

## Session 1: The armour of God

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Ephesians 6:10-20<sub>NIVUK</sub>

Believers are in a war that is not physical.

Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

1 Timothy 6:12<sub>NIVUK</sub>

Engagement in this war is not optional. It is therefore wise to learn how to fight successfully.

The main Bible passage shows believers how to be strong in the Lord, with access to His mighty power.

This course is about putting on 'the full armour of God'. The battle is not physical; therefore the armour is not physical even though the armour worn by Roman soldiers is used as an illustration.

It is important to note that the armour is God's. It is not about what we can achieve in our own strength.

God provides the armour.

We put on the armour when we respond wholeheartedly and appropriately to what God has provided through the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of His Holy Spirit.



## Be strong in the Lord

Inner strength is an attitude that does not give in to fear or cowardice, but demonstrates courage.

People that have superior physical strength usually go into extensive, disciplined and persistent training to acquire and maintain their strength. They have confidence in themselves and what they have attained.



The believer's strength has a different source, utter dependence on God's protection and provision leading to a life of obedience to Him.

### Reflection/discussion

## What should motivate a believer to develop inner strength?

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Philippians 3

Suggestions for building up and maintaining inner strength as a believer:

- Keep the heart free from unconfessed sin which would bring about an interruption of fellowship with God's Holy Spirit.
- Keep the heart free of unforgiveness, resentment or bitterness, and leave all personal battles to God. It is God who vindicates justly and righteously.
- Refuse to resort to lies, deception, scheming, personal 'cleverness' or the ways of the world to deal with challenges.
- Meditate on the attributes of God, particularly His incomparable power.
- Trust God, confident that His mighty and infinitely superior power is at work.
- Learn to discern the direction of the Holy Spirit and follow wholeheartedly.
- Obey God at all costs, showing love for Him.
- Demonstrate love for others, in truth and with grace.
- Persevere to the end; never give up.

## Session 2: People are not “the enemy”

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:10-12<sup>NIVUK</sup>

A good and successful soldier must precisely know the identity, resources and strategies of the enemy. Without this knowledge, it would be difficult to deploy appropriate defensive and offensive measures needed to defeat the enemy. The reference in the Bible text above clearly identifies the real enemies of mankind: the enemies are relatively powerful and wicked spiritual beings that are bent on the corruption and destruction of human beings.

These wicked spirits operate through human beings, hiding their existence and identities as much as possible. They influence humans to destroy themselves and one another through:

- Destructive personal attitudes, thoughts and actions.
- Hateful, damaging attitudes and behaviour towards other people.
- The establishment, or corruption, of institutions and traditions, in order to turn unresisting human souls away from God.

It is important to take on board that our struggle is not really against other humans even though it often appears to be so.



### Reflection/discussion

Mark 8:31-33

Luke 22:1-6

1 Peter 5:8-9

Jesus Christ has already won the battle against the enemy. Our part is to respond to His victory by being in Him, and effectively using the resources He has provided to successfully resist the defeated enemy of the human soul.

Colossian 2:6-15

## Practical application

⇒ Understand that the person, institution, government or ideology that are causing you problems are not the real enemy. Try not to respond to any of these with energy draining negative emotions.

We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

1 John 5:18-21<sup>NIVUK</sup>

⇒ Although you may wisely have to put some strategies in place to eliminate or limit the damage that people or institutions can do, the actual fight has to be with the spiritual weapons available in Christ.

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5<sup>NIVUK</sup>

⇒ The real enemy can be very subtle. Be alert and vigilant so that you can resist his attempts to get you to give up and to deviate from the path God has prepared for you.

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 5:8-11<sup>NIVUK</sup>

⇒ Do not fight people that oppose you by getting involved in pointless arguments and quarrels. Instead, pray for the people and look out for opportunities to teach and instruct them in the ways of the Lord, if they are willing to listen. The hope is that the Lord may use you to help them escape the trap of the devil and turn to God in repentance.

