

The Belt of Truth | Eph 6:14

If you have your Bibles, turn to Ephesians 6:14. And if you don't have your Bibles, bring it next week. I want to thank everyone for their encouragement this last week. It's a little overwhelming how much encouragement and love you've shown to my wife and myself this last week. I'm thankful for a church body to serve. It's wonderful to be loved and it's wonderful to love. The world doesn't know anything about true love. Real, sacrificial love. It's something that's of God. God is love. It's His very nature to love and give freely. It's just an amazing thing, the love of God and the love of His people.

Let's go to the Lord in prayer and ask for the Lord's blessing. We're going to be looking at verse 14 of chapter six of Ephesians. It's just one little phrase, one little verse. But there's so much needed truth for us to grasp in this verse. I just pray the Lord will help us grasp it, understand, believe, and apply it. Let's pray.

Our heavenly Father, we bow our heads before You because You're the Almighty. We are Your servants. We are Your children. We are the sheep of Your pasture. Lord, our hearts are mindful of Thomas Griffith and, Lord, we're aware that his life and our own life is in Your hands. We live, we move and have our being in Christ Jesus. You hold our very breath in Your hands. Lord, we're so thankful that You're a good God. We're thankful that You sent Your Son to die for our sins. Lord, we come to You empty-handed today. We want to worship You but we have no sacrifice to give You. All we have is to give what you gave us. Lord, look at Your Son and be pleased with Him. In our place, we throw back the righteousness of Christ as our offering. And, Lord, all we can do is say we're thankful that You provided a sacrifice. You provided an atonement for us. Lord, bless the meeting today. Meet with us. Bless Your holy name. Let it be magnified among us, Your people. In Your Son's name, amen.

Verse 14 tells us to stand, therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth. Last week, we talked about how we are in a battle whether we like it or not. You're at war and there is an enemy and the enemy is not flesh and blood. He may use flesh and blood. He may use your sister, your brother, your family member, or coworker. He may use false teachers, false prophets. He may use all types of people as instruments in his hands, but the Bible says we're not warring with these people. It's not flesh and blood that are true enemies. There is a power. The prince of the power of the air who is the commander of all unbelieving people. He holds all the world in his hands. And it's the devil himself who is our enemy and it's the devil, though he's like a lion roaming around, seeking someone like you to devour, it is he that we fight against. And he's fighting against you and we need to realize that Satan hates you.

He doesn't tolerate you. He despises you. He hates you. He's the destroyer. He wants to destroy you. He wants to devour you. He wants to shift you. He wants to take you and utterly rip you apart by the seams. He wants to bring you down into the pit with himself. You don't realize how much God loves you and you don't realize how much Satan hates you. He is out to destroy you and he's watching you. When you're sleeping, Satan is looking to come against you when

you wake up. In fact, he may be attacking you while you're sleeping. In your dreams. When you wake up with your first thoughts. You go to work, he's there. When you go home, he's there. You turn on the television, he's definitely there. He's everywhere. He's on social media. Just turn on the news and you see his effects, his works, everywhere. You've got to fight. You need the armor of God.

You can read Isaiah 59 and see that Christ Jesus is the Man who conquered for us. And He, Christ Jesus, put on His armor and won the victory for us. And then He takes off His armor and He gives it to use to wear. You see, we saw last week that we have to fight. It says to be strong and courageous. But not in your own strength or power. You're incompetent. You're weak. You're unable to defeat Satan. He's stronger, more crafty, more wise than you are. But you have to fight him. But you can't. Therefore, be strong not in your own strength. Be strong in the strength of the Lord. Be strong in His might. And how are you going to be strong? How are you going to be able to fight the evil one? You have to put on His armor, His protection, His weapons. And this is what we're getting into. We have the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit. These are your weapons. This is your armor. This is what you're going to need if you're going to stand firm in the evil day.

