Moreover, a wise author once observed that integrity involves a man knowing what is good and what is evil, what is useless, shameful, and dishonorable. The Romans further defined integrity as devotion and loyalty, especially to your friends and family. To Roman society, loyalty was the key to possessing integrity. Now, Job and his wife provide a good illustration of integrity and loyalty. At the beginning of the book of Job, the Lord pointed out to Satan the fact that Job had retained his integrity despite all the pressures that Satan placed upon him.

JOB 2:3, “And the Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered my servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil and he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause.’”

Even though Job’s wife witnessed his integrity, she abandoned him to his sufferings. Her action was an example of unfaithfulness, disloyalty.

JOB 2:7, “Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.”

JOB 2:8, “And he [Job] took a potsherd to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes.”

JOB 2:9, “Then his wife said to him, ‘Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!’”

JOB 2:10, “But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips.”

Job maintained his loyalty to God (his integrity), but Job’s wife was disloyal to him. So, devotion and loyalty were indications of integrity in Roman society. There are many believers who have no loyalty to others, none whatsoever. They are only loyal to themselves, and self-loyalty is arrogance. These selfish believers are preoccupied with themselves only, an attitude which results in subjectivity. They have no loyalty in life and, therefore, no integrity. Integrity involves developing loyalties in life, especially loyalty to truth (doctrine). Unfortunately, many believers lose their loyalty toward others when others do not live up to their unrealistic expectations. And this loss of loyalty usually results from ignorance about the doctrine of hamartiology, the biblical study of sin. They do not understand that all people sin and that forgiveness is the order of the day. Therefore, they are not loyal or faithful to others. They have a total lack of integrity when dealing with other individuals. These disloyal believers are not familiar with passages such as Psalm 130:3 which states, “If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?” They should not be shocked when others disappoint them; we all fail.

1KI 8:46, “For there is no man who does not sin.”

PRO 20:9, “Who can say, I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?”

ECC 7:20, “Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”

What should a believer do when people fail him or let him down? He should operate in personal integrity!

PRO 17:17, “A friend loves at all times, and as a brother is born for adversity.”

1PE 4:8, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

If the perspective of these verses fail you, then consider the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in John 8:7 – Jesus said, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” Just think, even in a group of self-righteous, religious, legalistic, judgmental, hypocritical, deceitful, arrogant, pompous, blind individuals like the Pharisees, not one person had the audacity to throw a stone at the adulterous woman. To the Romans, integrity also meant reverence and devotion to the authorities of life. This definition of integrity included respect and loyalty towards God revealed by the exact performance of all that was required of them. It also meant respect for the laws of divine establishment expressed in government. Integrity also meant justice or faith in Roman society. To the Roman, faith meant to be true to one’s word, paying one’s debt, keeping one’s oath, and performing all of one’s obligations. In Roman society, integrity was equated with the fulfillment of all of one’s obligations. In the Roman business world, a man’s word was his bond; they did not bother to draw up written contracts. If a Roman gave his word, that was final! So, Roman integrity signified the faithfulness and the ability to fulfill one’s obligations and keep one’s promises.



Another Roman connotation of integrity was consistency of word and perseverance of action. This definition of integrity indicated perseverance under the most trying circumstances. All integrity is related to truth. As Ephesians 6:14 records, all biblical integrity is based upon truth. This integrity not only involves learning the truth, but living in the truth and telling the truth. Loyalty to the truth, then, is the simplest form of integrity. The more complicated form of integrity involves the entire lifestyle of the believer. Often, the proper lifestyle of the believer has been described as morality, but that is not correct. The proper lifestyle of a believer is personal integrity based on truth. A believer can be very moral and still have no integrity. In fact, arrogance and many other mental attitude sins arise from a believer's morality via the "holier than thou" syndrome. This fact does not imply that morality is sinful. Instead, it simply warns the believer that the blind arrogance of morality often produces the arrogance complex of sins.

Let us review a few biblical principles concerning integrity and how it is developed in the believer before we continue with Ephesians 6:14.

1. Integrity begins in the heart (right lobe of the soul, the mind). Integrity, then, is a system of thinking.

GEN 20:6. "Then God said to him in the dream, 'Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this.'"

