

The Shield of Faith Means: God is Always There

Ephesians 6:16; 1 Cor. 10:13

Paul gives the insight that explains our struggles throughout our earthly lives as we look at Ephesians 6:16. Think about what we have read so many times:

above all, **taking the shield** of faith with which **you will be able** to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one

Now, apply the simple methods of Bible study. How many truths can you find in this one verse?

Lessons & Truths from Ephesians 6:16

Here they are:

1. **Taking the shield is not optional, it is a command** (“above all” is a continuation of the four commands in v. 10, 11, 13, 14)
2. **God has designed this supernatural defense system for every believer.** (“taking the shield”)
3. **God as our shield is tied to our faith.** (“of faith”)
4. **Using God’s shield empowers us to see the wicked one’s flaming missiles quenched.** (“with which”)
5. **God offers complete protection.** (“all”)
6. **Satan’s realm can shoot & throw flaming missiles our way.** (“the fiery darts”)
7. **God’s great enemy is also after us.** (“of the wicked one”)

Paul reminds us that nothing shot our way has to defeat us if we hide behind our shield. Our shield is trusting what God has already told us: that is faith.

We do not extinguish fiery darts, God does.

The shield of faith is a promise from God that He will always extinguish every attempt Satan makes to enflame our lusts and temptations.

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God’s promise is very clear.

Paul taught the church at Corinth about God as their shield.

Look back with me at 1 Corinthians 10.

1 Corinthians 10:1-13 (NKJV) Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. ⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷ And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." ⁸ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; ⁹ nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; ¹⁰ nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; **but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.**

Pray

The Terrible Aftermath of Unextinguished Arrows

What does a church look like when the shield of faith is unused?

Open to 2 Cor. 12. Paul had more chapters devoted to this wandering congregation than any other New Testament body.

The Corinthians are synonymous with the carnal life, lax morals, and disobedient lives.

They are also a church filled with all the consequences of sin: coldness of heart, pain, divisions, lawsuits, divorces, heartaches, and the heavy hand of God's chastening discipline upon them.

But they were saints.

That's how the epistles to them open.

The sins that saints can get ensnared in are vividly seen in the church at Corinth.

Now turn with me onward to 2 Corinthians 12:20-21 (NKJV):

For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and *that* I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest *there be* contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;²¹ lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who

have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

What was going on?

They were allowing all the lusts that are ever with all of us to enflame them. Always remember that:

Unextinguished Arrows Start Big Fires

A German pastor who was hung for his faith in Christ in 1945 wrote these words in a sermon on temptation¹:

"In our members there is a slumbering inclination towards desire which is both sudden and fierce. With irresistible power desire seizes mastery over the flesh.

All at once a secret, smoldering fire is kindled.

The flesh burns and is in flames.

It makes no difference whether it is sexual desire, or ambition, or vanity, or desire for revenge, or love of fame and power, or greed for money, or, finally, that strange desire for the beauty of the world, of nature.

Joy in God is...extinguished in us and we seek all our joy in the creature.

At this moment God is quite unreal to us, he loses all reality, and only desire for the creature is real; the only reality is the devil.

Satan does not here fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God....

The lust thus aroused envelops the mind and will of man in deepest darkness.

The powers of clear discrimination and of decision are taken from us....

It is here that everything within me rises up against the Word of God."

Wow, that sure portrays the issue of the flaming darts.

Our only hope is to remember that above all, we are to:

Take Up the Shield

Each piece of this spiritual armor must be responded to.

Just like we had to call on the Name of the Lord to be saved.

So we must respond to God's call to take & wear each piece.

Shield of Faith	Looking for God when I'm tempted
Helmet of Salvation	Knowing what Christ has done for me
Sword of the Spirit	Using God's Word to combat sin & unbelief in my life

¹ Swindoll, *Sensuality*, p. 10, quoting from Bonhoeffer.

When God Says ALL, He means All

How do we resist the Devil?

Paul said the shield of faith extinguishes all the fiery darts.

Paul had experienced those flaming arrows extinguished.

Ephesians 6:16 (NKJV) above all, taking the shield of faith with which **you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one**

Jesus saw him flee.

Matthew 4:11 (NKJV) **Then the devil left Him**, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

James assures us he will flee.

James 4:7 (NKJV) Therefore submit to God. **Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

John the final Scripture writer affirms even more of the same when he said we are overcomers in Christ.

1 John 4:4 (NKJV) You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because **He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**

Jesus saw the devil flee. Matthew 4:11

James saw the devil flee. James 4:7

Paul saw his fiery attacks extinguished. Ephesians 6:16

Peter affirms we can resist the Devil. 1 Peter 5:9

John attests that God is greater than anything the Devil shoots at us. 1 Jn. 4:4

It always works, just try it is God's promise.