First of all, we know we need this. Let's look at the first thing we need to put on. In verse 14, we learn that we need to put on a belt. Now, some of you think, "Well, I need the shield, or the breastplate, or the sword but I don't really need that belt. That's just extra weight." But we're going to see that this belt ties everything together. This belt is the foundation behind all the other pieces. It's the crucial piece of armor. You put it on first. It's mentioned first for a reason. You're going to need this one. I mean, you can't not have the other ones either. Every one is essential. But put the belt on first. Get it on.

So, what is this belt? Well, it's the belt of truth. And what we're going to see today is why we need to put it on and then we'll conclude with my second point, how to put it on. How to fasten it. How to get it around your waist properly. But why do you need to put it on? That's the first question. Why do you need this belt? Well, there are several reasons. There are four reasons why you need this belt.

One, because the battle is over truth. This is where the battle-line is. This is where the fight is. This is the front-lines. Wherever you see the truth, there you see the battle. Satan is not attacking errors and lies. Of course, he's using Islam and all these false religions. Of course, he's using these as lies for deception in the blindness of the world. Yes, he's in control of every lie and every deception, but that's not where he's focusing his battle upon. Satan's aiming his attacks where the truth is located. He's coming after the truth. Those are the front-lines of the battle. It's where the war is going to be fought, won or lost. Wherever you see the truth, there you know there's a war raging. And the more you proclaim the truth, the more you will have to fight. That's the first reason.

Secondly, Satan's main weapon against us and the world is a lie, falsehood, heresies. Remember in the garden, how he brought the whole human race down on its knees? He came to Eve and said, "Has God *really* said?" I mean, he's questioning the word of God. He got Adam and Eve to question the word of God. He was so subtle, he didn't give a complete lie; he just introduced a slight compromise, a slight error. He put a bug in the coding and corrupted the truth. How did Satan attack Jesus Christ? He didn't just jump on Him and wrestle Him. No, he attacked Him with lies and error. He would misquote scriptures to Jesus out of context. The Lord Jesus, how did He have to fight? With the truth. He fought back with the truth. And He would rebuke Satan's lies with the truth. You realize the most dangerous weapons in the world are not physical weapons of mass destruction, it's not Russian and its army, it's not tanks and missiles, not chemical weapons, not even a cashless society controlled by an A.I. It's lies. A lie is what destroyed humanity in the first place. Falsehood brings, not just physical death, but eternal death. Every sin you can think of, every sin in existence, is bred and germinated out of a lie.

There is no sin without falsehood. There's no sin without truth. You cannot sin without believing a lie. It's lies, error, heresies behind sinful behavior. Lies are the root of sin. And to get men to sin like you, Satan must get you to believe a lie. You who are having trouble in your marriages, it's because Satan is whispering a lie to you. And you're believing it. It's because you've got bad theology that you're struggling with lust. Because you're beginning to believe a false promise that there's satisfaction outside of Christ Jesus. That you can be appeased and satisfied and fulfilled in this world. It's a lie! It's a lie and we know it's a lie but we are duped into believing all over again. The devil whispers these lies constantly, constantly, constantly in our ears. It's like Delilah whispering in Samson's ear until he breaks. And you make fun of Samson but you're the Samson in this story. You're the one, and I'm the one, that after hearing these lies repetitively, we begin to think maybe it's true. Maybe I can take a quick glance and be okay. It would be a little exciting. Maybe I can let my mind gossip in my thoughts. No, I won't speak the gossip but I'll just think evil in my heart and my mind. It'll make me feel just a little bit better by slandering others in my conscience.

That's the devil waging war against us. And it's us getting wounded and beaten. Every besetting sin can be traced back to lies that we believe. Temptation itself is a lie. It's a false promise. It's dangling something that's shiny in front of us and we see it and we think that it's glory when it's not glory, it's hell. We don't see the broken marriages, families, and lies that's behind the shiny attraction. The most dangerous thing in the life of a church is false teaching. I mean, the Bible is littered with warnings about false teaching. Hebrews 13:9, *Do not be carried away by varied and strange teachings.* Galatians 1:6, *I'm amazed that you're so quickly deserting him that called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel, which is really not a gospel.* 2 Timothy 2:4, *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but waiting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teaching in accordance with their own desires and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.* That's what we're seeing today.

