

Created After the Image of God

Lesson 15 – The Whole Armor of God

December 22, 2019

“... and to put on the new self, **created to be like God** in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:24)

“... and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge **in the image of its Creator**” (Colossians 3:10)

1. Several times the Bible uses an analogy of armor to help us understand spiritual battles
 - a. “Do not be afraid, Abram. **I am your shield**, your very great reward.” (Genesis 15:1)
 - b. “**The LORD is my strength and my shield**; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.” (Psalm 28:7)
 - c. “He put on **righteousness as his breastplate**, and **the helmet of salvation on his head**; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.” (Isaiah 59:17)
2. “**Put on the full armor of God**, so that you can take your stand against **the devil’s schemes**.” (Ephesians 6:11), “...**that you may be able** to stand against **the wiles of the devil**.” (NKJV)
 - a. We don’t have the ability to stand on our own—we’re no match for the devil and evil spirits
 - i. “But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for **my power is made perfect in weakness**.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about **my weaknesses**, so that **Christ’s power may rest on me**.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)
 - ii. “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may **strengthen you with power through his Spirit** in your inner being” (Ephesians 3:16)
 - iii. “Finally, be **strong in the Lord** and in **his mighty power**.” (Ephesians 6:10)
 - iv. “I can do all this through **him who gives me strength**.” (Philippians 4:13)
 - v. “**Being strengthened** with all power according to **his glorious might** so that you may have great endurance and patience” (Colossians 1:11)
 - b. The devil can’t force us to do anything—his power is temptation, deception, and influence
 - i. If someone can get us to believe a lie and live accordingly then they have power over us
 - ii. The devil wants you to believe there is no God, therefore if you believe there is no God then you’re deceived by the devil and you’re being ruled by him
 - iii. The devil not only wants us to believe there is no God but also that there is no devil
 - iv. The whole idea of tricking someone is for them to not know they’re being tricked, if they know they’re being tricked then they’re not being tricked
 - v. What’s the real problem? Do we really need more evidence or simply less deception?
 - c. Jesus called the devil “the **prince of this world**” (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11); “**The god of this age** has blinded the minds of unbelievers” (2 Corinthians 4:4); “We know that we are children of God, and that **the whole world is under the control of the evil one**.” (1 John 5:19)
3. “...take your stand against **the devil’s schemes**. **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against **the spiritual forces of evil** in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 6:11-12)
 - a. The devil’s scheme is deceiving us into believing that flesh and blood (people) are the problem
 - b. Our true enemy is the devil but he gets us fighting with each other instead
 - i. Stand against the devil and love people—if we’re fighting people, we’re in the wrong fight!
 - ii. “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8)
 - iii. “Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good**.” (Romans 12:21)
 - c. People live ungodly and mistreat others because they’re tempted and deceived by evil spirits
4. “Therefore take up **the whole armor of God**, that you may be able to withstand in **the evil day**, and having done all, to stand.” (Ephesians 6:13 NKJV)

