

Christian Warfare

Lesson 10: The Armor of God, Part 2

- I. The Belt of Truth, Eph 6.14. Here the apostle tells us that we're to be armed against Satan's *lies* by a strict and faithful adherence to the *truth*. We're to gird up or fasten the truth onto our understanding and will in order that we might be prepared for good, true, and right action, no longer conformed to sin but to holiness. How well we do this, will make us strong or weak Christians, Eph 4.11-16. *Thus*, Paul's meaning is that we must fasten the *the truth of doctrine* to the mind, 1Pet 5.8-9, and fasten the *truth of sincerity* to the will, 1Pet 1.13-15. *To put on the belt of truth* is to be understood in these two senses.
 - A. The faith we profess and live by must be grounded upon the truth of God's holy Word. *A true faith* gives us knowledge of the way which pleases God, Acts 17.11; Eph 1.13; 1Pet 2.1-2; 5.8-9. This is necessary to defend ourselves against *false teachers* and *false teaching*, because Satan comes as a *serpent* to deceive, 1Jn 4.1-6.
 - B. We must profess the true faith truly, i.e., with upright and sincere hearts. *A true heart* enables us to walk in the way which pleases God. This is necessary to defend against *threats of persecution*, because Satan comes as a *lion* to devour, 1Pet 5.8-9.
 - C. Thus, in order to take our stand against Satan we're to begin by putting on both a *knowledge* of the truth and a *love* for the truth.
- II. We must be armed in our spiritual warfare against Satan's lies by establishing our *understanding* in the truth of God's Word.
 - A. Three reasons why.
 1. Because false doctrines are damning, 2Kgs 4.39-40.
 - a) False doctrines in the fundamentals of the faith aren't innocent things, 1Cor 15.1-4; Gal 1.6-9; 2.16; 3.1-4, 10; 5.1-6; cf. the Ecumenical Creeds.
 - b) The devil peddles countless falsehoods and doesn't care which one a person embraces, so long as he embraces one, because they're all damning.
 - c) The world's religions offer as many roads to heaven as there are to hell, Mt 7.13; but the Scripture teaches that there's only one way, Jn 14.6; 1Tim 2.5-6; Phil 3.7-9; Rom 3.20-25.
 - d) Gurnall, "Would any make it a shorter voyage to hell than ordinary, let him throw himself but into this stream of corrupt doctrine, and he's not like to be long in going."
 2. Because imposters are so subtle, 2Pet 2.1-3; Eph 4.14; 2Cor 4.2; 11.1-6; Gal 3.1.
 - a) Imposters prey upon the ignorant and gullible, 2Tim 3.5-8. Our armament against them is a thorough knowledge of the truth, vv.10, 13-17; Eph 4.11-14; Rom 16.17-18.
 - b) The devil chose to assault Eve rather than Adam because she was more likely to be ensnared. And he takes the same course now, creeping over where the hedge is lowest and the resistance is likely to be the weakest, 2Cor 11.3; Eph 4.14; 2Pet 2.14-15.
 3. Because of the universal influence our understanding has on the whole man.
 - a) Our knowledge informs our affections, Lk 24.32, and our whole way of life. Our knowledge is as the ground beneath our feet. What we embrace and assume to be true, we walk and live by. We are what we see and judge in that even if many of us don't live up to what we know, none of us live beyond it.
 - b) Whatever passes the understanding as true, is embraced by the heart as good and desirable, and then bears fruit in the life as determinative of our actions, 1Th 1.2-10.
 - B. Directions to establish your mind in the truth of God's Word.

1. Be sincere in embracing the truths of God's Word, 1Tim 1.5-6. Don't aim at more learning and the approval of men but at more holiness, an increase in godliness, and a more intimate fellowship with and likeness to Jesus Christ, Eph 4.11-14.
2. Attend faithfully to the ministry of the Word. The great purpose of God behind the preaching of the Word is to establish you in the truth and to prevent your being tossed by error, Eph 4.11-14. Moreover, don't only take in the application sections of a sermon, but just as eagerly receive and believingly embrace the doctrinal part as well. Gurnall, "The doctrinal part is needed to make you a solid Christian and the application part is needed to make you a warm Christian."
3. Don't enslave your judgments to any person or group. Bring everything back to the Word as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, Acts 17.10-12. Let the Scriptures be the only foundation of your convictions and not the words of any man. That said, don't swing the pendulum too far and despise the good words of good men when approved by holy Scripture. Let a man who speaks truth be cause for praise to God but never cause for his own praise.
4. Beware of the itching ears of curiosity, 2Tim 4.3, that lead you to covet new teachings and opinions. Gurnall, "This itch commonly ends in a scab of error." Newton, "If the Lord has shown you what is right, it's not worth your while to know how many ways there are of being wrong."
5. Pray for convictions settled in the truth of God's Word, Ps 86.11; 119.29.
6. Don't be offended by the different opinions of others on secondary matters. Give liberty to each other and see to your own establishment in the truth of Scripture.
7. Don't rest in any knowledge of the truth until you feel the efficacy of it upon your heart and life. False teachers are always hankering after knowledge but never come to its real purpose, which is transformation of the life, 2Tim 3.5-9; Rom 12.2; 2Tim 3.16-17.