Colossians 2:8, *See that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception according to the traditions of men, according to the elementary principles of the world.*

Ephesians 4:14, *As a result, we're not longer to be children tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by the craftiness and deceitful scheming.* 1 Timothy 4:1, *But the Spirit especially says that in the later times there will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons.*

Don't think that Satan doesn't disguise himself as an angel of light to bring a little minor corruption to the gospel, to lead us away from the truth into a form of a lie. And all evil comes from some belief of lies. We're to hold fast. Hebrews 10:22, *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.* We must hold fast to the truth. We must believe it and hold it dear to our lives. We must buy the truth and not sell it. We must treasure it. We must put on this belt of truth. Do you realize heresies have struck our nation in the churches of our country? It's widespread. It's an epidemic. Ligonier did a survey within evangelicalism and it's sad, the results that it found in 2020. Among non-evangelical adults within America, the question was asked, "Is Jesus God?" 50% of Americans that were asked said yes. Only 30% of evangelicals agreed.

Now, I don't think it means that non-evangelicals are claiming they believe that Jesus is God, they're saying that's what the Bible says. But evangelicals say that the Bible does not say Jesus is God. 30% of evangelical, confessing evangelicals in America, only 30% believe Jesus is God. That is bad. 50% of evangelicals in America think man is good by his very nature. That's bad theology. I remember watching someone going from church to church and he would visit a church and, after the service, he would do surveys of the people exiting the building. And he asked them, "Could you tell me what justification is?" And only about 10% of the people coming out of churches could identify justification and give any form of definition to it. That's bad. Don't think Satan's not at work in the churches.

You need to know justification. If you're a Christian, you *must* know that doctrine. Satan's coming after us and don't think he doesn't have Grace Bible Church in his targets. We're not immune to Satan's schemes. You see, Satan is subtle. He's crafty. He doesn't want us to worship himself. It's not like he has to get us to be demon worshippers of Satan worshippers. He just has to slowly get us off the sufficiency of scripture. The scriptures just aren't sufficient to give us everything we need to know about faith in our practice. Just a subtle, little slide away from the foundation. That's happening. You see, we have to have truth if we're going to wage a war against Satan's number one weapon: error. We have to have the truth. There is no other way to combat error without truth.

I have some people say, "Your church is too doctrinal." You can't be too doctrinal! We're all called to be theologians. I mean, if we're just getting help to get it through the week – "I need practical sermons on how to make it through a stressful week" – and we do need those. No doubt you need a pep-rally to get you through the week. We need that, of course. But there's a greater attack than just feeling a little tired on Monday morning. You need to know the doctrine of justification by faith. You need to be rooted and grounded in some real theology that's going to help you when Satan comes after you.

Thirdly, why do we need this belt? Because the battle takes place within our minds. Where is this battle? It's where truth is but where is truth? Truth is something that you can't put your finger on. It's nothing physical; it's something that exists objectively because it's in the mind of God. It's not dependent upon your belief, thankfully. It's dependent upon God's belief. So, it's objective but it's nothing that is physical. Truth is something that's conceptual. And that battle field is within your thinking. You wage this war not with a physical sword. The weapons of our warfare are not physical. You don't need guns. You don't need weapons. You need something to combat Satan who whispers in your mind. It takes place within your thinking. Now, objective truth cannot be defeated, but you can be. And your thoughts are often defeated.