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

2 Timothy 2:23-26<sup>NIVUK</sup>

## Session 3: Belt of truth

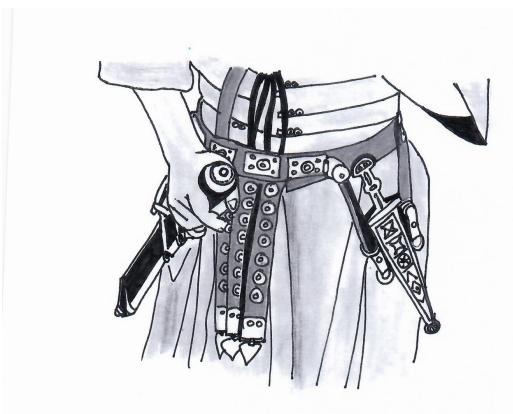
Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, ...

Ephesians 6:13-14a<sup>NIVUK</sup>

A belt was used by a Roman soldier to gather and firmly hold together the customarily loose inner garment before strapping on the rest of the armour, in readiness for battle. Without this functional belt the soldier could be distracted and ineffective in battle. The objective truth of the word of God keeps the believer resolute and free to be successful in spiritual conflict.

To stand firm in spiritual conflict, it is necessary to have an inner conviction that one is on the side of truth, and is therefore sure of victory.



A major strategy of the devil is to distort the truth in order to mislead and distract God's people. Many false doctrines have arisen over the years to derail individuals and groups of churches, making them ineffective and even wrecking the faith of some.

### Reflection/discussion

John 8:31-32

John 8:42-47

John 17:17

Romans 12:2

Ephesians 4:11-16

## Practical application

- ⇒ Ensure that you understand and believe the foundational truths of the gospel.
- ⇒ Study the Bible, not merely to gain intellectual knowledge, but to allow the truth to get hold of you. The truth, as revealed in the Bible, should govern your worldview, that is, your whole outlook on life.



- ⇒ Continue to grow in the knowledge of the truth of the word of God, steadily being transformed by the renewing of your mind. This is an on-going process called sanctification.
- ⇒ Be wary of false doctrines, especially nice-sounding interpretations of scripture that are designed to lull you into complacency and error. Any teaching or interpretation that contradicts any part of scripture must be wrong.
- ⇒ Know that some Bible texts may be difficult to understand and may require much effort to work out the true meaning in its context. A believer must therefore approach Bible study with humility and openness to teaching inspired by the Holy Spirit.

### Extra resources:

BUILD WITH CARE - A new life 3 - Studying the Bible  
<https://youtu.be/BZkR938iDmE>

KCSPC Discipleship series - Book 2, A new life, Session 3 - Pages 8-10

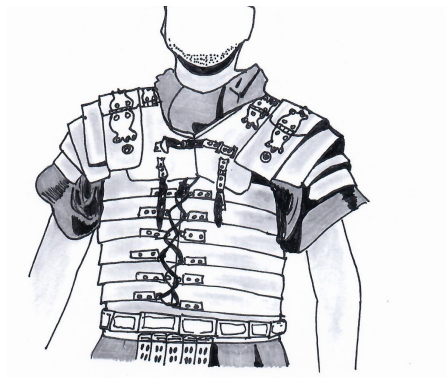
## Session 4: Breastplate of righteousness

Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ...

Ephesians 6:13-14<sup>NIVUK</sup>

The breastplate was used to protect the vital organs. In spiritual terms, these could represent essential parts of the human soul like the heart, will, desires and emotions.



The righteousness referred to in this case cannot be personal goodness, integrity or self-righteousness. Personal efforts at goodness will always fall short and cannot be used effectively as a defence against the devil's accusations and insinuations. The devil can find any number of areas in which each person is not doing well enough, no matter how moral or good they are. Such a person would soon become joyless, weak and ineffective.

Although believers must make every effort to be obedient to God and to act righteously, they must not depend on their own righteousness to be acceptable to God or to fight the enemy of their souls.

The armour is provided by God, so the righteousness that is like a breastplate is conferred by God on those who have put their trust in Jesus.

This righteousness is by faith alone.

## Practical application

⇒ Meditate on and believe the Bible verses that give assurance of salvation that is by grace, through faith alone.

Ephesians 2:8-9

2 Corinthians 5:21

Romans 3:21-26, 4:4-8, 8:1-4

⇒ Do not be hesitant or tentative in resisting all attempts to highlight your own short-comings and unworthiness, in order to make you lose heart and give up. Be confident in what God's love has done for you in saving you and declaring you righteous in Christ. When you are accused outwardly or within, simply bring that fact to mind, declare it and rejoice.



