

## “Arming [Preparing]” for Victory



### SABBATH—NOVEMBER 10

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Ephesians 6:14–17; 2 Corinthians 6:7; Ephesians 5:9; Romans 10:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:8; Mark 14:38.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “So put on all of God’s armor. Evil days will come. But you will be able to stand up to anything. And after you have done everything you can, you will still be standing” (Ephesians 6:13, NIV).

**KEY (IMPORTANT) THOUGHT:** Every believer must be prepared to defend himself or herself against Satan in the great controversy (war).

**SATAN’S GREATEST GOAL IS TO TAKE FOR HIMSELF THE LOYALTY THAT ALL TRUE BELIEVERS GIVE TO CHRIST.** Before conversion,<sup>1</sup> the devil rules over people. Conversion to Christ takes the believer away from the devil’s control. But it does not completely destroy the devil’s power over the believer. Instead, Satan works harder to destroy the believers’ faith and win him or her back to himself. He has many tricks. The Bible calls them “the wiles [tricks] of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11, NKJV). But in the end, no matter how much he tries to fool the believer, Satan can take no one from Christ who stays faithful to the Lord. (Satan might make our life terrible, but that is another story.)

This week’s lesson is about the Christian’s armor<sup>2</sup> in this war. Putting on all of God’s armor is our only protection. Therefore, we need to understand what each part of that armor is for. Without it, we would surely fall to the enemy. With the armor, our victory is sure.

1. conversion—the process in which a person accepts Christ as Savior and changes his or her lifestyle to fit with God’s will.

2. armor—a “coat” of metal that protects a soldier from injury while in battle.

**SUNDAY—NOVEMBER 11****THE NEED FOR WEARING THE ARMOR (Ephesians 6:14–17)**

In Ephesians 6:12, Paul describes the Christian life as a struggle. Paul says, “we . . . wrestle.” Notice that he uses the word *we* to show there are many of us. The verse reads, “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood” (NKJV). This means that every Christian is brought into the picture. In verse 13, Paul urges his readers to put on the whole armor of God. It is with God’s armor that we are to protect ourselves. And it has been made available for our use. Paul begins the verse with the word *wherefore*, or *therefore*, suggesting that wearing armor is necessary for the spiritual war. Then Paul describes how the Christian ought to be armed. He also uses the example of how a Roman soldier would wear the armor for battle.



**We must put on the whole armor of God to protect ourselves from Satan.**

**Consider the armor in Ephesians 6:14–17 carefully. What in this description impresses you with the need for preparation for your personal war with Satan? What does it mean to you that you are involved in this kind of spiritual war?**

The word translated as “wrestling” means hand-to-hand fighting. But later it is used to mean other kinds of fighting. A real, hand-to-hand fight with demons may not be what takes place. But the word clearly suggests that each one of us has a struggle to endure (put up with) or take part in.

The parable (short story with a lesson) of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1–13 also suggests that we are all to take part in a personal spiritual war against evil. Ellen G. White uses the five foolish virgins to describe Paul’s example of end-time people who claim to be godly but really are not (2 Timothy 3:1–5). “This is the class that in time of danger are found crying, Peace and safety. They fool themselves into thinking they are safe. They do not dream of danger. When they wake up from their sleep, they realize their poor spiritual condition [state]. And they beg others to supply their lack. But in spiritual things no man can make up another’s weakness.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 411, 412.

**What are some things that only you can do for yourself? (For**

example, no one can eat for you, can they?) How do you then use that same principle (important rule) to get yourself ready for your own spiritual war with evil?



The five foolish virgins are an example of end-time people who claim to be godly but are not.

## MONDAY—NOVEMBER 12

### GIRDLE (BELT) OF TRUTH, BREASTPLATE (CHEST ARMOR) OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (HOLY LIFE) (Ephesians 6:14)

It may be a little difficult to know exactly what this girdle really is. But maybe in Ephesians 6:14 Paul is talking about a leather apron that offered some protection to the part of the stomach but that also allowed a person to be free to move for action. In this way, the girdle was a piece of basic armor. And Paul says that armor was “truth.”

Along with the girdle of truth was the breastplate of righteousness. Here in this one verse Paul joins the ideas of truth and righteousness.

Look up the following verses. How can they help us to understand the connection between truth and righteousness? Why are they so important for our spiritual protection in the great controversy (war)? 1 Kings 3:6; Psalm 15:2; Psalm 96:13; Proverbs 12:17; Isaiah 48:1; 2 Corinthians 6:7; Ephesians 5:9.

