

6 Defenses to Help You Immediately Win in Spiritual Warfare

So much of spiritual warfare teaching infers a cosmic slugfest with the enemy. “Pray up,” “fast up” and “suit up,” we’re instructed, in order to prepare for inevitable battle with the prince of darkness.

The issue with such teaching is that it largely relies upon our own efforts and often fails to remember Christ’s efforts at the cross where Satan and his principalities were once and for all defeated (Col. 2:14-15).

I’m certainly not suggesting that Satan is obliterated or that we won’t feel the heat of his attacks. He and his minions still loom, seeking for someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). But the enemy’s wiles won’t be defeated in our own strength or by our own efforts, as spiritual as they may seem. As presented below, the key to immediate and sustained victory over Satan’s threats is still found at the cross.

What’s at the Cross

In my book, *Silence Satan: Shutting Down the Enemy’s Attacks, Threats, Lies and Accusations*, I remind readers that Jesus gave up His clothing and hung naked on the cross. The soldiers on the ground competed for a piece of His garment and eventually divided its articles among themselves (John 19:23). They wanted a little piece of this scorned man as a trophy to what they did that day.

But the clothing of Christ was worth so much more than the soldiers could have ever imagined. Though the soldiers each grabbed a piece of His earthly attire, Jesus left the garment of who He is at the cross so that you and I would go there and

put on the entirety of His identity. The significance of this is huge for winning our spiritual battles! With Christ's identity clothing us, we possess His righteousness and the authority of His presence, which is why Paul urges us to "put on Christ" (Rom. 13:14).

The Uniform of Christ

Writing from a Roman prison, Paul observed soldiers moving about in their armored uniforms, and he used this illustration to correlate what Christians possess in the Lord.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. –Eph. 6:10–11

Notice that Paul instructs us to be strong and to find strength in the Lord's power so that you may stand. He doesn't say to put on the armor to fight, but that in the Lord you may maintain the standing of your identity in Christ against forces that seek to destroy it. God's armor isn't the armor of humans, after all (2 Cor. 10:4). No, it is armor of light with weapons of righteousness (Rom. 13:12; 2 Cor. 6:7).

Let's briefly explore what I detail much more completely in my book: how each article of the soldier's armor uniquely holds us in the victory of the cross.

THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD

Belt of Truth

In Paul's day, the soldier's belt was a thick leather strap, girdled around his waist, with metal strips hanging down to protect his reproductive organs.

Paul encourages us to "fasten the belt of truth around your waist" (Eph. 6:14). Truth is foundational—it's what grounds us. The truth of God's Word is the only standard by which we can recognize and reject Satan's lies.

Our belts also protect our life-giving functions. Satan seeks to accuse us so that we feel disqualified from God's use. His lies and accusations attempt to sterilize us so that "I can'ts," "I'm nots" and "I'll nevers" keep us from doing anything daring or influencing anyone beyond ourselves. But the truth of God's Word encourages us in who we are in Christ. Digest this truth today, and repeat it every day: "I'm accepted and made worthy by the Blood of Jesus Christ."

Breastplate of Righteousness

The soldier's breastplate provided a covering over each shoulder and the sides of the chest. It's possibly the most beautiful part of the armor because its bronze or iron scales reflect the sun as the soldier moves about. It's heavy, though, possibly 40 pounds or more. But the protection it provided over the heart and vital organs was worth its weight.

Paul instructs that the righteousness we have in Christ is like this soldier's breastplate, which covers and protects the most vital parts of who we are.

Throughout Scripture, the word "heart" rarely refers to the blood-pumping organ as we know it today. Instead, it's most often used to describe the core being of the person—thoughts, emotions and any "inner function" of an individual.

Satan seeks to assault us at our core. His whispers and accusations are aimed to corrupt the parts of your inner self to steal your identity and replace it with his defeated one. But when you put on Jesus Christ, you put on this breastplate of righteousness, which covers you in His identity. Feel the weight of its protection, and declare this now: "I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus" (2 Cor. 5:21).

Shoes of Peace

The soldier's feet were outfitted with sandals made up of a thick leather sole and various straps that wrapped up to his

ankles. Bits of rocks were embedded as cleats into the soles for better traction. The shoes served a very important purpose: to keep the soldier well planted while marching or standing in unstable soil.

