

# Are You Dressed for War?

If you've been a Christian very long, you've probably heard about spiritual warfare. It's true: We have a real enemy who is serious about trying to keep us from living a victorious life in Christ.

It's important for us to understand who our enemy is and how we can effectively come against him, because if we don't, we end up getting mad at people and doing warfare with them when we should be doing warfare with the devil.

I used to spend a lot of my time rebuking demons. But even though I was rebuking the enemy, it didn't help because I wasn't really prepared to fight him. Then God showed me that Jesus never had any trouble conquering the devil, and if I wanted to be victorious over him too, I should study how *He* did spiritual warfare. When I did, I discovered that the key to His success was that He stayed in close relationship with God and was already "dressed" and ready to confront the enemy when he came along.

This reminds me of a recurring dream I used to have in which I would show up at my conferences in my pajamas. I was always waiting for someone to get there with my clothes, but they never brought them before it was time for me to go out on the platform to teach.

It was disturbing to have this dream over and over, so one day I prayed, "God, what is this?" Then He began to show me what the Bible says about putting on the armor of God and that I needed to get dressed properly in the Spirit. We all have a spirit, and whether we know it or not, our spirit is either dressed or it's running around naked.

It's important to make sure we're properly dressed in the Spirit, because if we're not, our enemy will take advantage of us. Ephesians 6:10-18 tells us to *put on* the full armor of

God: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes of peace, a shield of faith, a helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. I want to go a little deeper on a few of these:

**Tighten the belt of truth.** When the Bible was written, a belt was used for more than just holding up your britches; it held all the tools and weapons you carried. I've come to understand through years of studying that the phrase "tighten the belt of truth"—and the Word of God is truth—means when you're in a difficult situation or battle, you need to pull that belt of truth one notch tighter and say, "I am not going to let the devil steal the truth of God's Word from me. I am going to press in now and believe God more than I ever have."

**Put on the shoes of peace.** Jesus walked in peace. He never let anything rattle Him. Living with peace gives you power over the enemy because when you hold your peace in a difficult situation, you're not just *saying*, "I trust God," but you're *proving* you trust God.

**Lift up the shield of faith.** This is about living from faith to faith to faith, not from faith to doubt to unbelief and back to faith and then doubt, unbelief, fear and worry—and then a little bit more of faith. Satan attacks us relentlessly with doubt, uncertainty, insecurity, fear, unbelief, shame and guilt. But he can't hit you when your shield is lifted.

**Above all else, put on love.** There is one very important thing we have to put on that's not actually mentioned in Ephesians. Colossians 3:14 says, "And above all these [put on] love" (AMP). Loving others is spiritual warfare. This means if we want to defeat the devil, we can do it by overcoming evil with good (see Rom. 12:21). So when somebody mistreats you, you can defeat the devil by responding in love.

Remember, we have to *put on* our spiritual armor. We do it on purpose.

I want to encourage you to make a decision to spend time each day getting dressed spiritually. I challenge you to take 15 minutes every morning to put on your spiritual clothes, and by God's grace, you'll be ready to take on anything the devil throws your way.

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