

The Armor of God

1. Last week, we were reminded that Paul began his section on interpersonal relationships (5:18-6:9) with a reference to their true source of strength (5:18). How does 6:10 parallel this idea? What are the key words in verse 10, and what do they teach us?
2. Why does Paul stress the idea of the “whole” armor of God (11, 13)? A well-known commentary on Ephesians is entitled “Sit, Walk, Stand” (2:6; 4:1; 6:11). Since this last section of Paul’s letter is devoted to Christian warfare, why do you think the last verb in the sequence (“stand”) is not a more aggressive word like “attack” or “assault” (see also 13-14)?
3. Give some examples of “the wiles of the devil” (11). Verse 12 describes our enemies; do you think it is possible that our foe(s) could be victorious? Explain using these other verses (Romans 8:37; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 2 Corinthians 2:14; Colossians 2:15).
4. In verse 14, Paul begins describing the individual components of the “full armor of God”. What does it mean to gird our waists with truth? Why is righteousness associated with a breastplate? What kind of righteousness do you think this refers to – positional (Romans 5:19) or practical?
5. Why is the apparently “non-protective” item of shoes included in our outfit (15)? Why is the gospel associated with our shoes? Why is it called the “gospel of peace”? What is the significance of the word “preparation” in this part of the armor?
6. Why is taking up the “shield of faith” introduced with the phrase “above all” (16)? Why is faith linked with a shield? How does faith “quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one”? (Is the word “all” significant here?) Give examples of the devil’s fiery darts; how does faith “quench” them?
7. Why is salvation connected with our helmet (17)? Is Paul merely saying “be saved”? How is a sword different from all the other items in the list? Why is it the “word of God”? Can you think of another verse in the New Testament that associates the word of God with a sword?
8. Do you think prayer (18) is part of our armor? Why the repetition of the word “all” in verse 18? How many aspects of prayer are included in this verse, and what is the significance of each?
9. Paul applies the importance of prayer with a request for the Ephesian believers to pray for him personally (19-20). Identify at least three significant parts of his prayer request, and explain the importance of each one. How should each part be a request from you today?
10. Tychicus appears five times in the New Testament, from Paul’s ministry in Ephesus (Acts 20:4) to Paul’s last letter (2 Timothy 4:12), a period of about 15 years. How does this illustrate Paul’s description and trust in him (21-22)? How does their friendship illustrate the idea that Christian warfare is not “every man for himself”? Are there applications from the life of Tychicus and his relationship with Paul that you could apply to your own life?
11. What can we learn from Paul’s use of “heavenlies” in Ephesians (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 4:10; 6:12)?