You see, our subjective perspective of objective truth is where the battle is located. For instance, our problem is not the actual problem; your problem is how you perceive your problem. It's a big difference. Someone could come and slash every one of our car tires out there. Every one of them. We go all out, ready to go eat, and we notice that all four of our tires have been slashed. Someone came and did that. Some of you would go, "Okay, no big deal. I'll Uber my way home and fix this tomorrow." And it wouldn't ruin your day at all. You would move on quite easily. Maybe because you've got plenty of finances or maybe because you're trusting God or whatever. Some of you would just maybe break down. Maybe it's because you don't know how you're going to pay for it, Maybe because you had to be somewhere very quickly. It's inconvenient. But why is one person handling the problem well and the other person about to lose it?

One's angry and the other one's calm and collected. Why? It's not the problem, you see. I've seen people like Thomas Griffith, who gets terrible diagnoses, and says, "Glory be to God." And other people crumble and are unable to cope with it. It's not cancer that's your problem. I know there's a physical problem. I'm not denying that reality, but the battle is in how you perceive that reality. The battle is how you handle that difficulty and problem. The battle is going to be in your thinking. This is where Satan's waging war against you. He's waging war in your head. And yes, Satan does tempt your thinking. How does he do that? He's Satan. He's not flesh and blood. He's not like us. I mean, I can get in your head maybe by speaking, but I can't whisper into your thoughts. You say, "Well, that's the flesh." What do you think Satan uses? He will accuse you. He'll say, "You're not worthy to be a Christian."

He'll make you feel guilty. He will tempt you. In fact, he does tempt you regularly. He will distract you with despair, depression, anxiety. Fill your heart full of these emotional distresses. Rather than being able to look at the Lord Jesus Christ, you'll be focused, like Peter was, on the waves and the storm. You'll be focused on your problem, not the great Master of the world. Of course, it will overcome you. It's hard to be strong in the Lord when you're overcome with anxiety, fear, and depression and emotional distress. It's hard to fight Satan when you believe bad theology. The worst thing you can do, if you're suffering, going through cancer or sickness, and you're really suffering and it's a hard trial. The worst thing that can happen to you is to have that trial and bad theology. To filter your trial through bad theology will utterly destroy you. It's only when you have good theology – it doesn't eliminate your trial or take away your cancer, but good theology allows you to cope, fight, battle, and be victorious even in death.

I watched Joel Tiegreen win the battle when he died. He did not lose the day he died. He was full of faith and joy and peace in the Lord. What do you want? Do you want just an easy life? To just have a smooth life and everything going your way? There are no flat tires or mechanical problems with your car. Or you kids being frustrating or all these things that bring cares and concerns and hardships to your life. Do you want to just eliminate all that? You say, "God, just get rid of all that." Or do you want Jesus Christ? Do you want joy of the Lord or mere pleasure? You can have joy of the Lord no matter what you're going through. See, it's the devil lying to us that says you can't be happy because of what you're going through. That's a lie.

My fourth reason why we need this belt is because the belt is the means of standing strong. It says, in verse 14, *stand having fastened the belt of truth*. This is how you stand. Along with the other four things you need, we have to have truth. The lack of knowledge, bad theology, believing lies, is what's going to kill us, not the problem. Sometimes it's just a lack of knowing.

I'm not the best handyman. It frustrates me because I want my wife to be impressed with me and she's always telling me to call my friend Elvis. Elvis has fixed a lot of things at my house over the years. One time, he fixed the garbage disposal. He's done some drywall in my house. He's done all kinds of things but one time the deep freeze went out and I'm thinking, "Okay, let's save the meat." Letha says, "Call Elvis." I think that you can't fix a deep freeze. He comes over after the meat is all secured and taken out and I was like, "Letha wants you to look at this." He finds the socket and pushes the little button. The thing turns back on. It sounds naive but I didn't know to think of that. It didn't even cross my mind to check the little breaker on the socket. How many people perish in more serious trials because they just don't know what to do?

