

THE BATTLE IS NOT OVER Part 4

What is this battle that we're engaged in? We're engaged in a battle against sin, particularly a battle to CEASE FROM SIN.

1 Peter 4:1

1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

Notice, Peter urges us to “arm ourselves”. That’s battle language! Moreover, he’s urging us to prepare ourselves for battle. What battle? To *suffer in the flesh*.

Now, when Peter talks about “suffering in the flesh” understand he’s not talking primarily about suffering in our physical bodies. He’s talking about suffering in our *sinful desires* or instincts (i.e. doing what we want to do, saying what we want to say and thinking what we want to think).

We are cease from sin when we suffer (or deny) the *flesh*, not necessarily when we suffer physically. Physical suffering is often caused by oppression from the devil. Sometimes he’s given permission to oppress us because of some sin or disobedience. Other times he oppresses us because we’re ignorant that his authority has been taken away by Jesus Christ. If he can convince you that he has a right afflict you, you will remain sick and oppressed.

BUT, there’s no world where a person can cease from sin *without* suffering in the FLESH! In fact, one of the reasons why we never overcome sin is because we try to do it sin without denying our flesh. We allow our flesh do whatever it wants, say whatever it wants and think whatever it wants, WHILE hoping to be more like Christ (i.e. cease from sin). This is NOT POSSIBLE!

Galatians 5:22–24

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Notice, the fruit of the Spirit is produced in those who have “crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.” In other words, no crucifixion—no fruit!

Romans 13:12

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Again, we're admonished to "put off" the works of darkness before "putting on" the light! Therefore, if people are struggling to see our *light*, then it's probably because something's still covering it!

Having said that, it's not enough to simply "put off" the *works of darkness* (doing evil things, saying evil things and thinking evil things). We ALSO have to "put on" the light. In fact, it's not until we put on the light that we're ARMED FOR BATTLE.

Romans 13:12 Good News Bible

12 The night is nearly over, day is almost here. Let us stop doing the things that belong to the dark, and let us take up weapons for fighting in the light.

The way we take up our weapons (spiritual armor) is by PUTTING ON the light, or putting on Christ-like behavior! In fact, EVERY piece of spiritual armor we're instructed to put on represents a different facet of Christ.

For example, we don't put on the *breastplate of righteousness* simply by knowing about righteousness. We put on the *breastplate of righteousness* by living and operating as if we have the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Similarly, we don't take *shield of faith* simply by having faith for a particular promise. We take *shield of faith* by living by the faith of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, taking up the weapons (putting on spiritual armor) is synonymous with putting on Christ!

Romans 13:14

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Still, I want to reiterate that we cannot expect to put on Christ, if we do not FIRST put off the flesh!

Romans 13:12

12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

When Paul says "cast off the works of darkness" he's comparing putting away our sinful behavior with putting off NIGHT CLOTHES. Paul is admonishing us to exchange our night clothes (sleep garments) with DAY CLOTHES!

Moreover, anyone still walking around in their night clothes is *unprotected* and exposed to Satan's attacks. If we're still walking around in our spiritual pajamas or sleep cap (i.e. anxiety, fear, unforgiveness, anger, immorality, drunkenness, gossip, fear), we're defenseless against the devil!

We think we're being AUTHENTIC when we do what we want to do, say what we want to say or think the way we want to think. This is not being authentic. This is not being genuine. This is being EXPOSED to demonic activity!

Personally, I think some people would rather remain who they are than face the pain of changing or even the pain of being corrected. Satan is happy to reward us to remain the way we are. Society's happy to reward us to protect our flesh. However, while we're protecting our flesh we're exposed spiritually to the devil.

Even if we manage to put off the flesh, we *still* must put on Christ. If we put off the flesh, but do not put on Christ, we're still vulnerable (open) to the devil's attacks!

Matthew 12:43–45

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

Notice, just because you get Satan to vacate doesn't mean the battle/fight is over. You still must put something in its place. If we don't, Satan will get a foothold and will reenter our life! Moreover, the thing that gives Satan a foothold in our life is the flesh (our evil affections and lusts).

Romans 13:14

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Therefore, putting on the Lord Jesus SHUTS THE DOOR on the flesh and the devil!

When we talk about "putting on Christ" we're talking about being like Christ.

Romans 13:13

13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

To walk "honestly" means to walk *becomingly* or *fittingly*. Fitting to what? Fitting to someone who walks in the day or in the light! In order to win the battle over the flesh we must live and walk like people who are in the light. Moreover, if Jesus is the "light", then walking like someone in the light means to walk like Christ walked and looking like Christ looked.