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Dedication

To You.
The Warrior.
Fighting the battles.
We see you.

He sees you.

Take up your Armor. Have Faith. Stand Firm.

- Your Sisters at Salt+Clay

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Big Question: What is my position in Christ? Why is this important as it relates to the Armor of God and standing firm in the challenges, difficulties, and battles in my life?

No battle was ever won without courage, perseverance, and strength. But in order to understand the battle, we need to begin by acknowledging that we are in a war. Battles by definition, involve combat between two persons, between factions, between armies. They consist of any type of "extended contest, struggle, or controversy" (Webster-Merriam). Battles make up smaller components of a bigger picture.

The charge that we have received as Christians is to join the battle. When God calls us to join the battle, His is not using a mere metaphor. The war is real, the enemy is determined to destroy us and his weapons are deadly.

The hope of this study is that we will have a better understanding of the different types of battles in our lives and how to appropriate the Armor of God in order gain the victory God has planned and promised for us. That a keen awareness of the spiritual battle raging around us would be amplified as we realize who our enemy is and who our enemy isn't. And with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will be able to un-disguise the enemy and his strategies against us. Then with an enlarged perspective of the battles before us, we can engage in more intelligent combat.

The result? Greater victory in our daily living resulting in an abundant life full of love, joy, and peace. As we align ourselves with the purposes of God, maintaining and claiming the promises of Scripture we will have a victorious life in Christ, that's a promise!

Before we jump into our study, take a moment to pray to commit yourself afresh to Him and asking that He would open your heart and mind to all that He wants to teach you through this study. Pray that He would build into you such a deep sense of intention, purpose and meaning. Growing you in the structures and disciplines to achieve the victorious life He has promised you in Christ.

Read Ephesians 6:10-18 slowly. Write out verse 10 below.

This week our focus is going to be verse Ephesians 6:10. This verse sets the foundation for the rest of our study on the Armor of God. Go back up to the verse you just wrote out and circle the word "in" where it appears.

This idea of "in" is foundational not only for our study but in our understanding of our relationship to God and where our strength is found. The victory we are seeking in our daily lives and the battles in which we face are not based on human strength or physical weaponry but begin with our position in Christ. I don't know of anything that is more crucial as a foundation to the Christian life, than for the believer to know she is "in" Christ, and to see clearly what is available to her and what has been completed for her in Jesus.

Read Ephesians 1:3-14. In the Greek, this portion of verses is actually all one sentence. It's often called a "doxology" because it recites what God has done and is an expression of worship to honor Him. Count how many times you see the word "in," and then write out verse 3 below.

What are these spiritual blessings, and what do they do for us?

Ephesians 1:3 says that we have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Contrary to some beliefs, they are not some mysterious power or cosmic connection reserved for a select few. They are the key benefits of a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The word blessing in Ephesians 1:3 is a translation of the Greek word eulogy, and it means "to speak well of." Since God is the one acting in this verse, we can say that God has spoken good things about us, or pronounced good things for our benefit. The good things that God has decreed for us are probably beyond our ability to number, but we can outline a few by looking at the verses that follow the statement.

List out the following blessings from these verses below:

Ephesians 1:4

Ephesians 1:5

Ephesians 1:6

Ephesians 1:7

Ephesians 1:8-10

Ephesians 1:11

Ephesians 1:13

The lavish and abounding love of God for us is beyond comprehension. I pray that these concepts sink down deep into the marrow of our bones. Sometimes these can become basic concept to us, but I wonder if our head has something nailed down that our heart does not get. May we daily live out the reality of these truths in our lives.

Let's read a passage of Scripture that looks specifically at our adoption. Read Romans 8:15-17. What is being contrasted here in this verse 15?

What is being juxtaposed here is a "spirit of slavery" and a "spirit of adoption." It's interesting to note that the very opposite of a spirit of slavery in this passage is a spirit of adoption. You would think that the opposite of slavery would be freedom, but what is being contrasted here is that the opposite of a spirit of slavery is a spirit of adoption.

Definition of adoption: bring into the full rights as sons/daughters.

Describe in your own words how this idea of adoption into God's family and being freed from fear work together.

When we fully comprehend WHO we belong too, knowing our birthright, it's then that we are released from our slavery to fear. We need to learn how to stand firm in our birthright as daughters of our Heavenly Father. And with that will come our freedom from fear and give us the courage and tenacity we need to face our battles head-on. This is the foundation for us in any and every battle that we will face while we are on the earth. Understanding WHO we are IN Christ.

WE HAVE BEEN SET FREE, LIBERATED NOT TO LIVE LIVES IN FEAR AND DEFEAT BUT LIVES OF VICTORY.

Journal Prompt

Take some time right now and write out a prayer thanking God for all He has done for you as it relates to your adoption in God's family. Confess to God any places in your life currently where fear, worry or anxiety have a grip on you.



Big Question: How do we live "in" the strength of the Lord and "in" His power? What does this look like?

Yesterday we looked at the idea of "in" as our foundational understanding of our relationship to God and the source from which our strength is found. Today we are going to look at how to live "in" that strength and what it looks like to experience His mighty power in our lives. Take a moment to pray and ask God to open your understanding to all that He wants to reveal to you today.

Write out this week's theme verse from Ephesians 6:10 below (For fun maybe look up this verse in another translation).

Paul starts off with an appeal, stressing the source of our strength is in "His mighty power." Two questions come to mind. First, what is meant by "His mighty power?" And second, how do we avail ourselves of this power?

What matters here is that we grasp the significance of God's infinite, almighty power. But how do we tap into this power? To be active in the power of the Lord's might requires two acts of faith. First, you must have settled in your mind and believe down to the depths of your soul that the Lord is, in fact, mighty in power. This is a foundational truth. Second, you must not only believe that God is almighty, but also that this almighty power is engaged for your defense.

God expects you to meet every battle, every trial, and every temptation, leaning on His strength and His power. This needs to be resolved in your mind first before you can move forward.

Please look up these verses below that focus on God's power and might and write out what you discover.

Deuteronomy 3:24

Job 9:10

Psalm 89:5-8

Ecclesiastes 11:5

Jeremiah 32:27

Daniel 4:35

God is the Creator of heaven and earth, builder of everything. He is the God over all mankind, and He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed and miracles that cannot be counted. He answers to no one regarding His plans and purposes, and no one can hold back His hand or say to Him, "What have you done?"

We need to know that nothing, absolutely nothing is beyond His ability to handle in our lives. We need first to believe that God is who He says He is, that He is mighty in power for our benefit before we can move forward towards victory.

Let's address the second question, "how do we avail ourselves of this power?"

Read Luke 24:49, Acts 1:1-8. What did the Father promise to send? Write out Acts 1:8 below.

Jesus is promising something that is absolutely incredible. According to Acts 1:4 it is a gift that the Father has promised. And this gift is unlike anything they could have imagined. Look back at the verse you wrote above and circle the word "power." The Greek word that is used here for power is *dynamis* which means: strength, miraculous power, ability, abundance, meaning, mighty beautiful work. When we receive the Holy Spirit, we have received extraordinary power for marvelous works. Power through God's ability. Only with the Holy Spirit of God living in you can you take your stand against the schemes of the devil and step confidently into your divine purpose.

Look at this Greek word *dynamis* again, do you see another familiar word that we use in the English language? Can you guess? Yep, you're right, it's dynamite! Whatever season you find yourself whether a painful trial in a relationship, health issue or financial hardship, God has given you access to power so explosive that whatever the challenge, the power that God is giving us is like the force of dynamite. *Girls, are you taking advantage of all that He is offering for you?*

This is the type of power God has given us, without measure I might add, to live out this life. There is absolutely nothing that this world can throw at us that the power of God can't defeat. You are a daughter of the King of glory and His love for you is greater than you will ever be able to comprehend this side of heaven. Take one or more of those words above and start praying them over the battles you are currently facing in His Mighty power and in His great Name!

On the night before Jesus was crucified her gave His disciples some last instructions. In John 15, Jesus gave one of his most beautiful and illustrative teachings on the vine and the branches. He shares with them what it looks like to be in a vibrant and fruitful relationship with Him and the Father. Let's read a portion of this and continue to build on this idea of 'in."

Please read John 15:1-11. Write out all the different descriptions where Jesus uses the word "in."

When we are in Christ, we are partakers of the divine nature of God Himself. We are in Christ, and He is in us. Personal union with Christ gives us this divine power. There isn't anything that you'll face in this life that God hasn't already anticipated. There are no surprises to God and nothing is too big for Him to handle. He gives us everything that we need for living this life with strength, purpose, and fruitfulness. Do you believe this is true for you?

Now go back and look at John 15:10, Jesus is making a significant statement here. Finish His sentence: "If you...

Our abiding "in" Christ will hinge on our obedience to Him and His Word. And we see Jesus Himself is not asking us to do something that He doesn't do first by example. Obedience and love go together in God's economy.

Why does Jesus tell us these things (v.11)?

God desires that our joy is complete. That word in Greek for complete is pleroo which means: to make full, to fill up, to fill to the full, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally. We need to understand that joy God is promising us doesn't need to be dependent on our circumstances, something that is a fleeting once and a while thing. God not only desires, but also gives us the power to live joy-filled and abundant lives. He has given us everything that we need to accomplish this no matter what season we are in currently (2 Peter 1:3). Joy isn't just for when the sun is shining, and life is good.

ONCE WE UNDERSTAND WHO GOD IS AND WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST, AND THAT HIS POWER IS ENGAGED FOR OUR DEFENSE WE ARE WELL ON OUR WAY TOWARDS SOME VICTORIOUS LIVING!

Journal Prompt

Is this truth about God's Almighty power anchored down deep into your soul? Are there times that you question His power or that His power is engaged for your defense? Take some time and ask God to reveal any areas of unbelief and that He would solidify this truth deep within your heart.



Big Question: What are the ways in which we can begin to activate the power of God in our lives?

The two questions we asked yesterday were what is meant by God's "mighty power?" and second how do we avail ourselves of this power? We discovered that the first step was two-fold. First, we need to believe that God is almighty in power over any and every situation that comes into our lives and that this power is engaged for our defense. We avail ourselves of this power through the gift of the Holy Spirit that was given to us when we came to know Christ. A miraculous power for marvelous works. Today we are going to look at ways in which we can activate this power in our lives.

We have quite a bit of reading today, but this will be underpinning upon which we finish building the framework for "being strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might." We are going to look at an example of how God's power is activated for our defense through the life of an Old Testament character named Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

Take a moment to pray and ask God to open your understanding and give you ears to hear what He wants to say to you today.

Read 2 Chronicles 17:1-19. From this passage write out what you learn about Jehoshaphat's relationship and devotion to God.

We see in this passage the personal spiritual commitment of King Jehoshaphat. He is described as a king who "sought the God of his father" (17:4). The Hebrew word "seek" means, literally, "to trample under foot," to beat a path to God because you frequent that way so often. David lived over a hundred years before Jehoshaphat, but his legacy of devotion to God continued through the generations. Acts 13:22 God testified about David, "...I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do." David's life was far from perfect, a portrait of success and failure, but his heart was always pointed toward God. He had a sincere desire to follow God's will and do 'everything' God wanted him to do. This was the example that Jehoshaphat was following. Not perfection, but a heart that was in a consistent pursuit of God.

We see Jehoshaphat as he stepped into his new role begin to do some cleaning house, weeding out the high places of worship dedicated to false gods that had sprouted up around Judah. He then establishes a public teaching ministry of the Word of God, the result of which is a people awakened and then directed toward godliness. Jehoshaphat was blessed because he remained faithful to God. He was fervent in spirit and undaunted in courage and zeal. The result was security and peace for both him and the people of Judah. Jehoshaphat's devotion to God was actively lived out in how he reigned over Judah.

One of the ways we can activate the power of God in our lives is seen in the example of Jehoshaphat. It is also seen within the word activate itself. The definition of activating is: to make active or become active. Some additional synonyms would be: switch on, start, get going, set in motion. To activate the power of God in our lives, we need to start by being active and not passive in our pursuit of intimacy with Jesus and in the purposes for which God has created us.

Read Ephesians 2:10 and 1 Corinthians 15:58, summarize these verses in your own words below.

Our effort in God's kingdom work is investing in heavenly treasure. Muscle tone and energy are achieved not by doing nothing but doing something. This principle holds true in the spiritual realm as well. Sadly, it seems like there are more Christians that lack the fulfillment and strength God wants them to have than those that are living in their God-given giftedness in the empowering of the Spirit. They had not found their work assignment in God's overall plan, which was ordained before the world began. Their days lack a sense of individual purpose and drive. We have the power that has been given to us so that we can be refreshing fountains where thirsty souls may drink. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we possess the "water of life" and can be channels of blessing to those around us.

It's possible for people to attend Bible studies or conferences, listen to religious podcasts, study the Scriptures, and continually take in the Word, and yet seem lifeless, lacking power and vibrancy in their walk with Jesus and are unproductive in their Christian lives. Such individuals are like the Dead Sea. They have several "inlets" but no "outlets." To be vibrant and useful believers, we must not only "take in" all we can, but we must also "give out" in service to others! The Dead Sea is so salty that it contains no fish or plant life. What accounts for this unusual condition? There are absolutely no outlets! A high volume of water pours into this area, but nothing flows out. Many inlets plus no outlets equal a dead sea.

Read Acts 4. Summarize the prayer of the Peter, John and the believers congregating together. What did they ask of God? What was God's response?

Our Heavenly Father has intended us to live with power and purpose with lives that are to be profoundly useful for the Kingdom of God. When we begin to step out and let His power be released through us within the church and in our community, it will have an effect.

Jesus says in John 14:12 (NET), "I tell you the solemn truth, the person who believes in me will perform the miraculous deeds that I am doing, and will perform greater deeds than these because I am going to the Father."

Jesus said it, do you believe this is true for you?

Let's continue the story and see what happens next. Read 2 Chronicles 18:1-27, with whom and in what way did Jehoshaphat align himself?

From its second verse, we see some serious symptoms being revealed. Recorded in one sentence, this one event was to bear some rotten fruit, for years afterward (see 2 Chronicles 21:4-6). The joining of himself with Ahab through the marriage of his son Jehoram to Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

Although it is certain that this act of Jehoshaphat was wrong in principle, disastrous in practice (2 Chronicles 19:2-3), and threatened fatal consequences to himself. It's not impossible to suppose his motives were, for the most part, good, and he may naturally have thought that the sunshine of his own peace and abundance might be just the thing to win influence in and over Ahab and by extension the nation of Israel, rather than strengthen Israel in its ungodly independence.

On the other hand, nothing could justify Jehoshaphat risking such intimacy of relationship with a family that went down in history as the evilest: "there was never anyone like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged by Jezebel, his wife. He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols" (1 Kings 21:25-26).

Have you ever aligned yourself too quickly with someone or something and then only later realizing it was a bad idea? Without using any names describe the situation.

Whether it's relationships, partnerships in business or even ministry, we need God's wisdom and discernment with what and whom we align ourselves. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:13-16 we are "salt" and "light" and also that we are "in the world but not of the world" (John 17:14-15). We understand that being in the world, but not of it, is necessary if we are to be a light to those who are in spiritual darkness. We are to live in such a way that those outside the faith see our good deeds and our manner and know that there is something different about us. But at the same time, we need to be especially prayerful in these situations in which we align ourselves, as Scripture tells us to "pay careful attention, then, to how you live-not as unwise but as wise, making the most of your time because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15-16 CSB).

Look back at our passage, how many prophets did Ahab bring in to ask if they should go to war (v.5)? What question did Jehoshaphat ask Ahab (v.6)?

This question that Jehoshaphat asks Ahab seems to fit the overall character of his life. It's very likely this was his usual practice in seeking the Lord for direction and guidance. And interestingly, Jehoshaphat had the discernment to recognize that even though there were four hundred prophets, none of them were prophets of the Lord; also, they were claiming to be speaking on God's behalf (v.10, 11). The story unfolds with one of the last of Israel's prophets, brought before Ahab and Jehoshaphat and then the prophet gives a stunning portrayal of a heavenly scene about a lying spirit that is sent out to entice Ahab to go to war and ultimately to his death. And the plan worked.

Read 2 Chronicles 18:28-29, describe this scene.

This passage is a head-scratcher. Don't you just to want to ask "What the heck is happening here with Jehoshaphat?" It makes you want to scream at him "What are you thinking?" "Can't you see what's going on here?" It's almost like Jehoshaphat is having a moment of temporary insanity. He asked Ahab if there was a prophet of the Lord, and yes, in fact, there was one-only one. But Jehoshaphat did not heed the words of Micaiah; instead, he sat and watched as the prophet of the Lord was taken off to prison for

proclaiming "Therefore hear the word of the Lord..." (v.18).

How would you explain Jehoshaphat's actions? Do you think God gives Him a way out of this situation?

There is no getting around the fact that this was a terrible decision on so many levels by Jehoshaphat. He completely disregarded the warning from the prophet Micaiah. He got himself into a war he shouldn't have been in, with someone he shouldn't have been aligned. And to top it off put on clothes that didn't belong to him, taking on the identity of another. And not just any identity, but the identity of a man who was known as the evilest in the history of Israel!

Scripture doesn't fill in these details on how Jehoshaphat got in and stayed in the situation with Ahab, we can only try to speculate on the reasons why. But we can look at our own experience or the experience of others and try to relate on some level. In my own life, there have been relationships that I've allowed myself to become entangled, some of which had good intentions associated with them. But the more deeply entwined I allowed myself the more my judgment was skewed and distorted and I couldn't see my way clear. Once emotions are locked in, the way out can become clouded and ambiguous and can lead to some awful decisions.

Let's finish our reading today by completing 2 Chronicles 18:30-34. What was the king of Aram's orders to his chariot commanders? What was the outcome?

Oh, the gracious and merciful love of God! We find Jehoshaphat in a deadly and disastrous situation (that he willingly stepped into), but God in the act of divine favor swoops in with a hand of compassion and saves him. Oh, the great mercy of God, that is engaged in our defense, even when we blow it.

Where do you find yourself today? Are you in the midst of a battle that you've willingly stepped into? Or are you in a battle just because of association? Enemy fire is enemy fire, it all burns the same. Know today that your Heavenly Father is poised and ready for your defense. All we need to do is cry out to Him, and He will answer.

Journal Prompt

Take some time and read through some or all of these passages below. Maybe set aside a time to take a walk or go to the beach and find a quiet spot to soak in God's Word. If you find yourself in the midst of the battlefield, currently read through these passages to see some fresh encouragement for your soul. Remembering God's mercy and faithfulness on your behalf. If you're not in the midst of a battle, recall the times in your life when God swooped in to deliver you and journal back to God your gratefulness in how has He protected and rescued you.

Reflective Scripture: Psalm 34; Psalm 40; Psalm 61; Psalm 69



Big Question: How do we stay "in" the strength of the Lord.

We are continuing to build the foundation for what it looks like to be "strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might." We've established that to live in God's strength and to experience His mighty power we need to begin with a foundational understanding of WHO we are in Christ. And based on the work of Jesus and our adoption into God's family we now have power through the Holy Spirit that is engaged on our behalf. We explored the expanse of God's mighty power and established that "... all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him, all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17). Yesterday we began reading about an Old Testament king named Jehoshaphat, learning from his life and the ways in which we can activate the power of God in our lives. We discovered that his devotion to God was proofed out through action and the result was peace for him and the people of Judah. We also saw an example of what can happen when there are decisions made from compromise. Thankfully, we ended our time yesterday seeing that even when we get ourselves into a tight spot, we can cry out and God will come in our defense. What a merciful Defender!

Today we are going to continue with the story of Jehoshaphat, looking at his example on how we can stay "in" the strength of God. Take a moment to pray and ask God to speak to you through His powerful and living Word. One of the ways we can activate the power of God in our lives is seen in the example of Jehoshaphat.

Let's continue our study of Jehoshaphat, please read 2 Chronicles 19:1-3. What was the result of Jehoshaphat's alignment with Ahab?

This account shows the kindness and mercy of God toward Jehoshaphat, in bringing him back safely from a potentially perilous expedition with Ahab. But, even though he made it back home in one piece, there was still going to be a consequence resulting from Jehoshaphat's alignment with Ahab. And it was not just a slap on the wrist, Jehu told him "the wrath of the Lord is upon you." Yikes!

Wrath is a strong word that has strong negative connotations in our day and age. The whole "hell, fire, brimstone" talk seems outdated and unquestionably not politically correct in our modern culture. But that isn't a reason to remove it from our vocabulary. We need to have a proper understanding of this word, especially in the context of God and His holy written Word. The most concise definition of God's divine wrath is God's righteous anger and punishment, provoked by sin. There is a vast difference between the wrath of God and the wrath of man. The wrath of God is a divine response to human sin and disobedience and is holy and always justified; man is never holy and rarely justified. God's wrath, discipline, and correction always come in a way that continually leads us back to Him. He is the perfect parent keeping the punishment in balance with the sin.

"Now the wrath of God is as much a Divine perfection as is His faithfulness, power, or mercy. It must be so, for there is no blemish whatever, not the slightest defect in the character of God; yet there would be if 'wrath' were absent from Him!"

Read Hebrews 12:11 and Proverbs 3:11-12, what can we learn about the purpose of God's discipline in our lives?

God's discipline is for our good and will always produce something beautiful if we allow ourselves to be trained by it. We can be confident that when we receive correction from the Lord, it springs from love, and is given in love. He doesn't remove His loving kindness from us, it is because He loves us that He disciplines us.

Let's continue reading in 2 Chronicles 19:4-11, describe what happened next. What do you see revealed about Jehoshaphat's character?

This passage that comes directly after a sharp rebuke from the Lord is remarkable and very telling of Jehoshaphat's heart and character. His immediate response as shown in Scripture was to continue in the work of the Lord. There would be some sad and lasting consequences [Deeper Dive: 2 Chronicles 21:4; 2 Chronicles 21:17; 2 Chronicles 22:8-10] for this sin, but we see humility in Jehoshaphat's response by his immediate action in the next verse after the reproof. Based on this I think we can safely infer that this response is the mark of true repentance. "Let a righteous man strike me-it is a kindness; let him rebuke me-it is oil on my head. My head will not refuse it" Psalm 141:5.

We saw yesterday that Jehoshaphat walked in the ways of his father, King David. It is entirely possible that Jehoshaphat had heard many of the stories of his great, great grandfather. I wonder if when Jehu confronted him, this particular Psalm came to Jehoshaphat's mind.

Read Psalm 51, what stands out to you in this humble prayer for forgiveness?

In this Psalm, David asks the Lord for joy after fully acknowledging the weight of his sin. And we can see the joy of repentance flowing directly out of its grief. Living on this side of the cross the sins we repent of are already forgiven before we even repent. We might still have to bear the consequences of our sins for a time, and perhaps even the Lord's gracious discipline. But because of the justifying blood of Christ, our status in the eyes of heaven never waxes and wanes with the ups and downs of our sanctification. When Christ comes into our lives, we are full, eternally, and unchangeably forgiven. This enables us to repent with a kind of happy abandon.

We may have to live out the reality of some bad decisions, but we don't have to allow them to keep us captive to that past. Some of the most defeating and difficult battles we face are those battles of our histories and those voices in our heads that tell us we cannot move forward because of past mistakes. This is one of the tactics of the enemy, he will seek to tear down your defenses by bringing back to your remembrance choices that were made years ago.

But God doesn't operate that way, He desires to bring you into new hope and new future even in the midst of them. Each day is bringing fresh mercy and joy as you seek Him in the secret place. For God's Word says "as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). No matter what you've done, no matter what you have behind you, no matter what happened 20 years ago or yesterday. I promise you, based on the authority of the Word of God you can have a harvest on your land again. All is not lost. All is not wasted.

Please read Psalm 16:6-8, and then write out verse 6 below.

You may need to know today that the property lines of your life have fallen in pleasant places. If you are a child of God, the fact is no matter what has happened in your life or what is currently happening, the lines that fall out in the grand plan of God, are lines that have fallen for you in pleasant places. Every single one of us through whom God has worked has a beautiful inheritance.

When we can finally get to that place of believing what God has said over us is true, and we stand in the authority in Christ over that property we step our feet on that property by faith. It becomes a beautiful thing. That's where a horrible experience can become a beautiful part of the inheritance that we can pass down in the victory.

Journal Prompt

Take some time to come before the Lord and thank Him for His incredible love. His love changes the tone of our repentance. It gives us gladness amidst the sorrow. It shines a light when we are sitting in the darkness. And it gives us hope so that our broken bones can sing again.



Big Question: How do we engage in God's Power

This week we've been building upon this idea of IN as foundational not only for our study but in our understanding of our relationship to God and where our strength is found based on our theme verse in Ephesians 6:10.

Please write it out below. (EPH 6:10)

The victory we desire is not based on human strength or physical weaponry but begins with our position in Christ. And through a personal relationship with Jesus, we have been given everything we need to live this life with the *dynamis* power He has provided by His Holy Spirit. We saw in Scripture that the power of God is activated in our lives as we pursue intimacy with Jesus and live out the purposes for which he has created us. And in humility responding to correction with a heart of repentance.

