

The Girdle of Truth



Spiritual Warfare (Part 6)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again at the beginning of a new week, sharing with you keys to successful living which God has placed in my hands through many years of personal experience and Christian ministry. This week I am going to continue with the theme that I dealt with all last week, the theme of "Spiritual Warfare."

But first, let me say "Thank you" to those of you who have been writing to me. Before I finish this talk we will be giving you a mailing address to which you may write. It means a great deal to me to hear how this radio ministry of mine has been helping you and blessing you. So please take time to write, even if it's only a brief note.

Now to return to our theme of "Spiritual Warfare." Last week I explained that as the representatives of God's kingdom here on earth, we find ourselves involved in an all-out war with an opposing kingdom, Satan's kingdom, a highly organized kingdom of evil spirit beings, persons without bodies, whose headquarters are in the heavenly realms.

The battle ground on which this war is being fought out is the mind of humanity. Satan has built up strongholds of prejudice and unbelief in the minds of the human race to keep them from receiving the truth of the gospel. Our God-given task is to break down these mental strongholds, thus releasing men and women from Satan's deception, and then to bring them instead into submission and obedience to Christ.

Our ability to achieve this God-given task depends mainly upon two factors: first, that we see clearly from Scripture that on the cross Jesus totally defeated Satan on our behalf and that it is now our responsibility to demonstrate and administer the victory which Jesus has already won; second, that we make proper use of the necessary spiritual weapons with which God has provided us. These spiritual weapons fall into two main categories: weapons of defense and weapons of attack. This week I'm going to deal with the first category, the weapons of defense.

We will turn again to the passage in Ephesians 6, which is really the basis for all this teaching. I am going to read from Ephesians 6:10 through Ephesians 6:17:

> "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (NAS)

Early on in that passage that I have just read, Paul says, "Therefore, take up the full armor of God." That is what we are dealing with now, taking up the full armor of God.

You may have heard me comment before that whenever you find a "therefore" in the Bible, you want to find out what it is "there for." The "therefore" that I have just read, "Therefore, take up the full armor of God," is there because of the preceding verse where Paul says, "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenlies." It is because we are involved in this life and death struggle with the evil spirit forces of Satan's kingdom that we owe it to ourselves, and God's Word requires it of us, that we put on the full armor of God. It is significant that in the verse preceding that verse and in the verse following it, in each verse Paul says, "Put on the full armor of God." Surely, we have been clearly warned by Scripture that we are going to need to protect ourselves with the full armor of God.

In the second passage where Paul says this, he gives a further reason, "that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm." Notice that phrase "the evil day." I do not believe that means the great tribulation or some prophetic disaster that is going to come on the world, although I do believe there may be such—I believe in that context "the evil day" refers to something that every Christian is going to have to go through, a time when he is going to have to confront the forces of evil, where his faith is going to be challenged, where every kind of opposition and problem will be let loose against him.

Paul doesn't question that we will have to face the evil day, it is not an option, it is a certainty. I always think of the parable that Jesus spoke of the two men who built two houses: the foolish man who built on sand, the wise man who built on rock. The foolish man's house collapsed, the wise man's house stood. The difference between those two houses was not the tests to which they were subjected. Each house was subjected to the same test: the wind, the rain, the storm and the flood. The difference was the foundation on which they were built. Nothing in the Scripture indicates that we as Christians will escape these tests. We will not escape "the evil day," we have to be prepared to go through it. And in the light of that, Paul says, "Put on the whole armor of God."

He takes his picture form a Roman legionary of his day and he lists six pieces of equipment that a Roman legionary would normally wear. Let me list them for you:

First, the girdle of truth;

Second, the breastplate of righteousness;

Third, the shoes of the preparation of the gospel;

Fourth, the shield of faith;

Fifth, the helmet of salvation;

Sixth, the sword of the Spirit.

You will understand as you meditate on that, that if you put on all these six pieces of equipment, you will be fully protected from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet, with one exception. There is no protection for the back. I will speak about that later in this series of talks.