The apostle (leader and teacher) Paul speaks of righteousness as a breastplate to be used in spiritual war. He is thinking of moral<sup>3</sup> issues. Being moral means doing right and practicing righteousness. In other words, it means living out the “truth.” This is as important to Christians in the spiritual battle with the powers of evil as the breastplate is to the soldier on the battlefield. When we fail to do what is right and truthful, we are an easy target for Satan. This is because we are leaving a wide-open hole in our armor.

At the same time, this “righteousness” means living a righteous life. But we must always remember the other part of righteousness. That part is the righteousness of Christ, which covers the believer and remains the believer’s only hope of salvation. We need to hold onto the truth that our salvation rests in Jesus. As long as we do, we can protect ourselves from one of Satan’s best attacks against us: discouragement.

**Have you ever been tempted to give up your walk with Jesus because you have been discouraged about your life, your character (who you are), or your actions?**

3. moral—righteous; following what is good and right, according to Christian principles.

**If so, why is understanding the truth about Christ’s righteousness so important for a strong defense against Satan’s attacks?**



The breastplate of righteousness protects us against discouragement.

## TUESDAY—NOVEMBER 13

### PREPARATION AND THE SHIELD OF FAITH (Ephesians 6:15, 16)

The Roman soldier dressed himself to make sure he could move easily on rough land. For walking over all kinds of roads, Roman soldiers often wore shoes with sharp nails sticking out of the bottoms. Such shoes guaranteed the soldiers a good hold on the ground. Paul compares the shoes to the “readiness” (NIV), or “preparation” (NKJV) of the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15).

**Read Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:15; and Ephesians 6:15. Paul’s idea suggests staying faithful to the Christian life of war. In what way does the gospel of peace give the Christian a “good hold” in spiritual warfare?**

Ephesians 6:15 may be translated in different ways: “feet covered with the *preparation [readiness]* of the gospel of peace,” “having feet fitted with the *readiness* of the gospel of peace,” or “having covered your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace.” The key is a Greek word that can mean “preparedness [being ready].” It is the same as a prepared foundation or base. So, the gospel of peace is a “prepared foundation.” It is a result of the Christian having been reunited (joined again as one) with God through the blood of Christ. This gives the Christian a strong foothold in the spiritual battle that we all face.

**The next piece of armor that Paul speaks about is the shield. For Paul the shield is faith (Ephesians 6:16). In introducing this armor, the apostle begins with wording that may be translated as “above all.” What do you think Paul means by this opening phrase?**

The word translated as “shield” comes from the word for “a door.” The shield in Bible times measured about four feet by two and a half feet. It had two layers of wood glued together. And it was shaped like a door. Because arrows in those days were dipped in pitch and then set on fire, the wooden shield was covered with leather to put out the glowing arrows and make their tips dull. Of all true defense weapons, this was the most important one.

The spiritual comparison is not hard to understand. Among the “fiery arrows” (NLT) of Satan are lust, doubt, greed,

pride, and so forth. “But faith in God is a shield that catches them, snuffs out the flame, and makes them fall harmless to the ground.”—Adapted from *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 6, page 1045.

This kind of faith is really faith in action. It is a faith that holds doctrinal (Bible) truth but goes beyond just belief. It is a faith that shows itself in an active defense against the attacks of the enemy. Of course, we cannot save ourselves. And we cannot fight the devil ourselves. But our battle is to choose daily the Lord and His ways over anything the devil will throw at us.



The shield of faith helps to snuff out Satan’s “fiery arrows” of lust, doubt, greed, and pride.

### WEDNESDAY—NOVEMBER 14

#### HELMET AND SWORD (Ephesians 6:17)

The idea of the helmet of salvation in Ephesians 6:17 is borrowed from Isaiah 59:17. But Paul uses it in a different way. In Isaiah 59, it is God who wears the helmet of salvation. But in Ephesians, the Christian is asked to receive the helmet. The other things

may have been laid out for the soldier to pick up. But the helmet is handed (given) to him. Perhaps this is to show that salvation is a “gift.”

**In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul speaks of the helmet as the “hope” of salvation. In Ephesians 6:17, the helmet is described as salvation itself. How may these word-pictures help to explain how salvation can be a weapon of defense?**

Salvation in the New Testament is a present experience that will lead to eternity through freedom from every kind of evil. The victorious helmet that God (Isaiah 59:17) wears is given to the believer as protection. The most direct goal of the devil’s attack is to deny Christians their salvation. For this reason, the promise of salvation is given to them separately from their own works. Then the helmet becomes a powerful weapon for surviving the war. In this way the believer truly can sing with the writer of the psalms, “Lord and King, you save me because you are strong. You are like a shield [and helmet] that keeps me safe in the day of battle” (Psalm 140:7, NIV).