Today we are going to finish our look at Jehoshaphat and learn how to engage IN and prepare for the battle of our life. Take a moment to pray and ask God to open up your understanding, and give you ears to hear what He is desiring to teach you today. Take a moment to pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word.

Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-13. In verses 1-4 list, out what you notice in Jehoshaphat's response to the threat before him.

After a time of peace and prosperity, one fateful morning Jehoshaphat hears the horrifying news, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea..." (20:2). An enemy coalition was fast approaching about 15 miles south of Jerusalem, on the western shore of the Dead Sea. War was upon them, and Jehoshaphat's life and his entire kingdom were on the brink of extinction. Talk about a reason to panic! What would you do if you heard some alarming news that affected your future and maybe your life?

There are several things that we can glean from Jehoshaphat's response to this deadly threat. The first is that "Jehoshaphat...turned his attention," literally "set his face," determined to seek the Lord." Next, we see that the people not only sought help from the Lord but also that they sought the Lord. Once our need drives us to God in prayer, we need to understand how to pray. Jehoshaphat's prayer gives us some vital instruction on how to seek God in prayer.

First Response to Enemy Attack:

Determine to Seek the Lord with All Diligence

In 2 Chronicles 20:5-13. List out what you find significant about this prayer.

It's noteworthy that in Jehoshaphat's prayer, the first four verses (6-9) focus on God Himself as revealed in His Word. He recites God's attributes. Then he begins to recall God's actions on their behalf from the past. Finally, in the last three verses (10-12) he gets around to mentioning the problem. Which, he reminds God, stems from the fact that Israel had not obeyed God by not wiping out these very people who are now invading the land! These enemies are about to drive Israel out, not of their possession, but of Gods' possession. Finally, he calls attention to God's ability to deal with the problem, in contrast to Israel's ability. But even in mentioning the problem, God is still prominent.

Second Response to Enemy Attack:

PRAY-Focusing on WHO God is as Revealed in His Word and Remember WHAT He Has Done.

How would you describe your prayer life? How much is focused on God? How much is focused on others? Yourself?

This prayer of Jehoshaphat's is an excellent example because it's saturated with Scripture. It focuses on God as He has revealed Himself in His Word. In our prayers, we should not only seek answers to our problems, but we should seek God Himself. If we fill our prayers with the greatness of our problems, our faith will shrink. But if we fill our prayers with the greatness of our God and how He has worked down through history, our faith will grow. God delights to answer believing prayers where we put our finger on the promises and truth in His Word and ask Him to make it so in our case.

Read 2 Chronicles 20:14-17. How did God respond to Jehoshaphat's prayer? What was His instruction to Jehoshaphat?

As the people were gathered at the Temple in prayer, the Spirit of God came upon a prophet who encouraged them not to fear and assured them that God would undertake for them in this battle without their fighting at all! No matter how many times I read this account, it brings fresh strength and encouragement to my soul. "For the battle is not yours, but God's" (v.15). I've had this verse written on a chalkboard in my kitchen for the better of 3 months now as a reminder that when the battles wage against me, my family and ministry God is for me and will fight on my behalf.

Let's see what happens next in 2 Chronicles 20:18-24. Describe the battle strategy for the army of Judah. What was the result?

Based on the prophet's word from God, the people got up the next morning and marched out to the battlefield, led by a choir singing praises, of all things! That took some faith, to go into battle with your front line consisting of a choir! There is no mention of military equipment, no swords, spears, shields or bows. Their faith in their great God was their armor. Instead of calling them to raise their weapons, keep ranks, observe orders and fight valiantly their call was to "believe in the Lord God." These singers were staking their very lives on the truthfulness of that word from God. They were doing an absurd thing—marching unarmed in front of the army, singing praises to God, against a powerful enemy that was armed to the teeth! As they went out on this seemingly crazy mission, Jehoshaphat encouraged the people by saying (20:20) "Listen Judah and Jerusalem! Listen to what I have to say! Believe firmly in God, your God, and your lives will be firm! Believe in your prophets, and you'll come out on top!" (MSG) The evidence of their trust is seen in the fact that they kept marching! This is faith in action.

Third Response to Enemy Attack:

Step Out in Obedient Faith with Praise to God on Our Lips!

Go back and look at 2 Chronicles 20:25-31. Besides a miraculous victory over their enemies, what else did God give them?

Not only did God give Judah the victory in a total overthrow of the enemy, but God gave them the spoils as well. Jehoshaphat and his men had nothing to do besides gathering the loot, everything else was done for them. How abundant is the mercy of God to those who call on His Name! Their prayers and expectations were so far exceeded by anything they could imagine. They prayed to be delivered, and God not only delivered them but made them rich with the spoil of the enemy. In our spiritual battles, this is the victory, this is the prosperity.

Please read the following verses and list out what God promises to you in your time of need.

Isaiah 40:29

Psalm 91:15

Deuteronomy 33:27

Genesis 50:20

Let's finish up our study this week with this final verse.

Please read 2 Corinthians 2:14-15. What is promised to us in this verse? And what is the ultimate purpose?

This outpouring of triumphant faith in praise of the unfailing adequacy of the grace of God for every conceivable situation, no matter how threatening and destructive it may seem to be. As a child of God, we are called to spiritual warfare but are triumphantly led by Jesus our victorious General and through him spreading everywhere the "fragrance" of the knowledge of Christ.

The difference between victory and triumph is that victory is: An act of defeating an enemy or opponent in a battle, game or other competition. But triumph is an excellent victory or achievement in anything. It may or may not be direct competition.

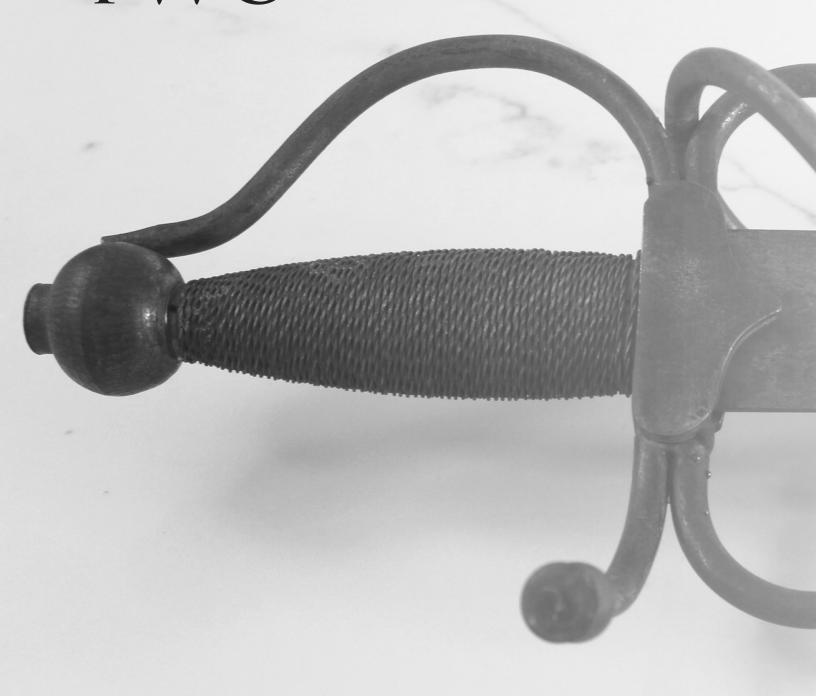
Beloved, you are made for triumph, not just victory. Triumph in every area of your life. You were made for an unprecedented purpose with a unique and vivid outpouring of His Holy Spirit for the praise of His glory and for your overflowing joy.

I pray that we will press in wholly to all that God has for us in this study of the Armor of God. May we be changed, equipped and empowered to Stand Firm in His strength and the power of His might!

JOURNAL PROMPT

Take some time writing in your journal to God your commitment to Him and in seeking all that He has for you through this study. Express to Him your gratitude that He leads you triumphantly and that your life would be marked because of what He reveals to you through His Word.

WEEK TWO







"And war broke out in heaven" - Revelation 12:7

Pray "Lord, please give me understanding as I look to your word for strength, wisdom and encouragement in the spiritual battle I am fighting today."

Ephesians 6:11,12 "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

The above verses will be our text for this week. This exhortation to ready ourselves for the spiritual battle may come as an unpleasant reminder that we are at war with an enemy. The truth is that Satan has declared war on us and he will engage with us to prevent us from doing God's will. We don't like to think of ourselves as having enemies, but as believers we must face the reality that invisible yet wicked spiritual armies in the heavenly places are stalking us. Are you currently aware of the fact that you are being stalked by the enemy?

Read the verses listed and describe the enemies desire.

1 Peter 5:8

Gen 4:7

Revelation 12:17

We have all heard someone, our mother or someone else, tell us to "stick together because there is safety in numbers." The plural pronoun "we" is used in Ephesians 6: 12.

Why is the plurality of this pronoun significant? Reference Ecclesiastes 4:9:12, Proverbs 27:17

Dive Deeper: The message of unity is an overarching theme in the book of Ephesians.

Skim the entire book and jot down some of the examples or key words that point to or promote unity.

Jesus taught us the consequences of division when He said "a house divided against itself will not stand."

Can you think of an example of division destroying a family, city, nation, or a church?

Since unity within troops is an essential, what are some of the ways we can contribute to the morale of the troops that walk alongside us?

	Col 3:13,14
	Eph 4:2
	Heb 10:24
	Eph 5:19
are lifte from the	are marching in unity to the cadence of our commander our spirits ed. But as we approach the front line and we see the rising dust he battle we may begin to feel overwhelmed by fear. Deuteronomy is a jewel of a passage. According to these verses who goes before the people into battle?
	What does he say?
	Considering your high priest how does this make you feel about your battle?

Week 2: The Why

Journal Prompt

Take a moment to reflect on today's homework. Spend a few minutes journaling your thoughts.



"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning" - James 1:17

Prayer: "Lord, please open my mind and heart today so I can fully understand the gift of spiritual armor you have graciously given to me."

In our study we discussed how mythological heroes have weapons or armor given to them by the "gods." These are mere counterfeits of the real, yet spiritual armor, God has given us to defeat our very real spiritual enemy.

Read Eph 1:3 and write a prayer of thanks to the Lord for His spiritual gifts including the armor he has given you.

Read 2 Cor 10:4 note the nature of your weapons.

As we read the stories of mythological heroes we would think them foolish not to use the weapons they were given. Their defeat would be certain without them. Likewise, we are hopelessly underpowered unless we put on the complete armor of God.

Look at the verses below and record why it is necessary for us to use our spiritual armor.

Ephesian 6:11

Luke 10:17

John 15:5

Acts 19:11-17

Each piece of armor is essential. Over the next 8 weeks we will be thoroughly looking at the individual parts of our armor but today consider it as one complete unit that you must be clothed in.

Read the following verses and describe what it looks like to put on God's armor.

1 Peter 5:5

Col 3:12

Romans 13:12

Considering the above verses, how is preparing for the spiritual battle different from the way the world prepares for a fight?

Dive Deeper: The Lord clothed in His armor is an awesome sight.

Read Isaiah 59:9-19 and record why He put on His armor.

Journal Prompt

Reflect on today's homework and journal your thoughts on God's gift of armor given to you.



"Praise be the Lord my Rock who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle" - Psalm 144:1

Pray "Lord, I pray that you will use my study time today to continue training me for the spiritual battles that are ahead of me."

Read Ephesians 6:11,12 again to refresh your memory of each detail in the verse. Today we will look at the Devil's strategies, or wiles, against us.

Use a dictionary and write out the definition of "strategy" or "wiles."

Using the scriptures listed below, describe some of Satan's methods and strategies.

Genesis 3:1-4

Mark 4:15

2 Cor 2:7 -11		
2 Cor 4:4		
2 Cor 11:3		
2 Cor 11:14		
Revelation 12:9		
We all have our areas of vulnerability. Think about yours and how the enemy exploits it.		
What strategy does Satan use against you?		
What piece or pieces of armor do you think will be most effective against that strategy?		

Dive Deeper - In our lesson we talked about how Satan is very effective at causing us to lose focus on him and turn to aim our weapons on flesh and blood. You may have experienced this first hand and you may even be guilty of considering flesh and blood your enemy.

How can we defeat this strategy when we recognize it being used against us?

Journal Prompt

Journal a prayer to the Lord, let Him know your needs and concerns regarding the battle you are in.



"For though we walk in the flesh we do not war according to the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds" - 2 Cor 10:3

Prayer: "Lord, give me understanding today as I look to your word for strength and endurance to pull down the strongholds of the enemy"

Use a dictionary to look up and define "wrestling"- write the definition and state the goal of the wrestler.

Wrestling is often painful and sometimes bloody, but it always requires strength and endurance. Since it takes all our strength to wrestle it is important we reserve our energy for wrestling for our true opponent.

When are you most tempted to fight against flesh and blood? What are the typical circumstances?

Read the flowing scriptures and record who was wrestling and describe why you think they felt compelled to wrestle with flesh and blood.

Gen 30	:8
Who?	
Why?	
John 18 Who?	3:10
Why?	
What d	lid Jesus do? (Luke 22:51)
Genesi Who?	s 4:8b
Why?	
Who sh	hould he have been wrestling with? (Gen 4:7)
Neither Cain, 1	nor we should be wrestling with our brother or sister
Who sl	nould we be wrestling with?
Gen 4:'	-
Roman	as 6:14
Eph 6:1	12

Our opponent is formidable; our opponent is strong; our opponent is cunning and stealth. He seeks to pounce upon us when we are unaware. We are fooling ourselves if we think there will be no struggle. Hebrews 10:4 tells us we have need of endurance in this struggle and in Matthew 10:22 & 24:13 Jesus exhorts us to persevere because "he who endures to the end shall be saved."

Considering these exhortations, and our need for enduring strength to wrestle successfully- write out the following verses soaking up every bit of encouragement that comes from the Lord's words to you.

Isaiah 40:29-31

Psalm 138:3

Dive Deeper: It is possible to overcome the enemy! Scripture is filled with examples of men who wrestled effectively against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Take some time to read Daniel 10, 2 Kings 6:8-23, James 5:16-18 paying attention to the consequences of the fervent prayer of these humble men.... record the effect that was felt in both heaven and on earth.

Week 2: The Why

Journal Prompt

Journal a prayer to the Lord asking for help in the area you feel most challenged in your spiritual battle.



"We are more than conquers through him who loved us."

- Romans 8:37

Prayer: "Lord, please enlighten my understanding today so that I can fully comprehend the power of Christ in me. Give me vision for the work that you want to do in me and through me."

You may be asking yourselves as we go through this study "If the battle is the Lord's, then why do I have to fight?" Why did Paul tell Timothy to "fight the good fight of faith"? You may not like the wrestling analogy and prefer the sheep/shepherd analogy or the vine/branch analogy. We all like the idea of simply cuddling with God. But the reality is that we will all have a season of wrestling against darkness.

The enemy has a strategy to keep us from doing God's will. He opposes us being kind and tenderhearted toward one another, forgiving one another. He opposes us picking up our cross daily. He opposes us being a servant rather than being served. He adamantly opposes us going out and preaching the Gospel and making disciples of all nations.

Satan has a strategy against you. Do you have a strategy to overcome him? If you do, list it here.

Note the strategy in verse 8	
and verse 9	
Now note the outcome in verse 10	
and verse 11	
Jesus himself gave Peter a strategy back in the garden. Write out Matthew 26:41	
Dive Deeper: One way to get a strategy is to look at those who have been	

We can find the apostle Peter's strategy in 1 Peter 5:8-11

Read 1 Peter 4:1-2, Hebrews 12:3-4 and Phil 2:5-8. What do these verses imply about the way we will battle and win?

victorious. There is no better place to look than to our Lord Jesus. As you are clothed in His armor be mindful that God's strategy's look nothing like

the man's strategy.

Revelation 12:11 directly tells us how believers overcame the enemy.

Record it here. Ask yourself are you using this strategy?

Jesus is the ultimate strongman. He wrestled in the garden to the point of bloodshed long before any humans ever laid hands upon him.

Read Luke 11:21-22 and record the two things our strongman man did for us.

What did He do?

What did He take?

Colossians 2:15 reads "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it." Let the truth of the previous verse sink into you heart. Not only has our Lord has been victorious, He has disarmed our enemy. Our champion has given us His armor, rejoice!

JOURNAL PROMPT

Take some time to journal what you have learned this week. Thank the Lord that He has given you the strength to do His will and necessary armor to defeat the forces of wickedness in heavenly places.







Ephesians 6:13: Protection in the Battle "Therefore take up the whole armor of God"

Prayer: Lord, I ask for the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of my heart to receive from your word as I study protection in the battle today. Teach me what it means to put on the whole armor of God and excite me to do so. Reveal to me what parts of the armor I am neglecting and give me the strength to give equal concern to each part. Lord, the desire of my heart is to be equipped for daily battle and bear your image to those around me. Amen.

Make a list of what the whole armor of God is in Ephesians 6:14-18.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Which part of the armor are you most familiar with, and why?

Which part are you least familiar with, and why?

Paul makes a point to exhort the Ephesians to put on the "whole armor of God". However, sometimes, we only put on pieces of the armor of God such as the belt of truth, but neglect other areas such as the breastplate of righteousness.

What leads us to neglect the whole armor and only put on pieces of it?

Which pieces of the armor of God do you tend to put on most of the time, and which pieces do you tend to neglect?

Just as a soldier is impacted if they only have pieces of their armor on, so is a Christian impacted by how much armor they put on.

How does putting on only part of the armor affect you daily? What areas of your faith remain vulnerable when you only put on a part of God's armor and not the whole armor?

Describe a time when you have felt this impact personally.

Because Christian enemies are super human forces, we cannot rely on human resources but must take up divine armor. Often times we fight the battle in our own armor or in someone else's armor.

How do you think you have been fighting the enemy with human resources, in your own armor, or relying on someone else's armor? Can you share a specific example?

Preparation is needed in order to effectively use the armor that God has given to us. Not only are we to prepare ourselves to adorn the armor, but to prepare ourselves with the armor to face what may come our way.

Look back at question one and write how you can incorporate each piece of the armor into your preparation for the day:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Week 3: Our Position

Journal Prompt

Read and write out the Old Testament scriptures on the divine armor of God.

Isaiah 11:5, Isaiah 59:17, Isaiah 52:7



Position in the Battle "That you may be able"

Prayer: Lord, because of your death and resurrection I am able to do the things that you ask of me. Without you Lord, I cannot accomplish anything eternally lasting on my own. Please help me daily to realize the necessity of relying on your ability Lord Jesus and asking for the empowerment I need. May you give me the grace to not focus on my own inability, but instead to fix my eyes on the author and perfecter of my faith.

Read Ephesians 1:16-21.

Write out verses 19 and 20:

Put in your own words what these verses say.

So many times we experience our own inabilities but it is not our power but the power of Christ that enables us.

What personal inabilities do you have that cause you to forget the ability you have in, and through, Jesus?

The substance beneath the armor is the victory we have through Christ's death and resurrection. It takes faith to live in that victory and experience the power Christ gives us.

How are you living in that victory and how are you not?

Journal Prompt

Journal about how Christ is able to give you power to fight the enemy and thank him for his death and resurrection.



Power in the Battle to Withstand "to withstand in the evil day"

Prayer: Lord, I want to withstand the lies that the enemy throws at me. Help me to see the spiritual battle that rages around me and not be naive to Satan's tactics in my own life. Give me your wisdom to identify how Satan tries to get at me and teach me how to disarm him. Amen.

Paul provides another way to combat the enemy in the battle we face. That way is an offensive position. He encourages the believers to "withstand".

How would you describe "withstanding" in your own words?

One definition for withstand is: to remain undamaged or unaffected by.

Do you believe you can be "undamaged" and "unaffected" by Satan if you are putting on the whole armor of God and standing firmly? Why?

To "withstand" is a verb showing that we are in battle resisting the enemy.

In what ways did Christ "withstand" Satan in Luke 4:1-13?

How are you going to resist Satan this week as he tempts, accuses, and lies?

We don't always sense it as intensely but there is never a time that we are not at war. We are being observed by our adversary all the time and he's taking note of our weaknesses, behaviors, habits, and failures. The world, the flesh, and the devil has well devised influences and impressions upon us constantly as well as attacks, arrows, and lies. The armor that we are given is designed to combat and handle each situation that the enemy hurls at us so that we can remain undamaged. The enemy is defeated so we live in the victory daily of the power that works in us that echoes from the cross.

THE VERY STRENGTH TO WITHSTAND AND DO MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL BATTLE COMES FROM THE LORD.

JOURNAL PROMPT

Take some time to journal your thoughts about what speaks to you from the above statement.



Participation in Battle "and having done all"

Prayer: Lord, I want to be a student of your word and know who my enemy is so I can effectively fight in the battle. Please help me to also understand my identity in Christ and the great inheritance I have in You. Please give me wisdom today to discern how the enemy specifically tries to attack me so I can combat him with all the spiritual resources available to me. Amen.

Read Job 1:6-11.

What did Satan hope Job would do?

And what did Satan take from Job? (spoiler alert: Job didn't take the bate)

We need to do all we can to be prepared to fight the enemy. One form of preparation is knowing our enemy and how he works.

What are some strategies that Satan employs to use against believers? Try to find three and site verses.

Knowing your true identity in Christ is one way to be prepared against the enemy.

Circle words from these verses that state your identity in Christ:

1 Peter 2:9 "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

John 1:12 "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God..."

Another way to be prepared to fight is by knowing how Satan specifically tries to attack you.

What are Satan's top five lies to you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

JOURNAL PROMPT

Look up verses that combat Satan's top five lies to you and write them out. Try your best to memorize them in the coming weeks so that you are ready to fight with the truth.



Participation in Battle "to stand firm"

Prayer: Lord, help me to stand firm and not let anything get in the way of that. I pray that when I am attacked I won't get frightened and shrink back. I want to be a strong soldier, unfazed by our adversary and trust that you are at work on my behalf. I know being in the battle requires faith Lord and so I pray you impart great faith to me as I move forward. Amen.

Read Exodus 14:10-14.

How do you think Israel felt?

Moses tells the people "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent."

Why is it important not to have fear in the battle? How can you conquer the fear so it doesn't hinder you?

In Exodus 14:13, who is	"standing'	and who is '	"working"? \	Why is
this important?				

Standing firm doesn't mean that we do nothing, actually the opposite, standing firm requires action. Read Exodus 14:15.

After telling Israel to stand firm, what does he ask them to do next?

How do you think this relates to your own battle?

It takes a great amount of faith to stand firm and rely on God to fight our battles for us.

Write a prayer asking for faith to stand firm.

Journal Prompt

Romans 5:2

1 Corinthians 15:1

1 Corinthians 16:13

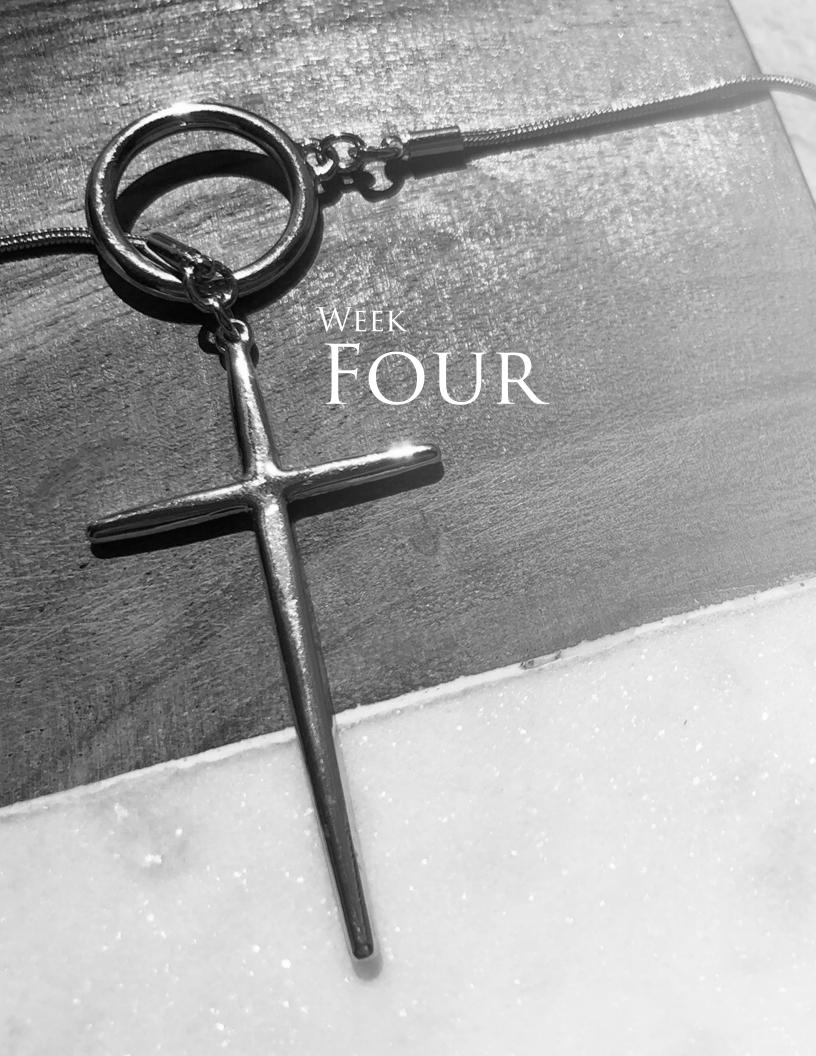
2 Corinthians1:24

Galatians 5:1

Philippians 1:27

Philippians 4:1

Colossians 4:12







"Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth"
- Ephesians 6:13

Prayer: Lord, thank you giving me spiritual armor, please open my heart as I study your word today, so I can understand how I am to take up the armor you gave me

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at each piece of armor the Lord has given us. When we think of a solider clad in full uniform there are so many conspicuous pieces of armor. Of all the pieces Paul could have listed first he chose the belt.