1CH 29:17, "Since I know, O my God, that Thou test the heart and delight in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these things;"

2. There is no integrity without truth. Truth must come before integrity, just as the Roman soldier's belt must be put on before the breastplate could rest upon it and be strapped to the chest.

JUD 9:16, "Now therefore, if you have dealt in truth and integrity..."

PRO 2:7, "He stores up sound wisdom [truth] for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity."

PSA 15:1, "(A Psalm of David.) O Lord, who may abide in Thy tent? Who may dwell on Thy holy hill?"

PSA 15:2, "He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart."

PSA 15:3, "He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend;"

3. Integrity reveals respect for God. Not only does integrity indicate a believer's respect for God, it produces confidence in the believer.

JOB 4:6, "Is not your respect for God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope?"

4. Integrity in the believer is the basis for God vindicating that believer from his enemies.

PSA 7:8, “The Lord judges the peoples; vindicate me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me.”

PSA 26:1, “Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity; and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering.”

PSA 26:11, “But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me.”

5. Integrity is also the basis for “blessing by association.”

PRO 20:7, “A righteous man who walks in his integrity – how blessed are his sons after him.”

The blessings that a believer who lives in integrity receives overflow from his cup (his capacity for blessing) and spill over to others around him, PSA 23:5.

PSA 23:5, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows.”

Ephesians 6:14 continues, “Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...” There are two concepts developed in Ephesians 6:14. The first concept relates to the first item of equipment listed. It is called the girdle (really a belt or harness) of the Roman soldier. Whenever a Roman soldier responded to the trumpet command, he left his quarters and ran over to the rack of equipment. And the first thing he put on was the belt or harness. Paul used this action to illustrate biblical truth.

EPH 6:14, “Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth...”

The first Greek word in this verse is the aorist active imperative of the verb *histemi*. *Histemi* is found in verses 11, 13, and 14. *Histemi* means to “stand against,” “to oppose,” “to hold your ground,” or “to stand fast.” Now remember, the believer does not have any human power or ability strong enough to enter and be victorious in spiritual combat against such superior creatures as are found in verse 12. Angelic creatures, even fallen angels, are infinitely stronger, greater, and smarter than humanity. We cannot possibly cope with them in our human strength. Therefore, God has provided a “wall of fire” to protect us. The belt of truth is part of this wall of fire.

The aorist tense of *histemi* is a constantive aorist which views the believer’s defensive actions against Satan and his demonic organization in its entirety. In other words, the constantive aorist tense views the believer as having reached a point where he is spiritually strong enough to hold his ground in spiritual warfare. So, the constantive aorist sums up an action of long duration. The believer’s defensive action over a long period of time is in view here.

It has taken the believer a lengthy time of dedication and devotion as a student of the Word of God to reach the point where he is able to put on the harness, the belt of truth. The believer must have biblical truth in his soul. And the more truth he learns, the more truth he will understand. And, the more truth he understands, the more truth he will think. And, the more truth he thinks, the greater chance he has to possess integrity. Thus, we see the mechanics of the principle that truth precedes integrity. This principle starts out with truth in the concept of Bible doctrine. And, in context, truth is defined as the absolute truth of the Word of God. The active voice of *histemi* signifies that the Church-age believer produces the action of the verb under the military metaphor of defensive action. The Christian soldier’s defensive action in time of spiritual warfare is the constant and persistent perception of Bible doctrine in spite of the satanic

pressure. The imperative mood in this phrase is the imperative of command in which God makes a direct positive demand on the volition of every Church-age believer. So the phrase “stand firm” or “hold your ground” is a divine command for defensive action through the daily intake of Bible doctrine.

EPH 6:14, “Hold your ground therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...”

In verse 14, “therefore” is the Greek inferential conjunction of *oun*. A conjunction simply joins together sentences, clauses, phrases, or words. An inferential conjunction is derived as a conclusion from facts or premises. Thus, *oun* may also be translated “because of this.” An inferential conjunction usually introduces additional information concerning the topic at hand. “Because of this” means “in view of the verses we have just studied.” In view of Satan’s table of organization and equipment (TOE), there is something the believer must do. So, the beginning of verse 14 is more properly translated, “Because of this vast satanic organization, hold your ground.”