**After bringing up the helmet of salvation, Paul speaks next about “the sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17, NKJV). This sword is the Word of God (Bible). Compare this verse with Hebrews 4:12. What important truth do we find in these verses, keeping our battle against Satan in mind?**

The temptation of Christ, as shown

in Matthew 4:1–10, is a beautiful example of how the Word of God can be a very good weapon. The verses should also give Christians a good reason for arming (protecting) themselves with the truths that are shown in the Word of God.

**So many enemies are at work trying very hard to weaken our trust in the Bible. What are some of the enemies in your own society, church, or culture? More important, how can you defend yourself against Satan’s attempts to weaken your trust in the Word of God?**

#### THURSDAY—NOVEMBER 15

#### PRAYING ALWAYS (Ephesians 6:18)

Ephesians 6:18 begins with the wording “praying always.” This suggests that praying is connected with the verses that we studied. The idea is that putting on, taking up, and receiving heaven’s armor all require dependence on God. So, “prayer is not another weapon. Instead, it is the spirit, the way in which the whole armor is to be worn and the battle fought. Paul is encouraging us to be always praying to God in our minds.”—Adapted from *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 6, page 1046.

**Study carefully Ephesians 6:18. What words in Paul’s warning to the Christian about prayer suggest training for war?**

The Bible often asks people not

to stop praying (Luke 18:1; Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17). But in Ephesians 6, Paul points out that in the war with evil powers, prayer is very important in every part of life. Such an attitude (feeling) about prayer is not easy for Christians. This is because when we have difficulty, our first thought is to ask friends and colleagues for advice. This is fine and has its place. But prayer should always be the first line of defense. And it is something that we should be “always” doing.

**Ephesians 6:18 begins with the wording “praying always” and continues with a phrase about being “watchful” (NKJV). What are we to be watchful about? Why?**

When Jesus was in Gethsemane, He told Peter and the other disciples to “watch and pray” (Mark 13:33–37). But they were found sleeping (Mark 14:38). Luke suggests that watching (paying attention) is connected with prayer as something that a Christian should always do. This is because it brings spiritual strength to the Christian. In Ephesians 6:18, the point is to pray for others. No doubt, as we pray for others, we ourselves receive spiritual strength. And we ourselves are better armed (prepared) for the spiritual war, no matter what happens.

**Having others pray for us is important. But why is praying for ourselves more important spiritually than having others pray for us? What does personal prayer do for**

**you that the prayers of others just cannot do?**

### FRIDAY—NOVEMBER 16

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Read Ellen G. White, “Importance of Seeking True Knowledge,” pages 312–314, in *Testimonies [Messages] for the Church*, volume 8; “The Color Line,” pages 219, 220, in *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 9; “O God! Help Me to Higher Levels,” page 105, in *My Life Today*; and “Called to Reach a Higher Standard,” pages 311–315, in *The Acts of the Apostles*.

“In every person two powers [good and evil] are struggling earnestly for victory. Unbelief, led by Satan, cuts us off from the God of our strength. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. Hour by hour, in the sight of the heavenly universe, the war goes forward. This is a hand-to-hand fight. And the great question is, Which side shall win? This is a question each person must decide for himself or herself. In this war all must take part, fighting on one side or the other. No one can escape from this war. . . . We are asked by God to prepare for this war. ‘Finally, let the Lord make you strong. Depend on his mighty power. Put on all of God’s armor. Then you can stand firm against the devil’s evil plans’ (Ephesians 6:10, 11, NIV). The warning is given again, ‘So put on all of God’s armor. Evil days will come. But you will be able to stand up to anything. And after you have done everything you can, you will still be standing’ (Ephesians 6:13, NIV).”

—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Sons and Daughters of God*, page 328.

“We must put on every piece of the armor. And then stand firm. The Lord has honored us by choosing us as His soldiers. Let us fight bravely for Him. Let us be right in everything we do. Honesty in all things is important to the welfare [health and happiness] of the soul. As you work hard for victory over your own temptations, God will help you by sending His Holy Spirit to be with you in every action. In this way you may give no reason for the enemy to speak evil of the truth. Put on the breastplate of righteousness, which is an honor for all to wear. This will protect your spiritual life.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 6, page 1119.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① This week’s lesson points out the personal part of the war in which we are all involved. But as Christians we are part of a larger community. How can community members help one another in their individual battles? What are the useful things that the community can do to help those who are in spiritual need?
- ② How does Paul’s soldierly symbol make the theme of the great controversy more realistic to us? Why is it always important for us to remember how real this war is? Who could imagine that a soldier in the battlefield would forget that he was in a war? So then, how much more important is it for us not to forget this spiritual war?