Why do you suppose he selected it first?

Girding is synonymous with belting and it is a preparatory step in preparing for battle. In ancient times men wore tunics. These tunics resembled a large piece of cloth with a hole for the head and arms. They were loose, free flowing and typically long. "Girding up loins" or fastening a belt amounted to gathering up these loose tunics and securing them to enable swift movement in labor or battle. It prevented them from getting tangled in or pulled down by their garment. "Gird up your loins" is a common expression used in the Israeli military to this day.

In the following scriptures state what you feel "girding up" symbolizes.
Job 38:3; 40:7 "gird up your loin like a man" KJV
Proverbs 31:17 "she girds her loins with strength" KJV
1 Peter 1:13
Luke 12:35

In the book of Exodus, we find the Lord instructing the Israelites to gird themselves for Passover.

Read Exodus 12:11 -17, 51. How does this text link to Ephesians 6:12-14?

An interesting note is that the Lord did not call the escaping Israelites a bunch of freed slaves; instead He calls them "armies."

Dive Deeper: Preparedness pleases the Lord. When we have girded our waist with truth we have prepared ourselves.

Read Luke 12:35-47 and comment on the prepared servant and the unprepared servant.

How does James 4:17 emphasize this point?

Ephesians 6:13 tells us to "take up the whole armor of God that we may be able to withstand the evil day." This is a guarantee that the "evil day" is coming.

Since we know it is coming, think about some ways you can "belt up" or prepare yourself for the battle. Write them here.

JOURNAL PROMPT

Write a prayer asking the Lord to gird you in His truth and prepare you for the spiritual battles that lie ahead of you.



Prayer: Lord, you are holy, and Your word is true, please guide my study time, instruct me in Your truth.

If we are to put on truth we must know "What is Truth?" - How do you define truth?

Use a dictionary to define Truth.

If you have access to a Bible dictionary write out the Greek and Hebrew definitions for Truth.

(Smart phone app tip- MySword for android and PocketSword for iPhone are free apps and will give you quick access to Greek and Hebrew definitions when you use the KJV translation. These apps have several other translations available as well.)

John 14:6			
Psalm 119:160			
John 17:17			
John 14:16,17			
Read John 8:31,32 and describe what truth does for us and how it correlates to what the military belt did for the solider.			
From Romans 13:14, John 14:6 and John 17:17 how do we conclude we are to put on the belt of truth?			

Use the following scriptures to record how scripture defines truth.

Read John 18:31-38 recording Pilate's interaction with the Jews and Jesus. Note Pilate's desire in verse 31 and his cynicism in verse 38.

Is there anything else in this passage that stands out to you?

Scripture tell us "the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one." This "wicked one" has been challenging truth since the beginning of time. He challenged truth in the garden, he challenged it in Rome and he continues to challenge truth to this day.

How does society currently define truth today?

JOURNAL PROMPT

Let this verse inspire you to write a prayer "Therefore, let not mercy and truth forsake you, bind them around your neck, write them on your heart and so find favor with God and men." Proverbs 3:3-4



Prayer: Lord, You are truth You know the way I should go, lead me with Your truth as I study Your word today

Truth protects. The Roman military belt had straps to protect loin area and an attachment to carry a sword. Ancient military belts varied, but all had protection of their loin area and a place for a weapon. Our belt of truth is similar but superior; not only does offer protection and carry our sword, but it has a navigation system!

Read each of the following verses and record the benefit we receive from our belt of truth.

Psalm 40:11

Psalm 43:3

John 16:13

Truth is directional-Often Satan tries to convince us that the outcome of lying will be better than the direction our life will take if we tell the truth. He will argue our financial position will be better if we lie; or our relationship position will be better, our place on the corporate ladder will be better. The reality is the position we are supposed to be is the place we arrive at when we tell the truth. That is the position God wants us stationed at for

His purpose, His will and His glory. Never fear the direction truth takes, it may be a difficult path, it may be a narrow road, but it is the right one and a safe one because the Lord is with you.

When are you tempted to bend the truth or tell a "white lie"? What is the motive?

2 Samuel 20:8 reads "Joab dressed in battle armor, on it was a belt with a sword fastened in its sheath at his hips." From this old testament passage we see that tied into a soldier's belt was his ability to bear a weapon to defeat his enemy.

Expound on how you think being firmly bound with truth correlates with your ability to bear the sword of the word of God.

Read these verses and record how truth affects us as well as what it prevents.

Romans 12:2

1 Peter 1:22

2 Timothy 2:25

Explain how Philippians 4:8 can protect your mind from lies.

In scripture the loins are often used as a metaphor for strength. They are the center for procreative power (Hebrews 7:5, Job 40:16.)

Expound on how destroying a believer's grasp on truth takes down his spiritual procreative power?

Dive Deeper -Read Psalm 5, Psalm 43 or Psalm 25 and note how the Psalmist writes of truth.

Journal Prompt

The Psalms are filled with praises to the Lord for His protection and His guidance. Spend a few moments writing your own psalm of gratitude to the Lord for His guidance and protection.



Prayer: Lord, my enemy is a liar and a deceiver, please grant me wisdom to avoid his deception.

As we walk this Christian life one thing we come to realize is that Satan is self-deceived and a deceiver.

What did Jesus tell us about Satan's character in John 8:44?

Our enemy does not want us to stand firmly girded in truth, so he devises schemes against us. Write out some of his various strategies to undermine truth from the following verses:

Genesis 3:4-5

Galatians 5:7

Romans 1:18

Romans 1:25
Daniel 8:12
2 Corinthians 4:3-4
Have you seen these strategies played out? If you feel it will benefit the group, share the example.
Our enemy is a counterfeiter. We must be on guard for counterfeit "truth" that he peddles. Just as a cashier must hold a \$100 bill to the light to verify if it is authentic we too must hold every doctrine to the light of scripture to see if it is authentic truth.
From the following scriptures note how Satan distributes his false doctrine
1 Tim 4:1-5 2 Tim 3:1-7
2 Tim 4:3-4
Revelation 2:14-15

Since our sword is attached to the belt, our enemy would be thrilled if we took our belt off. No belt means no truth and no sword. Our loins are vulnerable, and we are prone to get entangled in our garment.

Record the warnings given in these scriptures:

2 Timothy 2:3-4

Luke 21:34-36

Examine your armor. Is your belt fastened securely or are you tripping and getting tangled up in the cares of this life?

Have you ever turned on your navigation system only to doubt its accuracy then ignore its instructions and consequently found yourself lost? Satan wants us to doubt or ignore truth. This is how he originally snared Eve.

Record what these verses teach us about disobeying the truth:

James 1:22

Galatians 5:7

How can we know if the truth is in us?

1 John 2:4-6

Week 4: The Belt of Truth

Journal Prompt

Journal your thoughts on obedience to the truth. Let this verse inspire you "Lord, you desire truth in the inward parts." Psalm 51:6



Prayer: Lord, I ask that today You wrap me in your gracious truth and teach me to trust your truth as I receive it from your word.

Considering all we have learned this week, let's write out Luke 12:35 and expound upon this command from Jesus.

Write out Luke 12:35:

What do you think Jesus was communicating to His disciples?

How does truth prepare us?

How do we wear truth in a practical sense? Read and record the ways we are to be wrapped in truth.

Ephesians 4:25

Romans 13:11-14

Zechariah 8:16,17

Leviticus 19:11

Colossians 3:9

In 2 Cor 6:7 Paul said he demonstrated he was God's servant by teaching "the word of truth with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left." Here Paul is making a veiled reference to some of David's mighty men who trained so hard for battle that they could shoot arrows and hurl stones with either their right or left hand. (2 Chron 12:1-2)

Consider the way you are training and demonstrating you are God's servant. Write a prayer asking the Lord to help you in this area.

JOURNAL PROMPT

In the NKJV 1Peter 1:13 reads "Gird up the loins of your mind." Reflecting on what you have learned about girding and truth write out what steps you will take to apply this verse.

"God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth"

-John 4:24

Download a song of worship and spend some time worshipping the Lord







This week we will be covering the Breastplate of Righteousness.

First, let's look at what a breastplate is— a Roman soldier would typically wear a breastplate made of bronze or chain mail with the purpose of protecting his vital organs -namely the heart -from arrows and other deadly blows. As Christians, it is important for us to "put on" this armor of righteousness to protect our hearts!

Today we are going to look at who alone is righteous. As we begin, please take a moment to pray and ask the Lord to speak to you through His word.

Let's start with the Hebrew meaning for the word righteousness: state of him who is as he ought to be before God, the condition of being acceptable to God.

What do you believe righteousness to be?

Now let's see what God says about righteousness! Using the Scripture references draw a line to its verse on righteousness.

Ezra 9:15	And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ- the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith
Job 25:4	As it is written: there is no one righteous, not even one
Psalm 71:19	For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written the righteous will live by faith
Romans 1:17	This is righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile.
Romans 3:10	For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope.
Romans 3:22	Your righteousness, God reaches to the heaven, you who have done great things. Who is like God?
2 Corinthians 5:21	Lord, the God of Israel, you are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence.
Philippians 3:9	How can a man be righteous before God? How can one born of a woman be pure?
Galatians 5:5	But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.
2 Peter 3:13	God made him who had no sin to be sin in Jesus Christ to all who believed.

Who does God say is righteous?

Read Galatians 3

How are we declared righteous before God?

Fill in the missing scripture.	
Galatians 3:2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law or by	
	;
Galatians 3:6 Consider Abraham: HeGod, and itto him as	was
Galatians 3:11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, becau	ıse "

It is through our faith in Christ Jesus that we are declared righteous before God. He wants to be in a relationship with us. He wants us to know Him. But how? By understanding and putting our faith in Jesus and what he accomplished on the cross for us. Now we are acceptable to God. Jesus' sacrifice for our sin is the only sacrifice that will ever fully satisfy and be acceptable to God. There is nothing we can do, separate and apart from absolute trust in this perfect sacrifice, that will ever make us righteous.

Sisters, we are RIGHTEOUS! Take a moment and let this sink in! We don't often dwell on the fact that we are righteous. Take a moment and write out a prayer thanking Jesus for our righteousness! Jesus died on the cross for our sins so we may be forgiven. God can look at us now and see righteousness-Jesus in us! You are declared righteous because you believe! You have faith!

Journal Prompt

Dear Sisters, the enemy doesn't want you to know you are righteous! He hopes you don't remember to "put on" the Breastplate of Righteousness. He loves to aim his flaming arrows of doubt, depression, discouragement, weakness and thoughts of being inferior at your heart. How are you going to stop him? Journal your battle plan!



Let's pray and ask the Lord to speak to you through His word.

When Paul compares the armor of God with military gear, each piece represents a part of God's strength that He extends to us when we become His children. The breastplate of righteousness refers to the righteousness purchased for us by Jesus at the cross. (2 Corinthians 5:21) At salvation, a "breastplate" is issued to each repentant sinner. It is specially designed by God to protect our heart and soul from evil and deception. Our own righteous acts are no match for Satan's attacks (Isaiah 64:6). The breastplate of righteousness has Christ's name stamped on it, as though He said, "Your righteousness isn't sufficient to protect you. Wear mine."

Do we have faith in Christ's finished work on the cross?

Write out Ephesians 1:4-6

Sweet sisters, have we put our faith in God's word today and every day that it is finished? Do we believe that this finished work on the cross has forgiven us our sins and we are now forevermore acceptable to God? Do we put on the Breastplate of righteousness so that our hearts and thoughts are protected from lies that we are not acceptable?

Yesterday we learned the Hebrew meaning of righteousness was the condition of being acceptable to God.

Let's look a little closer at the word acceptable.

What is the dictionary definition?

What are some synonyms for acceptable?

What are some antonyms?

Have you ever been bullied or offended as a child or as an adult that made you feel unacceptable? What were some of the words or thoughts or feelings that you struggled with or made you feel unacceptable?

What action or deed causes that thought to rise up today? *Example: I'm not good enough because I am impatient with my kids.*

What lie am I believing?

The enemy likes to whisper to us that we aren't acceptable. He loves to remind us constantly of our failures and surely God could not love us because all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23) BUT Romans 3:24 says we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Satan loves to deceive us with half-truths and dear sisters we need to beware of them and know we have victory in Christ! (1Corinthians 15:57)

Read Revelation 12:10-11

Accuser means "one who condemns". Satan wants us to believe we are weak, he loves to point out our mistakes.

What does God want us to believe about our sins?

Take a moment to write out these verses and let them sink in.

1 John 1:8-9

Daniel 9:9

God wants you to focus on the full truth that leads to conviction and forgiveness of sin. Focus on His son on the cross, His blood that covers us, His mercy, His love, His grace, His forgiveness.

Put on the Breastplate of Righteousness by faith and sink into it.

List 4 synonyms of acceptable:

We are______ in Christ

We are_____ in Christ

We are_____ in Christ

We are_____ in Christ

Let's end our time today in prayer focusing on the full truth of God. We will never be enough but God is enough. Satan reminds us of our weaknesses but God answers back with His strength. Stand on His strength today! Put on His Breastplate of Righteous in faith today!

JOURNAL PROMPT

What does Christ's finished work on the cross mean to me? And how does this affect my life?



What does belief in Christ finished work look like?

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given you as well." Matthew 6:33

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." Psalm 91:1

"Trust in the Lord and do good: dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37.3-4

"I delight greatly in the Lord: my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness..."

Isaiah 61:10

As we open up God's word today let's pray and ask Him for wisdom and guidance as we look into how to develop a heart for Him.

The next few days we will be looking at Luke 15 the story of the Prodigal son and his steps to receiving his robe of righteousness.

Please read Luke 15:11-32.

What is the condition of the younger son's heart? Luke 15:12-13

How does the condition of his heart change? Luke 14-20

The younger son awakened to his emptiness. He came to his senses about where and how he was living and realized the wildlife (wine, women, worldly ways) didn't satisfy him or fill him. It leads to starvation and emptiness. When he realized "I am starving to death" (Luke 15:17) He awakened to his emptiness and set off back to his father humbled by his sin. (Luke 15:18-19) That awakening was key to his path of becoming acceptable to God and receiving a Breastplate of Righteousness. He came back home to his father's land and the door was wide open to him.

Can you remember a time when you felt empty? What steps did you take to return to the Father?

The younger son was also aware his father was good. His father was the source of food. Feasting on the things of this world may taste good and filling for a time but it left the younger son starving. The young man became aware that the only true, good, satisfying thing in all of life is being with his father.

Share a time God was good to you.

The young son also acknowledged and agonized over his wrongness. "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son"... This son was grieving over the sinful condition of his heart. He acknowledged the sins and felt bad. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4) When he grieved over what he did wrong, the fathered comforted him.

Here's a statement for you to ponder: It's good to feel bad about your wrongs because that leads to righteousness.

Think of a toddler who spent the entire day throwing a tantrum and suddenly comes to their senses and truly was sorry and lifted up their arms to be comforted, would you pick them up? Would you forgive? Of course, you would and so does God every time!

Look at Luke 15:21-24. Here we see the son receive the robe of righteousness, not because of anything he has done, but because he abandoned his worldly ways. He abandoned his wrong living and thinking. "make me like one of your hired servants" (Luke 15:19)

The young man didn't receive the robe, ring or sandals because of anything he did, but because he became spiritually awakened and aware of his sins, acknowledged and agonized over what he had done, and chose to abandon that way of life and come home to the father.

Look up the following verses in each category, reflect on each and don't be afraid to come to our Lord and admit you are a sinner! After each verse write what God shared with you.

Awakened to his condition - the son reflects on his condition

Matthew 5:3

Ephesians 2:1-2 and 4-5

Isaiah 40:30-31

Aware the Father is good

Psalm 40:2

Psalm 51:1

Hebrews 13:5

Acknowledging and agonizing over sin

Matthew 9:13

Matthew 5:4

2 Peter 3:9

Abandoning his sins - a repentant heart

Psalm 51:10-12

Psalm 103:10-13

1 John 1:9

Accepting God's righteousness is the day we sink into Christ and believe we are empty inside without Him. Accepting God's righteous breastplate to cover our hearts can only be done when we are in Christ and understand that He is the only good and righteous One!

As we finish Day 3, we have begun to develop a pure heart for God. Wearing the Breastplate of Righteousness creates a lifestyle of confessing our sins and surrendering our hearts to Jesus. If we don't, we leave holes in our breastplate that allows the flaming arrows of the evil one (Eph 6:16).

JOURNAL PROMPT

Journal a prayer asking Jesus—

- to fill your life.
- that your choices would become righteous.
- that your desires would be His desires.
- that He would protect you from further temptations and deceptions from the evil one.



What does belief in our own works look like?

Let's begin with prayer and ask God to open our eyes and heart as we look into what we need to put off and what we need to put on.

Look up Ephesians 4:22-24. Fill in the missing scripture.

You were taught with regard to your former way of life		
	your	
which is corrupted by its	: to be made	
new in the attitude of your min	ds and	
the	_, created to be like	
in true	:	
and .		

Read Ephesians 4:25-5:5. List in the first column all the things Paul instructs us to "put off" and in the second column list what we are to "put on".

Put Off	Put On
Falsehood	Truth

Let's return to the story of the Prodigal son and take a look at what the elder son believed in. Read Luke 15:25-32

Sometimes sin is easy to recognize and sometimes it hides under doing good.

Can you name a few of the sins of the elder brother?

Do you see some similar sins in your life?

Can you think of any sins that hide under doing good works?

Is the elder son, who stayed home and obeyed his dad able to wear the breastplate of righteousness on his own merit?

What sin prevented him from going to the party?

Have you ever been in a similar situation? What happened?

The elder brother is operating in partial truth: obedience is good, but he has no knowledge of the full truth.

Write out Ephesians 2:8-10

2 Corinthians 3:5 goes on to say "Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming to us, but our sufficiency is from God."

Sisters, every day we need to put on the Breastplate of Righteousness to protect our hearts not only from the flaming arrows of the evil one but from our own self-righteousness! If we don't put on our armor, or put it on haphazardly we will end up with a "wardrobe malfunction" of anxiety, worry, and concerns. Our focus will be on ourselves, our time with the Lord will lose its intimacy and His power in our lives will be diminished.

Let's end today with these scripture verses and meditate and journal thanking the Lord for his grace and mercy, asking for a pure heart, a renewed spirit, and our righteousness would be for His glory!

JOURNAL PROMPT

Let's end today with these scripture verses and meditate and journal thanking the Lord for his grace and mercy, asking for a pure heart, a renewed spirit, and our righteousness would be for His glory!

2 Timothy 2:22 "So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."

Titus 3:5-6 "He saved, not because of works are done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."

1 Corinthians 1:26-31 "Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Therefore, as it is written; Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."



Our Hearts

As we finish our lessons on the Breastplate of Righteousness today let's focus on our own journey. "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." Galatians 5:16

Please pray and ask the Lord to speak to you through His word.

Sisters, what weakness, sin or failure (thoughts) have you been dealing with?

Who do you relate to more with your struggles, the prodigal or the elder son? Luke 15:11-32

Does the father love them both equally?

Look up Luke 15:31 - what does it say?

When that weakness, sin or failure comes up in your thoughts, how do you typically deal with it?

Let's practice for when the emergency/crisis comes up. The enemy is attacking and it may be all-out war or it could be a very subtle sneak attack. *Are you prepared?*

First, ask Jesus to Awaken you to any sin in your life. Ladies this is a heart check! Are you bitter about anything, feeling offended, can't let something go, stressed, overwhelmed, worried?

Be Aware of who God is: write down 3 character traits about God that would make you feel safe to go to him with your sin:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Read Psalm 103 (NKJV) below:

Praise for the Lord's Mercies A Psalm of David.

Bless the Lord, O my soul;
And all that is within me, bless His holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,
Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,
Who satisfies your mouth with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagles.

Acknowledging and agonizing - Spend some time with God in prayer and ask Him to bless you with a contrite and repentant heart. Ask Him to give you an understanding of the pain that sin causes to you and to others and to Him.

Fuel for thought... Has someone ever made you feel unacceptable? Have you been judged by a self-righteous Christian? Or have you been self-righteous Christian judging other?

Draw a picture of the cross with you kneeling in front of it.....

Now, add another person next to you—someone, who has criticized you over the years OR a person who you have criticized.

What is Jesus' heart towards all of us?

John 3:16

Ezekiel 33:11

Write a prayer asking forgiveness or perhaps an apology to God (Is He prompting you to apologize to anyone?)

Commit here to abandoning that sin and pray now for the Holy Spirit's help in doing that.

Read out loud Ephesians 3:16-21

NOW, sit and rest in prayer as you accept and receive the covering of the Breastplate of Righteousness.

Paul tells us we need to "put on" our spiritual breastplate every day. We are in Christ and Christ is in us. We are righteous because of what Jesus did on the cross for us. We are forgiven, cleaned and fully accepted by God.

Dear Sisters sink into the Breastplate of Righteousness with your heart of faith! Renew your mind every day with God's Word and Prayer and share in fellowship. If you do, your lives will be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29). You will have victory and your faith will be perfected (Heb 2-3). Cover your hearts, dear sisters, cover your hearts and the enemy's arrows will not reach you, for your heart is protected by none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

Journal Prompt

What did God show me this week about righteousness? Am I remembering to put on this vital piece of armor-the Breastplate of Righteousness each day? Am I prepared for battle? Is my heart protected?





Week Six Introduction

Prayer: Father, I pray that you give us a hunger to experience the power of your peace in ways that are life changing. May Your word equip us as your soldiers to stand firm in the truth and promises you have given us. Help us to fight the battles ahead in your power and peace. In Jesus name, Amen.

Welcome to our verse we will be studying this week!

Ephesians 6:15:

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

- King James Version

My heart is of full excitement for all that the Lord is sharing with us this week in recognizing the importance of having our shoes on as we arm ourselves for spiritual battle! A soldier fighting to victory isn't going to get far without having on the proper footwear and we will be diving deep this week to understand just how crucial the footwear is to the Lord's armor and how we are to use it in battle.

From our talk this week, let's quickly refresh ourselves on some key points regarding the Roman soldier's shoes: First, they had spikes on the bottoms which allowed them to stand firm in battle. Second, they had thick leather soles which provided the equipment they needed to fight, kept them protected from enemy traps and allow them to move. Lastly, the shoes needed to be comfortable enough so that they could support the rest of the soldier's armor in battle and allow them to move with ease so that the rest of the armor could function.

In our verse this week, the word "preparation" (some Bible translations say "equipment" or "readiness") is translated in Greek as "hetoimasia". It's definition means both "foundation, firm footing" or "preparation, readiness". Does this already start to sound familiar when we think about what we know about a soldier's shoes? We will be going over these aspects of the soldier's shoes as they relate to spiritual battle. Even more important than that however, we will be discovering what it means to have our feet prepared with God's peace and how we are to use it to fight spiritual battles.

My greatest prayer is that your life is truly transformed through this week's study as you learn the significance and power of applying God's peace in your life.

Alright my fellow Christian soldier, let's get marching!



STAND FIRM

Prayer: Father, I pray that our eyes would be opened to the spiritual battles around us as we study Your word today. Please provide us with the depth to learn the significance of standing firm in You and the power that Your word has in spiritual battle. Bless us with the will to seek Your word continually and the ability to stand firm without being knocked off our feet or slipping into the traps that the enemy has set all around us. I pray you embolden us and encourage us with your word which is truth today to stand firm in you always. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Today we will be studying the "spikes" of the soldier's shoes that allow us to stand firm in spiritual battle! Let's start by refreshing our minds by reading Ephesians 6:10-15:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to STAND against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to STAND your ground, and after you have done everything, to STAND. STAND firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your FEET fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."

is it that we are standing on? Our feet! Everything that comes before this verse is supported by our feet being shod in the gospel of peace. A soldier who is standing in battle knows his job and is ready to fight.

How many times does Paul emphasize the word "stand" in these verses?

What do Roman soldiers have on their shoes that help them to stand firm?