Now, to hold his ground, the believer begins with his combat harness of truth. In the ancient world, wearing a battle harness indicated that a soldier was ready for service; he was prepared or strengthened for action. The phrase “having girded” is the aorist middle participle of the Greek verb *perizonnumi* which means to buckle on a belt. In our passage, *perizonnumi* means to put on one’s battle harness. It is used metaphorically to refer to equipping oneself with the knowledge of biblical truth. So, in the ancient world, wearing a battle harness indicated that a soldier was ready for service; he was prepared or strengthened for action. Therefore, a better translation of this phrase is “having buckled on your combat gear around your waist with truth.”

## Chapter 9 -- The Combat Boots

Continuing with verse 15, the next piece of equipment provided for the Roman soldier was his footwear or combat shoes.

EPH 6:15, “...and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace.”

The phrase “having shod” means “having tied on or bound on” the combat shoes. This phrase could be translated, “Also put combat boots on your feet.” The phrase “with preparation” means “with the equipment.” The noun “gospel” means “good news” (the good news about salvation) and the word “peace” refers to the doctrine of reconciliation (salvation reconciles man to God).

So, let us note several principles about witnessing.

a. Every believer-ambassador is God’s agent for witnessing.

Witnessing is the responsibility of every member of the Royal Family of God, ACT 1:8; EPH 6:15,20; 2TI 4:5.

2TI 4:5, “But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

This means that, at some time in your life, you are going to have the opportunity and the privilege of communicating Bible doctrine.

There are two areas of responsibility for this witnessing. There is a general witness of your life, 2CO 3:3,6:3.

2CO 3:3, “Being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”

This area is not pertinent to all situations, but there are times when it will be. Then there is the witness of the lips, that is, proclaiming the gospel, 2CO 5:14-21,6:2.

2CO 6:2, “For He says, ‘AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU.’ Behold, now is ‘THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,’ behold, now is ‘THE DAY OF SALVATION.’”

b. Knowledge of pertinent doctrine is necessary for effective witnessing.

The believer must witness in wisdom; this means the use of Bible doctrine. He must be filled with the Spirit in order to effectively communicate the gospel. He must make the issue clear and avoid human persuasiveness or salesmanship. The believer’s ability to witness depends upon a number of things.

His emphasis should be on the gospel, especially the doctrine of reconciliation, EPH 2:14-17.

EPH 2:14, “For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,”

EPH 2:15, “By setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace,”

EPH 2:16, “And in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the Cross, by which he put to death their hostility.”

EPH 2:17, “He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.”

A true witness must have correct and accurate gospel information from Bible doctrine, 1PE 1:18 and HEB 4:12.

1PE 1:18, “Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,”

HEB 4:12, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

The true witness must be filled with the Spirit and, therefore, current on rebound. He must have the right mental attitude. For instance, witnessing is paying a debt to the unbeliever, ROM 1:14-15.

ROM 1:14, “I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish.”

ROM 1:15, “So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.”

Preparation means a maximum understanding of doctrine in the soul.

ROM 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

Romans 1:16 describes the attitude of the super-grace believer – “I am not ashamed.”

Witnessing, therefore, belongs to the royal priesthood and is an extension of our ambassadorship. Every believer is an ambassador; if you are born again, you are an ambassador of Christ, 2CO 5:18-20.

2CO 5:20, “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.”

c. The issue of the gospel must be presented in a simple and clear manner.

John 3:18 and 3:36 are two perfect illustrations of how easy it is to make the issue of the gospel clear. You must give the unbeliever pertinent information regarding salvation. Christ is the issue; attitude towards Christ is the issue. Therefore, the effective witness must avoid any false issues of legalism, salvation by works, jumping through psychological hoops, and so on.

JOH 3:36, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.”

d. The effectiveness of witnessing depends on the Holy Spirit.

The effectiveness of witnessing ultimately depends upon the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit directed towards the believer relates to his spirituality, ACT 1:8, 2CO 3:3. The ministry of the Spirit directed towards the unbeliever relates to his conviction, that is, to convince him of the truth of the gospel, 1CO 2:14; JO 16:8-11.

JOH 16:8, “And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;”

JOH 16:9, “Concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;”

JOH 16:10, “And concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;”

JOH 16:11, “And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”

e. The clarity of witnessing emphasizes God’s judgment of human good, not personal sins.