Paul instructed that we outfit our feet with shoes of peace (Eph. 6:15). Like the historic shoes, our spiritual “shoes of peace” provide us with the ability to face rough or unknown situations knowing that we won’t slip from our positions.

It’s important to understand that peace isn’t the absence of tough times. Instead, “You will have many trials and sorrows,” Jesus assured us (John 16:33). We’re never guaranteed well-traveled paths, that everyone will like us, or that the devil won’t mess with us.

Though traversing difficult terrain may be an inevitable part of our journeys, we can still experience peace. “I have told you all this so that you may have peace in Me,” Jesus revealed. “Peace in Me” is the most important part of what He said. In this world, peace isn’t found in our circumstances, but rather found in Christ. In Christ we have the refreshment and protection of His presence, which is peace. In Christ we also have peace with God, made possible by His Son’s sacrifice on the cross.

Shield of Faith

The soldier’s shield was a sizable article, about four feet tall by two-and-a-half feet wide, put together with pieces of curved wood. It was designed to protect the soldier’s entire body from danger that might accost him from any direction.

Likewise, in spiritual warfare the attacks of Satan come at us from all different directions. His “flaming arrows” tend to broadside or come at us from behind, all designed to set fire to our identities in Christ.

Paul instructs that the only thing that will block and

extinguish these fiery arrows is a shield made of faith. While faith is the confidence of things we don't yet see (Heb. 11:1), it isn't blind. When I revisit the major events in my life, I clearly see a divine hand throughout, orchestrating my arrival and departure from place to place. With this in mind, I gain renewed confidence that God will again work out whatever situation I face.

The same is true for you. Think of all the ways God guided you in order to live today to read this. You'll find that remembering God's goodness in the past is the key to confidence in the future. Now use this confidence as your shield and lift it high. "God's got this" should be your unwavering expectation.

Helmet of Salvation

The soldier's helmet was a single piece of iron molded to fit his head and adorned with a peacock-like crest to identify his rank. Like today, head wounds in ancient times were the most common and fatal wounds of war. The soldier wouldn't dare enter battle without his helmet.

Spiritually speaking, our heads represent what's in them—our minds. We know that the mind is the devil's playground. Satan barges into our lives with notions as to why God can't use us, why we'll never be healed, or why our particular sins are too big to be forgiven.

We may not be able to control everything that creeps into our minds, but we can take these thoughts captive by replacing them with Scripture (see 2 Cor. 10:4–5). When Satan whispers, "God doesn't love you," take it captive with God's Word: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son ..." (John 3:16). If he accuses, "You've messed up too many times," remind him of the Scripture, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation" (1 Cor. 5:17).

Sword of the Spirit

Finally, the soldier's sword is a weapon unlike all of the others because it's both defensive and offensive. In its defensive function, the sword blocked the swing of an enemy's weapon. But often the soldier used it offensively by waving it in the air as a signal to oncoming enemies that he's armed and dangerous.

Paul revealed that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. We use God's Word as a weapon when we speak it. Speaking Scripture aloud raises a spiritual sword in the air that alerts Satan that you're armed and dangerous. Because you know who you are in Christ, he has no chance and might as well back off. Speaking Scripture gives Satan a potent reminder of everything he lost because of the cross, and it forces him to flee.

Maintaining Your Standing in Christ

As we've reviewed, each of the six pieces of the full armor of God is designed to help you maintain your standing in Christ and His identity. Covering yourself daily in Christ's truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation and Word is key to instant and sustained victory against Satan's attacks. These six articles uniquely clothe you in an identity that's not of yourself but of the One in whom Satan can find no fault. Stop all the fighting with this impenetrable armor, and stand and live in His victory!

Kyle Winkler is founder of Kyle Winkler Ministries, a media and teaching ministry broadcasting on the Christian Television Network and various online outlets. Before launching his own ministry, Kyle served at Christ Fellowship, one of the nation's 15 largest churches, and as vice president of an international apologetics ministry. He holds a Master of Divinity in biblical studies from Regent University. Arm yourself with daily encouragement from Kyle on Facebook and Twitter. His latest book, *Silence Satan: Shutting Down the Enemy's Attacks, Threats, Lies, and*

Accusations, *from which this article was adapted, is in stores now.*