Why is it important for a soldier to stand firm in battle?

Satan uses his strongholds to tell us lies, confuse and misinform us in order to weaken us as the Lord's soldiers, but it is the truth that sets us free. Ephesians 4:21 "You have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him." and John 8:32 "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

As Christian soldiers, what do we have that allows us to stand firm?

Standing firm in battle as a Christia	n soldier is important so that
you can live your life in	
according to	

Daniel - Standing Firm in God

In the book of Daniel, Chapter 1, we read that Daniel was a man of God who lived in a culture that was completely oppressive to his beliefs. Not only was the culture oppressive to his beliefs, but he had been called to an elevated position in the king's service where the contrast of his beliefs from the rest of the kingdom's would be very visible. Early on in his captivity in Babylon, we see Daniel requesting not to defile himself with the king's food that was being given to him. Instead he asked that he and his men be allowed to eat only vegetables and drink only water for 10 days.

This was a life-threatening position for Daniel to be in since his unwillingness to abandon his faith and God's commands went directly against Nebuchadnezzar's instruction. But on the tenth day the king's chief officials compared Daniel and his men to the other men who had been eating the royal food, and, indeed Daniel's men were healthier and better nour-

ished than the men who had eaten the king's food. This simple yet daring situation changed the eating habits of the king's men in order that they all would be healthier as Daniel was.

Because of Daniel standing firm in the Lord's truth, God was able to use him in many mighty ways throughout his lifetime. In the book of Daniel, Chapter 6, we see the king's officers were jealous of Daniel's success and plotted to have him killed. They persuaded the unrealizing king to decree an order that all subjects within the kingdom were to pray to the king and no other god, or otherwise be put to death. They knew that Daniel prayed daily to the one true God and would not fall for such an order. Sure enough, Daniel would not obey the king's order and continued to pray to God, a sure death sentence! But when he was thrown into the lion's den, God protected Daniel by sending an angel to keep the mouths of the lions shut, sparing Daniel's life once again. The king was so elated that Daniel's life was spared, he threw Daniel's accusers and their families into the lion's den to be eaten and issued a new decree shown in Daniel 6:26-27 stating:

"I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For He is the living God and he endures forever; His kingdom will not be destroyed, His dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves; He performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

Daniel's willingness to stand in God's truth and live righteously not only allowed God to win the battle that was against him but brought recognition and glory to God throughout the entire kingdom. By this time, Daniel was about 90 years old and God was still using him in miraculous ways because he stood with unshakable faith!

What I love about Daniel is that like most of us, Daniel never participated in combat as an earthly soldier, but my goodness wasn't he courageous when it came to fighting for God?! He stood firm in his faith in God and did not allow the attack from the culture that he lived in to sway his beliefs or his obedience to God.

And let's remember that while it appeared that Daniel's enemies were people, his true battle, and ours as well, is "not of 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." Daniel appeared to be attacked by the culture and people in his life, but his battle in reality was a spiritual one. Each time his beliefs were attacked, Daniel continued to fight the battles he faced by standing firm in God's truth and proving himself to be a righteous man, even when it meant that his life was on the line. Ultimately, Daniel's courage and willingness to stand firm in his beliefs not only allowed God to work amazing things in his own life, but a

pagan kingdom went from persecuting Jews to a place where even the king was led to declare God as truth!

Let's see how John 17:14-16 relates to this:

14 "I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by truth, your word is the truth."

(verse 14) This passage	e relates to Daniel	in that he stoo	d firm in		
God's	_ and the world _		him.		
(verse 15) Did God ke	ep Daniel in the e	environment th	at he was in,		
even though it oppress	sed his beliefs?	Yes	No		
(verse 15) Instead of removing Daniel, we see that God					
<u> </u>	Daniel from the e	vii one.			
What did Daniel do to faced with death?	o stand firm in the	Lord, even wh	nen he was		

Isn't it interesting that this passage says "the world hates those who are not of this world?" We can see this to be true in Daniel's life so many, many years ago but it is still so relevant in the world that we live in today. Have there been times in your life when you felt oppressed because of your beliefs as a Christian?

Please take some time to consider and write your experience below:

How did you respond to this situation?

Did you stand firm in the Lord? Or how could you have handled it differently by standing firm?

Next let's read Job 1:1-22.

This first chapter of Job is just the beginning of the spiritual attack that God allows Satan to wage against Job. While Job's losses are unthinkably tragic (and as the book goes on continue to get worse) and it's easy for us to question how a loving God could allow such suffering. But in Job 1:22 we read, "in all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing."

There are times that God allows lack of peace in our life that comes directly from a spiritual attack from Satan, but there are also other times when we are dealing with lack of peace because we live in a world that is fallen because of sin. Job didn't know he was under attack, and we will not always know what is causing our lack of peace. Deut. 29:29 says "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."

The point is, no matter what causes strife in our lives, we must follow Job's example and not let it cause us to sin. Regardless of what the cause is, anything in our lives that causes us to sin ultimately hinders the work of God and is a spiritual battle. We are to fight these spiritual battles by standing firmly as God's soldiers of peace!

When looking to recognize spiritual battle in your own life, a clue is to consider the areas where you feel strife or lack of peace. As Christian soldiers, when we experience these situations, we are called to stand firmly against them. Rather than being part of the battle against peace by responding in sin, we must ask for God's power to respond with His peace so that we can fight the battle towards restoring it!

List an area in your life right now that you are struggling with a lack of peace:

How are you currently responding to it?

Now think about this from a spiritual perspective ...

If a lack of peace is causing you to respond in sin, have you ever recognized the fact that rather than being defined as just an issue in your life, that it is a spiritual battle?

Remember that we are not fighting "flesh and blood".

What do you think that the spiritual battle happening is actually about?

How does responding in sin rather than as the Lord's soldier of peace hinder the work of God?

How does responding in peace as the Lord's soldier further the work of God?

Remember that Satan might knock us off of our feet in an area that we feel strong in. This could happen from family, to finances, to work, to relationships, to your walk with Christ, to your ministry and so on.

Where in your life do you feel strong right now?

If you were to suddenly lose your firm standing in this area, how would you respond?

Are you standing with me now, fellow soldier?! Recognizing that you are IN a spiritual battle, is the first step to victory! So now what are you going to do about it?!

Please take time to write down what you are discovering about standing firm in God:

Additional Verses

1 Corinthians 15:58

"Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

1 Peter 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."

Journal Prompt

Please write a prayer below asking God for His power to help you through the areas that you are struggling to have peace:



EQUIPMENT OF PEACE, PART 1

Prayer: Father, fill us with your Holy Spirit to be equipped to fight the battles before us. Help us to recognize the enemy and be ready to use your weapons of peace to fight his attacks. Help us to move swiftly to move your army towards victory. In Jesus name, Amen!

Romans 16:20

"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

Preparation

As mentioned in our talk, "preparation" is a wonderful word because it encompasses being both equipped with tools and ready to use them. And let's not forget that we are talking about our feet here, mobility is part of readiness!

Now picture the soldier's shoes once again, and let's focus on the thick, protective soles. This is the soldier's equipment equipment that allows the soldier to function, to be protected from the enemy's traps, to stand at length with ease, and to move quickly when needed. Such is the case of the soldier in spiritual battle. We are to have these protective soles in place on our footwear so that we can be equipped to fight, be protected from the enemy's traps, and be mobile!

Power Of The Holy Spirit

Paul starts off his letter in 2 Corinthians with fear that he will be hated by a side of the church that was against him. He boldly went forward anyway,

being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to do the work set before him, Paul could not do this with his human capabilities alone. We are powerless to fight a supernatural battle with our own power. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is the key to having our soldier equipment work so that we can fight against Satan. Jesus is the power source, and we need to plug in to Him in order to work! Paul emphasizes this truth often. I believe that it is crucial for us to first recognize where the power to use our equipment comes from, which is the power of the Holy Spirit!

Please read 2 Corinthians 3: 4-6. Where does our confidence and competence come from?

Please read 2 Corinthians 4:5. Who was Paul's preaching from?

Paul continually gave glory to the Lord for the work he was able to do through Him. Paul is clearly a testament to the power of the Holy Spirit's work in us and through us!

Jesus'Traits Of Peace ARE Our Equipment

Ephesians 2:14 says that Jesus is our peace! One of His given titles when Isaiah prophesied about Jesus coming to earth was "Prince of Peace" because He is the one who brought peace between humankind and God. As Christians, we are to represent the traits of Jesus, and since he is the Prince of Peace, we are to represent the traits of peace! Matthew 5:9 says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

Please read Ephesians 4:25-32 and Galatians 5:22-23 which list the attributes of how we are called to treat one another as Christians and what our fruit ought to be. Based on these verses we can see the attributes that Jesus has of how we are to have peace with one another.

Please take time to memorize these traits below:

JESUS'TRAITS OF PEACE:

- Humble
- Gentle
- Patient
- Loving
- Peaceful
- Uplifting
- Kind
- Compassionate
- Trustworthy
- Forgiving
- Comforting
- Truthful
- Considerate
- Serving
- Not Gossiping

As peacemakers, we are God's children. Ephesians 5:8 calls us, "children of light", Jesus is that light! My friend, these are the tools that we carry in to battle and the more we spend time with Jesus in prayer and His word, the more we will become like Him, reflecting His peace!

It is also crucial as Christian soldiers that we are ready and able to recognize the traits of our enemy, who is the child of darkness. They will be marked with traits that are the opposite of Jesus and His peace, which are:

SATAN'S TRAITS OF DIVISION:

- Proud
- Attacking
- Impatient
- Hating
- Divisive
- Mean-Spirited
- Oppressive
- Selfish
- Betraying
- Lusting

- Provoking
- Envying
- Attacking
- Devouring
 - Gossiping

... of one another

By studying the Bible, you will become familiar with your "equipment", and His Spirit will change you and strengthen you to become more and more ready as a spiritual soldier. Be aware of the traits of division that are opposite of peace so that you can recognize the spiritual battle happening. Be equipped with Jesus' traits of peace that come with the power of the Holy Spirit so that you are prepared and ready to fight the battle.

In your own words, describe what it means to see how Jesus' traits of peace are equipment for fighting Satan's traits of division:

Paul - Equipped With Peace

Paul is an example of being equipped and ready to fight the spiritual battle of peace within the church using Jesus' traits of peace that we just learned.

I would encourage if you have time to read the book of 2 Corinthians as a supplement to our study, as Paul's actions are exactly those of the child of light. Paul wrote this letter clarifying his love for the church and proclaimed why he was concerned about the direction it was going.

Paul wrote to the wayward church in Corinth because he recognized the spiritual battles causing lack of peace within the church: division, deceit,

gossip and hurt. In contrast, Paul wrote speaking in truth, compassion and comfort, and explained his love for the church. His hope was that He would correct them so that they would have joy (2 Corinthians 1:3-7). Paul's own example of the Holy Spirit's power alive in him is the example of how we should be responding in battle.

The following examples highlight some of the battles Paul was facing in order to bring Christ's peace to a divided church. Paul gives us tried and true instruction on how we are to respond as soldiers who are given power to use Jesus' traits of peace through the Holy Spirit.

Please read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11:

What does Paul say that we ought to do to those who have hurt	tus?
and	
And why is it that we ought to do this (v7)?	
And what is another reason that we ought to do this (v11)?	
How do you think forgiving of one another does the work of th Lord's soldier?	e
What do you think are some potential works of Satan that can happen because of a lack of forgiveness?	

Paul experienced many great difficulties in order to bring the gospel to the rest of the world. He encourages us to not be a stumbling block to other believers and to fight the battle with great endurance and through all hardships that may come our way.

Please now read 2 Corinthians 6:4-10.

According to verses 6 and 7, what are the traits that Christians need to fight the battle?

Paul had been slandered by people in the church criticizing him for not returning to Corinth, as he had said that he would return. Please read 2 Corinthians 10:1 and 2 Corinthians 13:10.

When Paul was maliciously talked about behind his back, what traits of Jesus does he use to respond?

Above is just a sampling of how Paul exemplifies the power of peace that the Holy Spirit provides when fighting a spiritual battle.

Please read 2 Corinthians 7:13.

What did the Corinthian church gain because Paul was courageous and willing to use Christ's equipment of peace in spiritual battle?

Of all of the things that Paul covered in his letter to the Corinthians, he beautifully summed up his deepest and simplest desire for the church to gain from it! Above all things, his hope was to bring and restore peace in the struggling church. Through his willingness to use his equipment in battle, God had the victory!

JOURNAL PROMPT

Based on the examples given in 2 Corinthians, were there any specific examples that resonated you particularly in how Paul used Jesus' traits of peace to handle a difficult situation? Please describe:

Based on your example given above, how can you be better equipped to use Jesus' traits of peace in your own life when situations are lacking in peace?



EQUIPMENT OF PEACE, PART 2

Prayer: Father, I pray that you refresh us with new insights today. Deepen our understanding. Fill us with your love, wisdom and truth to brightly shine your peace in a world of darkness. In Jesus name, Amen.

Today we will be taking a deeper look at using our equipment of peace. But first ...

POP QUIZ!

Without looking at yesterday's homework, list as many of Jesus' Traits of Peace that you can remember:

Now go back to where the traits are listed, which ones did you forget?

Knowing Jesus more and more will help you to better know these traits, they are your equipment for peace! And don't forget to remember Satan's Traits of Division so that you can see the battle and know what to fight it with!

Recognizing The Battle

Is there someone or something in your life that brings out the "worst" in you? We've all heard of the expression, "choose your battles". There are times when we genuinely have a spiritual attack bullseye from Satan on our lives, but not every day is necessarily "evil day" of attack. Because we live in a fallen world, we all have struggles that come in daily life that test us in spiritual battle.

For most of my years as a married woman, I have tried to do most of my housework with a joyful heart, grateful for the blessings in my life. But, I have struggled with asking for help with certain "pet peeve" chores around the house (truth be told - it's everyone's dishes that are sitting in the sink right now) because I want to avoid the potential conflict that comes when I wait to see if the request gets done or not. And what's more, even if the request does get done I want to avoid being frustrated if its not done to my standards.

So often times, my solution is to do the task myself because it's easier just to get it done than it is to ask for help. And while things get done on my schedule and to my standards, this leaves me feeling overwhelmed and resentful of the fact I am not getting enough help when I already feel like I have so much else to do. And what is my result from this? I let stress, anger and resentment build up and then finally I ask for help or make a comment in a "not so very nice" way. Ouch!

This story might seem silly in light of all that we are learning, but I KNOW that I'm not alone in this and that many of you might be sitting here reading this with hopefully a little chuckle of agreement. Most people who live with ANYONE are going to have frustrations that arise because of the differences of how we each operate. - BUT - While maybe this situation isn't necessarily a spiritual attack, my own reactions because of it have allowed it to become a spiritual battle! It's awful to admit, but I have been fighting my frustration with the WRONG equipment, the equipment of my flesh. Anger, bitterness and provoking behavior, all creating a lack of peace! Not good!

So, what's a girl to do? The dishes are not going to go away. In this particular case, I need to choose my battle! More importantly, I need to not allow the situation to bring out the worst in me.

My options are:

A. I can choose if this needs to even be a battle. Are my expectations too high? Am I being too rigid? Can I let it go or is this truly something that needs to be addressed?

B. I can go on avoiding the possible conflict of asking for help and allowing anger and bitterness to grow within because of the stress and overwhelm that I feel.

C. I can recognize that the true battle isn't the dishes, the true battle is that I am allowing this issue to hinder me in my walk with Jesus and the light that I am to be shining for Him. I need to put on my spiritual armor, ask for power from the Holy Spirit and respond with Jesus' traits of peace and NOT the traits of division!

Option C, my friend, is of course what we are to do as Christian soldiers! And, at first to my discouragement, the first time I tried stating my request in love, kindness and peace, it was not met with a peaceful response! It was a battle that I had to ask God to continually help me fight. I had to allow Jesus to truly change my behavior within me to really start to make a difference in the situation. And while things are improving, I am called as the Lord's soldier to bear His peace, regardless of the response I get!

In a simple daily life situation, that we all experience, I was in a spiritual battle. I was responding with my own flesh to attempt to fix the situation and it created a lack of peace because I don't have the power to fix it! I needed to ask the Holy Spirit to fill me and to bear Jesus' traits of peace in order to fight the battle and allow God to be victorious in my life!

This is so exciting because our lives can truly be changed if we are filled with Jesus' power and equipped with His traits of peace to fight these spiritual battles that are in our everyday lives! By recognizing areas that lack peace, it allows us to see the battle! And by being equipped with Jesus' peace we are able to fight the battle for God's victory!

Moving In Battle

And now let's remember that this is our feet we are talking about, we are mobile in battle! A soldier would never win a battle by standing in one place. We need to be prepared by being ready to recognize the battle, know our equipment and to move swiftly in faith!

As Christian soldiers let's note that there is no armor for our backs, we are to be standing our ground and moving forward towards victory at all times. When considering military tactics of mobility, there are a few different strategies. Let's look at these strategies and examine how using both the

equipment and mobility of our footwear can work in battle:

STRATEGY 1: MOVE IN BATTLE BY PREVENTING IT:

It might be something or someone that you enjoy, but by considering the traits of division, can you identify an area in your life that is in danger of becoming a spiritual battle?

What traits do you see that are red flags?

How can you move in order to prevent this from becoming a spiritual battle, starting now?

STRATEGY 2: MOVE TO FIGHT THE BATTLE HEAD ON

We have already identified potential spiritual battles in your life that you are reacting with the opposite traits of peace. They could be very big, such as an illness, or relatively small, such as your response to the neighbor's dog barking. Regardless, we are called to respond in peace.

How can you put on the Lord's armor and have your feet shod with the equipment of peace to fight this? Don't forget to also ask for the power of the Holy Spirit to help you.

STRATEGY 3: MOVE IN BATTLE BY DISARMING THE ENEMY

Is there something in your life that you are allowing to hurt you because you are standing in one place, while allowing yourself to be abused or bullied in some way? Sweet friend it is not your fault that someone would abuse you, but we are not called to be victims! Do not continue to give the enemy power by standing still in the wrong place. You are a daughter of Christ and the Lord's soldier. Be filled with the confidence of the Holy Spirit and move to where God wants you!

What steps can you take to allow the Holy Spirit to move you to stop being a direct target for the enemy and allow his peace to heal you?

"When it comes to our feet being able to both stand and move, we are to hold to the God's truth which has stood the test of time, but be able to use it in a way that is current as long as it remains within the limits of truth. We must both stand firm and and have mobility to fight. Do not be so firm in traditional Christian practices that you are useless to move in battle. Do not be so excited that you break rank and formation without knowing God's truth and where you are to stand. The army moves both with firmness yet with swiftness, mobility and adaptability."

- Dr. Martyn Lloyd - Jones, Christian Soldier

JOURNAL PROMPT

We are to be on guard for potential attacks on our strengths, but remember that also in our weakness He is made strong!

The young shepherd, David, turned down the opportunity to fight in King Saul's armor because it was cumbersome and unfamiliar to him. Instead, David went forth armed simply with his equipment of a rock and sling shot and allowed God to empower him to use those things to kill Goliath. Even in the smallness of David's equipment, the Lord used Him in mighty ways!

When you look at Jesus' traits of peace, which ones do you feel weak in?

Please write a prayer below asking Jesus for his Holy Spirit to come protect the areas that you feel strong and to and fill the areas of peace that you struggle with.



PEACE, PART 1

Prayer: Father, I thank you for the diligence that these women have in seeking out how to be spiritual soldiers for you. Thank you for Your peace and for the power that it has to change our hearts, minds and lives. I pray that you come upon us now, open our eyes and fill our lives with Your peace in ways we that we only have yet to experience. In Jesus' name, Amen!

Romans 5:1

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

What is the significance of the "peace" being the soldier's footwear? Like wearing proper shoes "completes" the "outfit" of the soldier's armor, Peace completes the other attributes of the Lord's armor. It gives truth, righteousness, faith and salvation the foundation, protection and mobility to be effective in battle. Peace is the comfort of the soldier's shoes. Just like those shoes that you once wore that made you miserable, without the comfort of peace we become painfully distracted and immobilized soldiers who are left exposed to attack in battle. It is vital that we have peace so that we can support the rest of the armor. EVERYTHING stands on peace! And (light bulb moment!) this is exactly why Satan will attack it!

I want to start with emphasizing that God is sovereign over all things. He does not cause a lack of peace, but He allows it in order to grow us in Him. If you are experiencing a lack of peace in your life, congratulations! God is trying to get your attention!

The Ladder of Peace

In the presentation for this week's verse, we discussed the "Ladder of Peace". This is having Peace with God, so that you can have Peace with yourself, so that you can have Peace with others. In any aspects of our life where we lack peace, we need to go back up the ladder to God and figure out what lie we believe about ourselves that He is trying to change.

Peace With God

From this week's talk, recall from Romans 15:33 that God is a "God of peace". Since God is the author of peace, he designed us with a void for peace that only He can fill. Until you have this peace you will be at war with yourself and at war with the world around you. Strife and division will surround you instead of having peace with God. What's more, we cannot do anything in spiritual battle without God's peace.

Jesus, the Prince of Peace, came to earth to reconcile peace between God and man. Apart from Him we cannot truly know peace, but we will always be searching for ways to fill our need for it. We must submit ourselves by asking Jesus into our hearts and be confident in our salvation in order to have His peace. Having this peace means having our spiritual armor shoes on!

Please read Job 22:21.

What are we to do to have peace?

What will the result of this be?

Have you completely submitted yourself to God in order to have peace in your salvation?

Based on your answer, how does this make you feel? Do you need to make any changes?

Let's check and challenge ourselves to move through the craziness of life in this world with the peace of God on a daily basis. As a Christian, the fruit that we bear should be the fruit of the spirit. As a Christian soldier, we know where we stand in the chaos of battle, we stand confidently in God's peace and the quietness and confidence that we bring to the battlefield will be evident!

Isaiah 32:17

"The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever."

Peace Within Ourselves

The lack of peace that people have in themselves these days seems to be an epidemic. Stress, fear, anxiety, insecurity, and the list goes on. The saddest thing seems that these symptoms that come from lack of peace within ourselves are strongly affecting our youth today with Millennials commonly being labelled as the "anxious generation". What a contrast to their predecessors 70 years before who are known as the "greatest generation"!

There are a lot of cultural and societal factors that play in to this, the pressure from social media to have perfection at all times, increased competitiveness in a tricky economy and so forth. Regardless of the difficulty found in today's society, there are steps that we can take to work towards peace within ourselves.

Struggling with our peace within allows Satan to already defeat us. How can we fight the real battle if we are worried, troubled and frantic soldiers! If we have anxiety, worry and fear within us, it is impossible to exemplify peace to the rest of the world. I hope from the bottom of my heart that you can realize how important this is, especially if this is something you struggle with! We need to put on our soldier shoes of peace along with the rest of the Lord's armor.

Is there an area that you struggle having peace within yourself? It may be something you have already listed or it may be something new revealed.

Please spend as much time as you need to reflect and write:

Please think about and pray for the deeper cause of where this lack of peace is coming from. For example, "people pleasing" might actually be caused by something deeper such as insecurity or lack of self-confidence. Other words might be fear, worry, anger, anxiety, depression, envy, lust, insufficiency, insignifiance, weakness, pride, impatience, hate, or "not good enough", or lack of self-control to name a few.

Please write the word that best describes the deeper cause of your struggle

Have you recognized that this is a spiritual battle?!

My friend, what you have just written down is a lie that either Satan or our fallen world has caused you to believe about yourself. It has become a stronghold in your life that needs to be defeated through the power of the Holy Spirit. Some people have a natural born tendency to struggle with certain things. Other people have had an experience or experiences, whether they know it or not, that have caused them to believe this lie. Either way, it is time to put on your full armor and stand against this lie and replace it with God's truth!

Please take a moment to consider where in your past your battle originates from. It could be from upbringing, an event or series of events, etc ...

If you know, then please write it down. If you don't know, then please pray now for God to reveal it to you soon so that you can better understand where your battle comes from.

Next, let's take the spiritual battle of having a lack of peace within yourself up the ladder of Peace back to God. If you have more than one thing written, repeat this process for each battle that you have listed.

"The lie that I believe about myself that creates lack of peace within me is":

In your weakness, God will be made strong! Let's replace the lie you believe with God's truth! Take some time to research scriptures in the Bible so that you can hear what God says rather than the lie you believe. You may want to research both the word you have written and its antonym in order to find references.

You may use the concordance portion of you Bible, the book of Proverbs also addresses many of the lies we believe. Some online resources that are helpful are:

- www.openbible.info
- www.biblestudytools.com
- www.biblegateway.com
- Or try a google search of "Bible Verse (enter your word here)" which should pull up some good resources

Please list below the scriptural references that hold God's truth about your battle:

"I am replacing the lie I believe myself with God's truth that says" ...

What a wonderful, loving Father we have who can gives us His peace so that we can

have peace within ourselves and be the soldiers that He has called us to be!