The clarity of witnessing depends upon the believer’s understanding of the judgment of human good. Human good was rejected at the Cross. The believer’s human good will be judged for reward at the judgment seat of Christ, 1CO 3:11-16. The unbeliever’s human good is the basis for his judgment at the last judgment, REV 20:12-15.

Verse 16, then, introduces the shield of faith.

## Chapter 10. --- The Shield of faith

EPH 6:16, “Above all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.”

Verse 16 introduces the shield of faith. This involves one of the most important parts of a Roman soldier’s defensive equipment, the shield. “Above all” is a prepositional phrase; it is actually a Greek idiom meaning “in addition to these.” The Greek verb for translated “taking up” in verse 16 is the aorist active participle of the Greek verb *analambano*, which means to pick up and put on. The aorist tense is a constative aorist which views the action of the verb in its entirety. *Analambano* takes the accumulation of doctrine resident in the soul and relates it to the function of the faith-rest technique. The active voice signifies that the Christian soldier himself prepares the action by picking up his own shield. Each soldier must pick up and carry his own shield, and when the army contacts the enemy, he must use his own shield in battle. The participle is circumstantial with an antecedent action to the main verb which is to “hold our ground” in verse 14. So, the first part of verse 16 should be translated, “In addition to these, having already taken up the shield of faith, hold your ground.”

Next in this verse is the “shield of faith.” “Shield” is accusative singular direct object of the Greek noun *thyreon*, which means a door-shaped shield. “Faith” is the descriptive genitive singular from the Greek noun *pistis*. Ordinarily, *pistis* means one of two things. It can mean the action of faith or doctrine, that which is believed. Here it refers to the principle of faith in itself. Under the principle of faith, faith is a system of thinking. Faith = thinking. It is the system of thinking by which we learn; someone teaches us something and we choose to believe it.

Rationalism and empiricism are the only other two systems of thinking. Rationalism always makes what you think in your mind the criterion. Empiricism is what you see, smell, taste, or otherwise observe; it is the basis for scientific experimentation. In empiricism, you synthesize what you have observed into conclusions you accept as reality. But, faith has always been the basic system of thinking and the basis for education.

The classification of the proper objects of faith is crucial. The object of faith for the unbeliever is The Lord Jesus Christ. Faith in The Lord Jesus Christ results in salvation, ACT 16:31. After salvation, the Word of God (Bible doctrine) becomes the object of faith.

All the faith in the world secures nothing but condemnation. However, a tiny little bit of faith in Jesus Christ secures eternal salvation. So the efficacy of faith always lies in its object. We learn this through salvation and we apply it in our spiritual lives. All efficacy of faith is related to either the Living Word or the written Word.

## Chapter 11 -- The Helmet of Salvation:

*And take the helmet of salvation. . . (Eph. 6:17a).*

Most secular and Bible dictionaries and reference books state that the helmet is a part of the soldier’s defense equipment. This is true only inasmuch as the helmet protects the head from injury sustained in battle. Actually, the helmet should be listed among the offensive armor or weapons of the fighting man. Particularly is this true of the HELMET OF SALVATION. No member of the human race can assume the offensive against the ruler of this world, Satan, or against his mighty demon army until he joins the Royal Combat Legion through faith in Jesus Christ! Only believers in Christ are involved in this

great spiritual warfare. We are on the Lord's side — the winning side — and it behooves us to examine each part of the Roman helmet and its significance in the spiritual life.

Man has traditionally preferred the lightest type of effectual protection for the head during combat. The helmets of most ancient warriors were made of quilted cloth or of heavy leather. Metal helmets were considered to be too cumbersome and inconvenient in hot climates; yet they had proved to be the best guard against head injuries. The Greeks had used metal helmets; but the Romans, finding these to be too heavy, adapted and improved them for their own needs. The Roman helmet was generally made from bronze. It fitted over an iron skullcap, which had been lined with either leather or cloth for greater comfort. A heavier helmet was worn by the Roman armies stationed along the hostile frontiers on the Rhine and Danube. The helmet covered the back of the head and was reinforced by a back plate, which protected the soldier's neck.

Atop each helmet was a ring into which a crest of horsehair or feather plumes could be inserted for parades or dress occasions. Those regimental plumes were never worn on the battlefield! The Roman helmet had no visor. Instead, a small metal peak jutted out in front to offer added protection against the downward cuts of the opponent. Hinged bronze cheek pieces held the helmet securely in place.