Only the shield of faith, (looking for God each time we're tempted), can extinguish these flaming arrows.

Here is a simple set of the big seven temptations we face all through life, that only the shield of faith can extinguish.

We Extinguishing Satan's Darts by Responding to God

When Faced with...	Respond to what God Says:
1. Besetting sins & habits	Romans 6:11-13 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin , but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.; Colossians 3:5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.; Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts , we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,
2. Fear & Depression	Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed , for the LORD your God <i>is</i> with you wherever you go.; Psalm 71:14 (NIV) As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.
3. Words that hurt	Ps. 141:3 (NKJV) Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth ; Keep watch over the door of my lips; Col. 4:6 Let your speech always be with grace , seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.; James 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath ;

4. Sexual Lusts	Job 31:1 (NIV) "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman; Gen 39:9b How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"
5. Pride	Jer. 9:23-24 (NKJV) Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise <i>man</i> glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty <i>man</i> glory in his might, Nor let the rich <i>man</i> glory in his riches; ²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.
6. Wasting Time	Ps 119:37 (NKJV) Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way.
7. Materialism	Mt 6:19-20 (NKJV) Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.; 1 Cor. 3:14-15 If anyone's work which he has built on <i>it</i> endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire; 2 Cor. 5:10 (NKJV) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things <i>done</i> in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

When Faced with...Besetting Sins & Habits

Respond to what God Says:

Romans 6:11-13 Likewise you also, **reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² Therefore **do not let sin reign** in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And **do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness** to sin, but **present yourselves to God** as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.;

Colossians 3:5 Therefore **put to death** your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.;

Titus 2:12 teaching us that, **denying ungodliness and worldly lusts**, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

When Faced with...Fear & Depression

Respond to what God Says:

Joshua 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; **do not be afraid, nor be dismayed**, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go.";

Psalms 71:14 (NIV) As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.

When Faced with...Words that hurt

Respond to what God Says:

Psalms 141:3 (NKJV) **Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth**; Keep watch over the door of my lips;

Col. 4:6 **Let your speech always be with grace**, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.;

James 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be **swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath**;

When Faced with...Cravings of the Flesh

Respond to what God Says:

Job 31:1 (NIV) "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman;

Gen 39:9b How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Rom. 6:13 (NKJV) And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.

Eph. 4:22-24 (NKJV) that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, ²³ and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Col. 3:5 (NKJV) Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

When Faced with...Pride

Respond to what God Says:

Jer. 9:23-24 (NKJV) Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty *man* glory in his might, Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches; ²⁴ **But let him who glories glory in this**, That he understands and knows Me, That I *am* the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.

Colossians 3:12 (NKJV) Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

James 4:10 (NKJV) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

When Faced with...Wasting Time

Respond to what God Says:

Ps. 90:12 (NKJV) So teach *us* to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Ps 119:37 (NKJV) Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, *And* revive me in Your way.

Eph. 5:16 (NKJV) redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Jam. 4:14 (NKJV) whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

When Faced with...Materialism

Respond to what God Says:

Mt 6:19-20 (NKJV) **Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ **but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.;

1 Cor. 3:14-15 If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward.¹⁵ **If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss**; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire;

2 Cor. 5:10 (NKJV) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, **that each one may receive the things done in the body**, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Remember that all the verbs and pronouns of spiritual warfare are plural? That reminds us that we need to:

Stay Connected, Keep Communicating & Never Stop Caring

That's what we are all supposed to be doing as we saw in Hebrews 10:24-25.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NKJV) And let us **consider one another in order to stir up love and good works**, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, **but exhorting one another, and so much the more** as you see the Day approaching.

Did you catch that?

As members of Christ's Body we are to:

Resist the temptation to isolation.

Break into someone's life with words from God's Word.

Reach out and see the wiles of the devil frustrated in their life, and yours.

When we speak God's Word there is power, not from us but from Him who is the Word.

Jesus has destroyed the power of the Devil (Heb. 2:14).

Jesus destroys every work of the Devil He is confronted with (1 John 3:8).

When we love Jesus, we love His family.

Church is the gathering of Christ's family.

Come.

Speak the truths of the Gospel of Christ.

Remind yourself and all around you that nothing and no one can snatch you or them (John 10:28-29); or separate you or them (Rom. 8:35-39), from Christ's love.

As believers, who walk in the Spirit as Paul said we are to do, we walk through life clothed in the protective gear God designed just for us; and we walk through life in community with those around us making sure they too are making it through the battle.

We are not alone. We are part of a family.

We help each other through the battles of life.

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