It is likely that this spiritual battle may be a process towards victory. The next time you sense the lack of peace that comes from it, put your full armor on and have your feet shod with peace! You are the Lord's soldier and can now can recognize the battle and rebuke it by standing firm in God's truth, and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to respond with Jesus' traits of peace!

The world we live in doesn't do much to encourage our state of mind. Please take a look at habits that might be contributing negatively to your peace in an unnecessary way. In case you find yourself falling into a vicious

cycle of repeating negative thoughts in your head, rebuke them and remember what the verse below says:

Philippians 4:8-9

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

What habits can you change today to help fill your mind with peace? Now do it!

When the lie you believe about yourself creeps into your thoughts, instead of thinking on it, what true, noble, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy things that you have learned from God's truths and promises can you fill your mind with?

What new habits can you develop to encourage this? Now do them!

Isaiah 26:3

"You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you."

JOURNAL PROMPT

When you sense the lies you have believed about yourself creeping in, remember to rebuke them and replace them with God's truths as much and as often as possible.

Please write down God's truths that you are replacing the lies you believe about yourself with and put them anywhere and everywhere you need them as a reminder.



PEACE, PART 2

Prayer: Father, please reward these women in their diligence for studying Your word. May you clarify and solidify all that we have learned in our minds and hearts. As your humble soldiers, may you empower us to move to fiercely use your peace in the battles that we find in this lifetime. Thank you for your love, guidance and protection. In Jesus name, Amen.

Peace With Others

Relationships are complex. Haven't we all had people in our lives who can be really, really hard to have peace with?

It is so easy to fall into the mindset of thinking, "if this person would just stop doing 'x', THEN we would have peace!" We allow this mindset to grow and become sensitive, offended and bitter; we react in sin. Or we may be allowing ourselves to be in an unpeaceful relationship because we are in need of love or value or something else lacking within ourselves and we are hoping that this person can meet our needs if they would just change!

First, let's remind ourselves again who the real battle with peace is against:

Ephesians 6:12: "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."

Remember that Satan comes to the world to bring division. Division between God and people, division between person and person. As Christians,

we are not of this world and it will be natural at times for people in the world to hate us and come against us (John 17:14-17).

Is there someone that you struggle to have peace with? Hello spiritual battle! Worse yet, is there someone who brings out the worst in you?! And even far worse, is it with another Christian? Satan loves to turn God's people against each other, it makes his work easy! How can we be soldiers for the Lord if we are fighting each other?!

Paul commands us as Christians in 2 Corinthians 13:11 to "strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you."

I deeply appreciate the fact that this verse says for us to "strive". We can pray for our enemies or for those who hurt us but we cannot control their actions. What we can do, however, is strive to be prepared as God's soldiers by standing firm in who He has called us to be and by being filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to use our equipment of peace when it is lacking in a relationship.

Sometimes there are people who we have natural personality conflicts with. They may be people we have to see, such as in our family, at work, at school, our neighborhood, church, social circles, etc ...

Please read Romans 12:18-21

Fill in the blanks (v18): "If it is possible, as far as it		
, we are supposed to live at		
with		
What are we not to do? (v19)		
If we respond with our equipment of peace, what does it accomplish? (v20)		

Fill in the blanks (v21) "	Do not	
but		

I love this last verse so very much because the good Lord knows I need it! Isn't it hard to not let someone bring out the worst in us when they either consciously or unconsciously "push our buttons"?

You may already have listed this struggle by now, but is there someone in your life who you could say brings out the worst in you?

Can you describe or give examples of how you have lack of peace with this person / these people?

How have you previously been responding to these incidents?

What were the results of how you responded?

Guess what? If your responses reflect anything other than God's peace, then you are in a spiritual battle! The other person may not change, but YOU can change to have peace in your life and peace in the situation.

This may not apply in all cases, but in considering how you have previously responded, I am going to ask you to do some deep searching of your heart. Please take some time and ask God for humility and reveal if you are the one who is causing this battle with another person. We are not perfect people. We get jealous, proud, controlling, insecure, offended, judgmental, and the list goes on. We need to ask God to make us perfect in our weakness with His strength.

Please write how your actions and responses have contributed to the lack of peace in your relationship: Please reference back to Day 2, and read Jesus' traits of peace are listed again.

Now please write a prayer, asking Jesus to change your heart towards this person and respond with the power of the Holy Spirit to use the equipment of peace that He has given us.

You might have to pray this over and over, but imagine the change that is possible if you are willing to fight this battle with peace!

There are times that we find ourselves in a relationship that unknowingly mixes good qualities with lies that lead to a lack of peace. We may have a difficult time separating the reasons we are in that relationship from why we should get out. Other times someone blatantly has it out for us. Jesus knew first hand what it was like to have people who were out to get Him, in spite of His perfect example of peace.

Please read Luke 4:29-30:

What did Jesus do when the people were ready to attack and kill him?

Please read Mark 3:3-5:

When Jesus was oppressed and misunderstood, how did he respond?

When people were seeking to attack Jesus, note that He never allowed Himself to be a victim. In the heat of attacks, He responded in peace. Even in His death, He was not a victim! Jesus stood firm in the power of knowing who He is in God, He did not give anyone's meanness, abuse, or hatred any power over Him.

Like Jesus, you are NOT to be a victim! You are God's daughter, and just like we would respond with our own children, He does not call us to live in attacks of abuse, bullying, manipulation and mean spiritedness. You are equipped by His power of peace to be His soldier!

There are times that we find ourselves in the wrong relationships and we feel that we lack peace because the other person is causing it. Ask yourself now how you allowed yourself to be in the relationship in the first place. You may have been looking for love, or friendship, or community and may have not known what you were getting yourself into at first. It is crucial as Christians that we choose our friends carefully. Proverbs 12:26 says, "The righteous choose their friends carefully, but the way of the wicked leads them astray." Our relationships should be healthy in order that they bear the fruits of the spirit. Remember again Jesus' traits of peace, or the "child of light', vs the traits of the "child of darkness. This is your scale when it comes to relationships with people. Matthew 7:16 says, "You will recognize them by their fruits."

If you are in a relationship, whether it be romantic, a friendship or other, that is abusive in any way, you need to take steps to regain power through Jesus and His peace in your life. When someone is out to get you no matter what you do, you can respond with the equipment of peace but also remember that you are mobile and you can move in order to not give this person any more power to use against you.

Remember what your equipment in the power of the Holy Spirit, and the traits of Jesus Christ are, so that you can fight against people who attack you. Remember that you are mobile and you can choose to fight the battle and move out of the way from giving them power and ammunition against you.

If you are in a relationship where you are feeling attacked by someone, let's start at the bottom of the ladder of Peace and work our way up by asking ourselves some questions.

Peace With Others

How has this relationship been hurtful to you?

What do you "hope" to achieve by being in this relationship? (i.e. Love, friendship, community, career, popularity, etc...)

Look above at the last two questions. You should now be able to identify what you have been trading peace for with what you hope to gain.

Do you feel that you really, truly have the things that you have been willing to trade your peace for? Do you believe that this is what God wants for you?

Peace Within Ourselves

What fears do you have about this relationship becoming less significant in your life?

Whatever your fear is, recognize that it is a lie from the enemy! Do not let this lie hold you captive, instead stand firm as a soldier for the Lord! Hebrews 13:6 says, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"

What lies do you believe about yourself that cause you to stay in this relationship? These can very well be the same lies that you listed in yesterday's homework:

What are God's truths that you need to replace these lies with?

How can you be filled with the power of peace through the Holy Spirit to fight for peace in this relationship?

And now we get to the top of the ladder, of having peace with God! Stand firm in His truths and promises. You ARE loved, you ARE good enough, you ARE fearfully and wonderfully made and His plans for your life are for good! Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Based on what you have learned about peace this week, what steps do you need to take to have peace in your relationships?

Please write a prayer asking for God's power to do so.

Hebrews 13:20-21

"Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be our glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Gospel of Peace

We didn't talk much about the word "gospel" in the rest of our study, but that doesn't mean it's not actually very important! Let's first take a look at the verse and break down its definition:

Ephesians 6:15

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."

The Greek "gospel" coming from the word "euaggelion" which means "good news", and "peace" coming from the word "eiréné" which means peace, or Jesus, who is the "Prince of Peace".

Ultimately, the good news is this: John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Our peace is complete in the hope and assurance of our salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If we replace these words with the Greek translation we read it as: "And your feet shod with the preparation of the good news of Jesus"

What are the attributes of peace that bring good news?

Satan hates the "gospel" which surely makes it a target of attack! How might he try to attack Jesus' good news?

How can the good news of peace put into action change our own lives, the lives of others, and around the world when it comes to spiritual battle?

In Closing:

God is sovereign, and while He allows things to happen in our lives that we may never understand, He will use these battles to grow us in ways that we never could have imagined through His mighty power. The true battle being fought is over US, my friend, and we are to be prepared as His soldiers by standing firm and being equipped to move in peace towards victory!





Going deeper: Use https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/faith/ to do a word study for faith. Make note of any fresh insights you uncover.

Prayer: Lord, prepare me for today's battle. Keep my eyes open and focused on your truth and not the 'truth' the world is throwing at me. Unveil my eyes so that I can see areas where I doubt your promises. Reveal to me any areas where I am holding back and lacking faith. Show me where the enemy is prowling. If there are areas that he is gaining a foothold, oh Father, help me to do battle and find victory in Your name.

This week we are going to be looking at the shield of faith.

Jot down a few words that come to mind when you think of the word faith.

The English word "faith" can be confusing. Many dictionaries define it as "belief without evidence." The Bible does not support this idea of faith. On the contrary, what does Peter tell the church in 1 Pet. 3:15?

Faith in Greek is Pistis: faith, belief, firm persuasion, assurance, firm conviction, faithfulness.

The dictionary definition of *faith*: fāTH/ noun

Comp Synony			in someone or sor afidence, conviction	C	
	Faith some	is complete one or something	;	or	in
		•	1	nfidence in (try not to bout this confidence?	e
		elements make i trust in somethin		for you to put your con	n-
	Write notice	•	:16 and underline	e some of the key words	s you
	Paul s	witches the lang	age from, "havin	g put on" to what?	
	<u> </u>		the s	shield of faith"(NIV)	
	Why	do you think Pau	l changes his cho	ice of words here?	
	By tak rows?	U 1	l of faith, what ha	ppens to the flaming a	r-
would	soak it	•	•	ast before a battle, they uish the flaming arrows	S.

What is Paul saying the church should be washed to be holy and without blemish?

To extinguish the flaming arrows that the enemy is throwing at you, you must take up your shield of faith. For that shield to be of any use to us, what must it be soaked in?

Apply: What is stopping you from soaking your shield of faith in the Word of God? Are there any idols standing in the way? What do you need to sacrifice this week to make time in God's Word a priority so that you can stand firm in your faith (acting on the truth)?

Knowing what is true (girding your loins with truth) is not enough. You must pick up this truth and use it as a defensive maneuver against the enemy, that's faith.

Look up the verses below and write down what we know to be true about God's promises to us:

Matthew 6:31-33

Acts 1:8

John 3:16

John 3:36

Romans 8:28

Romans 10:9-10

Philippians 4:6-7

Apply: Faith is acting on the truth. Are there any lies that you are believing? What fiery arrows is the enemy throwing at you? What truths in God's Word can you hold up to extinguish those arrows?

JOURNAL PROMPT

Spend some time journaling about the lies you believe. Ask God to replace the lies with truth. Submit any idols that you're worshipping to the Lord and commit to making Him your priority.



Going deeper: Read Hebrews 11:4–22. Make a list of all the people commended for their faith. Pick one or two people from the list and find their story in Scripture. Make a list of their failings and victories. Spend time reflecting on how God uses us despite our shortcomings.

How is this truth an encouragement to you today?

Prayer: Lord, anchor my faith. Deeply root me in your truth. Show me any areas where I'm weak so that the enemy would not be able to gain a foothold of lies in me. Let Your Word wash over me today. Flood me with Your truth so that I can take up my shield and wield it against the enemies fiery darts. Reveal to me the depths of heart in the men and women that have gone before us so that I can lean into their testimonies and glean strength of my own.

Read Hebrews 11 in the ESV translation

Write Hebrews 10: 39 below.

How does Hebrews 11:1-3 defin	ne faith?
the	of things
the	, of things

In your own words, explain how Hebrews 10:39 ties in with Hebrews 11:1?

In verse 2, by faith, the people of old received their what?

Look up synonyms for commendation and write them below.

In a world where so many are striving for approval and praise, how hard is it for you to seek approval from the Lord instead of from the world? Why or why not?

In Hebrews 11:3 what do we understand better by faith?

Let's recall the true meaning of faith. Look back and yesterdays notes..

What does faith mean?

Does God call us to blind faith in regards to the creation story? What evidence do we have?

In Hebrews 11:4-22 the author begins to give an account of our faithful ancestors.

Which person does the text spend most of its time?

Which part of his story do you think shows his faithfulness the most? Why?

What attitude did Abraham have in his life on earth? How would he define "home"?
List every proof of this from 11:8-16.
Apply: God wants us to have heaven on our minds.
What does it mean to have an eternal perspective? What changes could you make to pursue an eternal perspective?
As you look at the people listed in Hebrews 11:4-22, pick one and list all the things that may have caused them fear.
Apply: In this season that you're in, is there anything that brings you great fear? As you think through Abraham's life, how can his choices encourage you this season? How can we live with eternal perspective to combat those fears?

Journal Prompt

Spend some time journaling about your fears. Process through with the Lord what you're afraid of and ask Him how to replace your fear with faith. List out what faith looks like in your current situation. Anchor Hebrews 10:39 to the fears you are wrestling with.



Prayer: Lord, help me to surrender my fears to You. Show me more of your truth today so that I can live out your calling on my life with great obedience and faith. Father, reveal any areas that I'm holding back. Humble me. Show me areas where I need to surrender. Open my eyes to see the absolute wonder of You.

Read Hebrews 11:23-29 (ESV).

List all the things listed that Moses experienced by faith.

Which do you think would take the most faith? Why?

Let's get a little background story on Moses. Read Exodus 1-2:11. As you read, make note of the five brave women who deliver Israel/Moses.

List them below and briefly describe what they did.

Think through what each woman had to do by faith.

Pick one of them and write down all that could have happened to them. What may have caused them to fear?

Read Exodus 3-4:17. God is calling Moses to redeem His people. Moses makes an excuse after excuse as to why he's not the guy for the job. List them below.

- 3:11-
- 3:13-
- 4:1-
- 4:10-
- 4:13-

With every excuse, Moses is saying, "Lord, I am not enough!" With every response, God is saying, "Yes, but I am!" Moses has REAL fear. He's desperate to know that God is who He says He is. God's goal is not for Moses to feel good about things, it's that he walks out his calling with faith and obedience.

Apply: Is there anything in your life that you need to walk out in faith and obedience? In what areas are you saying to God, "I'm not enough!" Why?

JOURNAL PROMPT

What is God calling you to do out of obedience? What excuses are you making? Confess to the Lord any areas of rebellion. Ask the Lord to help you respond with obedience.

Commit today one thing you can do to walk out this calling with obedience. Confess any fears that you may be holding on to and ask the Lord to replace your fears with faith (acting on the truth).



Prayer: Father, You are enough. I lay myself aside today and lean into Your constant presence. You are calling me into an intimate relationship with You. Reveal anything in me that is hindering that intimacy. Take me deeper Lord so that I might walk out Your calling on my life with confidence and assurance that You are leading me. Father, I want to be counted as one that is faithful to You.

Read Hebrews 11:30-31 (ESV).

What two things are commended by faith?

Read Joshua 6:1-20.

Briefly describe the plan God unveils for Joshua. What obedience does He require?

Who was Moses' assistant?

How is Joshua's response to God's plan different from Moses' response (Ex. 3-4:17)?

Joshua has been side by side with Moses for 40 years, and now he's been called to pick up where Moses left off and took the land that God has promised Israel.

Do you think Joshua is surprised by God's strategy for taking Jericho? Why or why not?

Not only were the Israelites supposed to march around Jericho for 7 days but what additional requirement do we find in Joshua 6:10?

How might the people of Israel felt marching around the city in utter silence? How might the watching people of Jericho have responded to this weird display of "warfare"?

Apply: How hard is it for you to keep quiet when things don't look the way you think they should? Are you more likely to wallow in verbal complaints or turn to the Lord and surrender your plans and remain silent until He does what is best?

Look back at Joshua 6:1-14, how many times is the ark mentioned and where was it to be positioned?

The ark is the literal presence of God. God went with them into battle as they walked around Jericho. Read John 14:15-17.

What does God promise those who know Him?

When we are advancing into an area of uncertainty, we must be confident that the Lord is with us and leading the way. How are we going to know this?

Apply: What areas of uncertainty lie before you right now? How can Joshua's example of faith and utter obedience be an encouragement to you? In faith, what area of your life do you need to commit to obedience today?

Journal Prompt

As Joshua stepped out in obedience he had 40 years of stories behind him marking God's miracles and faithfulness. Spend some time thanking God for all the ways that He's been faithful to you. In what specific ways has He provided for you and protected you through the years? Thank God for the gift of His presence. Spend time reflecting on the fact that God's presence no longer resides with us but actually IN us.



Going deeper: Hebrews 11:32 lists by name six men of faith. Read each of their stories and write a brief description of why they are listed in the Hall of Faith.

Which one impacts you the most and why?

Prayer: Lord, I lay down my desire for comfort and ease. I want to live a life of surrender to You. Show me what I'm holding on to. Release my grasp so that I might live the abundant life that you're offering. Lord, You have promised never to leave us nor forsake us. Please lavish me in this truth so that I can walk boldly through trials of many kinds. Grow my faith as I trust in You step by step.

Read Hebrews 11:32-40 (ESV)

What are other names of faith are listed in vs. 32?

List the things that happened by faith (v. 33-34):
The list of accomplishments of faith moves from those who experienced victory by faith to those whose faith involved suffering and seeming defeat
How would these verses answer someone who said that God allow a life of ease to those who are faithful?
What do the following verses tell us about suffering/trials?
Romans 5:3-4
James 1:2-4
1 Peter 1:6-7
Romans 8:18
What lies does the enemy speak over you in seasons of trials?

nd Romans 8:31-39 (NLT	.)•	
nat can we place our faith	in during these seasons?	
(v. 31) If God is for us	s,	
(v. 35) Can anything of	ever	
(v. 35) Does it mean I	He no longer loves us if	
	d that	
d makes many trustivorth	ly promises to the believer in	. His Word

How is this promise, in particular, one you need the Lord to respond to? How confident are you that He will?

Look up Romans 8:28 and write it in the space below:

As you are waiting for God to work all things together for good, what other promises can you take to the bank?

James 1:5:

Apply: Can you recall a time when God gave you wisdom in the midst of a challenging situation? Is there something you're walking through now that you need God to provide you with wisdom?

JOURNAL PROMPT

This week we have looked at the shield of faith. What has challenged you the most? What area of your life do you need to commit to the Lord and respond in obedience this week?





Week Eight Introduction

Hello fellow Bible study students! I am SO incredibly thrilled to be walking alongside you all, growing in love and grace as we dig deeper into God's Word with one another.

This week we are going to "suit up" with the most vital part of the armor thus far, from Ephesians 6:17a: "Put on salvation as your helmet" ...

Interesting side note: this is the shortest description given to any of the pieces of the armor. Paul realized, when he was writing this letter to the Ephesians, that his audience would know how important this piece was, so it required almost no explanation in terms of its value.

When a solider in the apostle Paul's day prepared for battle and donned his armor, the helmet was the last and final piece of the armament to be worn. The Roman helmet was called a galea, and it was usually made of metal, although poorer soldiers may have had leather helmets, fortified and strengthened with pieces of metal. The primary function was to protect the soldier against damaging and destructive blows to the head, which could result in immediate death!

This week, we are going to investigate and discover how vital this piece of armor is spiritually, to each of us: fellow warriors in the spiritual battlefields where the enemy tries to take us captive with schemes and tricks and strategies in the oldest "playbook" ever written. This week his target is our minds and our thoughts. The helmet of salvation, in a nutshell, will provide us with hope and protect our minds from believing and falling for anything the enemy, Satan, tries to get us to wrongly believe by filling our heads with lies and half-truths. Good news! We KNOW his tactics, we KNOW his plan of attack, and we KNOW how to successfully WIN the battle against him!

How good does it feel, girls, knowing you are fighting the battle on the WINNING side and that you WILL be victorious? I say, "Send in the calvary" and let's sit back and watch! Oh. Wait a minute. Did I forget to tell you? WE ARE the calvary. We do NOT get to relax and observe as a spectator would. You WILL be declared "the winner," but it's going to be a long, hard-fought battle, and your BIG celebration for winning the war won't come on this side of heaven. You WILL, however, be able to celebrate victories over battles won with fellow soldiers in the fight. And THAT is a reason to get EXCITED! Let's get started!

Each day will begin with a short prayer to prepare your mind and a worship song suggestion to play before you begin your study to prepare your heart.

Each day's study, or "Combat Plan" will be divided into 5 subsections to tackle each day's theme:

Description: Provides a dramatic example and analogy

Definition: Gives a clear, detailed explanation

Details: Explains the "plan of attack" so the enemy is de

terred and deflected and cannot close in and catch us off guard. This section also contains an abundance

of Scripture so you're equipped to FIGHT!

Deployment: Encourages you to apply your learning and put it

into practice on the battlefield!

Dig Deeper: Challenges you to delve even further into God's

word for continued study.



Choose It --- Marked: Identification Through Salvation

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, thank you for this time to learn about the next piece of armor you have provided to equip me to fight the battle against the enemy. Keep my heart and mind fixed on you, Jesus. In Your Name. Amen!

Song: "Thank You God for Saving Me" by Chris Tomlin

Description

It was November 1, 1934 at a revival meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina. Here is one man's account:

"As soon as the evangelist [Mordecai Ham] started his sermon, he opened his Bible and talked straight from his text. He talked loudly, even though there was an amplifying system. I have no recollection of what he preached about, but I was spellbound. In some indefinable way, he was getting through to me. I was hearing another voice: the voice of the Holy Spirit.

I became deeply convicted about my sinfulness and rebellion. And confused. How could this evangelist be talking to me, of all people? I had been baptized as a baby...I had gotten into mischief once in a while, but I could hardly be called wicked. I resisted temptations to break the moral code my parents had so strictly instilled in me...I was even the vice president of my youth group in our church.

On that night, Dr. Ham finished preaching and gave the invitation to accept Christ. After all his tirades against sin, he gave us a gentle reminder: "But God commendeth his love toward us, that that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). His song leader, Mr. Ramsay, led

us all in "Just As I am" – four verses. Then we started another song: "Almost Persuaded, Now to Believe." On the last verse of that second song, I responded. I walked down to the front, feeling as if I had lead weights attached to my feet, and stood in the space before the platform.

I checked "Recommitment" on the card I filled out. After all, I had been brought up to regard my baptism and confirmation as professions of faith too. The difference was that this time I was doing it on purpose, doing it with intention. For all my previous religious upbringing and church activity, I believe that that was the moment I made my real commitment to Jesus Christ." (from Just As I Am, an autobiography)

That man? Billy Graham. Once this amazing ambassador for Christ secured his helmet of salvation, he charged out on the battlefield to spread the gospel message of love, peace, mercy, grace, and forgiveness through a saving faith in Jesus Christ. Estimates are that he preached to more than 80 million people in person; millions of those choosing Jesus and becoming saved.

Do you recall the date and location of your conversion "moment?" Mine was August 19, 1994, on my 5th wedding anniversary in Palm Springs at a MOPS leadership retreat!

Write your date and location here:

Not sure, or don't have one? No worries! Keep reading, friend!

Definition

Look up salvation in several sources and write what you discover

Now, go back and circle the key words.

Salvation, simply put, is being saved and delivered FROM sin and INTO eternal life. There is a LOT to cover to make sure you have a clear understanding of what it means to confidently and comfortably wear the helmet of salvation.

Please read Ephesians 2:1-10 for a detailed explanation, as Paul reminds ALL of his readers what we were like in the past before we received Jesus and were saved, what we are like now that we are alive in Christ, and the promises of God for us in the future. He does a splendid job of defining what salvation is. Fill in the blanks with the main ideas, and use the

space below to summarize, in a sentence what this means spiritually and/or personally (and if you don't know or have a question, write it down - no worries!)

verse 1: In our past we were d_____ because of our disobedience and our many sins.

It's impossible to be "alive" with Christ when we are living a life that stands in direct opposition of what the Lord has for us. Our sins are anything and everything we say or do that do not reflect and emulate God - who is perfect in every way.

verse 2: In our past we led a depraved life because of the influence of the d_____ in our lives.

It was very easy to be led astray! The enemy, aka Satan, is hard at work in the hearts of those who haven't yet accepted Christ as Lord and Savior of their lives. He's got many of the path and he road to destruction and ruin.

verse 3: In our past we followed the d_____ of our sinful nature.