The Roman officer wore a more ornate helmet than the enlisted man. Made of bronze or of iron, the officer's helmet was plated with silver or gold and frequently bore his crest or decorations. Considerably wider cheek pieces fastened his helmet, and an elongated slot extended down its center to hold the officer's scarlet plume on gala occasions. Although all helmets were constructed after the same basic design, their shapes varied for easier recognition by the soldiers.

With the exception of the standard-bearer, who was permitted to wear a wolf's head — a singular honor bestowed upon the man who carried the colors — every man, from the highest officer down to the last buck private in the Roman Army, wore a metal helmet over an iron skullcap. Upon completing his basic training, each Roman soldier received his mark. At the same time, he was fitted with an iron skullcap of his own, which he was obliged to wear at all times. Once he had become accustomed to having his head covered, he would be less conscious of the weight of the helmet. The wearing of the helmet called for a special mental attitude: respect for authority, respect for military discipline, as well as self-discipline. He had learned to respect the sagacity and better judgment of his superiors; he had learned to appreciate the value of the helmet in combat! Even if it were uncomfortable, it was well worth the trouble, and he welcomed the safety it offered him!

The Roman Army was noted for rarely ever suffering head injuries. The Roman soldier simply had no excuse for losing his helmet. If he received a head wound, in battle, it was assumed that he had become a coward, had fled and left his helmet behind. His comrades would never let him escape such disgrace, and it was considered better to lose one's life rather than report in after battle with any kind of head injury!

As the most vulnerable part of the human anatomy, the head requires special protection. While the dense structure of the skull provides natural armor for the central nervous system and the soul under normal conditions, added protection is needed in combat. Had helmets been used during the War between the states instead of haphazard cloth caps, many lives could have been saved. In later conflicts, this situation was corrected, and thousands were spared because the soldier wore his helmet. He may not have valued it when it was first issued, but he was grateful to possess a helmet when the hail of bullets fell or the shrapnel burst around him!

It is of even greater importance that a human being utilize the helmet of salvation! The Greek text of Ephesians 7:17a emphasizes this principle. "And" is the adjunctive use of KAI and means "also." "Take," is the aorist active imperative of the verb DECHOMAI — "to receive, to welcome." The constative aorist contemplates the occurrence of salvation — a momentary action of believing in Jesus Christ — and gathers it into a single whole. Thus, the verb sees in their entirety the thirty-six spiritual assets' every believer receives at the point of salvation.

When we believed in the Savior, we were entered into union with Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father as the King of Kings. In union with Him, we are His Royal Family. God the Holy Spirit came to indwell our bodies and sealed us until the day of redemption. What fantastic security we have! God's own righteousness was imputed to us; we are positionally vindicated and sanctified by God! We are issued divine equipment compatible with our station as royalty.

Since it is the soul that is saved (Psa. 19:7; Mark 8:36; Heb. 10:39), it must be guarded from harm after salvation. The active voice of DECHOMAI indicates that mankind produces the action of the verb. Although you can neither be ordered nor compelled to believe in Jesus Christ, you may be urged to do so. This concept is brought out by the imperative of entreaty, which expresses an appeal to the free will of Homo sapiens to accept Christ. If you are not yet saved, the fault is entirely on your side. God is neither slow nor lethargic; His power to save you is limited only by your refusal to be saved! However, from the moment of your salvation, you become a member of the Royal Family of God. You do not dedicate yourself to full-time Christian service; you are born into it by virtue of regeneration! You were offered the helmet of salvation, and you have “welcomed” or “received it.” You have enlisted in the ranks of the Royal Combat Legion of Jehovah of the Armies!

The Greek word for helmet is PERIKEPHALIA, a compound noun derived from the preposition PERI (around) and the noun KEPHALE (head) — that which goes around the head. In the Latin, the exact equivalent of the Koine Greek, “helmet” is GALEA or CASSIS (casque). Let us examine this very valuable piece of equipment. It is called the “helmet of salvation.” “Salvation” is the genitive neuter singular from SOTERIOS and is used as a substantive rather than as an adjective. The genitive of reference indicates the significance of the helmet. In order to bring out the true meaning of the word, it must be translated here as a relative clause: “Also, receive the helmet, WHICH REFERS TO BEING SAVED!”

