

Ephesians 6

Armor

PREFACE

God's Word contains the answers to all of life's problems and needs. As we apply God's Word to our daily lives, the Holy Spirit strengthens us, our faith grows, and our lives are transformed.

But for many the bible is a complex book, too huge to tackle.

By selecting important chapters of the Bible (20 from the Old Testament, 20 from the New Testament) and focusing on them, I hope to encourage you to get into God's Word. To help accomplish this, I have prepared a visual memory aid for each key chapter. The aids are purposely *weird* in order to increase retention. Each aid has three elements:

1. The *book* of the Bible
2. The *chapter*
3. The *theme* of the chapter

By studying the memory aid several times and focusing on it, you will recall the image and consequently the book, chapter and theme.

Remembering these key chapters will enrich your daily life. It will also help you to relate God's Word to others. As you write greeting cards or speak with people, you will be able to apply God's Word directly to their problems or needs.

At times, you will be unable to speak directly to a person. Send them a Key Chapter booklet! They are designed for sharing!

Each Key Chapter booklet is presented in the same format:

1. *Background* for the chapter
2. *Key verses* of the chapter
3. *Thoughts* on the theme of the chapter

Bible classes and small study groups will find the third section helpful for discussions. The *thoughts* will provide a variety of applications upon which to reflect.

God will not let his Word return void (Isaiah 55:11)!

He will bless you abundantly as you meditate on his Word (Psalm 119:48)!

He will enable you to be a blessing to others as you spread his Word (Genesis 12: 2-3)!

Soli Deo Gloria,
Paul R. Schroeder

Explanation of the Memory Aid

1. The BOOK of the Bible:
The fortress is in the shape of an E on its back = **EPHESIANS**
2. The CHAPTER:
The number formed by the plume of the knight's helmet = **CHAPTER 6**
3. The THEME:
The knight in *armor* = **ARMOR**

EPHESIANS 6: BACKGROUND

Many regard the letter to the Ephesians as the most sublime of Paul's epistles. When he wrote this letter to the church he founded in Ephesus, Paul was imprisoned in Rome. Nearly 10 years had passed since he had been with these beloved people.

He reviews for them the importance of the church of Christ, which he describes as body (1:22-23; 4:14), temple (2:21-22) and wife (5:25-32). The "body" image, however, becomes the main image in the letter.

As loving parents have concerns for their children, Paul has concerns for the relatively young group of believers in Ephesus, who are surrounded by challenges to their faith. He urges them to be strong and to protect themselves with "the full armor of God."

Armor was well known to them. They certainly understood the great importance Paul was placing on God's spiritual gifts as he compared them to armor.

This chapter reminds us today, in a time of massive nuclear weapons, that spiritual warfare is still *personal*. Each person must respond to the battle call individually (though supportive of others). The responsibility for being properly dressed for battle is also an individual responsibility. While others may certainly help, the battle remains personal.

Confidence and determination are admirable qualities of the warrior. God told Joshua to be strong and courageous (Joshua 1:9). God not only encourages, he *equips*.

By the gift of each piece of armor, by our access to God in prayer, and by the presence of God's Spirit—it is clear that Satan cannot ultimately win. The victory is ours. "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

KEY VERSES OF EPHESIANS 6

Verse 1

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right

An important lesson for a soldier to learn is obedience. We learn the true meaning and significance of obedience when we are children. Disobedience to parents is one of the signs of the last times (2 Timothy 3:2).

Verse 4

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Fathers, as heads of households, have a God-given responsibility to act reasonably toward their children and to be very concerned about their faith in Christ.

Verse 10

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Our strength comes from him.

Verses 11, 13

Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

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.

We have a tricky enemy. We must be fully armed in order to survive. We must be protected from head to toe since we don't know where Satan will strike.

Satan camouflages the hideous, horrible nature of sin and makes it appear good, normal, and acceptable. Indeed, many a young Christian (as well as older) needs to be cautioned that it is "normal" to sin (within our sinful nature). Only in Christ can we be different—a new creature. In the battle with our sinful nature, the outcome for the believer is guaranteed victory. (See Romans 8:1, 10, 11, 13-18; see also Key Chapter booklet *Romans 6—New Life*).