Galatians 5:19-21 include a partial list: "When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these."

verse 4: Now we know God is devoted to us because of His

m_____ and l_____.

Good news! God has an "exit strategy" and an "extraction plan" in place! JESUS! When we claim Him, accept Him and know Him as Savior and Lord over our lives, we are saved! He loved the world SO much, John 3:16 reminds us, He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. Yippee!

verse 5: Now we are delivered from the d and were
given life when God raised Christ from the d
We were saved by grace - God's unmerited favor by giving us what we didn't deserve. We are delivered, quite simply, from hell and eternal damnation, in a place devoid of the Lord. Jesus's death on the cross, as a perfect sacrifice, free of blemish, provided the atonement of reconciling a perfect God with sinful mankind through Jesus.
verse 6: Now we are delivered from the dead and seated with and
are united with
Here's the greatest news ever! It's part of the enemy's tactics he'd rather you not know about or even forget: Paul doesn't say we are seated in heavenly places beside Christ, or because of Christ, or separate from Christ. No. We are seated IN Christ. Christ is seated in heavenly places at the right hand of God – and if we are spiritually one with Him, then we too are seated in exactly that place! It's a present reality, not just a future destination! verse 7: In the future ages God takes great delight in pointing to use examples of the incredible wealth of His and toward us.
toward us.
1 Timothy 2:3-4 reminds us that salvation and eternal life are gifts that God wants to give to ALL of mankind. His desire is that all of His creation - we are ALL made in His image (1 Corinthians 11:7) - will desire and choose Jesus! All who choose will be living testimonies of God's kindness and generosity.
verse 8-10: SO: God saved us by g when you
believed - and it was a free g not a reward for the
gthings we've done. We are considered his master
piece! To do the g things He planned for us long ago.

Because we are seated "with him in the heavenly places," like Christ, our works are done. We are not saved by works but saved for works and these "good things" had nothing to do with our being saved. But God has some pretty exciting things planned for us if we are willing to tighten our helmets and step out in faith!

Details

So, here's the truth that Satan would like us to overlook: we can never "lose" our salvation. Satan would have you believe all sorts of half-truths and flat out lies. But remember who/what we are dealing with:

Satan / the devil is referred to as: (abbreviated list)

Matthew 12:24

2 Corinthians 4:4

1 Peter 5:8

Job 1:6

Revelation 12:9

Which "name" is one that Satan has used in YOUR life to play "head games" with you? Please explain.

Now don't start shaking in your boots just yet! The names of Jesus drown out any claims of this enemy, crushing him like a bug underfoot, and will result in an ultimate victory in the final battle when Christ returns that will send our enemy permanently into a fiery lake of burning sulphur where he will be tormented day and night for eternity (Revelations 20:10).

A few the MANY names of Jesus that we can claim: (I admit - it was hard to stop!)

Matthew 28:18

John 6:35

Hebrews 12:2

1 Thessalonians 1:10

Acts 10:42

John 8:36

Revelations 1:8

Revelations 3:21

Revelations 17:14

Revelations 22:13

Which one of these names do you cling to the tightest? Or is there another not listed here? (Challenge: Google "50 Names and Titles of Jesus: Who the Bible Says Christ Is")

All right, girls! Your helmet of salvation should be squarely on the top of your head. There is one last bit (and it's kind of... longish, shall we say? But OH SO vital!). It's important to know not only YOUR story of transformation, but to be able to know at least two places in the Bible you can share salvation with others. The first is Ephesians 2:1-10. (Check $\sqrt{!}$) The other is often called "The Roman Road to Salvation." It is a selection of Bible verses which answers the questions nonbelievers often pose. It can be found in the following verses and six "steps" as you ease on down the road:

ALL have sinned

When someone says: "I consider myself a 'good person'... won't that be enough?"

Respond with:

Romans 3:23

Romans 3:10

Romans 5:12

Explanation: The creator of the universe is holy: which means set apart and perfect. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (1John 1:5) Some-

one might consider themselves "good," but against what standard and what measurement? Even considering the 10 Commandments, all of us has fallen short of keeping God's Law perfectly: "For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws." (James 2:10) The standard of perfect righteousness that God demands is impossible on our own merit and our own striving.

Allowance

When someone says: Is sin really THAT big of a deal? If it is... what HOPE is there?

Respond with:

Romans 6:23

Explanation: We have all sinned, and disobedience to an infinite eternal God warrants an infinite eternal consequence. We can't "pay" our way out. God is a just judge and will NOT let the guilty go free and a sinful man go unpunished. Our holy and righteous God loves man whom He made in His image, and provided payment for our sins through Jesus, the only acceptable sacrifice, sent to die in our place.

Atonement

When someone says: After all of the awful things I've done and said that grieve God's heart, HOW could He willingly die in my place?

Respond with:

Romans 5:8

Explanation: God SO loved the world (John 3:16 - again!)! God's love for ALL of His creation is so profound: while Jesus hung on the cross, and was mocked, cursed, spit upon, and suffered unthinkable pain, His heart was on His creation: "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing..." (Luke 23:34) What powerful, unspeakable, unconditional love!

Acknowledgement

When someone says: HOW can I be saved?

Respond with:

Romans 10:9-10

Explanation: Simply say and believe. It really IS that easy! Girls, you and I can be saved only by confessing our sins and placing our faith in God's son, Jesus Christ who died and paid for our sins on the cross. Sometimes this can be referred to as "the sinner's prayer," but there really is no RIGHT way or RIGHT words. If it comes from the heart, and a change has taken place, "there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents" (Luke 15:10).

Acceptance

When someone says: Did God HEAR me? Did He accept me?

Respond with:

Romans 10:13

Explanation: God promises that "...to all who believed him and accepted him, He gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12) Yes! God does hear and accept ALL who put their faith in Him. He welcomes everyone in. Heaven is on the horizon! There is no need to fear death, because Jesus BROKE the power of death on the cross by spilling His own blood. The debt we owed has been paid in full.

Advancement

When someone says: What do I do now?

Respond with:

Romans 10:17

Explanation: Start growing in faith! The only way to know God is read more about Him through daily Bible study, talk to Him daily through prayer, gather with other believers, and encourage one another in the faith. And don't be shy about sharing this newfound belief. "Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven," said Jesus in Matthew 10:32.

Deployment

Marching Orders: Go and DO!

I know what you may be thinking: that was the "firehose" effect of a WHOLE lot of Scripture and a WHOLE lot of talk about salvation. But these very truths are what our faith and hope is centered on! They are foundational beliefs, and once the base is in place, it's time to build! Take a DEEP breath, because you're ALMOST done -- unless you'd like to Dig Deeper, and if you'd like, DO! By ALL means!

You WILL receive marching orders each day. James 1:22 compels us: "But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says..."

So, girls, here's what I want you to do:

First, I want you to close this time in prayer, thanking God for His immeasurably generous gift of Jesus and of your salvation. And maybe you don't have a "day of salvation" and have never "made it official" with the Lord. Well, sweet sister, this may be your day! If it is, pray the verses above and tell someone about your commitment (or recommitment) to follow Christ.

Second, for ALL of you, pray for the Lord to bring someone to mind and to put someone on your heart who needs to hear this saving message.

Write the person's first name here:

Now, look for opportunities to simply show the love of Jesus to this person. Offer to treat them to coffee or to lunch and start the time in prayer. This may be the only moment during your interaction that the Lord comes up, but by beginning in a very simple prayer, it will communicate that you are a follower of Christ. And then pray for where the Holy Spirit would lead the conversation. You just never know how the Lord will use you.

The Lord has given ME a sweet opportunity lately with a "gym friend" who has been open to prayer (it began over coffee) and now welcomes me to pray over her when she becomes overwhelmed. Isaiah 6:8 "Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?" I said, "Here I am. Send me."

JOURNAL PROMPT

Dig Deeper:

Read the account of Nicodemus in John 3:1-21. Write down bullet points, summarizing what you read and/or answering the following questions:

Who was Nicodemus?
Why does he visit Jesus at night?
What connection does Jesus make to the Old Testament for Nicodemus to understand?
What does it mean to be "born again?"
What is the purpose of the Son of Man, in His own words?
What do light and dark represent in these verses?
What does a person's life look like who is in the dark? In the light?
Where are YOU in this story? Born again? In the light?



Secure It --- Manage: Justification

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, thank you, first of all, for saving me! Thank you for the incredible gift of Your son, Jesus Christ. I appreciate this eternal gift beyond words. Keep my heart and mind fixed on you, Lord. In Your Name. Amen!

Song: "Bulletproof" by Citizen Way

Description

It was April 6, 2012 at 3:00 PM in the small village of Mushaki, located in the Ghazni Province of Afghanistan.

United States Army Staff Sergeant Ryan Frye and two other soldiers were working on clearing a route through the village. They were inching along the dirt walls around the perimeter and were preparing to cross an open field that stretched a short 50 meters. As soon as they rounded the corner, five enemy fighters opened fire, pinning them down. Frye returned fire immediately. Suddenly, an enemy round slammed into the side of his head, from an AK-47 fully automatic assault rifle from a distance of less than 100 meters.

"I was hit on the left side of my helmet as I was returning fire," said Frye, who didn't realize at first that he had been hit. "I was dazed," Frye recalled. "It didn't really knock me out. It was an incredible ring. I went deaf instantly and couldn't hear anything. The round ricocheted off the helmet and dented it. I could feel that my helmet was frayed and couldn't reach up under it."

This would have been a fatal shot, but it only left Frye with abrasions because his ACH (Advanced Combat Helmet) deflected the 7.62 mm round. The Kevlar helmet turned away a bullet that hit Frye square on the side of his head, days before the birth of his daughter.

"All I thought about when I got hit was my family and how much I wanted to get back with them. After we got back from deployment, I saw my baby girl for the first time."

Bulletproof, indeed! Today, we are going to examine what it means to be "justified by faith," as we secure our helmets, and manage what it's like to wear our helmet of salvation on our heads daily. Just as you put on physical clothes, by now you are becoming aware, you need to don your "spiritual armor wardrobe," as well!

Definition

Look up the definition for justification in several sources and write what you discover below:

Now, go back and circle the key words.

Justification, or being justified by faith, is mentioned several times in the New Testament, including Romans 3:28 and Galatians 3:24. It basically says that we are declared righteous before God, and this happens at the MOMENT of our salvation. We are justified by grace (a gift) through faith (trusting in Jesus).

What does this mean? It's SO incredible exciting! Once we are saved - after that very MOMENT - God looks at US and sees Jesus and HIS righteousness! He doesn't look at us and only see the exhausted, stressed, anxious worrier who can't sleep (...or maybe that's just ME sometimes...). NO! He sees JESUS! Today we will look at what justification means, and tomorrow we will dig into what the term sanctification looks like. And as we grow in our faith and get comfortable with this fashionable piece of headgear, we will begin to realize that there IS an instruction manual that goes along with HOW this helmet is to be worn. Hopefully you are quickly realizing that this helmet needs to remain firmly secured on your head daily!

Details

To help you understand justification, it's helpful to envision a court of law. When someone is standing trial, the judge declares that person to be "guilty" or "not guilty" based on the evidence and on the power and persuasiveness of the attorneys!

Here's the situation: YOU are on trial before the highest court on earth or in heaven, and the prosecutor hurls accusations and charges against you – all of them true. He reminds the judge of the little white lies you've told, the minor and major indiscretions, the foolish choices and decisions you have made that led to all kinds of sins being committed; including some you're embarrassed to hear recounted aloud. Your accused has rested his case and awaits the judge to pronounce you guilty as charged – after all, everything he said was true.

However, your defense attorney, a kind man with gentle eyes, sits quietly beside you, not once objecting to anything that's said. Instead, when the protection rests his case, Jesus comes before the judge and acknowledges that everything said was true. And the wages of sin IS death. However, Jesus died so that you would immediately be declared "not guilty" and the case against you is immediately dismissed.

This declaration came the very moment you were saved. It's not something that you had to do or had to earn. It is a onetime act and declaration that God makes about YOU! Just as a reminder, we are positionally righteous, we are not "perfectly" righteous (that comes with sanctification, which we will look at tomorrow).

For now, let's "arm" ourselves with verses that remind us of what God wants to remind us is TRUE about our righteousness and the characteristic and qualities of one who is righteous.

Look up each verse that spells out the acronym RIGHTEOUS, write it out, and use the additional space to summarize, in a sentence what this means spiritually and/or personally or write a question (like you did yesterday).

Repay: Romans 2:6

Everyone will be held accountable for their choice to choose Jesus or not. If you're not for Him, you're against Him. There are no "fence sitters!"

In Him: 2 Corinthians 5:21

Though the sacrifice of Jesus, we ARE made righteous!

Godliness: 1 Timothy 6:11

These are traits that, as we pursue them, we will reflect Jesus more and more.

Heart: Proverbs 21:2

Just a reminder that the Lord looks at our heart - if you have chosen Jesus and are seeking after Him, you will know your own ways are NOT right if they aren't in alignment with God's plan for righteousness.

Thirst: Matthew 5:6 (use the NIV too)

This is another beautiful reminder that God gives abundantly to anyone who asks and He will fill us to overflowing!

Eyes & Ears: Psalm 34:15

Just a reminder that the Lord sees and hears you!

Obedience: Romans 5:19

This verse compares how our sin can be traced back to Adam and how Jesus is the source of our righteousness.

Upholds: Psalm 37:16-17

A reminder that the Lord is fighting our battles with us.

Seek: Matthew 6:33

A great reminder of the good things God will provide to His followers who seek after Him.

Looking back at all of these verses, which one(s) give you the most hope and encouragement? Why?

How does this relate to the helmet of salvation? We need to be secure in our righteousness that comes because we have been justified by faith in Jesus. The enemy is going to try and play head games with us. He is going to try and get you to believe that you are NOT in right standing with God because you keep on sinning. Remember girls, a Christian isn't sinless, we should just be sinning less and less!

Secure your helmet! You have been justified and are righteous! We are getting ready to head out into battle tomorrow, so be prepared!

But first...

Deployment

Marching Orders: Go and DO!

When Jesus is delivering "The Sermon on the Mount," one of the beatitudes is a verse you listed above: In Matthew 5:6 (NIV), Jesus says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Your job for the rest of today is to crave and deeply desire righteousness -

right living reflecting Jesus - as desperately as you would hunger and thirst if you were stranded in the desert with nothing to eat or drink for days.

Choose ONE area / aspect of Jesus and His righteousness that you will "wear" today, work on, and focus on:

Take a moment to find a verse that will remind you of this trait (Google works great for this!):

As for me, it's not to be overwhelmed and to be at peace, even with ALL of the demands from seemingly every direction! The verse I will be clinging today is Philippians 4:6-7. "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

Journal Prompt

Dig Deeper:

Read the account of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18:9-14. Write down bullet points, summarizing what you read and/or answering the following questions:

What is the setting of this parable, and who are the main characters?

If you were in the temple, how would you feel about what the Pharisee was saying?

How do you think God feels about the Pharisee?

How would you feel about what the tax collector was saying?

How do you think God feels about the tax collector?

In what areas of life do you 'have confidence in yourself?' Is this good or bad in light of Luke 18:9?

Is it okay to be better than others? How can we grow in righteousness without becoming self-righteous?



Choose It --- Move It: Sanctification

Prayer: Dear heavenly Father, I praise you for this time to work on my heart, my mind, my words, and my actions to help me be a better reflection and representation of Jesus today than I was yesterday. Keep my heart and mind fixed on you, Lord. In Your Name. Amen!

Song: "Sanctify Me" by Mercy Me

Description

It's time to choose it and move it! For today, you will need a figurative construction hat, so mentally choose your favorite style and color, and picture yourself wearing it. Maybe it's bright yellow, shiny and new, and it looks like Bob the Builder's hat ("Can we fix it? Yes, we can!"). Or maybe the one you're modeling is battered and beaten, but still effective. We will eventually step onto the battlefield, and I will be revealing to the newer recruits (you'd be the ones wearing the new helmets) and reminding the "veterans" of the group how Satan wants to wage wars with our minds. But before we do, let's step onto the construction site and take a closer look at their method of protecting the head.

Originally, in the very late 19th century, mining workers were leather caps to protect themselves from falling objects. Hard hats, like the ones worn on building sites today, date back to 1933, with the onset of the construction of the Golden Gate Bridge, when the mining helmet was transformed into a durable, industrial hard hat.

This construction site was the first area designed as a "Hard Hat Area."

This was largely due to falling rivets! Under the direction and demand of Chief Engineer, Joseph Strauss (no direct relation to Levi: yes, I checked!), the safety expectations were ramped up! He insisted on a rigorous safety code to combat the high winds, rough currents, and towering heights that provided quite a challenge for the workers. The bridge building industry's death rate averaged one fatality per million dollars spent. Strauss was determined to minimize this statistic. (The bridge would cost an estimated \$27-35 million). In part, due to the insistence on wearing "hard hats" by Strauss, only 11 constructions workers died when suspension netting failed as a result of a 5-ton platform crashing through it. Hard hats saved many lives back then, as well as today!

Illustrations abound regarding instances when a construction hat saved workers' lives:

- •A power plant worker survived a blow from a 100-pound steel hatch which landed squarely on top of his head.
- •A 24 year old Miami man was working at a construction site when a cable holding a large sewer pipe snapped and a several pound pulley fell onto the worker's head. He walked away with just a scratch.
- •A salesman, admittedly not an "outdoors kind of guy," was cutting down trees for firewood, and begrudgingly was wearing the hard hat his wife insisted on, when a 15-foot maple tree fell onto his head after using the chainsaw to cut it down. He needed a few stitches to the forehead, but the resulting scar was the only evidence of his "battle wound." (and maybe a bruised ego!)

So, girls, don your hard hat and let's get started on sanctification!

Definition

Look up the definition of *sanctification* in several sources and write what you discover:

Now, go back and circle the key words.

Sanctification, simply put, is growing in righteousness. It's a continual, ongoing process of being made more holy, and gradually - over time (as in your whole entire LIFE!) - conforming to the image of Christ. Like justification, sanctification is a work of grace through faith accomplished because of the finished work of Jesus on our behalf. To understand how

these two terms, relate, someone much wiser than me put it this way: "sanctification is the gradual process of becoming *practically* what we are *positionally* (righteous)."

We are definitely women "under construction." Just as builders working on a site cover their work with tarps to protect it from the elements, God shelters His work with our covering of righteousness. Here's what you and I need to remember: we are ALWAYS a work in progress; messy and incomplete. And it's ok! The important thing to remember is that during the process, we choose to put on our helmet of salvation every day!

Details

Have you ever watched HGTV and wished your home could undergo a makeover like some of the ones you've seen? I sure have! I've dreamed of an updated kitchen, new color palette for the walls, new furniture, and the list continues (my home and its furnishings are over 20 years old!) Or maybe you have watched a show where someone gets a beauty makeover: a new sassy haircut and color, fresh makeup, and a stylish wardrobe. Have you ever wanted something NEW? (Before your brain starts wandering down the "if only I had..." path... come back!) Here's the GREAT news: Once we have been justified by a saving faith we ARE new!

Please look up 2 Corinthians 5:17 and write it below:

We are NEW creations after we have undergone our own "extreme make-over." As believers, we are filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 13:52) God will continue to work within us, sanctifying us by fixing anything that isn't quite right yet. We have to remain "connected" to Christ by abiding in Him - living out each day clinging to Jesus! I love His illustration of the vine and the branches in John 15:5: "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

In order to become more like Jesus in this journey of life that can be compared to a race (a monster, mega-marathon that occurs over the course of our lifetime!), we need to run with endurance.

According to Hebrews 12:1-2:

How are we to do this? (verse 1)

And what do we need to do in the process?

We know our goal and who's along to help us, we just need a roadmap, or a blueprint, to guide us in the "construction" process of sanctification: The Bible!

In order to effectively emulate Jesus, let's take a look at just 10 of the many qualities He exhibited. Please look up the verses and either write out the entire verse or summarize it. Then share an example of a time in the past when you DID exhibit this trait. Satan wants to minimize Jesus in you and try and convince you that there is NO way you could POSSIBLY be like Jesus. He wants you to think about the times you've failed or the times you may have not been 100% like Jesus and get you to doubt your abilities. He is 1 BILLION percent WRONG!

Allow the Holy Spirit to bring instances to mind and thank God for those opportunities to "be Jesus" to others!

Loving: John 13:34

Forgiving: Ephesians 4:32

Compassionate: 1 John 3:17

Servant: Mark 10:45a

Prayerful: Matthew 5:44

Gentle: 1 Peter 3:4

Patient: Romans 8:25

Self-Controlled: Proverbs 25:28

Humble: Matthew 23:12

Faithful: Luke 16:10

Deployment

Marching Orders: Go and DO!

Ok girls! Hopefully the Holy Spirit has reminded encouraged you and encouraged you to see the moments in your life when you HAVE been like Jesus. Praise God for this! Your marching orders today are short and sweet.

Choose the one character trait above that is the most challenging for you and write it here:

Today you are going to be prayerful that the Lord will provide you with opportunities to display this quality and practice it.

Please write about how Jesus was evident through you. If, instead, you do the complete OPPOSITE, please share that, too! Trust me: God will give you PLENTY more opportunities to try again!

Journal Prompt

Dig Deeper:

The website, bible.org, has a great article on sanctification at:

https://bible.org/seriespage/8-work-out-your-salvation-process-sanctification

Write the answers to the application questions below:



Inspect It --- Mirror: Purification

Prayer: Dear loving, heavenly Father, thank you so much for desiring that I become more like You Son, Jesus. I appreciate the opportunities you provide me with on a daily basis to "work out" my salvation. Keep my heart and mind fixed on you, Lord. In Your Name. Amen!

Song: "Refiners Fire" by Hillsong

Description

"Gold! Gold! Gold from the American River!" was the proclamation from newspaper publisher and merchant Samuel Brannan, as he held a vial of gold aloft and walked down the streets of San Francisco. Most of us are familiar with the California Gold Rush, which began on January 24, 1848, with the discovery of gold by James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill.

Gold prospectors also engaged in "hard-rock" mining, which was the process of extracting the gold directly from the rock that contained it, usually by digging and blasting. These miners eventually wore specially designed helmets to cover and protect their heads.

The first hard hat was developed in 1919 by Edward D. Bullard of San Francisco. His inspiration came from the helmet he wore as a soldier in World War I. Constructed of canvas, glue, and black paint, it was nicknamed "Hard Boiled" because of the steam used in the manufacturing process. These helmets were vital to extract the ore, which is the main source of gold.

There are three steps in the gold refining process that date back to Old Testament times. The first step is to pound, shatter, and crush the ore into a fine powder, totally pulverizing it all! There are many unwanted elements, or "dross" in it that need to be sifted out and eliminated. In Old Testament times, this was tedious, as primitive hand tools would leave the refiner perspiring and frustrated as he worked hard to shatter it.

During the second step, the remaining powder goes through frequent washings and cleansings. This is when the unwanted, non-metallic elements are eliminated, leaving only the metallic elements behind.

Finally, the crushed and cleansed ore is placed in clay containers and put into the furnace. Here, at the extreme temperature of 1,948 degrees Fahrenheit (!!!) an amazing transformation occurs: the impurities in the gold begin to rise to the top, at which point the refiners skims away the dross. Each time this process is repeated, the gold becomes more and more pure!

God chose us while we were still "unrefined" ore. He knows how much potential "yield" of treasured gold we have within us. Despite our flaws and "worthlessness" at first, God chose us and wants to take us through the purification process. Yes, there will be painful moments of crushing – that's when Satan wants to come in and mess with your mind! Keep your mining helmet on! Because soon you will be washed and cleansed, taken through fires of sufferings, and walk out, knowing that even in the midst of the fiery furnace, Jesus will NEVER leave your side!

Definition

Look up purification in several sources and write what you discover

Now, go back and circle the key words.

Please look up Malachi 3:2 in the NLT and the NJK versions:

As fellow believers, we know the life of a follower of Christ is NOT an easy one! It's a constant, daily struggle against Satan, ourselves, and society. Jesus said so in John 16:33, "Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." However, God promises blessings of joy and a rich, satisfying, abundant life in the midst of this battle. (John 10:10) This will perhaps be a more "painful" day than the others because we are going to have to "battle" as we "do business" with God.

Part of this means we have to deal with temptation and sin, and knowing God's will for your life. We have to admit we are sinners first:

1 John 1:9

Then, we need to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal those places in our lives that are covered in dross and are still "diamonds in the rough:"

Psalm 51:10

Let's get to work!

Details

Look up these verses and draw a parallel between the verse and the purification process. (And be as basic or as complex as you want to be! The acronym KISS <Keep It Simple, Sister!> works here too!)

Broken and crushed (Psalm 34:18)

Washing and cleansing (Ephesians 5:26)

Furnace (Isaiah 48:10)

So - it's time to dig down into your OWN "gold mine," unearth some "ore," and get ready for some refining and purifying! Have you ever prayed an "exchange prayer?" Simply put, it's when you identify a sin and a struggle and pray for the Holy Spirit to refine you and replace, or "exchange," the negative character quality for a positive one.