Each part of the Roman helmet is analogous to some facet of salvation. For example, the SKIN LINING emphasizes the work of Christ on the Cross: redemption (toward sin); reconciliation (toward man); propitiation (toward God). The first Biblical reference to skin in connection with salvation is found in Genesis 3:21: “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skin, and clothed them.” Since skins are obtained by the shedding of blood, we are reminded of the blood of Christ — His efficacious spiritual death in providing salvation, which includes not only our forgiveness and cleansing from sin, but also the imputation of God’s perfect righteousness to our account!

The BRONZE CASQUE is analogous to the uniqueness of the Person of the Savior — His virgin birth as the sinless Son of God; His Hypostatic Union as the God-Man; His impeccability (His faultless, perfect Person). The GOLD CREST and PLUME identify the believer of the Church Age as royalty forever; and the CHEEK PIECE portrays the eternal security of each believer in union with Christ. The helmet of salvation is a permanent item of equipment (Eccl. 2:14; cf. 1 Pet. 1:5). Once you have received the helmet of salvation, you can never forfeit it (John 10:28). You may turn traitor and deny your Lord as Peter did; you may retreat shamefully from the heat of the unseen conflict by your reversionism; you may be deprived of your decorations and citations; but you can never lose your eternal salvation! So great is the grace of God!

## **Chapter 12 -- The Sword of the Spirit**

*... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:17b):*

One of the most unusual weapons ever invented was the MACHAIRA. Swords had always been symbolic of warfare and slaughter, and many kinds of swords existed in the ancient world. Earlier swords were made of bronze; those of later periods were forged of iron. Although other offensive weapons were in general use — the bow, the spear, the javelin, the mace and battle-ax, the sling, the battering ram and the ballista for throwing stones — it was generally conceded that the sword was the basic weapon for close combat. As a rule, the ancients were impressed by the size and strength of a sword. The most impressive of the five types of swords used by combatants in antiquity was the ROMPHAIA. Invented by the Thracians, the ROMPHAIA was a broadsword of considerable length — never shorter than four feet and often up to six feet in length. This broadsword had one sharp cutting edge and was held by a double handle. It was the preferred weapon of the Gauls and the Barbarians, staunch enemies of Rome, and was employed in hacking blows. Because the ROMPHAIA’s unwieldy length and weight caught the Barbarian or Gaul temporarily off-balance after a stroke, precious moments were lost before he could regain combat effectiveness. It was in these moments that the soldier was vulnerable to the danger of the swift Roman MACHAIRA. Furthermore, the ROMPHAIA rarely took a heavy death toll, for after three or more strikes against Roman armor, its blade became dull.



A second type of sword was the XZIPHOS. Shaped like a rapier, this rounded sword had a sharp point and was used only for thrusting. Since its point broke off easily, it was considered an inferior weapon in battle. Because of its highly personal character, the sword soon became a sign of rank. This was true of the AKINAKES, an ornate Persian sword worn by Persian generals, the AKINAKES usually had ivory handles and was studded with gems faceted in gold. Totally useless in combat, it was suitable only as a status symbol; therefore, the AKINAKES became the choice gift of Persian monarchs to their favorite nobles.

The DOLON — the hidden sword — is still extant, encased in either a riding whip or in a cane. Since the ancients knew little about the tempering of metals, most blades were brittle and broke on contact. It was the Romans who introduced swords made of iron, and the Roman MACHAIRA turned out to be the most ingenious invention of warfare of its day. The blade of this perfectly balanced weapon was usually only eighteen inches long. It had two cutting edges instead of one, and it tapered off to a sharp point. Extremely keen, the MACHAIRA was very maneuverable; its outstanding advantage was that the Roman soldier was never off-balance while he used his MACHAIRA.

The introduction of this new weapon constituted a remarkable innovation in the weaponry of the ancient world and demanded a complete reversal in the training of the Roman swordsman. Thus, recruits were taught not to cut but to thrust with their swords. A firm grip on the excellent hand-guard of the MACHAIRA, a stab to a vital part of the body, and the enemy of Rome fell mortally wounded. Unlike his enemy, who must expose his right arm and side in order to strike a hacking blow, the legionary's body was covered while he thrust his sword at his opponent. Since he was well-protected by his shield and heavy armor, the blow could do little harm; since he exerted less force or strain, the Roman soldier's stamina in battle extended far beyond that of his enemy.