"The joy of the Lord is your strength".

*"But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."*

⇒ Resist, the temptation to depend on your good works to make you acceptable to God. Instead, humbly and frequently thank God for the gift of righteousness. This will protect you from the dangerous sin of pride that would surely give the devil the means to make you fall from grace.

⇒ Encourage yourself to be deeply moved with gratitude for God's gift of righteousness. Emotions are important and are included in a true Christian experience. The breastplate of righteousness will enable you to maintain peace and joy in spite of challenges, trials and difficulties.

## Reflection/discussion

1 Peter 1:3-9

1 Thessalonians 5:5-11

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



## Session 5: Gospel of peace

...and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

Ephesians 6:15<sup>NIVUK</sup>

The third piece of armour is attached to the body, like the first two.

The Roman soldier wore sandals that had the following:

- Laces to attach them firmly to his feet.
- Sturdy soles to protect the feet from sharp objects placed in the path by the enemy.
- Studs in the soles to ensure a firm grip.



The sandals provided protection, firmness and mobility, resulting in the readiness to deal with the enemy's changing tactics resolutely and victoriously.

The emphasis here is on 'readiness'.

In the same way, believing, living by and declaring the gospel of peace makes the believer ready to face conflict victoriously at all times.

### Reflection/discussion

#### **The gospel of peace**

##### **Peace with God**

Romans 5:1-11

The assurance of being right with God keeps the believer firm and steadfast in spiritual conflict.

##### **Peace within**

Romans 8:28

Philippians 4:6-7

1 Peter 5:7

An anxious and fretful person cannot fight the enemy effectively.

##### **Peace with others**

Romans 12:9-21

A believer must not be distracted by squabbles and personal battles with other people. Love overcomes.

## Practical application

⇒ Ensure that you have total clarity about your relationship with God, so as to be firm and unmoved in the face of the enemy's suggestions and accusations. Remind yourself often that it is through the sacrificial death of Jesus that you have peace with God.

⇒ Make every effort to rest in God. Do not give in to anxiety. Pray about everything and trust God to take care of you. An anxious or fearful person cannot engage effectively in spiritual conflict.

⇒ Aim for peace with everyone, within the boundaries of love and truth. Do not compromise any aspect of the word of God in your pursuit of peace with people. The best way to pursue peace with all is to ensure that you want the best for everyone, even those that oppose you. This is love. When you truly love people, your actions will always aim for peace.



When the gospel of peace is entrenched in your heart in this manner, the enemy of your soul will not be able to use anything or anyone to entrap and defeat you. Instead you will become an agent of God's peace.

### In conclusion:

- Be at peace with God.
- Cultivate inner peace by always trusting God to take care of you.
- Aim for peace with others.
- Be prepared to share the gospel of peace with others.

## Session 6: Shield of faith

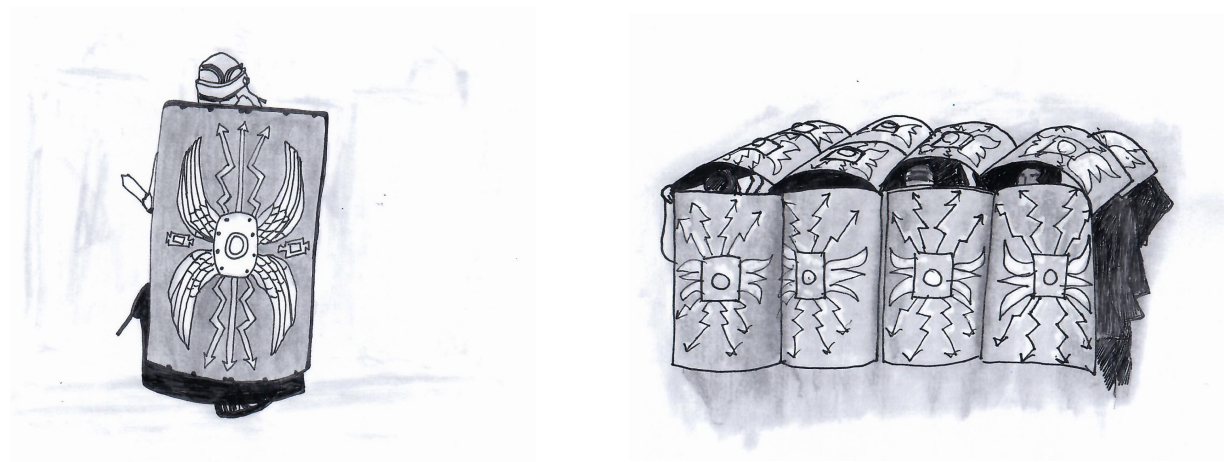
In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Ephesians 6:16<sup>NIVUK</sup>

The last three pieces of the armour that God has provided are to be picked up and quickly deployed when evil spiritual beings launch specific attacks on the believer.

