

# BATTLE



EMPOWERED BY FAITH





Battle: Empowered by Faith  
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A sword with a crossguard, standing upright against a wooden background. The sword is positioned vertically, with its hilt at the top and its blade extending downwards. The crossguard is a simple, straight bar with rounded ends. The blade is a single, straight piece of metal. The background is a dark, wood-paneled ceiling with diagonal planks.

**WEEK 2**  
**Armor Up! Equip for Battle**  
By: Dr. John Freeland

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. 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. 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 6:10-18)



## INTRODUCTION

The most likely casualties of war are those who do not know there is a war. All around them, family and friends fall prey to the enemy, and they are unmoved and without concern. Why? The battle is spiritual and not seen with physical eyes. The Apostle Paul recognized this battle. A spiritual war was raging, so Paul encouraged his fellow believers in Ephesus to “Put on the full armor of God” (verse 11).

A war still rages around believers in Christ today, so let’s armor up this week and get ready to rumble. In verse 12 Paul said, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood.” To the world, this kind of talk is insanity. “If we don’t fight flesh and blood whom do we fight?” We fight “against the rulers, the authorities and the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (verse 12). But how do we fight an enemy we cannot see?

Every day, Paul saw the battle armor worn by Roman soldiers. It usually included bronze or iron breast and back plates worn over chainmail (at least for those who could afford it). Roman helmets were typically made of bronze or iron and offered protection for the head and neck. Metal shin guards protected the lower legs from sword blows and projectiles. A large rectangular shield made of

wood covered in leather or canvas offered protection for the upper body and could be used to form a shield wall. They also wore a belt which held their sword and other weapons.

Paul knew that fighting a spiritual battle with physical weapons was destined for defeat. Armor and missiles don’t intimidate “the powers of this dark world” nor will they drive away the “spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” So let’s armor up! Let’s put on the spiritual armor that can defeat the enemy. Let’s put on the Belt of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Readiness of the Gospel of Peace. Let’s take up the Shield of Faith, put on the Helmet of Salvation and draw forth the Sword of the Spirit.

This week we will examine each of these defensive and offensive weapons, but due to time and space let’s group them together in twos fully understanding others may choose to group them differently. First let’s learn to Stand, then on Day 2, we will discuss the Belt of Truth and the Sword of the Spirit, followed by the Breastplate of Righteousness and the Shield of Faith on Day 3. Then on Day 4, we will consider the Readiness of the Gospel of Peace and the Helmet of Salvation. We will close the week with the nuclear weapon of Prayer. Stand Up! and “Armor Up!”





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**DAY 1 | WEEK 2**  
**Stand Your Ground.**  
By: Dr. John Freeland

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.”  
(Ephesians 6:10-11)



## STAND YOUR GROUND DAY 1 | WEEK 2

### Strength From God

The Apostle Paul addresses “fight or flight” when he says, “be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.” People experience “fight or flight” in the face of danger. For some the natural response is to run toward the fight and throat punch them. Others naturally run and run away fast. Paul said, “Stand firm.” Now is not the time to run. It is time for us to stand and take up the fight.

From 6th grade to 10th grade my school career looked more like the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) than academic excellence. I was in more fights than I can count. I was small, underweight and a bit nerdy. When I came home with a black eye or a fat lip Dad would say something like, “What does the other boy look like?” Usually the answer was “Better than me.” He would then say (and I heard this a lot) “Boy, I don’t want you to ever start a fight, but don’t you ever run from one.”

The kingdom of darkness hates every member of the kingdom of Light. If you believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord, you are part of the Kingdom of Light. Paul, like my dad, isn’t saying pick a fight. He’s saying, “There is a battle raging and like it or not you are in the middle of it because of Whose

you are.” The good news is we aren’t designed to fight the spiritual battle alone. We are made “strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.”

### Relying on Faith

“Mighty power” stands in contrast to “human power.” Human power isn’t mighty in the spiritual realm. This forces us to look beyond ourselves when we are in battle. How do we become strong in “His mighty power”? It comes from faith in God. We are, quite literally, “empowered by faith.” Maybe you have been overtaken by fear. That doesn’t make you a coward, it just makes you human. It is in those moments, when we doubt or fear, we have only one place to turn: to God. In these times, times of battle, “empowered by faith” takes hold and moves us forward. The frontline of the Christian life calls us to faith in God.

