

THE 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

Throughout history, a shield in warfare would be used to protect one's body from the opposition's weaponry, but the 'shield of faith' the Apostle Paul talks about is much deeper and more powerful. It has a dual purpose in that it serves in our everyday walk with God, and also in our struggle against spiritual forces of evil in this world.

In our relationship with God, the shield of faith is used as a refuge, a place where we seek solace in Christ. Scripture often speaks of a shield and refuge being the same thing. From the Psalms, “He is a shield for those who take refuge in him” (18:30). “You are my refuge and my shield” (119:114). Scripture also talks about the Lord as our shield. “You are a shield around me” (3:3). “He is our help and our shield” (33:20). To Abraham, God said, “I am your shield and your very great reward” (Genesis 15:1).

Taking up the shield of faith is trusting God's purpose is being worked out in all our circumstances. We may hope that it will take away our problems, solve the issue, heal the disease, and a lot of our praying is about that. Sometimes God does intervene in the way we would like, but in our hardships, He works out His purpose in His time. Corrie Ten Boom took up her shield of faith while hiding Jews and members of the Dutch underground resistance during the Nazi occupation of Holland. She very astutely said, “God doesn't have any problems. He only has plans.” What are problems to us are plans to God, but in our problems,

there is a tranquility of heart derived from God that comes with taking up the shield of faith.

Scripture records many examples of satanic attack, and we are in our most dangerous position if we think we are free from it. The devil's attacks are very subtle and usually come when we're least suspecting. The shield of faith acts as one of our most essential defences against Satan. It doesn't stop an attack, but is designed to protect us in the attack. The actual exercise of faith is the shield, which becomes our security.

Faith looks beyond the physical and the material to God with the certainty that though God is unseen, He is more real to us than the physical and material. By taking up the shield of faith, we are extinguishing the flaming arrows of the evil one, because we know God's ultimate protection and purpose is present in the conflict.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, there isn't a better refuge or comfort I have than my faith in You. I ask that it grow deeper and stronger, and thank You, Lord, for your presence in me.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I taking up 'the shield of faith' in troubling times and when faced with temptation?