

Put On the Whole Armor of God

Soldiers in God's Army are one of the ways Christians are depicted in the Bible. Hear Paul's words to Timothy, ³*Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer.* 2 Timothy 2:3-4 NIV

Through Paul's letter to the Ephesians God has given us some orders to be obeyed. The purpose of these commands is to ensure that we are victorious soldiers. **First, we are told to be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.** It is supremely important that we recognize our position in Christ and act accordingly. We are victors because we are identified with the captain of the Lord's Hosts.

Second, we are told to *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.* Ephesians 6:11

In this world Satan has the vantage point and he attacks us wherever possible. Peter tells us in 1 Peter 5:8, *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

But God has provided us with all the equipment we need for our protection. To stand against the foe and be victorious in spiritual conflict we must make constant use of the armor God has provided. God suits us up so that we can successfully stand up against all the strategies and deceits of the Devil.

Paul wrote, *Therefore put on God's complete armor that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day. First, the apostle places the stress on the armor of God as a whole.* He then considers the importance of each individual piece of this God-provided armor.

What is this full and complete armor that God provides for his soldiers? It is all of the equipment, all of the provisions that God has provided for us. As defensive

armor it is tailored to protect us. But it also is usable to ensure spiritual triumph over the enemy.

The apostle's first point in defining this armor is **that it is God's provision, not our own**. But we are responsible to take it up and put it on once and for all. Nothing but the clothing that God has provided will give us safety and success.

Secondly, we will need each piece of the gospel armor. Therefore, we must put it all on and be careful not to leave off a single piece.

In another passage Paul summarizes the whole armor of God. *"Put on, or clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and do not think about how to gratify the desires of your sinful natures"* (Romans 13:14).

We could say that the defensive armor God has provided for his people is a symbolic description of the Lord Jesus Himself. **Under the figure of the Roman soldier's gear the apostle relates what Christ is to the believer**. Through faith we are to appropriate Christ through an understanding of and application to our lives of what He has done for us. Like Timothy we heed the exhortation, *"You, then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus"* (2 Timothy 2:1). He is the source of our armor. He Himself is our Defense.

To put on the armor is to understand Christ's provision for us and our identification with His work. In other words, we assume the attitude of faith at work in our lives. When all the pieces of this gospel armor are considered together, they tell us what Christ Jesus is to us as the Lord Protector.

Putting on or taking up the various pieces of armor consists in our understanding of each piece's significance. The pieces describe Jesus' relationship to us, and they can defend us in the various areas of our lives which come under Satan's attack. Remember this and put on by faith and confession of who we are in Christ in the spiritual battles.

Th hymnwriters have correctly interpreted the Word of God to us:

Stand up, my soul, shake off your fears
and gird the gospel armor on;

march to the gates of endless joy,
where your great Captain Savior's gone.
(Isaac Watts)

Put on the gospel armor,
each piece put on with prayer;
where duty calls or danger
be never wanting there.
(George Duffield)

The fight is on – arouse you soldiers brave and true!
Jehovah leads and victory will assure;
Go buckle on the armor God has given you,
And in His strength unto the end endure.
(Lelia Morris)

Fight the good fight with all your might,
Christ is your strength and Christ your right;
lay hold on life and it shall be
your joy and crown eternally.
(J Monseil)

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