When it is time to stand your ground, the only way to stand is in faith. The victory obviously comes from Christ, but we cannot live into that victory without faith in Him. By faith, when the day of evil comes, we can stand our ground. It is “‘not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit’, says the LORD Almighty” (Zechariah 4:6). The rulers, authorities, the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of

evil in the heavenly realms laugh at mere “human” might and power. They laugh because it’s like bringing a knife to a gun fight. On our own might and power, we are way outgunned in a spiritual battle. It is truly quite simple; we have no choice but to put our faith in Jesus.

In 10th grade, I took up martial arts. The fighting stopped after I earned a few belts in Hapkido. Before, I was way outgunned. I was small, scrawny even. I had no skills and no strength. I was an easy target. It only took a couple throws, a punch or two, and the twist of a couple of wrists to get the bullies to stop picking on me. What changed? My strength hadn’t changed much, but I had some new skills, and I knew how to use their weight and strength against them. The change was so drastic, even my older, bigger brother quit picking on me. And so, it is in the spiritual realm when we are “strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.”

### **Surrender and Humility**

My brother was the one who had defended me on many occasions. Now he needed me to defend him. The trick for me, was understanding my newfound ability could really hurt someone. I had the power to break an arm or inflict great pain. We need to understand our newfound ability and power. We have exactly what we need to stand firm. We mustn’t let it go to our head. We mustn’t think it is about us because it isn’t. It is about Jesus. It is about the Kingdom of God and how we are called to be On Mission 365 days a year.

Beth Moore said, “Strength is not found in arrogance but in humility. When we surrender our limitations to God and rely on His strength, He equips us to face anything.” Maybe you have been surrendering to the wrong source. Maybe you’ve been surrendering to the rulers, authorities, the powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. It is time to surrender your inability to fight this battle. It is time to surrender your inadequacies. It is time to surrender your own limitations. It is most certainly time to be made strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God and stand your ground.



**Questions for further reflection:**

1. Was finding out you are in a spiritual battle news to you? In what ways have you responded to the battle?

2. What does it mean to you that “we cannot live into that victory without faith in Him”?

3. In what ways have you been fighting a spiritual battle on your own? What areas of your life still need to be surrendered to God?

**DAY 2 | WEEK 2**  
**The Belt of Truth and Sword of the Spirit**  
**Truth and Gospel**  
By: Dr. John Freeland

“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.”

(Ephesians 6: 13-17)



## BELT OF TRUTH AND SWORD OF THE SPIRIT TRUTH AND GOSPEL DAY 2 | WEEK 2

### **The Belt of Truth**

The Belt of Truth serves as the foundation of our spiritual armor as it holds everything together. The Belt of Truth symbolizes our commitment to living in alignment with God's truth, which empowers us to discern and withstand the lies and deceptions of the enemy (verse 14). Paired with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, truth becomes both our defense and our offense in spiritual warfare.

Truth itself is a foundation. Think about any argument or lesson. An argument built on lies will eventually crumble. Making truth the foundation enables us to stand our ground with confidence. Wrapped in truth we are well equipped to discern the lies and deceptions of our enemy.

Putting on the belt is one of the last steps in getting dressed, yet it comes first in Paul's list. This emphasizes the importance of truth. Wearing the Belt of Truth requires more than just acknowledging truth; it entails living it out in our daily lives. The Belt of Truth is essential in the Christian life. It involves honesty, integrity, and a commitment to God's Word. Truth shapes our character and determines how we will respond in every situation. Wearing the Belt of Truth

signifies living a life grounded in God's truth and aligning our beliefs and actions with His Word.

A friend of mine used to ride bulls in the rodeo. One year our VBS had a cowboy theme. Who do you think got to be the "face" of VBS? Big buckles make a statement. They say something about those who wear them. It's like they're saying, "Bucking bronco, I got a big buckle, so you better watch out. I mean business." The Belt of Truth is like that. It's a big buckle that says to the enemy, "Devil, I've got a big buckle, so you better watch out. I mean business."

The Bible is our source of truth. We can have confidence that what we find within its pages is true. In our desire to live in truth, a good place to start is by reading as much Scripture as you can as often as you can. The caution we need to take to heart is to make sure we read for growth and spiritual maturity not just for bragging rights. So, before you read, ask God to help you understand and grow in the knowledge of God and relationship with Him.

