

LESSON ESSENTIALS

GOD AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM

LESSON 3: GOD'S BATTLE PLAN

Every successful endeavour needs a plan, and plans are even more likely to succeed when a group of people works together with the same purpose. God has a plan to fight against the evil in this world, and this plan is no secret – it is plainly written in the Bible! The battle includes God sending His son as a payment for our sins, in order to purchase us back from Satan. This plan continues as new souls are taken back for God. As we work together to glorify Jesus Christ in the heart and soul of every person God's Kingdom claims victory. What is the key principle in winning this victory? Each and every one of us obeying the whole will of God!

Isn't it amazing to think that even in the darkest struggles God has a plan? We may feel very weak and inadequate to take on the evil in this world- but the truth is that God can supernaturally equip us for this task in His spiritual armour! Read on to find out more.

Most of the battles fought between good and evil are within the heart of man. It is in the heart of man that the Devil creates strongholds of jealousy, pride etc.

The main purpose of the Devil is to snatch mankind away from the loving relationship of God.

How should we battle against the Devil? The first thing to do is to submit to God and resist the attacks of the Devil. The word of God has clearly outlined what our response should be in James 4:6-7.

Each of us fight a spiritual battle every day. The forces that surround us are often unseen, and our enemy rarely reveals himself. This does not make the battle any less real. Each of us struggles against our own sinful nature, the temptations of the world and the plans of Satan. How can we as believers respond in the spiritual battle? "Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good (Ecclesiastes 9:18 ESV)." Many believers become casualties of the enemy not because they lack strength but because they rely on zeal without divine wisdom.

As good soldiers, effective and successful in stopping the enemy's advance, we need to know more about the Devil and his domain before we chart out our response in this battle. We need to keep in mind that though the Devil has already been defeated through the blood of Jesus Christ, he is not dead yet.

He and his allies are held in bondage in darkness. We read about it in 2 Peter 2:4, "For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment..."

Then how should we battle against the Devil? The first thing to do is to submit to God and resist the attacks of the Devil in our own lives. The word of God has clearly outlined what our response should be in James 4:6-7. Thus we declare war against the enemy through our unconditional submission to God. The Bible encourages us to do good and walk uprightly before the Lord. This is the stand we make for God.

Secondly, we need to ask how we should actively fight against the Devil, and ready ourselves for this fight. The answer is found in 2 Corinthians 10:3-6: the word of God reveals that our war is a spiritual one and not against flesh and blood. God himself has provided us with the necessary armour and weapons that have divine power to destroy the power and principalities of this world. God has given us vast and marvellous resources at our disposal, and so in this way, we can be ready to fight with all our might against the enemy.

We must keep in mind one very important thing when fighting against the forces of evil. Since this is a battle, we should not be passive fighters. We should be pro-active and be prepared to fight.

How can we be active instead of passive? The answer is found in Ephesians 6:13-18. The verses say, "Therefore take up the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day,

and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.”

Therefore as believers with God’s help, we can be pro-active to ward off the attacks of the enemy using the armour of God.

Let us take a closer look at each of the armour that God has commissioned and given us for our battle:

1. **The Belt of Truth:** A belt goes around our waist and holds our other garments together. It can be tightened, felt at our centre and a source of strength. A belt can even hold our sword. Without the truth none of our other pieces of armour are effective.
2. **Breastplate of Righteousness:** A breastplate protects the heart, the chest, the vital organs. Since we are fighting against the principalities of this world, we protect ourselves with truthfulness and righteousness, which give us our basic protection. The righteousness we have from Jesus Christ protects us from temptation.
3. **The Shoes of Readiness to Spread the Gospel:** As believers, our role is to bring many people to the knowledge of Christ, and therefore, we should be always ready to share the gospel. Shoes protect our feet from tripping, from injury; They keep us from stumbling. Knowing our purpose will keep us walking on the right path.
4. **The Shield of Faith:** The shield of faith “with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one” is basically having faith that God will rescue us even when we feel nothing is going our way.
5. **The Helmet of Salvation:** The knowledge that we are saved should protect our mind from doubts, and can act as a helmet. Remind yourself constantly of the truth of your salvation, and where it comes from.
6. **The Sword of the Spirit:** The sword is the only offensive weapon in the armour of God! This is because it is through the power of the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of

To be pro-active in this fight we must daily put on the armour of God. That involves praying, and reminding ourselves of the truth of the Gospel and our salvation by reading God’s Word. God has given us this equipment with which to fight – we should not leave our armour unused!

God and the power of prayer, we will be able to break down the strongholds of the Devil.

Dear child of God remember you are a soldier in God's army and it is only after putting on the whole armour of God can we be able to stand our ground and resist the attacks of the Devil. Along with this we need to remember the command that God has given us: always be alert! There is no point in having the armour of God if we do not use it all the time!! God has promised He will not leave us, and He will give us all that we need.

IN REVIEW

- In our battle against the Devil and the principalities of this world, we have to take a pro-active stance; we cannot be passive fighters.
- The war against the enemy begins with us, and taking a stand for an unconditional submission to God.
- Resisting the Devil involves walking uprightly before the Lord and obeying His commands.
- Since our war is a spiritual war, God gives us the weapons for our fight.
- We have the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the shoes of readiness, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God; to help us defend against the Devil's attacks.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- What proactive stance would you be willing to take in your fight against the Devil and the principalities?

- Think about each piece of the armour of God. How can you 'use' that piece of armour in the spiritual battles you are facing today?

- Do you feel led to prayer and intercede for someone? How would you incorporate it into your prayer life?

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