Verse 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.

The dimensions of the struggle transcend the human arena. Our enemy is a spirit. Our warfare is spiritual. Only the spiritual armor which God provides will be of any use.

Verse 14

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place.

Be prepared. Protect your heart. God commands us as individual soldiers to stand firm. Then he provides the blessings to *enable* us to stand firm. When God commands us to do something, he also empowers us to do it.

Verse 15

And with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.
Get ready to move.

Verse 16

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Knock down the attempts of Satan to harm you. It is important, in faith, to reject and knock down the darts of Satan. Each attack must be defended against.

Verse 17

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.
The head must be protected! God's Spirit operates through his Word.

Verse 18

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 and vigilance go together. Praying in the Spirit keeps each Christian soldier in contact with "headquarters."

Verses 19-20

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Pray that nothing will hinder anyone's speaking boldly for Christ. Give to others your prayer support.

Verses 23-24

Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

Peace to all. Love to all. Grace to all.

THOUGHTS ON EPHESIANS 6

Day 1

In our battle with Satan, even death, his last great attack against us, will ultimately be defeated. We will rise again (Hebrews 2: 14-15). (See Key Chapter booklet / *Corinthians 15: Resurrection.*)

Christ has met Satan head on, and at every point of the battle, he defeated him. Christ's victory is ours through faith! In his strength we are victorious (Philippians 4:13).

Wearing the helmet is positively crucial. You may be able to survive without an arm or a leg, but if your head is gone, you are done! No wonder the helmet is "salvation." If salvation is gone, you are done! Don't put the helmet aside, even for a moment. You can get your head cut off that way.

A soldier can become injured in many ways. The most needless way is through carelessness. Rest from the battle is needed, but if taken at the wrong time or wrong place it can prove disastrous. No wonder Scripture calls the “soldier of the cross” to constant vigilance accompanied by prayer. Times of rest can only safely take place when we are securely in the fortress of our God (Psalm 47) or safely hidden behind the rock of our salvation (Psalm 62).

Human wisdom and strength are no match against Satan, because we are not fighting against mere flesh (Ephesians 6:12)

True spiritual warriors don’t boast of their strategy, prowess, or skill. They are fully aware that their strength and victories come from the Lord! (See Psalm 44: 4-8).

Day 2

Great warring leaders such as St. Ambrose, John Knox, etc., felt overwhelmed by the call to leadership. They were humbly filled with a sense of unworthiness and inadequacy for the task. They did not seek high position or prominence. God deliver us from leaders with selfish ambition who seek hollow glory for personal prestige.

Dressing properly for battle implies you know the enemy. Satan is not merely a fallen angel. He is a fallen angel. He has extraordinary powers of deception and strength. Never underestimate him. Martin Luther was right when he wrote in his great hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”: human power alone cannot defeat Satan.

Satan is not a roaring lion who intends only to bit us. He intends to devour and destroy us (1 Peter 5:8).

It’s true—the best defense is a good offense.

Paul enjoyed using ordinary things as object lessons. As he wrote these words, he was guarded by Roman soldiers. He uses the guard’s armor as his visual aid to teach a spiritual lesson.

When defending your self against accusations, words will hardly suffice. But righteous behavior—a good Christian life—will prove the accusations are lies (Romans 12: 20-21).

A soldier who stops praying is in danger of being fatally wounded. Prayer must be constant.

Victory in Christ is not only for the past. It is also very much for the present and future.

Day 3

Luther identified the “unholy three”: the devil, the world and our flesh.

The battle with our flesh—our sinful nature—will not end till death, but even our flesh will be victoriously overcome by the resurrection of our glorified body (Romans 8:23).

Some exciting victories are recorded for our comfort in the third and sixth chapters of Daniel.

We have a cheering section as we go to war (Hebrews 12:1).

The enemy may seem unbeatable, but remember that the bigger they are, the harder they fall. Victory is only “a stone’s throw away” (1 Samuel 17: 31-58).