For the rest of this talk, I am going to deal with the first item of equipment, the girdle of truth. First of all, we need to understand why a Roman legionary would need a girdle as part of his equipment. We have to remember that in those days, the clothing of men as well as of women, was usually some kind of loose garment that came at least to the knees, some kind of a tunic in the case of the Roman legionary. Now, when a Roman legionary had to do something active, had to fight, had to use his weapons, if he did not take care of that loose garment, its flaps and its folds would hinder his movements and prevent him using the rest of his equipment effectively. So, the first thing he had to do was to take his girdle and tie it tightly around his waist in such a way that the tunic no longer flapped freely and could not hinder his further movements. This was essential. It was the basis for

everything else. And that's why Paul mentions the girdle of truth before he speaks about anything else.

Quite often in the Bible it speaks about a man "girding up his loins." That is what it refers to.

Now Paul says, the girdle for us is truth. I don't believe that means abstract, theological truth, I believe it means truth in daily living. I believe it means honesty, sincerity, openness, frankness. You see, as religious people, we are often encumbered about with a lot of sham and hypocrisy, a lot of things we say and do that we don't really mean but we say them because they sound good, they're religious. We are full of religious clichés and insincerities, things we do; not to please God or because we really want to do them, but to please other people. Almost any religious group that you are associated with you will find has got its own particular clichés like, "Jesus will help you, brother." Sometimes that is nothing but a "cop-out," because it is not Jesus who needs to help your brother, it's YOU who need to help your brother. Religious talk like that is just like a loose, hanging garment. It gets in our way. It prevents us from doing the kind of thing that God asks us to do. It prevents us from being active, energetic, effective Christians. It prevents us from using the other items of equipment. And so, we have to first of all, put on the girdle of truth. We have to put away sham, hypocrisy, religious clichés, saying and doing things we don't mean.

Often that's quite painful. You have to begin to show other people the kind of person you really are. You may have been hiding away. You may have been putting on a religious front all this time and now you are confronted with the need for real truth and openness and frankness. That's putting on the girdle, that's tying it around so that these religious insincerities and shams no longer hang around you and get in the way of things that God is asking you to do.

So, that's the first requirement, the girdle of truth.

Our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue with our defensive armor. I'll be speaking about the second item, the breastplate of righteousness.

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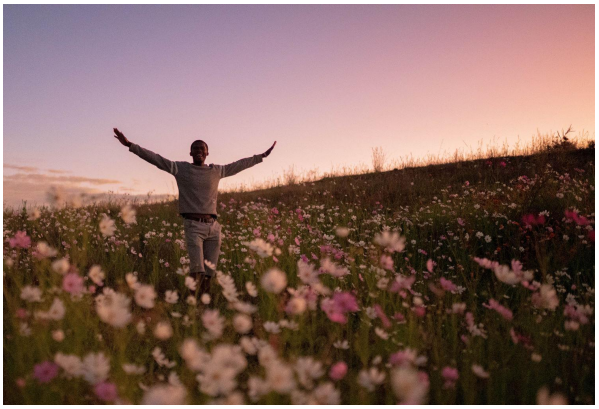

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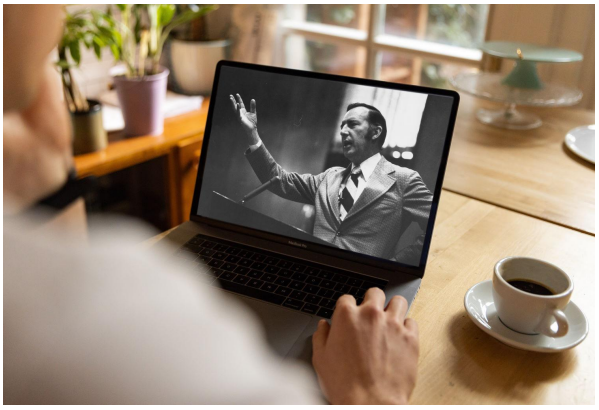

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