The finest of these double-edged swords were issued to the Praetorian Guard. It is significant that the Holy Spirit has chosen the Roman MACHAIRA as the counterpart to the Christian soldier's most effective offensive weapon — the MACHAIRA OF THE SPIRIT. This same analogy is used in Hebrews 4:12, where the Word of God is compared to and found to be even more powerful than the sharp MACHAIRA of the Romans. In this context, Ephesians 6:17, the Bible is called the "MACHAIRA of the Spirit."

"Of the Spirit' is the ablative singular of source from PNEUMA (Spirit) and refers to God the Holy Spirit. The genitive case — that is, the genitive of source — demands this literal translation: "from the Spirit." The Third Person of the Trinity is the Source of our offensive weapon, "which (nominative neuter singular from the relative pronoun HOS) is (present active indicative, EIMI — 'to be') the word (predicate nominative, REMA) of God (ablative of source, THEOS, minus the definite article)."

On closer examination of the grammatical structure of this phrase, we note that the tense of the verb EIMI is the static present, which represents Bible doctrine as perpetually existing. In spite of Satan's effort to erase every trace of the inspired Word of God from the face of the earth — at one time, only fifty copies of the Scriptures remained in man's possession, and Rome had ordered these to be destroyed — there will never be a generation destitute of Bible doctrine! God will personally see to the preservation of the Canon and to the impact it has on humanity (Isa. 55:11). This latter fact is brought out by the active voice; the Sword of the Spirit will invariably leave its mark! The mood of the verb EIMI is the declarative indicative, a simple statement of fact.

When does the MACHAIRA become an offensive weapon? When it is unsheathed? As long as it remains in its scabbard, suspended from the left side of the BALTEUS, its power to devastate the enemy is but potential. The MACHAIRA has to be transferred from its sheath into the hand of the combatant! The same principle applies to the MACHAIRA of the Spirit, the Word of God! In order to become effective in the believer's life, the doctrines contained in the Word of God must be taken from the printed page and transferred into the Christian's soul. Doctrine must become resident in the soul before it is usable in the life! To emphasize this point, God the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to use the Greek word REMA in place of the more commonly used word, LOGOS. REMA means "the Word sent forth" — the spiritual weapon taken from its scabbard, the Bible. REMA could be properly rendered "mandate," or better yet, "doctrine," for it presents the concept of a specific saying or of a category taught exegetically. Stored in its scabbard, the Sword of the Spirit is preserved for you and for all generations hereafter; unsheathed,

this super weapon becomes your personal property and allows you to assume the offensive in spiritual combat.

How do you take this sword from its scabbard? By appropriating God's gracious provisions for learning Bible doctrine. Not only did God see to the formation and preservation of the Canon of Scripture, but He authorized classrooms in specific geographical areas — the local churches — in which His Word might be taught. He further provided the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher to certain male members of the Royal Family for the express purpose of equipping Christian Warriors for the intensified stage of the angelic conflict. He made possible the ministry of the indwelling Holy Spirit for our spiritual perspicacity and growth and gave us a human spirit as the means of categorizing, processing and storing Bible doctrine. More than that, God designed the laws of divine establishment for the protection of the local church and its freedom to function unhindered and unmolested. Nor dare we overlook the principle of grace in human anatomy — our ability to breath, eat and process food into energy; our ability to think, our brain's ability to print information — all these are vital grace systems of assimilation. There is no limitation to the spiritual truths that can be understood. You not only can comprehend God's Word in its entirety, you should also know it; for from knowing God's Word comes knowledge of God's will for your life!

