

WHAT is the “Sword of the Spirit”, WHY Does God Call it “Armor” & HOW Do We “Take” it Up?

Ephesians 6:13, 17

This morning we are looking at the sixth and final piece of our spiritual armor in Ephesians 6. But before we start examining the sword of the Spirit, do you remember the wider context of the book of Ephesians?

Ephesians describes our new identity in Christ, the new us, or what we may call our new “operating system”: better than any other book.

God’s Operating System for Believers

Ephesians was written to local church congregation filled with individuals struggling with all the normal personal weaknesses, the pain of family struggles, the stresses of work challenges, and the constant onslaughts of worldly temptations.

That kind of sounds like the same daily struggles each of us face today.

Ephesians 1-3: Our Positional Heavenly Blessings

Chapters 1-3 explain the spiritual blessings of all we have through Christ.

Theologians call this section our positional holiness.

These are three chapters of deep spiritual truths of all Christ did for us. The sum of what we have opens the book.

Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV) Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **ble^ssed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,**

There it is. “Every” spiritual blessing is ours through “Christ”.

Ephesians 4-6: Our Practical Holiness Choices

Chapters 4-6 detail our practical holiness.

These final three chapters describe a series of choices we are to obediently make.

Paul summarizes chapters 1-3 as our new calling, and then applies those truths to the elements of a new walk.

First, in Ephesians 4:1, we are to “walk worthy of the calling”.

Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV) I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to **walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,**

Then, in 4:22-24 there is another key series of choices:

Ephesians 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.

The new us equals the miraculous work of salvation in Ephesians 1-3.

We Are New Creations in Christ

The new us equals a supernatural creation of God living within us Paul calls the “new man”.

The **fullness of the Holy Spirit** transforms us as described in Ephesians 5:15-21.

This **fullness of the Holy Spirit** overflows into marriages that are changed by God into reflections of Christ’s love (Eph. 5:22-33).

The **fullness of the Holy Spirit** overflows into families changed by God into reflections of Christ’s peace (Eph. 6:1-4), and then our work lives and careers also forever changed by the filling of the Spirit that empowers to new us (Eph. 6:5-9).

Then we come to **our protection system** in Ephesians 6:10-17.

God reveals that the new creations we have become need daily care.

We need a spiritual care & protection system.

God designed this system to be like wearing a suit of body armor.

For us to operate as new creations in these old bodies, God says this is my plan.

The spiritual armor equals our care & protection system God designed.

Spiritual Armor Equals Our Care & Protection System

Think of your armor as the protection system God offers to us.

God wants to keep us operating like we were designed to operate.

We each go through life facing various obstacles, fears, hopeless situations, constant challenges, and often irresistible temptations. How do we stay on track?

How do we live out our lives in Christ each day?

The Ephesians 6 armor is what God designed as our care & protection system.

Note what the final piece is according to God.

Ephesians 6:17 (NKJV) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, **which is the word of God;**

Simply stated, the last piece of armor is holding onto the Word of God like a sword.

Pause and think with me:

Are you operating as you were designed by God to operate?

Does the fruit of the Spirit flavor our lives?

Does the Spirit's power radiate through our lives, marriages, families, and school or work lives?

Did you operate the way God designed you this week?

Operating as Designed to Operate

When you flipped a light switch in the dark at home this morning, what did you expect to happen?

How about when you turned the keys in the ignition switch of your car (or pushed the button if you have a newer car), what did you expect to happen?

Or, how about when you pushed the wake or start button on your phone or computer, what did you expect to happen?

Of course, with all of these actions, we expect the light switch, the ignition switch, the power button to start that device doing what it was designed to do.

The light comes on, the car starts, the phone or computer works.

When a device is doing what it was designed to do, we say everything is fine. It operates almost without us thinking.

Keeping things Operating Correctly

When the light doesn't come on at home either the power is out or the bulb is burned out.

If the car doesn't start its either out of gas or some other system is not functioning.

Same for phone or computers.

To keep things operating we take care of them.

We replace broken parts, refuel, keep plugged in, updated, and charged.

All of those are the care and protection guidelines.

Everything important in our lives comes with some instructions on: "How to care, protect and keep this device operating the way it was designed to operate".

That's what we have before us in God's Word.

God has given us a manual for operating the way he designed us to operate as new creations in Christ.

Operating the Way God Designed Us

Salvation made us a new creation.

We are amazing devices.

We are connected to our Creator, the Almighty God of the Universe.

We instantly become His habitation.

We go through life as His temple where He lives.

What happens when God moves in?

God through His Spirit living within causes changes.

Changes in our lives produced by God's Spirit is called the Fruit of the Spirit.

