

WEEK 2

THE BELT OF TRUTH (EPHESIANS 6:10-14)

* The info in this message is adapted from: "Spiritual Warfare" by Tim Keller & "This is War" by JD Greear

When you become a Christian, there's a sense in which you receive everything you need instantly – salvation, the indwelling Holy Spirit, direct access to God through prayer, His Word to guide you, even the armor of God.

But even though you *received* the armor at salvation, you still have to learn to put it on and use it. It's like a soldier entering the military and receiving certain pieces of equipment, body armor, and weapons. But they still have to learn to use them properly and effectively.

And tonight, we begin looking at each piece of the armor of God and how to use them effectively. The first piece of the armor that Paul mentions is "the belt of truth"...

Ephesians 6:10–14 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth..."

We always think of truth as primarily a "WHAT," but in Scripture it is first a "WHO." Jesus said, "I am Truth" (John 14:6). So, putting on the belt of truth first means to put on Jesus in salvation. If you don't have the *Son* of God, then you can't have access to the *armor* of God.

And, when Paul says to put on the belt of truth, the people of his day would have understood that he was using a Roman Soldier to illustrate the armor of God. They saw Roman soldiers around them everyday so they would have immediately understood the imagery.

So, the “belt of truth” pictures the leather belt that a Roman soldier wore. And notice: Paul calls it the belt of “truth.” What is truth? We know that Jesus is Truth, but notice what else Jesus says...

John 17:17 [He prayed to the Father and said] “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

The belt of truth is specifically referring to God’s Word, the Bible. And Paul is showing us how to effectively use the Word of God in our battle against the invisible enemy – the devil.

So, Paul is implying a few things about God’s Word...

1. Truth prepares you for the fight.

You see, the soldier’s belt wasn’t really a piece of armor. It actually *prepared* you to suit up and fight.

You see, in the ancient world, people wore flowing robes (many people still wear them in the middle east). So, when it was time to go to battle, a soldier would gather all the excess material from their robe and pull it above their knees and secure it into their belt. It’s kind of like us “rolling up our sleeves” to go to work.

Jesus was using the same imagery when He said...

Luke 12:35a “Stay dressed for action...”

Some of the older Bible versions call this “girding up your loins.”

Practical Example (from Tim Keller): Anxiety – We typically think anxiety comes when we’re thinking too much. People will say, “I have anxiety because my mind races to all sorts ‘What If’s’ – all sorts of thoughts flowing out of me in every direction.”

But, anxiety doesn’t happen because we’re thinking *too much* – it happens because we’re thinking *too little*. You see, when you have all sorts of thoughts flowing out of you in every direction (like a flowing robe), that’s not thinking too much – it’s letting your thoughts run wild.

You have to gather in all those flowing thoughts and secure them into the belt of TRUTH. You take every “what if” – every anxious thought that is flowing out of you – and think carefully/biblically about what is TRUE concerning that thought!

2. **Truth firmly supports your core.**

The thick leather belt firmly supported the CORE of the soldier, like a weight-lifter's belt supports their core when they're squatting or deadlifting. In the same way, God's Word firmly supports the CORE of who you are – your core identity in Christ.

For example, in the book of Philippians, Paul made a list of all the things he used to find his identity in before he met Christ. But, when he was saved and began to walk with Jesus, Paul later said...

Philippians 3:8 "Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ."

Paul understood that Christ and His Word firmly supported the CORE of who he was – his core identity and sense of worth! You see, most people get their sense of identity/worth from the person who is most important to them.



Who is most important to you? Is your sense of identity based on what *they* say about you, or is it based on what *JESUS* says about you?

3. **Truth protects you against what is false.**

God's Word (Truth) has a *defensive* and an *offensive* aspect to it. And we see this in the armor of God. For example...