In this apt analogy between the MACHAIRA of Rome and the MACHAIRA of the Spirit are found parallel truths. It takes skill to use the MACHAIRA! The Roman soldier spent long hours in sword practice. To the Romans of antiquity, the MACHAIRA was but an extension of the wrist. The recruit must learn the correct use of his wrist; he must develop agility of elbow and shoulder, expert footwork; he must know where to aim his thrusts. All this took time and discipline, but these were essential in building Roman military might. It was common knowledge that a well-trained Roman soldier was worth twenty-five to fifty Barbarians in battle. The Barbarians were gigantic in stature — six to seven feet tall; they were physically stronger than the Romans. The average Roman measured no more than five feet, six or five feet, eight inches in height. Yet his MACHAIRA more than made up the disparaging difference in the size of the antagonists, and many an arrogant boast dissolved into a death rattle as the valiant legionaries caught the Barbarians unprepared to parry the thrust of this mighty super weapon! The Roman soldier stood his ground; he was never thrown off-balance. His maneuverability in combat was phenomenal, and his thrusting ability remained unhampered. Thus, the once scornful Barbarians learned well the lesson that size in either man or weapon does not necessarily guarantee an advantage.

What the MACHAIRA was to the Roman soldier, the Sword of the Spirit is to the Christian Warrior. Bible doctrine becomes resident in the soul only after a period of the consistent function of GAP. Once the Christian soldier is fully equipped for combat, he is ready to meet an enemy, superior in every way, in close combat. Nor can he be thrown off-balance by the forces of Satan! However, no believer can afford to stay on the defensive indefinitely. Let me reiterate that in spiritual warfare, as well as in temporal warfare, defensive action can only delay or avoid defeat! Just as the offensive increases the effectiveness of a military organization, raises the morale of the troops and allows freedom of action and concentration of effort, so the offensive of the Royal Combat Legion provides both spiritual dynamics and a profound impact on that generation. How can you, as a member of the Royal Combat Legion, take the offensive and gain tactical victory in the unseen warfare? By your daily, positive volition toward Bible doctrine. The super-grace believer attacks! The reversionistic believer retreats! Accept this Roman challenge: FORTES FORTUNA JUVAT ("Fortune favors the brave")!

The concept that offensive vigor leads to victory is expressed in the Roman idiom, A CUSPIDE CORONA ("A crown from the spear"). The idiom refers to honor earned by means of military exploits in combat. Every believer with doctrine in his soul has his A CUSPIDE CORONA — his own super-grace soul has his A CUSPIDE CORONA his own super-grace blessing paragraph in time and his resultant surpassing-grace decorations in eternity.

Vegetius observed accurately that victory in war is not determined either by numbers or mere courage but rather, by skill and discipline. Roman conquest of the world was the result of continual training in the art of war and exact enforcement of discipline. The Roman armies, with their inconsiderable numbers, successfully opposed numerically superior enemies. Thus it was that a handful of men, conditioned to war, could march to certain victory, while their opponents, raw and undisciplined, were "but masses of men dragged to their slaughter." Likewise, the Christian's warfare demands both strict academic and personal discipline on a daily basis.

One other factor should be considered — vulnerability in combat. The historian, Pliny, reports that Roman soldiers wore beards until 300 B.C. When it was proven that beards were hazardous to the combatant, the Roman soldier was ordered to shave every day; he had to be clean-shaven when he reported for duty. The shaving of the beard becomes analogous to the believer's rebound. You cannot fight the enemy with unconfessed sin in the life! Even as the beard neutralized the finest equipment and the effectiveness of the armor, so sin neutralizes the believer in the angelic conflict and renders him vulnerable to the attack of the enemy. When the Royal Legionary falls in for duty, he must be in fellowship, for only in the filling of the Spirit can he accomplish the divinely assigned objective!

If Jesus Christ had to rely entirely upon the Holy Spirit to sustain His humanity during His Incarnation in order to execute the Plan of God, how much more dependent are you and I on the filling of the Spirit! Our Lord used the equipment God made available to Him for His conflict with Satan. Think of Christ's use of the Sword of the Spirit! Never did the blade flash brighter; never was the Sword sharper nor more brilliantly wielded than in the wilderness duel (Luke 4:1-14). Yet it was not by His skillful use of the Sword, but by His strategic victory on the Cross that the Master Swordsman made possible our exploitation of His conquest. It remains for us to become expert in its use!

*Also, receive the helmet, which refers to being saved; also, the sword from the Spirit, which is the doctrine from God (expanded trans., Eph. 6:17).*

***JUD 1:24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,***

***JUD 1:25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.***

I pray that anyone who has read this book or any chapter in it that you would be blessed by  
WRITTEN WORD AND THE LIVING WORD - BIBLE DOCTRINE AND THE LORD  
JESUS CHRIST.

In His Name,  
Pastor Bob McLaughlin