Hosea 4:6 says this. *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*. They're being destroyed, eaten up, devoured by Satan because they just don't know how to respond. They just don't know the truth. They don't know how to combat Satan's temptations. They're being destroyed left and right. And we're losing many of the battles simply out of ignorance. Simply because we don't know the word of God. We don't know the promise to counter the lie. We don't know how to answer the objections of Satan, the temptations of the mind, and thus we're destroyed. You see, the truth is the belt that holds all the other pieces of the armor together. The breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God). All these things have one thing in common: everything is connected back to the truth. Without the truth, all these other objects that we're to put on don't, and cannot, exist. You don't have the sword of the Spirit without the truth. You don't have righteousness without truth. You don't have faith without the object of faith being the word of God, the truth.

Truth is essential. It's the primary piece of armor that we have to have. Truth is the root of the Christian life. The Bible says that He chose us to give birth in us through the word of truth. We're sanctified, the Bible says, by the truth. John 8 says *you will know the truth and the truth will set you free*. Truth is kind of the heart of who the Christian is. You can't be a Christian unless you believe the truth. Now, if we're Christians, we all have a certain amount of truth that we believe. It's the essentials of the gospel. But we're to grow from that elementary knowledge into greater

truths. Sanctification will not happen without growing in the word of God. You can read the book of Titus and learn two things in the book of Titus. The theme of Titus is: bad doctrine leads to bad living and sound doctrine leads to holy living. You can't separate holiness from truth. You can't separate your Christian life from truth. You can't fight Satan if you don't know the truth. And all of us need to grow in the truth.

Paul's rebuking, if it is Paul who wrote the book of Hebrews, is rebuking his readers. He says, "By this time, you should be teachers but you still need to be taught." And that shouldn't be said of any of us if we're more than five years into the Christian walk. We all should be teachers and be equipped. If you're not coming to our Sunday school hour, we learned justification by faith this morning. Powerful. You say, "I already know that doctrine." Do you realize that you have to constantly be put back into memory of the things you already know? You think you know the doctrine of justification by faith alone? Then why do you doubt it when Satan says you're not worthy enough to be a Christian? Because you forget it. We need to constantly be put back into remembrance of the things we've learned and then build on that and grow. I love it, and I know you do too, you love it when you read the Bible and you get something new and fresh. Something that sparks something in you. And as you get older, Christian, at first it's like everything's new, everything's alive, everything's fresh. But as you grow older in the Lord, sometimes it's just one little word or concept, but when you see it, it's amazing.

I've already preached through Romans but I was reading Romans one again and it's like, "Man, that is amazing. Where has that been my whole life?" I feasted on that for the whole week. This is our weapon. Paul put it this way in 2 Corinthians 10, *For though we walk in the flesh, we're not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.* That's strongholds even in our own thinking. *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion that's raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience.*

We have to fight. This is our weapon. It's the power of God unto salvation. It's sharper than any two-edged sword. It's able to discern our own thinking. It's able to even pierce and convict those we speak to. It's what we have. It's so important that we strap on the belt of truth. Now, I said I would conclude with how to do this. How do I put on this belt? It tells us as a command, this is imperative, *stand therefore having fastened on the belt of truth.* That is past-tense, after you have put on this belt of truth, now, present-tense, stand now that you have done this.

Well, obviously there are three things that we all know are true. You've got to know the truth. You've got to believe the truth. And you've got to obey the truth. You've got to know it first. I don't know how serious you take Bible study in your life, but you should take it as if your life depended upon it, because it does. Paul told Timothy, "You do well to preach the truth because you'll not only save yourself but you'll save those who hear you." We persevere not through our past-tense believing the truth. We persevere by our present-tense, ongoing belief in the truth. I like what John Calvin says about the best principle of hermeneutics, that is, how you understand the word of God. And you may be going, "Jeff, I read the Bible but I don't get a lot out of it. In fact, I read some stuff and I just can't understand it." And that's fair enough. That's all of us,

actually. But the Bible tells us that it's God who illuminates our minds. It's not your intellectual skill or power or IQ that makes you a good Bible interpreter. You don't have to be the smartest person to know the word of God.