The enemy is not your fellow Christian. Don’t fight back if he attacks. Make up! (See Matthew 18: 15-17; 5:23-24; Romans 12:18).

The works of the flesh are numerous. We are at war against them (Galatians 5: 19-21).

Zechariah 4:6: Not by might, or by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord Almighty.

Some additional Biblical references to armor: Romans 13:12, 2 Corinthians 6:7 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

Day 4

Some thoughts about Gideon and his army (book of Judges):

1. Gideon was threshing wheat at a winepress. Strange place! Why? He was hiding for fear of the Amalekites and Midianites, who would have taken his grain. He is filled with “ifs” and why’s” and insists on a “fleecy” answer to his prayers. Before God intervened and empowered him, he was hardly a man of confident faith.
2. The fleece test reassures us that God will continuously reaffirm and strengthen us as we seek his will and his ways. It would be better if our faith were strong enough to follow without such “tests” and signs”.
3. There was a good response to Gideon’s call to arms—32,000 responded. Yet the odds were nearly 4 to 1 since the Amalekites and the Midianites numbered 135,000 in all. With valiant effort and excellent strategy, perhaps Gideon’s army could win! Since there was that chance, God decided to “whittle” the army down in size.
4. The first process of “whittling” came in the form of an announcement. Similar to the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 20:8, Gideon’s volunteers were told, *Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead* (Judges 7:3). It’s a good thing they left because negative attitudes influence people! (Encouragement also can be contagious [1 Thessalonians 5:11]). In response to that announcement, 22,000 soldiers left. Now Gideon had 10,000 men left. God felt that was still too many.

5. The final “cut” was made by a “lapping” test. Gideon was down to 300 men and no human hope of winning. Now God was ready to give the victory! It would be clear that the victory was from God!
6. Notice the odd battle plans Gideon gave his tiny army. If your spiritual leader is within the will of God, follow him.
7. God uses the weak to confound the strong, the foolish to confound the wise, the poor to confound the wealthy—and 300 to confound 135,000 (Judges 7).

Though a breastplate is provided there is no back plate. We must face the enemy. No provision is made for retreat. There should be no deserters in God’s army (Hebrews 6: 4-6).

The “well-dressed” child of God wears armor.

The pieces of armor compliment each other, working together to protect the individual. Also, soldiers are to present a united front by standing together and facing the common enemy. Roman shields had rolled edges so they could interlock. There is no time for confusion in the ranks. We are to act in one mind and one spirit (Philippians 1: 27.).

Day 5

When the heavenly hosts are on your side, you are always with the majority (2 Kings 6: 13-17).

Romans 8:31: If God is for us, who can be against us?

Jesus said, with man this [salvation] is impossible, but with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

The person who doesn’t stand for something is apt to fall for anything.

There is some comfort in knowing we do not suffer alone. Our problems are not unique, but are common to all (1 Peter 5:9). Even great comfort comes from God’s promise to deliver us at the right time (1 Peter 5:10).

Our commander in chief will never desert or leave us. (See Romans 8: 38-39; Hebrews 13:5).

We are to be confident warriors. The victory is assured (2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 5:4-5).

All power and all authority belong to God. (See Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:19-21; Hebrews 1:3).

While most parents are quick to point out that Scripture tells children to obey their parents, some may be slower to recognize the equally urgent command that parents are not to provoke their children to wrath (Ephesians 6:4). Both commands must be practiced together.

While Joshua led the people of Israel into the Promised Land, they were besieged by enemies on every side—yet they were victorious. As we are led by Christ toward our eternal Promised Land, we too are besieged by many enemies. We too shall be victorious. (For a refreshing review of Joshua’s battle at Jericho read the sixth chapter of Joshua).

You and I are not match for the devil. Only Christ can defeat him. Only “in Christ” can we be victorious.

Paul demonstrated his courage in the Lord. Even though Paul was in prison he boldly spoke the gospel (Philippians 1:12-14).

Ephesians 6:23-24: Peace to the brothers, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.