The Roman soldier's shield was used to neutralise the literal flaming arrows shot by the enemy. The fiery arrows were designed to cause as much damage and confusion as possible before hand-to-hand combat began.

Shields were also used in formations by groups of soldiers to protect the whole unit as they advanced against the enemy.



From time-to-time, a believer comes under a concerted attack by the enemy. The attack could come in the following ways:

- Evil thoughts zapped into the mind, designed to unsettle and confuse the believer.
- Attack on the imagination with pictures and imagery that could make the believer doubt their position of righteousness in Christ.
- Inflammation of wrong desires, tempting the believer to fall into the sins that they are particularly susceptible to.
- Direct opposition by people or institutions that are knowingly or unknowingly working for the enemy.

The defence against these specific attacks is faith in God's promises, trusting in His presence and power.

## Practical application

⇒ Grow in the knowledge of God's promises and instructions. Trust the Holy Spirit to bring to mind particular promises or truths that would effectively neutralise any unsettling or misleading suggestions by the enemy or his agents.

2 Peter 1:3-4

2 Corinthians 1:20-22

⇒ Remember the specific promise that God's loving presence is with you.

Romans 8:28-39

Hebrews 13:5

Psalm 46:1

⇒ Remember that God's mighty power is at work in you and for you.

Ephesians 1:15-23

1 John 5:3-5



## Session 7: Helmet of salvation

Take the helmet of salvation ...

Ephesians 6:17<sup>NIVUK</sup>

The helmet of the Roman soldier was used to protect his head. The head includes the brain, the control centre of the body. Damage to the head would affect the ability of any other part of the body to function properly. The head is therefore of strategic importance to the whole body.



In spiritual terms, the head would represent the whole attitude towards the faith, rather than the individual parts. The enemy's strategy here would be to bring about such a level of weariness and discouragement that the believer is tempted to give up altogether.

### Reflection/discussion

#### **Take heart!**

Galatians 6:9

Hebrews 12:1-3

The believer is warned in the scriptures against becoming weary, losing heart and giving up.

#### **Hold on to hope!**

1 Thessalonians 5:8-11

1 John 3:1-3

John 10:27-30

The defence against this type of weariness is hope. The helmet represents the hope of salvation; the hope of a perfect and blissful eternal life with God, where there is no spiritual conflict, pain or sorrow.

## Practical application

⇒ Read and meditate on Bible verses that describe the future glory of the believer. Always rejoice and thank God for your wonderful and eternal destiny.

2 Corinthians 4:13-18

Revelation 21:1-7

Revelation 22:1-5

Colossians 3:1-4

1 Peter 1:3-9

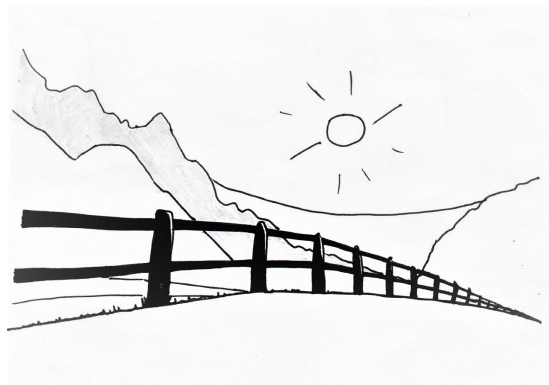
⇒ Invest time, resources and energy on activities that will encourage you.

For example:

- spend time with like-minded believers
- listen to exhortations inspired by scripture
- listen to music inspired by scripture
- read books that will encourage you in godly things.