## **The Sword of the Spirit**

The Sword of the Spirit refers to the Word of God, the Bible. It is offensive by nature and is used to attack the enemy's lies and advance the Kingdom of God. Hebrews 4:12 depicts the Word of God as a sharp, two-edged sword. The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is offensive in two ways. With one edge, the Sword cuts through the lies and deception of our spiritual enemy. With the other edge, it cuts to the heart of man convicting him concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. This means nothing is beyond the reach of the power of the Sword of the Spirit.

Many have named the Bible to be the most popular work of literature ever written, with an estimated 25 million copies sold every year. It is much more than just popular literature. It is the living Word of God. It has the power to transform hearts and minds. With the Word of God as our sword, lies are exposed and darkness is driven away. George Muller, preacher, evangelist, and foster father to hundreds of orphans said, "The Word of God is our ultimate weapon against the forces of darkness. It pierces through falsehoods and exposes the truth."

The Belt of Truth and the Sword of the Spirit are essential components of our spiritual armor. Grounding ourselves in truth, living it out in our daily lives and discerning truth from deception empowers us to withstand the schemes of the enemy. As we wield the Sword of the Spirit with proficiency gained through study, practice, and guidance from the Holy Spirit, we become formidable

warriors in the battle against spiritual darkness, advancing God's kingdom with truth and discernment.

**Questions for further reflection:**

1. Consider making a commitment to read the Bible through in one year. Try one of these:

<https://pages.billygraham.org/daily-bible-reading/>

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/>

<https://oneyearbibleonline.com/>

2. In what ways do you see the Belt of Truth and Sword of the Spirit working together in your life?

3. How confident are you that you are grounded in truth and discerning truth from deception? In what ways do you feel empowered to withstand the schemes of the enemy? In what ways do you not feel empowered?

**DAY 3 | WEEK 2**  
**Breastplate of Righteousness and Shield of Faith**  
By: Dr. John Freeland

“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.”  
(Ephesians 6: 14-16)



## BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SHIELD OF FAITH

### DAY 3 | WEEK 2

#### **The Breastplate of Righteousness**

“Holier than thou” is a label often used for hypocrites. But “holier than thou” has also been used as a weapon of insult to attack the one who is holy. Holiness and righteousness make unholy and unrighteous people uncomfortable. The honest, humble life of a believer in Christ is difficult for those outside the faith to be nearby. Observing the love and grace with which the righteousness can bring conviction on even the hardest of hearts.

The world hates the righteous because righteousness shines a light in darkness. Light disrupts darkness. Light drives it away. Romans 12:2 speaks to this righteousness: “Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is— His good, pleasing, and perfect will.” When the righteous refuse to conform to the pattern of this world, the world takes offense.

The Breastplate of Righteousness (Ephesians 6:14) protects your vital organs, symbolizing the importance of living a righteous life. It safeguards your core values and motivates you to live in accordance with God’s will. One way to think of the Breastplate

of Righteousness is to think of it as a guardrail. When our guardrails are righteous, our life will be one of righteousness.

Righteousness is a strong defense against the powers of this dark world. The armor of God is just that, “of God.” Righteousness isn’t something to be achieved, but it is something to be “maintained.” Ephesians 2:8-9 shows us, “It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.” We cannot earn salvation, nor can we create our own righteousness. Romans 3:20 says, “Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.”

#### **The Shield of Faith**

Ephesians 6:16 says, “take up the Shield of Faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” As pointed out in the introduction Paul is making a comparison with Roman armor. Roman shields were large and sturdy, typically made of wood covered in leather or canvas. This construction allowed them to deflect most flaming arrows. If an arrow did lodge in the shield, soldiers might try to smother

the flames by hitting the shield against the ground. Soldiers also relied on their comrades to extinguish the flames quickly or prevent them from spreading.

Flaming arrows were a psychological weapon as much as a physical one. Even if they didn't cause widespread fires, they could create panic and disrupt formations. Considering this we should remember first; we are not alone. We have each other and though we fight on the front lines, we have backup in one another and in the presence of God through the Holy Spirit. Second, the devil's flaming arrows have more to do with intimidation than annihilation.