For example, I struggle with bitterness towards a family member, as well as some self-righteousness because I can easily convince myself that I am justified in feeling the way I do. (Now I'm sure NONE of you can relate... hopefully you're smiling and nodding about now...)

I have to (begrudgingly, often times...) admit it's a sin.

Proverbs 14:10 convicts me: "Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can fully share its joy."

Job 35:1-2 NKJ adds to the reminder: [Elihu Condemns Self-Righteousness] Moreover Elihu answered and said: "Do you think this is right? Do you say, 'My righteousness is more than God's'?"

OUCH! My prayer and my realization is that if my heart's being "choked" by bitterness, Satan is winning, first of all, and my heart cannot be full of joy. I talk to my three children a lot about "not stealing someone's joy" and I need to take that to "heart" more often!

And I pray to replace bitterness and self-righteousness with an opposite quality (Proverbs 31 is a really great and compelling place to look!).

Proverbs 31:26 encourages me: "When she speaks, her words are wise, and she gives instructions with kindness."

Now THAT is who I want to be!

So, girls, what follows are some common struggles we have, as well as an opposing verse to "purify" that quality trait. Look both up, either write out the entire verse or summarize it, and write a response. What should you say? Whatever the Holy Spirit prompts.

Jealous: James 4:2 to Content: Philippians 4:11

Greedy: Proverbs 21:26a to Giving: Proverbs 21:26b

Envious: Ecclesiastes 4:4 to Loving: Mark 12:31

Gossip: Proverbs 17:4 to Encouraging words: Proverbs 25:11

Pride: Proverbs 16:18 to Humility: Proverbs 29:23 and 1 Peter 5:5				
Lies: Psalm 34:13 to Honesty: Psalm 32:2				
Quarreler: Proverbs 21:9 to Peacemaker: James 3:18				
Deployment				
Marching Orders: Go and Do!				
Look up these three verses for some final words of encouragement for the day:				
1 Peter 1:7				
1 Corinthians 10:13				

Psalm 34:19

Choose ONE set of character qualities above and write out an "exchange prayer." Or - CHALLENGE! - maybe there is another "set" the Holy Spirit is laying on your heart.

Now GO and BE who the Lord wants you to be!

Journal Prompt

Dig Deeper:

Read the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3:14-30 and answer the following questions:
Who were the three men and why were they brought before the king?
What was the men's response when threatened with being thrown into the furnace?
Summarize the chain of events beginning in verse 19.
What were some of the events that surprised and amazed you?
How do you think you would have reacted in the same situation?



Replace It --- Mature: Glorification

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, in humbleness and humility I come before you, ever mindful of how difficult and stubborn I can be sometimes. Help me continue to grow into the image of Jesus. And thank you for the promise and guarantee of heaven! In Your name, Amen!

Song: "I Can Only Imagine" by Mercy Me

Description

Today the headgear is more lavish: a crown! A very famous one was created for Queen Victoria in 1838. Its velvet cap is made from red crimson and it is bordered by some ermine. White silk lines the inside. It is decorated with 2,783 diamonds, 277 pearls, 17 sapphires, 11 emeralds, 4 rubies, and the Black Prince's Ruby at 170 carats! This crown is part of the Crown Jewels Collection which are all carefully guarded and on display at the Tower of London and it is absolutely stunning!

What's so interesting is that Queen Victoria hoped for Jesus' second coming during her reign so she could literally remove her lavish, bejeweled royal crown and lay it at His feet.

One day, Queen Victoria was listening to a sermon that was being preached not he second coming of Christ. The chaplain noticed that the Queen was tearing up as he spoke. Afterwards, he asked her, "Why did Your Majesty weep as I spoke today?" "Oh," said she, "because I do hope that He will come in my day!" "Why does Your Majesty desire that He should come in your day?" The chaplain asked. "Oh, sir, that I may lay my

crown at His feet!"

When WE get to heaven, many believe WE, too, will have crowns. No longer will we wear the heavy helmet of salvation, dented by arrows of the enemy that were thwarted by our faith, tarnished in some areas that were "under construction," shiny in other places which reflect the successful refining process. Instead, we will receive our reward in heaven.

Write what Matthew 5:12 has to say:

This is the BEST promise! What we can rejoice in the most is that our suffering and the sanctification and purification process culminates in the most exciting news ever!

Write out 1 Peter 4:13 and what this means to you - what are the implications?

Definition

Look up the definition for *glorification* in several sources and write what you discover:

Now, go back and circle the key words.

Glorification, simply put, is the "grand finale" of our salvation. It's the culmination of sanctification and means that we are PERFECTION: it's the final removal of sin. The trumpets will sound, and Christ will return! The enemy will be ultimately defeated, never to be allowed any power at all.

Details

Let's see what there is to look forward to - and remember these are truths and promises you can cling to that will never be taken from you! God wants us to be amazed, hopeful, and excited as we anticipate and look forward to an eternity with Him! Don't let Satan convince you otherwise!

Please look up the verses and either write out the entire verse or summarize it. Glorification is something that is... Shared: 1 John 3:2 Colossians 3:3 Philippians 3:20-21 John 17:22 2 Peter 1:4 Romans 5:2 Prepared: 1 Corinthians 2:9

Matthew 25:34

Romans 9:23

(Full of) Fanfare:

1 Timothy 6:16

Matthew 24:27

1 Corinthians 15:51-53

Deployment

Marching Orders: Go and Do!

Girls, you have worked SO incredibly hard this week!

Your marching orders today are the shortest directives with the greatest challenge: take a prayerful look back at your homework over this past week. Reread the verses you looked up and your responses. And ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind the one thing He wants you to really allow Him to work on and to refine.

Glorification is a future reality - and you want your crown to be heavy with "jewels," ready to lay at the feet of Jesus, as He greets you with, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:23)

Journal Prompt

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	-				

Read Isaiah's description of his vision and dream of what he imagined the Lord to look like in Isaiah 6:1-7 and answer the following questions:

Using all of your senses, what did Isaiah see, hear, smell, feel, touch, and taste?

What was Isaiah's reaction to what he saw?

How would YOU have responded?

What was the purpose of the coal and why?

Has God given YOU any visionary insight, sending your life into a different direction?

Children and Parents

Children and Parents

Free Parents because you belong to the parents because you belong to the parents because you belong to the parents because you have a long life.

Children, obey you to do, 2° Honese, aff you have a long life. I still the parents will have a long life. I still the parents will have to anger the parents will prove you. The provide a your children and the provide and the provide a your children and the provide and the from the Lord.

Slaves and Masters

Slaves obey you would serve. As slaves as though you were slaves, you would serve. As slaves as though you will serve. As slaves as though you were slaves, you would serve. As slaves as though you were slaves, you would serve. As slaves as though your slaves or free slaves or free slaves, you watching enther we are slaves or free when they are work with people, whether we are way. Do not the your heart. Than for people, whether wasne way. And he your heart than we do not slave and he are slaves of us for the good wour slaves. Master in heaven, and he are slaves the same Master in heaven, and he are slaves the same waster in heaven, and he are slaves the same waster in heaven, and he are slaves the same waster in heaven. Week ber, you both have The Whole Armor of God in the Lord and in his might whole Armor of God in the Lord and in his might have the strong in the Lord and in his might have whole Armor of God in the Lord and in his might have whole Armor of god will be able to stand firm the Lord and word. Be strong to will be able to stand firm to A final word. Be strong to we are not fighting of God's armor so the are not fight against evil spirit of God's armor so we and authorities of the devil. Tulers and authorities of the devil. Tulers and and against evil spirit but against evil rulers and and against evil powers in this dark world, and against powers in this dark world. but against evil rulers and authorities of the unser powers in this dark world, and against God's and 13Therefore put on every piece of God's and powers in this dark world, and against evil spirit owers in this dark world, and against evil spirit after the enemy in the time of evil. putting resist the enemy in the your ground, putting standing firm. Astand your sness. Will be first body armor of God's righteous you will be first from the Good News so that you will be body armor of God's righteousness. Is for sho from the Good News so that you faith to s all of these, hold up the shield of faith 17 Put on salvation as your helmet. an or these, hold up the shield or faith to s 17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and to is the word of Cod and in 18 Pray in the Spirit at all times and arrivers for all helicarders for all helicarder persistent in your prayers for all beli 19And pray for me, too. Ask God to is the word of God. explain God's mysterious plan that explain God's mysterious plan that alike.* 201 am in chains now, still keep on state of the chains o 21 To bring you up to date, Ty am doing and how I am get a helper in the Lord's work. Final Greetings let you know how we are 23 Peace be with you. and the Lord lesus Chri be eternally upon all 6:3 Ox Children, obey your sobey your sobey your process. sobely post posterity 6:36 Greek like soul one leter Seemed talements seemed read you Ephesians 6:10





Arm Yourself

Prayer: Lord, please give me understanding from Your word today

"And take the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God"
- Ephesians 6:17b

As we study the armor of God from week to week, one of the many things we can take comfort in is the fact that the Lord did not leave us defenseless when He ascended to the Father. Not only did He give us protection to resist the attacks from the enemy He gave us a spiritual weapon. Our text this week, Ephesians 6:17b, exhorts us to take up the weapon given us and to be armed with His powerful two-edged sword.

Prior to His death and resurrection Jesus' disciples were ready to take up literal swords in the name of the Messiah but the Lord would not have them defend Him that way. (see Luke 22:35-36 and Matthew 26:51-54) The sword that they would ultimately wield while on this earth would not be carnal swords. Instead, they would take up the sword they had watched their master use, the sword they had been trained with: the spoken word of the Living God.

Read Isaiah 49:1-2; 11:4 and describe the Messiah's weapons.

The Greek language has more than one word for "word."

Logos - "message or explanation" Graphe - "written word" Rhema - "uttered or spoken word"

These are the three Greek words that are translated as "word" in our bible. Rhema is the word used in Ephesians 6:17. Thayer Greek Dictionary defines it as "that which has been uttered by the living voice."

Does this have an impact on the way you think of your sword? Ex plain why.

Look up the following verses and record what our Lord does through His spoken word.

Genesis 1:3; Hebrews 11:3

Psalm 107:20

Revelation 2:16

Revelation 19:50

Isaiah 11:4

2 Thess. 2:28

Our Lord creates with His words, fights with His words and wins with His words. There is power in His words. Record what the following verses tell us about His word.

Hebrews 4:12

John 6:63

1 Peter 1:23-24

Read Isaiah 55:10-11 and write what God's word accomplishes with His word.

Journal Prompt

Spend some time journaling your thoughts on the nature and the power of the sword you are to arm yourself with.



Receive Training

Prayer: Lord, please train me in Your scriptures so I can speak them in a way that is pleasing to You

The bible has so much to say about our speech. It is chalked full of warnings for us to watch what we say. When we consider the power of our words discretion in speech becomes a priority. God does not speak His word indiscriminately.

Read John 12:49-50, John 16:13 describe the who speakers are.

Where they get their utterance from?

Do you speak with discretion?

Have you ever witnessed a spiritual sword flailed around indis criminately? What was the result?

If we are to wield a sword we will need training and help. No commander would send out his soldiers into the fray of battle without instructions and guidance on his weapons.

Note how the Lord prepares you

Psalm 18:34

Psalm 144:1

Skill and effectiveness occur when we understand our weapon. Understanding the word is essential for the solider in the Lord's army. The Lord invites us to ask him for understanding of His word and ways.

Record the invitations and examples

Jeremiah 33:2-3

James 1:5

Luke 24:45

Dig Deeper: In John 14:26 Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit will bring the Lord's word to our remembrance. In order for us to remember the words of God we must first put them in our mind. We need to download the entire Bible into our brains.

Have you read through the whole Bible? When was the last time you read through it?

Read Deuteronomy 31:10-13 and note how often the entire law was read and record to whom it was to be read and why.

Learning to use the word is dependent on how diligently you study.

Read and record the instruction in these verses.

2 Tim 2:15

2 Peter 3:16

1 Peter 3:15

Are you giving careful attention to study? If not jot down a plan to prioritize time in God's word.

Journal Prompt

In your journal write a prayer to God asking Him to give you a heightened sensitivity to your speech. "Lord teach me how to use my tongue for building up and not tearing down....



Defend yourself

Prayer: Gracious God help me to understand how You want me to use Your word to battle the enemy

When we consider the proximity of opponents when swords are engaged we realize that our enemy will be moving in close. It is during this closerange combat that we will pull out our sword to defend ourselves. The classic example of using the sword to defend against temptations can be found in Jesus' wilderness account.

Read Matthew 4:1-11 to refresh yourself on the details of the account.

Record what stands out to you in this reading.

We fall victim to the enemy when we don't use the sword. When we don't speak the word. Have you ever experienced defeat because you did not know what the word said about your situation or did not apply the word to your trail?

Our weapon is powerful, but we must use it! When Satan tries comes at you with a lie, slay with it truth of scripture. When he tries to strike you with despair block it with promises of hope. Use a specific scripture for the specific temptation he throws at you. Make a habit of asking the Lord to give you a scripture for your temptation and then hang on to that verse. Use it to defeat the enemy.

Read Psalm 119:11 explain the principal this verse teaches.

Wrap yourself in the word. Your belt is the Belt of Truth and your sword is attached to it; they are connected. Think of it like an ammo belt, be wrapped in as much scripture as much as possible so you are always ready when the enemy attacks.

Do you make any effort to memorize scripture? Record what these verses teach us about memorizing scripture.

Psalm 40:8

Psalm 119:16

Deuteronomy 11:18

Job 23:12b

Dig Deeper: When we are under stress we may worry we will lose our thoughts.

Read Exodus 4:11-12, Matthew 10:19-20 and Luke 21:14-15. Does this build your confidence?

(Note that in each of the above situations persecution was involved. A great example of speaking the Word when sudden attack comes is found Acts 6:9- 7:60 where we read Stephen's address to his persecutors)

JOURNAL PROMPT

Journal some ways in which you can practically apply today's lesson regarding God's Word as a sword. Ask God to give you the discipline and structures needed to accomplish this task.



Defending Others

Prayer: Lord, open Your word to me today and give me a heart of compassion for those who are entangled in the enemy's grip.

When we experience victory in battle and find rest we want to stay at ease. But if we look around while in our ease we will notice that many of our brethren are not at rest. Read Josh 1:14b-15 and note what the Lord commanded Ruben and the half tribe of Manasseh to do.

How can you apply this principal to your spiritual victories and your brethren's needs?

Dig Deeper: What is your response when you discover one of your loved ones has been taken captive by the enemy? 1 Cor 10:6 tells us that the stories in the old testament are examples to us.

Read Gen 14:14, 16 and 1 Samuel 30:1-19 note the example of these two men's actions when their loved ones were overtaken by the enemy.

In light of the fact that our enemy takes spiritual captives how can we be inspired by their actions?

Read Luke 10:17-19 and Mark 9:17-29 for more encouragement.

When people are kept captive, they are intentionally weakened by their captors who only allow them meager portions of food to keep them frail. We have seen this played out as released prisoners of war, who were once strong warriors, return from captivity looking like skeletons. When someone is spiritually captive they are in weakened spiritual state. We must be careful how we wield our sword, we want to conquer the enemy not hurt the hostage.

Read Proverbs 12:18, Galatians 6:1 and record your thoughts on using scripture and your words to help those held hostage by the enemy.

False teaching is one way the enemy keeps people in his grip. Read Revelation 2:12-16 record how Jesus will combat false teaching.

How can you participate in combating false teaching?

When you take the gospel to the unsaved you are using the sword offensively.

List other ways you can use your sword against the kingdom of darkness.

JOURNAL PROMPT

Journal a prayer for those you love who have been overtaken in a sin or are overwhelmed by the enemy.



Prayer: Lord once again I ask for grace to understand Your word, please open my heart to Your truths.

We noted on day one that Jesus' disciples were willing to take up literal swords prior to His death and resurrection. We are familiar with the fact that Peter did attempt to use a literal sword to defend Jesus. Jesus told him to put away that sword and went a step further healing the man Peter had wounded. But the disciples did not finish out their lives on earth swordless.... instead they wielded their spiritual swords.

Read Acts 17:6 and describe what they accomplished.

If we want to turn our world upside down for Jesus, our use of our spiritual sword must be more than theory and more than silent prayers and unspoken words. Our enemy want us to be silent, but our God wants us to speak His word.

Read the Ephesians 6:19 -20 and record what Paul requested.

Do you feel the enemy trying to suppress the word when you know you should be speaking it?			
How do you push back? Do you pray regularly for boldness?			
Weapons can give courage to a person who would normally cower. How does God's word give you courage?			
List some scriptures that make your fearless below are a few examples for even more inspiration:			
Matthew 10:28			
1 Cor 15:55-57			

Proverbs 29:25

1 John 4:4

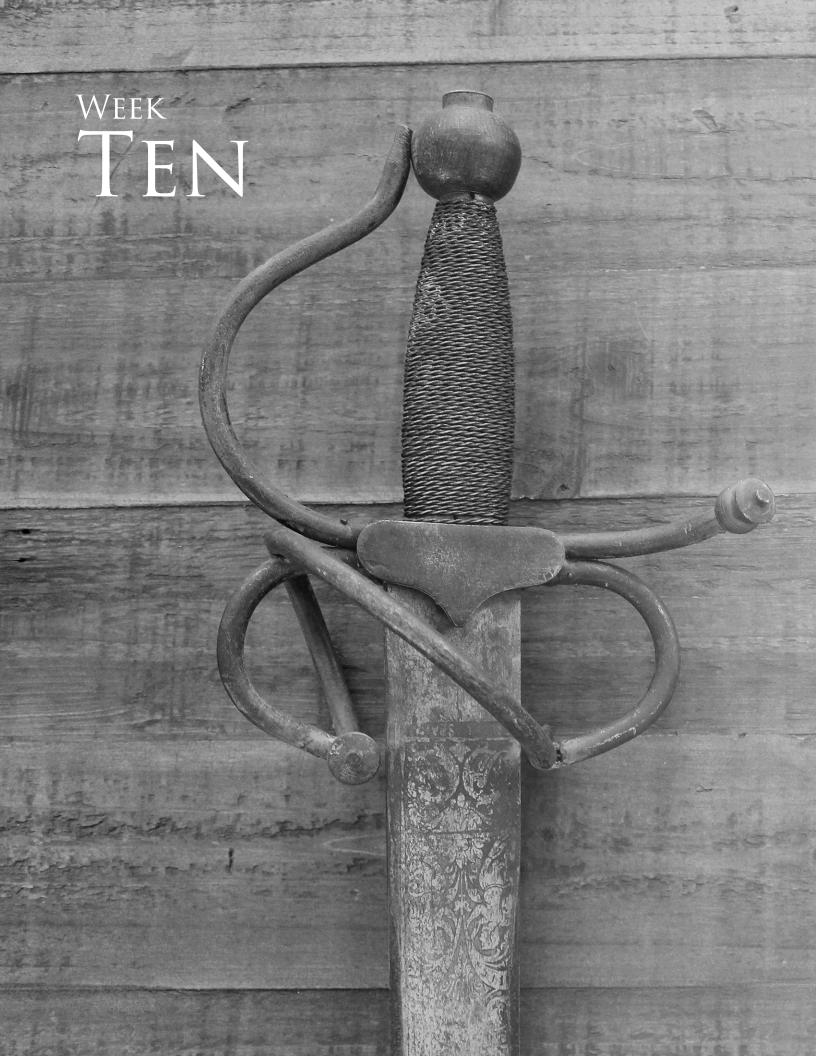
Dig Deeper: Read Revelation 19:11-20 and meditate on the victory the Lord accomplished with "the sword that proceeded out of His mouth" - Does this verse give you even more courage?

Journal Prompt

Journal your thoughts on this week's lesson.

"Let the saints of the Lord be joyful.... let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a sharp two-edged sword be in their hands"

— Psalm 149:6





Remember to Abide

Prayer: Father, thank you for your love and care for me. Thank you for providing the armor that will protect me and help me to stay in your perfect will for my life. Help me to understand how to effectively use this armor. In Jesus name, Amen.

Ephesians 6:18-19: "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 saints.."

Prayer is the activator and energizer for using the armor of God that we have been studying. Many Christians feel like beginners in prayer, even though it must be a priority in our life and in spiritual battle as the Apostle Paul emphasized in Ephesians 6:18-19. Let's consider how the Priority of Prayer in using and empowering the Armor of God compares to the life of a soldier in training.

Two Priorities in Military Training

In military training, soldiers must do two things in order to be ready for battle:

- 1. He/she must train everyday to get and stay in shape to be fit for battle, learn to use his weapons, and learn strategies for battle.
- 2. He/she must learn to come under the authority of his commanding officer. Regardless of his/her personal preferences the soldier must listen and do what the commanding officer tells him/her to do. In the chaos of battle listening and doing what

the commanding officer says to do can literally save his/her life and the lives of others.

As Christian women with many responsibilities and relationships we care about, we need to become skilled in spiritual battle by staying connected to our Lord and "commander" by:

- 1. Abiding in Christ our Vine through daily communication with Jesus (prayer, scripture reading and memory)
- 2. Learning to recognize and follow the voice of our "commander" the Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember to Abide in Me (the True Vine): John 14-17 Jesus' Last Words to his Disciples

Just before Jesus was betrayed and arrested, and ultimately put to death he gave his last sermon to those disciples who were closest to him.

Jesus was giving his disciples a survival strategy for living and ministering AFTER he was gone. Jesus would give them the work of spreading the gospel and establishing the church in a hostile world. These life—giving words remain the strategic truth that gives us life and access to the love and power of God as we face spiritual battles. These words can be found in John 14-16, with the heart of the message on abiding in the True vine Jesus, in John 15.

Prayerfully read "the last words of Jesus" to his disciples found in John 14 - 16. Imagine yourself in the room as Jesus speaks. Jesus paints a word picture of a grapevine, branches and fruit - (possibly as they were walking through an actual vineyard).

From what you know of plants, what is the central truth Jesus wants his disciples (and us) to understand at a deep level?

Look up "Abide" in a dictionary, Bible dictionary or footnotes in your bible. Record the definition and your understanding of the word "abide."

Count the number of times you see the word "abide" or "remain" and record the number here_____.

Why do you think Jesus repeats this word so many times?

A branch on a grapevine has no choice, it is created by the life juices down in the roots of the vine. The branch receives all it needs to survive and thrive and produce fruit by simply staying connected to the vine.

Jesus invites us into an intimate relationship with Him, symbolized by the image of the Vine and the branches. By staying connected to him daily we receive the power, love and life needed to be fruitful and be effective prayer warriors. Relationship and connection with God means we intentionally stay connected to him in prayer – ongoing conversation with him all day.

Review John 15:5-8 Consider this amazing promise: John 15:7" If you abide (remain) in me and my words abide (remain) in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you."

What two things does Jesus give as two major keys to answered prayer?

The importance of spiritual "training": It's crucial for learning to abide and in spiritual battle that we give our prayers more power! In order to see more answers to prayer we must abide deeply in Jesus and align ourselves with who Jesus is in our lives.

Colossians 3:16
Psalms 46:10
Psalms 119:10-11
Philippians 4:6-7
Read John 15:9-12. As you read this passage notice the use of these repeated words:
v. 9 "As the Father hasme, so have I
Now remain in my"
v.10 "If youmy commands, you will remain in my
love, just as I havemy Father's commands and re
main in his love.
v.11 I have told you this so that mymay be in you and
that yourmay be complete.
v. 12 "Myis this: Love each other, just as I have
you.

Look up these scripture that point to spiritual practices that help us abide

more deeply:

Jesus' love for us as demonstrated on the cross is the reason we are drawn to respond to relationship with Him. The way we demonstrate love for

Jesus to obey his words in our life (which means we must know them first). Jesus has told us these things because it makes his joy complete and our joy complete as well!

Today's Takeaway: By staying in close connection with Christ(abiding) we have a firm foundation and connection to God and his resources when spiritual attacks come!

Deeper Dive: Read and reflect on John 17. Look for the ways he prays for himself, his disciples and for those who would believe in the future.

Journal on the requests Jesus has for his disciples, especially about their treatment in the world and by the "evil one."

Journal Prompt

Share with God your sincere desire to "abide" in him. Ask for his help to do that.



Realize your Resources

Prayer: Father, thank you that you have given us all the resources we need to live lives full of love and joy. Our enemy wants to interfere with our focus on you. Help us to grasp the power of the resources you have given to us to defeat the enemy's attacks. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Paul shows us 6 pieces of spiritual armor that are effective in spiritual battle: Belt of Truth, Breastplate of Righteousness, Shoes of Peace, Shield of Faith, Helmet of Salvation, Sword of the Spirit. Prayer is not counted as a piece of armor, but is the energy that empowers the use of the armor. Prayer activates and energizes ALL the pieces of the armor!

