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## Learning What to Wear: Part 2

Ephesians 6:10-24

### Introduction

It does not take a new believer very long to discover that living the Christian life is not a playground, but it is a battleground. Paul clearly identifies our enemies as the world (our present habitation), the flesh (our present limitation), and the devil (our present provocation). Of this fact we have previously been warned in Ephesians 2:1-3 and similar warning also appears in 1 John 2:15-17. Paul spoke, as each of us could, out of personal experience. He was aware of his own weakness, and that the Law only exposes our sin but can not erase our sin, see Rom 7:13-25. He was aware of the opposition when he was stoned and left for dead in Lystra, Acts 14:19; when he faced dark spiritual forces at Ephesus, Acts 19:13-41 (Sceva's seven sons; the worshippers of the goddess Diana). He was aware of the Jewish culture and worship that brought him such great opposition, arrest, and imprisonment, Acts 21:26-24:27. Through all this he also clearly saw that Jesus is our only hope because He has overcome the world (Jn 16:33; Gal 6:14); the flesh (Gal 2:20; Rom 6:1-6) and the devil (Matt 4:1-11; Eph 1:19-23).

In the closing verses of chapter 6 Paul issues his plan for every believer to live a glorious and victorious life. First, he issues a call to arms, 6:10-11. Second, he warns us to know our enemy's strengths and weaknesses, 6:11-12. Third, he warns us to know the enemy's battle plan, 6:11-12. Fourth, he warns us to know our equipment and weaponry, 6:13-17. Fifth, he unveils our secret weapon, 6:18-19. Sixth, he closes with a wonderful greeting.

### I. A Call to Arms, 6:10-11

1. This is a call to every believer, here "my brethren," 6:10a
2. This is a call to "be strong" in the Lord's power and ability, 6:10b
3. This is a call to put on our "whole armor," i.e. you need all of it 6:11a
4. This is a call put consider the "wiles" (Greek *μεθοδία*, *methodia*)

### II. A Call to Know Your Enemy, 6:11-12

1. The enemy within, the flesh and blood is a hindrance. We are our own worst enemy, Gal 5:17, but we face unseen forces, that are "against" us; principalities, powers, rulers of "this darkness" of this age; spiritual hosts of wickedness, in heavenly places (i.e. the unseen spirit world).
2. The enemy without, our environment, the world, unseen spiritual opposition, Jms 1:27; 4:4; 1 Jn 2:15-17; 3:1; 4:5, 17; 2 Tim 4:10.

3. The enemy unseen, our adversary and his emissaries, Rom 8:38-39; Col 2:14-15; Matt 12:28-30; see esp. Job 1:8-9; 2:1-6 (lessons in spiritual warfare). He presents himself as an angel of light 2 Cor 11:12-15. We must always remember that he is the tempter, our adversary, our accuser, our deceiver, a murderer, and a serpent. He is well organized and has a plan and he has principalities and powers you cannot face on your own.

### **III. A Call to Follow God's Plan of Help, 6:13**

1. We are to take up "the whole armor of God" repeats the command of verse 11. It is a call for obedience the armor must be "put on" and "taken up."
2. The purpose of the armor is to enable us to withstand in the evil day, which is every day since the fall.
3. Having done all we can in the power of Christ, we are to stand in the power of His might.

### **IV. A Call to Put on Each and Every Piece of Armor, 6:14-18**

1. The Girdle of Truth, 6:14a - Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life; Jn 14:6; 8:31-32; Phil 1:9-10 be sincere; "without wax." A girdle is the belt that holds the weapons, and hold down the garments. The truth will be a rare commodity in the later times, see 1 Tim 4:1-5.
2. The Breastplate of Righteousness, 6:14b - This piece of armor was the covering of the upper torso protecting all the vital organs of the body. Our breastplate is the "righteousness" of Christ that we appropriate at the point of our redemption, see Titus 3:1-8; cf. Eph 2:1-10. This is a call to holy living in the midst of an unholy culture!!
3. The Shoes of the Gospel, 6:15 - The soldiers footwear in the ancient world was an essential part of his armor! Here note that the Gospel of peace is the necessary preparation for us to successfully engage our enemy. In the old west a good firearm was called a "peacemaker," signifying that an enemy would back away in the face of it or reap the consequences. Faith that is the basis for our salvation (Eph 2:8-9) is also the Gospel of peace that brings about of justification, see 15 facts of our justification in Rom 5:1-11.
4. The Shield of Faith, 6:16 - Soldiers in Paul's day used two kinds of shields. First, a small round shield about two feet in diameter was used to repel the blows of the enemy's sword in hand to hand combat. Second, there was the Greek *θυρακα*, *thuraka*, mentioned here in 6:16, which was used in front line field battles. This shield was two feet wide and four-and-a-half feet high. Soldiers would stand side by side on the front line to form a protective wall against the enemy's arrows, see Heb 11:1-3; 12:1-3
5. The Helmet of Salvation, 6:17a - This armor was the metal headgear that protected the head with side bands to protect the face. It is significant that the helmet is our salvation. Satan tries to get through to our mind by

questioning God and confronting us with lies, Gen 3:1-19. He also works to discourage, bring dissolution, point to faults, failures, sins, unresolved issues, etc. But our salvation is unshakable because Christ has guaranteed the security of every believer, Rom 8:38-39; see esp. Heb 6:13-20.

6. The Sword of the Spirit, 6:17b - The offensive weapon of the soldier for hand to hand combat was his sword. Note that the believers offensive weapon is the "sword of the Spirit," which is "the Word of God," 6:17. We have often seen in Scripture that the Holy Spirit was a key player in its writing and a key player in its interpretation, see e.g. 2 Pet 1:16-21; Heb 3:7; 5:5; 7:14-17; 20-22; 2 Tim 3:16-4:5.
7. The Unshakable Power of Prayer, 6:18-20 - If all these six things were not enough we have the weapon of prayer. Frank Laubach wrote a little book called, *Prayer the Mightiest Force in the World: Thought for An Atomic Age*, in which he made the point that no power equals the power of prayer. In this passage we are instructed to pray for all believers that they will encounter to power of God to accomplish His will and every good work done in His name. Perhaps you have never considered prayer as a weapon, but it in fact is a strong offensive weapon to unleash against the adversary to assist other believers and seek to reach the lost. "Praying always," we are admonished repeatedly to give ourselves to prayer, Rom 12:12; Phil 4:6; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:17. Praying "with all prayer" including supplication, intercession, thanksgiving, praise, public, private, silent, verbal, planned, spontaneous, whispered, confession, humiliation, adoration, kneeling, reclining, standing, seated, walking, riding, driving, flying, with eyes open, with eyes closed, at any occasion, at all occasions, prayers that see to honor, glorify, praise, and beseech God and our Lord Jesus to perfect His perfect will in us and those around us.

#### V. **A Postlude: Paul's Greeting, 6:21-24**

1. He wanted to give an update from prison, he is doing okay, 6:21a
2. He is sending the letter by Tychicus who will give them further personal information, 6:21b-22.
3. He closes with his usual prayer for peace and grace, 6:23-24.