Just like soldiers on the front lines, we need each other. We need each other to help extinguish the flaming arrows stuck in our Shield of Faith. Think about that for just a minute. The Devil's flaming arrows can get stuck in your Shield of Faith. These flaming arrows are challenges to our faith. If someone says they are having a crisis of faith they really mean their Shield of Faith is on fire because it has many flaming arrows in it. No believer in Christ should ever be ashamed of the flaming arrows stuck in their shield. Every believer should feel the freedom to ask another Christian warrior for help.

The damage the Devil can do to a believer in Christ is minimal at best. The Devil can't take your soul if you believe in Jesus. The Devil can't send you to hell because you already have eternal life. Unfortunately, the Devil's intimidation is quite effective,

and many Christians struggle under the weight of these flaming arrows. Secure your Breastplate of Righteousness and raise your Shield of Faith. Tighten up the ranks. The battle is on.

**Questions for further reflection:**

1. What flaming arrows are stuck in your Shield of Faith?

2. In what ways do you see the Breastplate of Righteousness and Shield of Faith working together in your life?

3. Read Romans 13:14 and 2 Corinthians 5:21. When you think about being a “righteous person” in what ways does your relationship with Jesus influence your righteousness?

**DAY 4 | WEEK 2**  
**Shoes of the Gospel of Peace and the Helmet of Salvation**  
By: Dr. John Freeland

“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.”  
(Ephesians 6: 15-18, NIV)



## SHOES OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE AND THE HELMET OF SALVATION DAY 4 | WEEK 2

### **“Shoes” of the Gospel of Peace**

Many a preacher has talked about the “Shoes or Sandals of Peace.” That’s not what Paul said. What he did say is “with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of Peace.” The Gospel of Peace is not what is protecting your feet. It is the readiness that comes from the Gospel of Peace that protects your feet. The NASB uses the word preparedness.

If you have ever stood at the edge of a high precipice with no handrail you likely used extreme caution and eased your way to the edge. That is the opposite of readiness. Why do we use extreme caution and ease our way to the edge? Because we lack confidence in either our ability to keep our balance or in the ground beneath our feet. The Gospel of Peace gives us a readiness that we can stand and stand firm even in a spiritual battle that is way beyond our ability. This readiness is not just a readiness to fight the battle, it is also an eagerness to share the message of peace we find in Christ.

At the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, I noticed how carefully the guards place their feet. I noticed as one guard walked down the steps to lay a wreath at the tomb his head and shoulders moved smoothly without bobbing.

It was a remarkable display of grace and strength. Like these soldiers we become graceful and sturdy on our feet, ready to navigate any ground. We stand firm in our faith confident in battle and confident in evangelism. “The readiness that comes from the Gospel of Peace” equips us to bring peace and reconciliation to a world in turmoil.

The Gospel of Peace is not just words. The Gospel of Peace is a way of life. This Gospel of Peace is not just about getting through a tough time or ensuring our life remains manageable. This Gospel of Peace is about everyone around us. This Gospel of Peace is about the salvation of our loved ones and our brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering or persecuted whether here or abroad. The Gospel of Peace is seen in how we live our lives in the good and bad times. It gives us a readiness, sure-footedness, and peace during the battle. When we walk in that readiness, those around us won’t have to ask us if we believe in Jesus. They will know.

## **The Helmet of Salvation (Ephesians 6:17)**

It is interesting that the Armor of Salvation is a helmet. The helmet protects the head, the mind. The most obvious example is a football helmet (or maybe a motorcycle helmet). Without the helmet, the football player is sure to be carried off the field with a concussion. Protection is in view here, but there is another type of helmet I have in mind. Once I went to a gun show with an Apache helicopter pilot. He knew they had an Apache there and wanted me to experience it. He helped me get in the cockpit and gave me the helmet with the “heads-up” display. Everywhere I turned my head the cameras and guns followed. It also had an infra-red display built-in. I could see “hot spots” everywhere I looked, like a man holding a cup of coffee.

The Helmet of Salvation is like that. It is not just for protection. The Helmet of Salvation is defensive in that it is for eternal security and for freedom from sin, guilt and shame. The Helmet of Salvation is offensive in that it has the power of abundant life. Most Christians would answer “Why did Jesus come?” with “for our salvation” or “to forgive our sin” or some similar answer. Jesus said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10).