Abiding in Christ pictures an intimate relationship between himself and us as the branches. As we grow in this intimate relationship we will become more confident in approaching God in prayer and we will grow more confident in how to pray – by praying.

In addition to abiding, there are several other spiritual resources and advantages that increase the confidence, power and effectiveness of our prayers:

- 1. Pre-eminence of Jesus' name
- 2. Person and Power of the Holy Spirit
- 3. Power of Two (Praying together)

Resource #1 The Pre-eminence of Jesus 'name

One of our greatest resources in prayer is the power of the name of Jesus. Through much of Jewish history a person's name was far more than a label for someone. One's name symbolized all of who they were and what they stood for. If someone spoke in the "name of Caesar" it carried the full weight of who Caesar was, his absolute power and authority. When we pray "in Jesus' name" it is more than a nice sounding end to a prayer. If we pray in Jesus name we are claiming by faith the power and authority of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our savior the one who had power over nature, who healed and who performed miracles. There is no greater name we could claim in reference to our prayers! Be encouraged by the scriptures found in this section.

Look at Colossians 1:15-20 and Colossians 2:9-12. What do you learn about the authority and power of Jesus Christ from this passage? Make a note of all of the ways that Jesus is "pre-eminent."

Colossians 1:15-20

Colossians 2:9-12

Read Philippians 2:6-11. Notice the humility of Jesus in vs. 6-8 and the exalted position of Jesus in vs. 9-11.

According to this passage, whose name is above all other names? (including the enemy's!)

In vs. 10-11 Who do these verses say will bow their knees and confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord?"

Jesus invites his disciples to pray in his name.

Read John 16:22-24 and paraphrase this passage below.

This promise might seem too good to be true. But it must be balanced with John 15:7. What are the two conditions Jesus give us to expect our prayers to be answered?

1.

2.

Resource #2 The Person and Power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity who brings us power, comfort, guidance and insight into truth. In John 14, 15, and 16, Jesus promised that when he left earth he would send the Holy Spirit who would live in our hearts as believers. The Holy Spirit comes into our hearts at the moment we place our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Read John 14:15-27 and John 16: 5-15 and make a note of all the things Jesus says about the Holy Spirit that will "help" his disciples, including us!

Read	Acts	1:8	

What does Jesus say his disciples will receive when the Holy Spirit comes?

What task did Jesus leave for his disciples to accomplish?

How might this promise encourage you to courageously share your faith with people in your world?

Our enemy delights in seeing us stumble into sin. But God gives us help through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit not only gives us power for sharing our faith, He also empowers us to withstand temptation to sin and to produce godly character in us.

Read Galatians 5:16-26 and fill in below:

vs. 16 "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not ______ the desires of the _____nature."

In vs. 19-21 Select and list the "acts of the sinful nature":

In vs. 22-23 Find and list the fruit of the Spirit:

In Ephesians 5:15-17 Paul tells us how to avoid living unwisely. What strong admonition does he give the Ephesians with regards to living in a fallen world filled with temptations?

Paraphrase it in your own words:

Look at Ephesians 5:18. Paul gives the Ephesians the command to "be filled with the Spirit." Being filled with the Holy Spirit means giving God permission to guide and empower us to avoid sin and pursue His best for our lives. By faith we can pray for God to fill us with the Holy Spirit.

Read Romans 8:26-27. What special help does the Holy spirit give us regarding prayer?

Ephesians 6:18 says "And pray in the Spirit on all kinds of prayers and requests." Paul recommends prayers empowered by the

.

Resource #3 The Power of Two or more

Connection with other believers is vital to growth and prayer. Jesus said in John 15 "I am the true vine and you are the branches." And when he says in Acts 1:8 "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you," He is speaking to groups of believers – that eventually would become the church. The Christian life is not meant to be a solitary experience. Christianity is based on relationships! Relationship with God, relationship with other Christians, and relationships reaching out to people who need to know God's love.

Here are some benefits of being in relationships with Christian friends:

Jesus makes a special promise regarding prayer and his presence in Matthew 18:19-20:

"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them."

According to this promise, if you are having a difficult time and feel like you don't know how to pray or are about to give up, you would benefit by _______.

Look up these verses and find the blessings of being in relationship with other believers.

Galatians 6:1-2

I John 4:7-12

Colossians 3:12-14

A personal word to those who need Christian support and connection: Only you know where you are in having deeply connected Christian fellowship with others. If you sense you need more connection, reach out to someone you respect about this, pray for more quality relationships and expect God to answer your prayer!

Ephesians 6:18b: "With this in mind be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

Paul reminds	us to not or	nly pray for	ourselves	but also
for				

Today's Takeaway:

- By praying in Jesus' name our prayers are given more power and authority.
- By learning who the Holy Spirit is and trusting his power and direction our prayers will be targeted with skill.
- By forming relationships with other growing believers we can band together in prayer and help each other stay strong!

Deeper Dive: For even more on the glorified Christ and his authority and power, read John's description of the Son of Man in Revelation 1:4-20.

What do you "take away" from this description that can give you confidence in your prayers and in your Savior?

JOURNAL PROMPT

Write a prayer from the heart that shares with God your love and appreciation for these incredible resources! For the Pre-eminence of Jesus' name, for the person and power of the Holy Spirit and for the Power of praying with others.



Review the Enemy's Tactics and My Areas of Need

Prayer: Father, I desire to live a life that glorifies you. Be with me as I grow in the knowledge of the enemy's tactics and of my own weaknesses. Help me to grasp how committed to me you are as I learn how to pray effectively in my own spiritual battles and for others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As women living in fast paced Southern California, it's easy to become overwhelmed with the busyness of life and the many worthy commitments we have! To focus on spiritual attacks can be intimidating unless we see all the ways God has blessed us with powerful resources to defeat the enemy's attacks in our lives!

We have focused first on the person and power of God's resources before turning to a focus on the enemy's tactics and our vulnerabilities. Today we turn to the ways the enemy seeks to discourage us, confuse us, tempt us, and lead us away from our desire to walk with God. We also need to understand the ways we are vulnerable to the enemy's attacks.

What's in a Name?

The enemy's names reveal his character and goals. Look up the references for some of his names. Working from the scriptures seek to explain more fully what each name for the enemy means. (The Armor of God, Priscilla Shirer, p. 21)

- 1. Satan means "the Adversary" (of God) (Job 1:6)
- 2. Devil means "slanderous" (Matthew 4:1, Ephesians 4:25-27)
- 3. Lucifer means "day star" or "shining one." –(Isaiah 14:12-14; Luke 10:18).
- 4. Tempter means "one who tempts people for the purpose of enticing them to sin." (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5)
- 5. Prince of the Power of the Air/Prince of Darkness means the devil does not work alone. (Ephesians 2:2, and 6:12)
- 6. Accuser means "one who condemns." (Revelation 12:10)
- 7. Father of Lies means "liar and falsifier." (John 8:44)
- 8. Ruler of this world the enemy and his forces infect whole cultures, impacts the worldviews and moral perspectives, and institutions of societies, seeking to kill, steal and destroy belief in God's truth and supremacy. (John 12:31, 2 Corinthians 4:4)

Now that we know the character of our enemy we can take stock of his tactics.

Review the Enemy's Tactics

John 10:9-10: "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to kill, steal and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

Satan has already been defeated by Jesus according to Genesis 3:15, Romans 20:10 so he has no ultimate power to kill, steal or destroy our eternal life and relationship with God. But he has power to threaten God's purposes and make our lives miserable, seeking to intimidate us and cause us to pull away from our relationship with God. He can also tempt us in many ways.

Tactic #1 The Enemy seeks to Kill, Steal and Destroy

What things of eternal value in my life does the enemy try to "kill, steal and destroy"?

Look up these scriptures and determine what godly desires or behaviors the enemy wants to kill and destroy?

John 22:37-40

Psalms 119:105

Psalms 119:11

Luke 22:40

James 5:16

I Thessalonians 5:17

Proverbs 22:1

Psalms 34:14

How have you seen attacks against any of these godly desires or practices in your life?

Tactic# 2 – The Enemy Attacks Your family and relationships

In Genesis 3:1-7 how did the enemy come against the "first family"?

11001110111
I Corinthians 3:1-9, 21 Paul explains the seriousness of a situation in the church at Corinth.
How is it an example of the enemy's work?
How have you seen the enemy attack your family or relationships?
Tactic #3 - The Enemy Attacks your Confidence, your Calling, and your Heart
Confidence, your Cannig, and your Freat
Attacks on our Confidence:
In Revelation 12:10 The enemy is called the "accuser of our
, who them day and night." The
enemy is constantly reminding us of our mistakes, sins and bad choices, trying to convince us that we are under God's judgment
rather than under the blood.
Tuthor than ander the blood.
Revelation 12:11 tells us how these brothers overcame the accuser.
"They overcame him by the of the and
theof their testimony."
Attacks on our Calling:
Read Joshua 14:8. The enemy tried to intimidate the spies Moses sent into
the promised land and make them fearful and cowardly. Joshua gives a

report on the promised land which was a faith filled report.

However, he says that his "brothers who went up with me made

the _____ of the People _____ with ____."

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Attacks on our heart:

Hebrews 12:15 warns	us "See to it that no one misses the grace
of God and that no	grows up
to cause trouble and	тапу."

The enemy seeks to keep old wounds fresh in mind, knowing that anger and hurt and bitterness and unforgiveness will continue to spread the damage to your heart and the other person.

Tactic # 4 – The Enemy Attacks Your Purity and Your Peace

Old fashioned temptation and sin! Isaiah 59:1-2 describes the danger of temptation and falling into sin.

What are the consequences of succumbing to this kind of attack?

"If the devil cannot make you bad, he will try to make you busy!" The enemy seeks to overload your life and schedule, pressuring you to constantly push beyond your limits, never feeling permission to say no. You become exhausted and lose focus in your life and calling. Becoming overloaded is actually violating a commandment in Deuteronomy 5:15.

What principle do we violate to think we have no limits?

The Enemy attacks your belief in God and his word by infecting your culture. He brings chaos, fear, discouragement, and doubt by propagating his lies and twisted version of God's truth. He does this by influencing whole cultures, philosophies, institutions, and communities. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Look over this list of the enemy's tactics.

Which one(s) have you noticed that the enemy has used in your life in the last 6 months to a year. Be specific, it will help you become more aware of the enemy's strategies in your life!

Reviewing My Areas of Need: Food for Thought

Here is the reality of spiritual warfare: The enemy is proactive in assessing our weaknesses and planning custom made attacks against us as believers. It is not possible to remain "clueless" and apathetic and avoid serious and debilitating attacks. We must become spiritually vigilant!

Fact #1 - The Enemy is always on the prowl to bring chaos, doubt, fatigue, temptation to God's beloved children!

I Peter 5:8 "Be se	Your enemy the	
devil	around like a roaring	looking
for someone to	,, •	

Fact #2 By failing to keep in close connection with Jesus through his word and through prayer, we can open ourselves to the enemy's attacks.

Ephesians 4:26-27 warns us "In your	do not sin:
Do not let the go down while you are	
and do not give the devil a	

The enemy does not play fair he usually attacks when someone is down. The enemy studies us and observes our vulnerabilities and weaknesses. If he studies our weaknesses to get an advantage, then how much more do we need to make a study and inventory of our weak or vulnerable areas?

We all have weaknesses, blind spots, and personality quirks – some we joke about and some we keep hidden from others. We all have been marked by our "family of origin" both for good and bad. These things are not necessarily sin, but they might leave us open for custom made attacks by the enemy.

Today's Takeaway: To be effective in using the armor of God we must study two things:

- 1. We must study the enemy's tactics and look for which ones that repeatedly come up in our lives.
- 2. We must do an honest inventory and ask God to show us our areas of weakness and vulnerability.

Deeper Dive: Read Luke 4:1-13. Look at this account of Jesus' temptation in the desert. Watch for Jesus' vulnerability mentioned in the beginning. Take note of each temptation and reflect on how it targeted basic human weaknesses. Also take note of how the enemy shifted tactics in the third temptation. Lastly focus on how Jesus answers each temptation.

What can we learn from this powerful account about how to deal with the enemy?

JOURNAL PROMPT

Do some detective work in your own life. Ask for God's help and reflect on these questions.

Right now what are the stresses, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities in your life situation (with your husband, family, work, home, health, volunteer work, relationships, your relationship with God, your work/life balance, your issues with self-worth, etc.?) Make a list:

Now, share your thoughts about these things by journaling as if you are talking to a trusted "safe" friend – Jesus:
What tactics of the enemy do you see in your life right now? Using the list of the enemy's tactics from today's homework, make a list:
Ask God to help you recognize the enemy's attacks and become more consistent in using the armor of God through prayer.
asing one arriver of Sou viriough prayer.



Rely on Your Armor and Stand Firm!

Prayer: Father, thank you that you are already the ultimate victor in the battle with my enemy! Thank you for the armor and for the other resources you have given me that will help me be strong in prayer! Lord, teach me to make prayer a priority in all aspects of life and especially in times of attack and temptation! In Jesus' name, Amen.

The day has finally come when we focus on the Armor of God in the spiritual attacks of the enemy! Let's go back to the beginning of this passage. Paul sends out orders like a military commander. He had plenty of experience of being jailed by Roman solders, he knew their military structure, tactics and how they used their armor to protect themselves and to advance against the enemy. Let's review his first words:

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then." (Ephesians 6:10-14a)

For every hour on the battlefield there were hours of drills, marching, and caring for their armor for Roman soldiers. Our battles are not visible to the eye but they are no less real or dangerous. Let's look at how we can be

ready to do battle in the moment by preparing ahead of time.

Be Strong in the Lord and Banish fear!

God has given us a strong and balanced mind.

Look at II Timothy 1:7 and describe the gift God has given us.

God has promised to be with us.

Read Isaiah 41:10 Paraphrase this powerful promise and consider committing it to memory – it can be relied upon in battle!

Be Strategic in Your Defense Plan

Using the insights you had from yesterday's homework look at your vulnerable areas for attack and take action:

- 1. Make a list of the vulnerable areas of your life you want to cover with prayer regularly, even daily. Perhaps it's your family or children, or your family finances, your overcrowded schedule, recurring physical illnesses, feeling "less than" because of comparisons to others, etc.
- 2. Make Post-its using the list of vulnerable areas and place in strategic places that you see every day. Using your list, write each one or several of them on post-its along with a faith building scripture that applies. Use your mirror, sink area or car console so that you see them consistently.
- 3. Pray for these areas every time you see them during your day. Ask God to cover them with his power and protection.
- 4. If you see an attack in one of these areas, in prayer by faith remember and rely on the appropriate piece of armor and "Stand firm!" To regain peace when we experience anxiety, we remember our shoes of peace that keep us steady in God's peace, remembering those spikes that dig down into the ground will enable us to "stand firm"!

Ex. One day you see that your child is overly anxious about school, and the enemy stirs up more trouble by bringing worst case scenarios into your mind – "he probably won't graduate from high school, or go to college or ever get a job!!" Don't believe these lies and exaggerations! Instead you can pray, "Lord you see that I am anxious about my child's anxiety and stress at school. Lord, calm his mind and my mind and replace our anxiety with your peace." We know that God hears and answers this prayer because he invites us to pray instead of getting stuck in anxiety in Philippians 4:6-7

Look up Phliippians 4:6-7 and paraphrase it here:

Be in Constant Contact with God: Make Prayer Your Lifestyle

Do not be intimidated by prayer. This is one way the enemy stops us in our tracks is by accusing us "You don't know how to pray correctly, so God won't hear you." "You have messed up and no way will God hear you!" These are lies from the pit!! Prayer is simply talking with our Abba, our heavenly father, sharing our joys and our concerns. The more we pray about everyday things the more we will be ready to pray in times of trouble and temptation!

According to Jesus' teaching on prayer in Mattew 6:5-8 prayer, we don't have to be great orators in prayer.

What characteristic does Jesus highly value in prayer?

In Proverbs 1	.5:8 God sa	ys he is p	leased to	hear the p	orayers
of		,			

Luke 18:1: "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up."

Read the parable Jesus told in Luke 18:1-8 and share what quality in prayer is key to seeing answers.

Just before his arrest on the Mt. of Olives Jesus gave his disciples some urgent advice. Look up Mattew 22:40 and make note of this advice.

Why would this advice be important for them in the coming days?

Be Ready to Resist the Enemy: Suit Up in your Armor Daily!

Each day, as you brush your teeth or drive to work "put on your armor" by faith.

- Thank God for his presence and power in your life and ask that he keep temptations from you and protect your day.
- Mentally go through the pieces of armor and by faith put them on—you might want to memorize them or keep them on a post-it nearby.
- Thank God for this promise

Remember the Enemy is sneaky! He comes to kill, steal and destroy everything that keeps us connected to God! Read and reflect on the following story.

"Ordinary Day"

Some days start out looking very ordinary. I get up, make the coffee and get breakfast, I get the kids up and hear either a happy greeting or a grouchy groan from them. I rush to fill out papers to go back to school, and I make sure the kids are dressed appropriately for the weather. I drive at least one to school and must wait in the long line to drop off students. I'm excited about some free time for the next hour – and consider "Should I go to the gym or should I have a good quiet time with God?" I decide I need time with God, it's been a while.

At home, I go to my favorite chair and plop down with my Bible and a cup of coffee. I suddenly think, "I haven't checked out social media for a while so just for a few minutes I check in – Wow so much has been happening. Sue's daughter got married at such a beautiful spot! Why wasn't I invited?" Then I notice pictures from a birthday party at the beach "Wow, she didn't invite me? I thought we were friends! Well I am carrying too much weight now to get into a suit anyway! I probably should have gone to the

gym to work out instead of just sitting around. It's too late to go now. Oh, I don't know why time with God sounds so great but is so hard to do! I am so lame when it comes to my relationship with God. I am feeling very low now and my free time has slipped away, I am such a loser!"

What happened to this day? How did the enemy steal a precious hour from this dear mom?

How could she have used knowledge of her weaknesses, prayer and her spiritual armor to "Stand Firm!" Rewrite this scenario and show how at each point of attack this mom could have turned the tide and stopped the attack.

Be Intentional: Go to God in Prayer after losing a skirmish with the Enemy

God never sees you as a "loser" but a dearly beloved daughter! If you have a day where you feel the enemy has gotten the best of you, take it to the Father in prayer.

Today's Takeaway: In order to Stand Firm in spiritual battle we must:

- Be confident in the Lord
- Be Strategic in our Defense Plan
- Be in Constant Contact with God
- Be Ready to Resist the Enemy
- Be Intentional in asking God's help when we fail

Deeper Dive: Paul's image and description of a soldier in his armor was not the first time this description appears in the Bible. Read Isaiah 59: 12-20.

What circumstances brought about the Lord's "putting on armor" and what was the outcome of the battle described here?

JOURNAL PROMPT

Use these suggestions as you journal a prayer to God for his help as you resist the enemy in the future and address any weak areas you may have discovered.

- Thank God for his love and thank him for showing you any weak areas you uncovered in this section.
- Confess any sin you become aware of. (I John 1:9)
- Ask him to partner with you in a strategy to address your weaknesses (reprioritizing, seeking wise counsel, redoing your schedule, etc.)
- In the name of Jesus, resist the enemy and tell him to stop his attacks! Remind the enemy he has already been defeated (Genesis 3:15, Revelation 20:10)
- Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit by faith (Ephesians 5:18) Thank God for hearing and answering your prayer.



Rejoice in Victory and Return to Abiding

Prayer: Father, thank you for sending Jesus to die on the cross for my sins and for adopting me as your daughter. Keep your grace and purposes for my life always before me. Empower and transform me so that I may become more like Jesus and glorify you in my life on earth. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The ultimate defeat of the enemy is a fact we can rejoice in every day! Someday the enemy's ultimate destruction will be fully accomplished. A vivid account of this is found in John's Revelation in chapter 20, verses 7-10. A beautiful picture of the new Jerusalem is found in Revelation 21:1-5. We will someday be able to pack our armor away because there will be no more Satan, sin, death, or sickness, and we will be with the Lord, joyful and whole, forever!

But for today, while the enemy is still "prowling around seeking who he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). We need to stay alert and stay "suited up." We need not fear the enemy because the he cannot win in the end and God has given us ways to protect ourselves and take back territory the enemy had stolen.

Rejoicing in Victory: We can rejoice because God is committed to our victory!

Rejoice that you belong to Jesus! Jesus makes a powerful declaration about his power and intentions regarding our enemy.

Read 1 John 3:8. Record it here and thank God for Jesus' commit ment to you!

Rejoice that God has promised to provide you specific help in times of temptation. Look at I Corinthians 10:13. Fill in the blanks in this powerful promise:

"temptation has seized you except	what is
to man. And God is	; he
will not let you be	what you
can bear. But when you are	, he will also pro-
vide a way so that you can	ир
under it."	

How do you feel to know God has promised you special help in specific times of temptation?

Rejoice that Jesus promises he will always be with you! Read these two scriptures and write them in your own words:

Romans 8:35-39

Matthew 28:18-20

Refocus on Abiding in Jesus: Stay Connected to God's love and his will!

The best way to defeat the schemes of the enemy is to refocus on Abiding in Jesus. By abiding (staying connected) to Jesus we will be desiring to do

what is pleasing to him as we learn more from his word and as we pray through our days. It is harder to become distracted by the enemy if we are loving and serving God and others.

Abiding isn't hard, we actually are drawn to it because of Jesus' love! We love him because he first loved us.

Refresh yourself by Abiding: Review John 15:9-11 from our first day of homework.

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be made complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Go through te above passage and circle the word "love" with a red pen, circle the word "obey" in black pen, and circle the word "commands' in blue pen. How do these words bring understanding to you about abiding in Christ?

Take note and write down where the love originates. Then write down who receives the love next. Then track who receives love next and write it down.

What command does he give his disciples in this passage?

Become more like Jesus: Romans 12:1-2 gives a command to believers that is a major factor in being able to stay in connection with Jesus and to grow spiritually. Write it below:

What is Paul telling us NOT to be conformed to in v.2?

In the homework on Day 3 we saw that one of Satan's tactics is to inject lies and moral contamination into the ideas, philosophies, values, cultural norms of the world.

From your observation of our culture what are some of the ideas, philosophies, and values that have been injected with lies and moral contamination?

Paul tells us instead "to be transformed by the renewing of our mind." We cannot transform ourselves, that is the work of God's Spirit. However, we can co-operate with the Spirit by actively working to "renew our minds."

From what you know of growing as a Christian, how could you work to "renew your mind"?

Read Romans 12:1-2 again. If we intentionally refrain from copying the ways of the world and its values and we pursue relationship with God, his word, obey his word, prayer and Christian fellowship, what does the apostle Paul promise will happen?

Abide (Stay connected) in God's Will: Big Picture

God's will is to see more people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ so that they will be connected to him eternally. (John 3:16) He wants us to be a part of sharing his love with those in the world, still under the darkness of the enemy. (Acts 1:8) His will for Christians is to live in intimate relationship with him, receiving his love and sharing it with others. (John 15, Romans 12:1-2) He wants his children to become more and more like Jesus and have lives characterized by the fruit of the spirit

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love joy, peace, patience, kindness goodness, faith-fulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23) His will sees past the chaos and pain of this world and into a glorious kingdom where all sin, darkness, sickness and death are destroyed. (Revelation 21)

Abide in God's Will: Uniquely Fitted for You

God's Plan for your life - Seek to understand God's unique plan for your life.

Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and write it here:

In verse 8-9 Paul clarifies how we are saved. Explain this in your own words

Verse 10 gives us this beautiful promise: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

- The word for "workmanship" in Greek is "poema" an original work of art made directly from God's heart and hands.
- Created in Christ Jesus to do good works reminds you There are things in this world that only YOU can do in Jesus' name.
- God prepared in advance for us to do- God has always known what wonderful plans and projects lie ahead for you, what people you will touch, what adventures you will take as you give our heart and life over into his hands.

Today's Takeaway: Study the Genuine and you will easily recognize the Counterfeit!

Banks must teach their personnel how to recognize counterfeit money. They look at samples of counterfeit money. But they focus on recognizing the genuine currency, because if they carefully study to recognize the genuine currency, they will know the fake easily by what doesn't match up!

Learning to be skillful in spiritual warfare will come naturally as we walk with Christ. By focusing on what is valuable in God's kingdom (his character, his power, his will) through his word we will recognize the look, the sound and the "smell" of the enemy, the spiritual counterfeit! Then we rely on our armor, the name of Jesus, the power of the Holy Spirit and prayer to "stand firm" and to go forward to "take back territory!"

Deeper Dive: Read Paul's prayer for the Ephesians in Ephesians 3:14-21. Look for those words or phrases that encourage you in your relationship with God and in spiritual warfare.

Write a prayer back to the Lord, thanking him for these blessings.

Journal Prompt

Look back on our homework and imagine you have 5-7 minutes to share with a friend some of the main points of this week's focus on the Priority of Prayer in spiritual conflict. What would your main points be (no right or wrong answer).

Notes

Notes

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