



Armor of God

Session 5— Breastplate of Righteousness

March 15, 2022

Ephesians 6:11 - 17: Put on the full armor 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 armor 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 around 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.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

What was a Roman breastplate like and what was its purpose?



In Greek and early Roman times, a breastplate was a solid piece of metal, formed in the shape of a man's chest with a second piece of fitted metal across the back. Front and back were held together with leather straps.

In the armor of a Roman soldier, the breastplate served as protection for some of the most important parts of the body. Underneath the breastplate is the heart, lungs and other organs necessary for life. It weighed almost 20 pounds.

A breastplate is something you have to put on. How does that relate to a breastplate of righteousness?

Meanings of "Righteousness"

Being righteous simply means doing what is right—being virtuous, honorable, adhering to moral standards.

There are different kinds of righteousness referred to in Scripture:

- **Perfect righteousness** – Only the Triune God is perfectly righteous.

Deuteronomy 32:4: He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

John 10:30: I and the Father are one."



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Philippians 2:6: Who (Jesus), being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

- **Imputed righteousness** - Imputed righteousness is the righteousness every person receives who has been born again by faith in Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3:9: and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

2 Corinthians 5:21: God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 4:5: However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

Romans 10:3: Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

- **Comparative righteousness.** Humans can be comparatively righteous.

1 Samuel 24:17: “You are more righteous than I,” he said. “You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly.

Matthew 5:20: For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Psalms 14:3: All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Romans 10:3: Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.

- **Practical righteousness.** This is the righteousness that we are to pursue and train for.

1 Peter 2:24: “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

2 Timothy 3:16: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

1 Timothy 6:11: But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

Like a breastplate, we must “put on” this righteousness.

Colossians 3:12 - 14: Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Failure to live righteous lives is perhaps the most deadly and the most common door we open to demonic oppression. Satan has an ally in our “old self,” and that’s what Paul addresses in this passage.

Ephesians 4:17 – 5:7:

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed.

²⁰ That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹ when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²² You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³ to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. ⁵ ¹ Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them.

So, you have two “selves,” if you’re born again: the new self and the old one. Which one dominates your life? Which one shrivels up and has less and less influence on you?

This is Satan’s scheme: to steer us from a life of righteousness, to direct temptations to the old self, playing on our sinful desires and passions. Paul addressed this battle between in Romans 7:21 – 25:

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. ²² For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; ²³ but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. ²⁴ What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

We are enabled to put this breastplate of righteousness on because God delivers us from the old “wretched woman” that we were through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the above passage from Ephesians, the apostle makes it very clear *what* we must avoid if we want to have the protection of the breastplate of righteousness. Let’s identify them:

- We are no longer to be plagued with futile thinking but rather to be made new in the attitude of our minds.

Philippians 4:8: Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

2 Corinthians 10:5: 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.

- We are to speak truth and put off any kind of falsehood.
No fudging, no exaggerating, no cover ups
- We are not to sin in our anger and we are not to let the sun go down on our anger
- No more stealing—including time! No more trying to get by with less than you should do
- No more sloughing off – work hard
- No more unwholesome talk
- No more bitterness, rage, anger, brawling and slander
- Not even a hint of sexual immorality
- No impurity or greed
- No foolish talk or coarse joking

In addition to what we are to “put off,” we see what we must “put on.”

- We are to be kind, compassionate and forgiving
- We are to walk in the way of love
- We are to be thankful

How do we put on the breastplate of righteousness?

- Know God’s Word better and better. Read it; memorize it, listen to it, OBEY it.
- Pray daily for the Holy Spirit to enable you to put on the breastplate of righteousness.

1 John 3:22: and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him.

- Choose relationships that encourage you to live a godly life.
- Have a prayer partner you pray with regularly.
- Identify the temptations and areas where the enemy tries to get in.
- Repudiate any sin in your life and make yourself accountable to someone.

Closing

Are you putting on the armor every day? Here are three prayers from Becky Harling that she has given us permission to share with you. These are examples of the way to pray on the armor of God. It would be very beneficial to you to write your own prayers, to be very specific about putting on each piece of the armor. You could add “When Satan Is Throwing Obstacles in My Way to Keep Me from Doing God’s Will.” Or “When Satan is tempting me to sin.”

When Satan Is Attacking with Guilt or Shame

Lord Jesus, I praise You! You are worthy to receive power and wealth and honor and glory and blessing because You are the Lamb that was slain. I praise You that You sit on the throne triumphant and victorious and that no weapon formed against me will prosper. I praise You that I am already clean because of the work You accomplished on Calvary. How I praise and thank You that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Lord, I stand in the victory that You have already won and I renounce Satan’s attempts to throw me into guilt or shame. Thank You that You are my victory! I stand secure in You and in Your righteous robe. I praise You, Holy One, that when You look at me, I look as good to You as Jesus (Revelation 5:12-13, Isaiah 54:17, John 15:3, Romans 8:1).

When Satan Is Attacking My Mind with Fear or Anxiety

I love You, LORD God, my strength! You are my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer! How I praise You that I can hide in your presence under the shelter of Your wings until the battle has passed. When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. I praise You that Your Holy Spirit will strengthen me to be strong and courageous. I don’t need to be discouraged or afraid because You are with me. Thank You that You go before, behind, above, and beneath me. I can’t wander

anywhere from Your Spirit and I can't be hidden from Your presence even when the enemy is attacking me. I praise You that great peace is possible for me because You yourself are the Prince of Peace. I claim Your peace today over my mind and thoughts (Psalm 18:1, Psalm 91:1, Psalm 56:3, Joshua 1:9, Psalm 139:7, Isaiah 9:6).

When Satan Is Attacking Me with Feeling Overwhelmed

I praise You LORD God, that You ride forth in Victory on behalf of truth, humility, and righteousness. Let your right hand display awesome deeds! Thank you that You are always defending me before the accuser. I praise You that though I feel overwhelmed, You are never overwhelmed. You will empower me to overcome the evil one, because You live in me and You have anointed me and appointed me to do your work. Thank You that, like those who have gone before me, I will overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of my testimony. Help me to not shrink back from praising You for all you've done in my life. Thank You that my testimony has the power to silence the evil one because of Your great redemptive power (Psalm 45:4, I John 2:14, 20, Revelation 12:11).

Friend, don't stop with these prayers. Write some of your own. Look up scriptures and use them, combined with praise, to silence the voice of the enemy in your life. Jesus is victorious and His desire is that you will be victorious as well.

Go to Becky's website (beckyharling.com) for a free ebook called "Prayers to Calm Your Anxious Heart."