- a. ““Be angry, and do not sin’: **do not let the sun go down** on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.” (Ephesians 4:26-27), “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because **the days are evil.**” (Ephesians 5:15-16)
- b. “**Therefore do not worry about tomorrow**, for tomorrow will worry about itself. **Each day has enough trouble of its own.**” (Matthew 6:34), “Sufficient for the day *is* the evil of it” (YLT), “Sufficient to the day *is* its own evil” (DBY, WEB), “Each day’s own evil is sufficient” (HNV)
- c. We should start the day recognizing it will be full of evil—this is not pessimistic but realistic
5. “Stand firm then, with **the belt of truth** buckled around your waist” (Ephesians 6:14)
 - a. Because of the depth of the devil’s deceptions, the very first thing we need is truth
 - b. Notice that this piece of armor is “the belt of truth” not “the belt of *assumptions*”
 - i. An assumption is something we believe to be true but might not really be true
 - ii. If we’re living by false assumptions then we’re vulnerable to the enemy
 - c. “But you have not so **learned Christ**, if indeed you have **heard Him** and have been **taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus**” (Ephesians 4:20-21 NKJV)
 - i. “I am the way and **the truth** and the life.” (John 14:6)
 - ii. “Everyone **on the side of truth** listens to me.” (John 18:37)
 - iii. The only way to wear “the belt of truth” is to live by the truth Jesus Christ taught
 - d. Truth is simply reality—the way things really are, not necessarily the way they appear to be
 - e. Those who aren’t living by the truth Jesus Christ taught are living in a skewed reality
6. “With **the breastplate of righteousness** in place” (Ephesians 6:14)
 - a. “And to put on the new self, **created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness**” (Ephesians 4:24), “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully” (v. 25), ““In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry” (v. 26), “Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work” (v. 28), “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths” (v. 29), “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice” (v. 31), “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other” (v. 32)
 - b. A right relationship with God is contingent upon having right relationships with people
 - i. “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, **live at peace with everyone.**” (Romans 12:18)
 - ii. “Now the **fruit of righteousness** is sown in peace by **those who make peace.**” (James 3:18 NKJV)
 - iii. Sowing seeds of peace with others bears the fruit or result of being right with God
7. “And with **your feet fitted** with the readiness that comes from **the gospel of peace**” (Ephesians 6:15)
 - a. The solution for evil is not more education, laws, social reform, or a better environment
 - b. The solution for evil is to put on our shoes and go share the gospel with people
 - c. People must change from being ruled by evil spirits to being ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ
8. “In addition to all this, take up **the shield of faith**, with which you can **extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one**” (Ephesians 6:16)
 - a. “Do not be afraid, Abram. **I am your shield**, your very great reward.” (Genesis 15:1); “**But you, LORD, are a shield around me**, my glory, the One who lifts my head high.” (Psalm 3:3); “We wait in hope for the LORD; **he is our help and our shield.**” (Psalm 33:20); “You who fear him, trust in the LORD—**he is their help and shield.**” (Psalm 115:11); “Every word of God is flawless; **he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.**” (Proverbs 30:5)
 - b. People shoot flaming arrows of slander, gossip, ridicule, mocking, sarcasm, yelling, accusations
 - c. We are to let the shield extinguish or quench the flaming arrows shot at us, not shoot back
 - d. “Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. **See how great a forest a little fire kindles! The tongue also is a fire**, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts

the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and **is itself set on fire by hell.**" (James 3:5-6)

- i. Our words are like fire because they spread quickly and cause much destruction
 - ii. **"And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."** (Matthew 5:22)
 - iii. If we use our tongues like flaming arrows to hurt others then we will end up in hell
 - e. **"See, it is I who created the blacksmith** who fans the coals into flame and **forges a weapon** fit for its work. And **it is I who have created the destroyer** to wreak havoc; **'No weapon forged against you will prevail,** and you will refute **every tongue that accuses you.** This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and **this is their vindication from me,'** declares the LORD." (Isaiah 54:16-17)
 - i. God created the smith that forged the sword and the destroyer that wields the sword
 - ii. The world falsely accuses us of hate when we stand against sin in people's lives
 - iii. We quench the fire of accusations by not defending ourselves but letting God defend us
9. **"Take the helmet of salvation"** (Ephesians 6:17)
- a. **"But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."** (1 Thessalonians 5:8)
 - b. **"Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope** on the grace to be brought to you **when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming."** (1 Peter 1:13)
 - c. This helmet is the hope and expectation of being rewarded when Jesus Christ returns
10. **"and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray** in the Spirit on all occasions **with all kinds of prayers and requests.** With this in mind, be alert and always **keep on praying for all the Lord's people."** (Ephesians 6:17-18)
- a. It has been rightly recognized that the sword of the Spirit is the only offensive piece of armor
 - b. This sword has two edges: (1) the word of God; (2) praying with all kinds of prayers
 - c. Our own words carry no authority, we must depend on God's authority in His words
 - i. **"Now the serpent was more crafty** than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, **'Did God really say,** "You must not eat from any tree in the garden"?' (Genesis 3:1)
 - ii. **"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ... Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."'"** (Matthew 4:1, 4)
 - iii. When tempting and troubling thoughts persist, the solution is not to keep trying to clear our thoughts or to think positively but to speak God's word and the thoughts will go away
 - d. **"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests"** (Ephesians 6:18)
 - i. Twice in this letter to the Ephesians, Paul had prayed for them (1:16-23, 3:14-21)
 - ii. **"But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"** (Matthew 5:44)
 - iii. **"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."** (Philippians 4:6)
11. Concluding words and encouragement to seek God and come to Him through Jesus Christ
- a. All the while you're thinking God doesn't exist, He's so incredibly involved in your life without you even knowing it!
 - b. He knows what we think even before we think it, how can we possibly outsmart Him?
 - c. If you're not sincerely trying to find Him then He won't let you find Him, and sadly you'll perish
 - i. **"But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart** and with all your soul." (Deuteronomy 4:29)
 - ii. **"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."** (Jeremiah 29:13)
 - d. He can very easily make Himself known but purposely hides because He wants us to seek Him
 - e. If you'll seek, submit, trust, and obey Him, He'll be pleased and begin revealing Himself to you