One, I don't think the Bible was meant to be written in code or hard to understand. It's pretty clear, for the most part. But the Bible does say this, *to whom it has been given, more shall be given. But him who does not have, what he does have shall be taken away from him.* It's basically saying this: if you have something, and you know it is true, and you don't just know it and believe it, but you act upon it and obey it, God says, "I'll give you more." Obedience to what you know will lead to more knowing. But if you know and you don't act upon it, you're like the foolish man who builds his house upon the sand, but not only will your house fall, God will take what you did know and take it away from you.

You're not going from staying stagnant with a certain level of the Christian faith. No, you're either increasing it or you're losing it. God's either giving you more, or God's actively, in judgment, taking it away. Think of it this way: you're going to build a house on your land and you don't have the funds to do it. So, someone says, "Listen, I'm going to give you \$50,000 to get started." You say, "I can't build a house for \$50,000." "I know you can't, but you can get the foundation laid. You can get started. And if you do a good job and are faithful with the little I've given you, I'll make sure you have more when you go to build the infrastructure. I'll keep you supplied. But if you take that \$50,000 and mispend it, I will come back and take it away from you."

God doesn't give us everything at once. You don't become and you don't know everything. I don't know everything. We're all growing. But how do you put it on? How do you put this belt on? You take what you know and be faithful with it. You be a good steward with your knowledge. You fight Satan with it. And implement it in your life. Implement it in your marriages. If you do that, God will show you more and He'll continue to show you more and more. Combat the lies and temptation of Satan with the truth of God's promises. This is how you put it on. The Bible says, *Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against You.* You have to hide the word of God in your heart because Satan's going to attack you in your hearts, thoughts, and mind.

I like what Psalm 15 says. It says to speak the truth in our hearts. So, you've got the word of God in your hearts and minds, now it says for you to speak to yourself. You do it all the time. You think all the time. You're constantly mulling over thoughts. It's either bad theology or good theology. It's either the lies of Satan or the truth of God's word that you're mulling over and how you contemplate will determine how you handle your problems. It's what you say to yourself and believe in your heart that's going to determine if you're victorious or defeated. So, you have to preach to yourself. The Puritans would call it meditating. It's simply speaking the truth in your heart. It's being your own preacher.

The Holy Spirit goes with you. You have to take the word with you. You have to hide it in your heart. Here's how I think it functions: Satan comes with lies, you have to counter those lies with truth just like the Lord did in the garden. Satan came to Hlm... Now, Eve did not come back and

say, "You're misquoting God." She believed him. The Lord Jesus said, "No, that's not true. Get behind Me. You say this, but I'll tell you what the Bible says." The Lord Jesus knew the Bible better than Satan.

Here are some common lies that you may be tempted to believe. First, God has abandoned you and He doesn't listen to your prayers anymore. Ever believed that one? Why pray, God doesn't hear me? Isaiah 41:10, this is what you repeat back to yourself, *Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.* Get behind me, Satan.

Secondly, the future is uncertain. You who watch, or used to watch, Fox News, you're full of fear watching the news. It's uncertain days. I don't know what to believe anymore. Other than the Bible, I've learned not to trust anything. It's hard to navigate through all the propaganda and lies and misinformation. I don't know. It's hard. And so we can be fearful about tomorrow, fearful about what's going on in Ukraine. We can be fearful about all kinds of things. Be filled with fear and anxiety, right? That's Satan speaking to you. Read this verse in your head. Philippians 4:19, *My God will supply every need of yours according to the riches and glory in Christ Jesus.* You're going to be taken care of.

You may think, "Well, the world is out of control." Read this in your mind, *Why do the nations rage and the people plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His anointed, saying "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." But He who sits in the heavens laughs. I mean, right now, believe this, God's laughing at all the raging going on in the world. The Lord holds them in derision. And then He will speak to them in His wrath and terrify them in His fury, saying "As for Me, I've set My king on Zion, My holy hill."*

What about this lie you're prone to believe? You're unworthy to be a Christian. What does Paul say? There is now no condemnation. John put it this way in 1 John, *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of all of our unrighteousness.* Believe and memorize that one. You're going to need that one every day because Satan is the accuser of the brethren and he's constantly accusing you.