Turn back with me to Galatians 5:22-23.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

The transformation God brings at salvation is caused by His Spirit filling us. That leads to personality changes.

Those changes are called the fruit the Spirit brings inside us when He is controlling us.

He is our new operating system.

The Evidence of Obeying God = The Fruit of the Spirit

When operating as we were designed to operate God's Spirit changes us each day.

Walking in the Spirit means we are re-filled each day with self-sacrificing **love**.

Walking in the Spirit means we are recharged each day with endless **joys**.

Walking in the Spirit means we can go through entire days with a spiritual battery life that allows us to operate with:

unstoppable **peace**,

unflappable **longsuffering** attitudes,

evident **kindness** to even our enemies,

expressing the reflection of God's **goodness**,

with persistent **faithfulness**, and

winsome **gentleness**,

all wrapped in an amazing life bounded by **self-control**.

That is how we operate, when we operate the way God designed us to operate.

As the switch turns on, and a new day starts, that is what powers up.

That supernatural way of life that causes lost people to wonder about the God who lives within us. Now, back to where we started.

Spiritual Armor Equals Our Care & Protection System

Think of your armor as the protection system to keep us operating like we were designed to operate. We go through life facing obstacles, fears, hopeless situations, constant challenges,

and often irresistible temptations. How do we stay on track? How do we live out our lives in Christ each day? The Ephesians 6 armor we have been studying is what God designed as our care & protection system.

Are you operating as you were designed by God to operate?

Did you operate the way God designed you this week?

God said His Word is the guide to the care and protection of our new lives.

How are you doing at taking the Word as your sword?

We are looking at the sixth and final piece of our gear God says we need.

Each day we face foes that we have never seen, **but God has.**

We don't know how to defend ourselves, **but God does.**

That is Ephesians 6:10-17!

We Need the Protection Only God's Word Can Give

Each part of this armor is a reflection of what God has given us to meet a specific threat from the Evil One.

We Need the **Belt of Truth** to Resist **Satan the Liar** (Jn. 8:44)

John 8:44 (NKJV) You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, **and does not stand in the truth**, because **there is no truth in him**. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, **for he is a liar and the father of it.**

We Need the **Breastplate of Righteousness** to Resist **Satan the Accuser**. (Rev. 12:9)

Revelation 12:9-10 (NKJV) So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, **for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night**, has been cast down.

We Need the **Shoes of Peace** to Resist **Satan the Fear Maker** (2 Tim. 1:7).

2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV) For **God has not given us a spirit of fear**, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

We Need the **Shield of Faith** to Resist **Satan the Tempter** (1 Th.3:5).

1 Thessalonians 3:5 (NKJV) For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, **lest by some means the tempter had tempted you**, and our labor might be in vain.

We Need the **Helmet of Salvation** to Resist **Satan the Deceiver** (2 Cor. 11:14).

2 Corinthians 11:13-14 (NKJV) For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder! **For Satan**

himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

We Need the **Sword of the Spirit** to Resist **Satan the Devouring Lion** (1 Peter 5:8-9).

1 Peter 5:8-9 (NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because **your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.** ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

Through this final piece of armor, God reveals that we need to be armed with the ultimate weapon, which is the Spirit's Sword, God's Word.

Jesus the Word: Feeds & Protects My Life

Jesus is called the Word of God (Jn. 1:1).

The Logos, or the Word, is who He is (Rev. 19:13).

When I learn God's Word and take that same Word that saved me, and hold onto it by faith, it becomes the **Sword of the Spirit**.

The Word that feeds me (1 Pet. 2:2), saves me (1 Pet. 1:23), guides me (Ps. 119:105), fills me (Col. 3:16): also protects me.

By meditating upon that Word my life is purged, pruned, and sharpened (Josh. 1:8-9).

The holding onto the Word as a sword (Eph. 6:17), I am able to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12).

The Word is the sword that the Spirit can use in my life to defend me against the Evil One.

It is also the sword than can cut away layers of callousness.

It is the sword that can defend me, and refine me.

Take up Your Sword

When I want to be healthy and safe, I hold the **Sword of the Spirit**.

When I choose to use the truth of God's Word, I am using the **Sword of the Spirit**.

When I do **Jesus the Word: Feeds & Protects My Life**.

He feed my new life (Mt. 4:4), nourishes and cleanses my soul (Jn. 17:17).

Holding the Word as a scalpel can cut away layers of callousness and coldness towards God (Heb. 4:12).

Holding the Word as a sword can make the Evil One retreat before the voice of God that I cling to and hold.

The "sword of the Spirit" is the "Word of God" and we are to "take up" this final part of our war gear. How? By reading, studying, memorizing, and feeding our lives each day with God's Word. How are you doing?