- **The Sword of the Spirit** (a piece of armor we'll see later) is using the Word of God *offensively* – the forward attack of taking God's Word into a dark and dying world.
- **The Belt of Truth** is *defensive* because it's in a location where it protects your private parts, but NOT how it sounds. You see, God's Word protects your private/inner parts – your heart...

Psalms 51:6 "Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart."

You see, ancient people believed that a person's *will, emotions, and desires* came from the heart, which is why there are so many verses that tell you to "guard your heart." But, in the original language, it doesn't say

“heart” – it actually says “bowels,” which are at the center of your body, near the belt.

But nobody wants to say, “I love you with all my bowels!” So, they translate it as “heart.” Paul is saying that the belt of truth (God’s Word) protects your *will, desires, and emotions* from the lies of the enemy...

Psalm 119:9 “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.”

So, the belt of truth is *defensive* – guarding and protecting your “inward being” against lies and deception. The TRUTH allows you to recognize a LIE.

Illustration: When the U.S. Secret Service trains their agents to identify counterfeit money, they don’t make them study fake bills. Instead, they make them study every detail of a *genuine* bill which allows them to easily spot a fake when they see it.

“The best way to prove that a stick is crooked is to set a straight one beside it. No words need to be spoken.” – A.W. Tozer

In other words, when you KNOW the truth, you’re able to identify what is false *before* it has a chance to enter your heart. But we all know that some of the enemies’ lies will inevitably make it into our heart because he’s so deceptive. So, when we identify a lie that has found its way into our heart, we use truth to root it out...

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

All the false “arguments” and “opinions” that are flowing out of your heart (like a flowing robe) – every thought that contradicts God’s Word needs to be brought down and destroyed. Otherwise, those arguments and opinions will trip us up if they’re not gathered up and secured by the belt of truth.

So, we gather every anxious thought – every false argument and opinion – and compare it to the truth. And one by one, you bring down those lies before they become a “stronghold” for the devil to wage war on your life!

But, if you're unfamiliar with God's Word then you can't recognize the false *arguments* and *opinions*. For example, Jesus says, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free," (John 8:32) but it's only the truth you know that will make you free. It's only the truth you know that can guard your heart.



Do you know God's Word well, or do you neglect the study of God's Word?

Illustration: Bart Ehrman, the professor of NT studies at UNC is a skeptic who is credited with leading thousands of college freshmen away from faith in God. He always starts his class by holding up the Bible and asking, "How many of you believe this is God's Word?" Then he follows with the question, "How many of you who raised your hand can *honestly* say you've read the entire Bible?" When most of their hands go down, he says, "Really? This is a book written by Almighty God – vital to EVERY area of your life... *but you haven't even bothered to read it?*" Then he says, "Your actions prove that you don't *really* believe it's the Word of God after all." And with that seed of doubt planted, he begins his journey of methodically dismantling their shallow knowledge of the TRUTH.

"It is neglect of the Bible which makes so many [vulnerable] to the first false teacher whom they hear." – J.C. Ryle

Every cult and false religion in the world thrives on people who only know *pieces* of the truth.

Illustration: I read a story about the Devil walking along with one of his demons. They saw a man ahead of them pick up something shiny. The demon asked the devil, "What did he find?" The devil said, "He found a piece of the truth." The demon said, "Doesn't it bother you that he found a piece of the truth?" Satan said, "No, I'll see to it that he makes a religion out of it."¹

You see, if you only know *pieces* of the truth because you neglect your Bible, then you are exactly where the enemy wants you! The very first piece of armor that Paul tells us to put on is the belt of truth because it...

- **Prepares you for the fight.**
- **Firmly supports the core of who you are** – your identity in Christ.

¹ Klyne Snodgrass, *Between Two Truths - Living with Biblical Tensions*, 1990, Zondervan Publishing House, p. 35.

- **Protects your innermost being** from the lies of the enemy. And when those lies do make it into your heart, the belt of truth allows you to root them out by comparing them with the TRUTH.
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Small Groups