Hebrews 10:23-25

Galatians 6:7-8

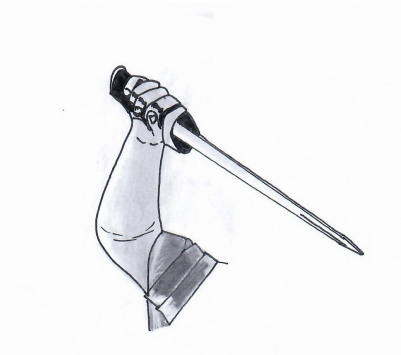


## Session 8: Sword of the Spirit

... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Ephesians 6:17<sup>NIVUK</sup>

The Roman soldier used his sword as both a defensive and an offensive weapon. The sword was used, not only to ward off the enemy but also to attack him.



In spiritual terms, the sword is the word of God. It is the spiritual weapon provided by the Spirit of God, to be used to resist the enemy, in whatever form he comes, causing him to give up a particular skirmish.

All of scripture was inspired by the Holy Spirit, so any appropriate aspect of it, correctly interpreted, taking into account its contexts, can be used with confidence to repel the enemy.

**James 4:7**

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

**2 Peter 1:19-21**

**Hebrews 4:12-13**

The devil or any of his agents will attempt to cast doubt on the objective truth of God's instructions and commands, sowing seeds of confusion and rebellion in a believer's mind: ideas, thoughts and words could be used to

- pander to the ego, causing the believer to become conceited and to go against God's established order in the home, church etc. This is the root of Satan's own sin, and he often attempts to trip up human beings in the same way.
- cause fear and doubt.
- cause discouragement and depression. Etc..

## Practical application

- ⇒ Make it your aim to read through the whole Bible regularly, in order to grow in the general knowledge of the truth.
- ⇒ Study parts of the Bible diligently, in order to grow in the depth of knowledge of truth.
- ⇒ Make it a habit to memorise Bible verses.
- ⇒ Beware of so-called advances in knowledge. Reject ideas, thoughts or words that go against any teaching in scripture.
- ⇒ Beware of distortions of scripture that are not so easy to spot. Humbly learn from other believers. Believers can help one another avoid being taken in by these extremely subtle and dangerous misrepresentations of the truth.
- ⇒ Counter false ideas, thoughts and words with appropriate scripture, not with your own strength, power or ideas.
- ⇒ Listen to the Holy Spirit. He will bring to your mind the effective 'word' to use in resisting particular attacks of the enemy.



## Reflection/discussion

Consider the example of Jesus  
**Matthew 4:1-11**

It is noteworthy that the 'sword of the Spirit', which is the use of particular and appropriate truths in resisting the enemy, is attached to the 'belt of truth', which is the general knowledge and understanding of truths from the Bible.



## Session 9: All kinds of prayer

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.  
With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Ephesians 6:18<sup>NIVUK</sup>

In this illustration, prayer is not a part of the armour provided, rather it is the means by which the believer stays strong in the Lord and in His mighty power in spiritual warfare.

In summary, believers are admonished to be strong in the Lord - standing firm with the six pieces of armour in place - and praying continually in the Spirit for themselves and others.

The pieces of armour will not be effective without prayer.

A life of prayer demonstrates the understanding that the battle is the Lord's. The conflict is cosmic in nature, and cannot be fought effectively by mere humans without the intervention of God. Prayer is the way to stay connected with God. The more time believers spend in the presence of God, the stronger, more efficient and effective they will be.



### Praying in the Spirit

Romans 8:26-27

The Holy Spirit directs the prayer of true believers. He creates the prayer within them and empowers them to offer it. Such prayers are not mechanical or cold, but are filled with warmth, passion, freedom and faith.

**All kinds of prayers**

1 Corinthians 14:14-15

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

⇒ Thanksgiving, praise, worship

⇒ Praying in a known language

⇒ Praying in tongues

⇒ Singing in a known language

⇒ Singing in tongues

Matthew 6:5-15

Luke 18:1-14

Acts 4:23:31

Acts 12:5

1 Timothy 2:1-8

⇒ Praying with fasting

⇒ Private prayers

⇒ Corporate prayers

⇒ Conversational prayers

⇒ Wordless prayers

⇒ Structured prayers

⇒ Instant prayers

⇒ Persistent prayers

**Posture?**

⇒ Bowing

⇒ Kneeling

⇒ Sitting

⇒ Standing

⇒ Walking

⇒ Lying prostrate

⇒ Raising hands

Etc.