What about this lie? My suffering is a sign of God's abandonment. I'm going through things and God's left me. Remember Job? Read his life and one of the things you'll notice is not just the trials he went through, one thing after another, though it all happened in one day, and his wife wanted him to curse God and die and his friends came over and just condemned him. Everything was miserable for Job. But one of the worst things for Job was he kept on asking where God is. Kept on saying, "If I could just speak to God. If He could just hear me." This whole book is full of God saying, "Where are you?" And God doesn't show up until the very end. And you may feel in your life that God is not around and He's not hearing you, that He's left you to your sickness, your financial problems, your loneliness, your trials. But the Bible tells us in 1 Peter 1:6, *In this you greatly rejoice, though for a little while, if need be, you're grieved by various trials.* This trial is not a proof of God's abandonment; it's a proof of God's love. Joel

Tiegreen would tell me that three or four times on a phone call. He said, "This is my favorite verse because it says, 'only if need be.' This is needed in my life." It's not a sign of God not loving me. Do you realize every hangnail that you have is appointed by God for your good? What you may think doesn't matter, the little trial that you're facing is a sign of God's love for you to get your mind off this world and back on Him. You know that these trials are working in you a far greater weight of glory than whatever loss you may have in this world.

What about this lie? To find meaning and purpose in life, you must be liked by everyone. The desire to be loved by everybody, to be liked, to be thought well-of. You know what this is called? The fear of man. We're all prone to this. You say, "No, I don't care what people think about me." Yes, you do. Proverbs 29:25 is how you combat this. The word of God says *fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the Lord is a means of safety*. Isaiah 51:12 says, *I, yes I, am the One who comforts you. Who are you that you are so afraid of humans that will die? Why are you afraid of them? Do not fear those who kill the body but fear the One who can kill the body and soul and hell.*

What about this lie? No one likes you. You're not very likable. Not only do people not like you, but if they talk to you, it's either to get something out of you, or they're just being accommodating. They're just trying to be nice. They truly don't like you because you don't have anything really likable about you. Well, how do you combat that one? Not by saying, "I'm good and beautiful and everybody should like me because I'm so handsome and charming." That's not the way. The devil would get you to believe something like that. Here's how you combat that one. 1 Corinthians 13 says, *love thinks the best*. Don't think people don't like you. That's thinking the worst of them. Think the best of them. Think well of them.

What about this lie? Lustful thinking will satisfy your flesh? The Bible says, rather, *blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God*. Take the promise that's really a lie that promises you something gratifying, and replace it with a better promise. A real promise. "I don't need that, I want God. That will be fulfilling."

What about this one? You will never be happy married to your spouse. You married the wrong person. You shouldn't have gotten married to this person. That's Satan speaking to you. If you're married, you know, without a doubt, it's the will of God for you to be married to your spouse. And then take this verse to combat such a lie. Proverbs 5:18, *Let the fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth*.

Death is something you must dread, Satan says to us. But Jesus says, "Everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die." There is truth, there are promises, for every lie that there is. We just need to know them. And we need to store those truths into our hearts and into our minds and preach to ourselves daily. Every false promise of Satan must be countered by a true promise of God. You need to know your Bible. You need to know the promises of God. You need to have good theology. This is how you fasten on the belt of truth.

Let's pray.

Lord, thank You for giving us a book, giving us objective truth that's true regardless of whether we believe it or not. But help us to take hold of it and fasten it on. To meditate upon it. To believe it. To know it. To live by it. To love it. To cherish it. Let us buy the truth and not sell it. Lord, we know that Your word and Your law is to be more desired than fine gold. It is the most precious thing You've given us and we know ultimately, truth is Jesus Christ Himself. Thank You for this belt, the armor of God, that You've given us so we can stand against the wiles, craftiness, temptations, and attacks of Satan. This we pray in Your Son's name, Amen.