The Helmet of Salvation is an offensive weapon first because it ensures that we are grounded in the assurance of our salvation; second, because it addresses every area of our lives. Jesus is the answer for every area of life, for every problem we have, for every member of our families. Being outfitted with the Helmet of Salvation we stand ready to give answer to our unbelieving family and friends when they ask, “Why choose Jesus?”

**Questions for further reflection:**

1. In what ways do you see your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the Gospel of Peace and the Helmet of Salvation working together?

2. How does Colossians 1:23 shine light on your answer to the question above?

3. In what ways is the Helmet of Salvation protecting your mind? In what ways is it the power of abundant life for you?



**DAY 5 | WEEK 2**  
**Pray in the Spirit on All Occasions**  
By: Dr. John Freeland

“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, NIV)

## PRAY IN THE SPIRIT ON ALL OCCASIONS DAY 5 | WEEK 2

Despite the protection provided by Spiritual Armor, Paul felt compelled to include one more thing: “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Ephesians 6:18). We have seen aspects of the Armor of God that is both defensive and offensive. Prayer takes spiritual warfare to a different level. The Armor of God in many ways is very personal and intended for close combat, even hand-to-hand combat. Prayer is a long-range weapon, a nuclear weapon.

### **Pray in the Spirit**

Prayer is a nuclear missile. Through prayer comes nuclear explosions that rock the underworld and break strongholds in the realms of spirit and flesh. When Paul says, “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions,” he is teaching that we don’t pray alone. Even on the floor of the loneliest living room or the darkest African or South American village surrounded by witchcraft we do not pray alone because we pray “in the Spirit.” You can be sure you are not alone. Hebrews 13:5 repeats the promise of Deuteronomy 31:6 which says: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

I have this image of the Holy Spirit rolling up His sleeves every time a Christian says, “Let’s pray.” The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, never leaves us to pray alone. When it is prayer time, the Holy Spirit is actively engaged. When prayer needs to be lifted, the Holy Spirit is there to call us to our knees. When we don’t know what to say or how to pray, “the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words” (Romans 8:26). You are never alone when you pray. You are never ignorant in your prayers. Keep praying. The Holy Spirit is helping you, even when you doubt.

### **Always Keep Praying for All the Lord’s People**

Often the most compassionate thing we can do is fall on our knees in intercession for another who is under spiritual attack through sickness, depression, addiction, or any other malady you can list. Nothing is more compassionate than engaging in an angry battle with the Devil because a husband or wife is entertaining thoughts of divorce or a sister in Christ is battling cancer. Interceding for your brothers and sisters in Christ and for those who are not yet believers is one of the greatest

privileges of the Christian life. Paul said, "Always Keep Praying for All the Lord's People." Paul understood that more spiritual battles are won through prayer than anything we could dream or imagine. Worship and preaching are as important as spiritual warfare, but prayer is long-range precision.

Prayers are the most powerful and most spiritual moments of life. Prayer is vital in our relationship with God and when it comes to engaging in the spiritual battle of the Christian life, no weapon is focused more than prayer. As we lift specific prayer request, we target needs and uplift individuals. When we take up the Sword of the Spirit and fall to our knees, the combination becomes flashing lightning and Holy Spirit wind amid darkness and evil. The combination lifts power off the pages of Scripture and sends them into the heavenly realm with the power of agreement and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Demons shiver when you armor up and take to your knees with the Sword of the Spirit in one hand, the Shield of Faith in the other and the Word of God in your heart.

Prayer may be activated here, but it is answered in a different realm, a heavenly realm. When you adopt a position of prayer, darkness trembles. Something is about to change. That change will not always be the one you want or the way you want, but it is in the Spirit. Sometimes that change will be inside of you. Sometimes that change is exactly what you had hoped. But that change is always of God.

Darkness and evil can try to keep you from intercession for others and intimacy with God, but the only thing that will keep you from prayer is yourself. Armor up, and let's pray.



**Questions for further reflection:**

1. What visual images comes to mind when you think about prayer being a nuclear weapon?

2. What are some things you need to change in your life so you can engage in prayer more often and for longer periods of time?

3. Thinking back on your times of prayer. When was one time that prayer time was among the most powerful and most spiritual moment in your life? What made it so powerful?

**Additional Notes:**

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## OUR MISSION

To lead people to trade the pursuit of more for a life worth pursuing in Jesus Christ.



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