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## **The Armor of God**

\*taken from Nancy Alcorn's *Mercy For...* book series

Every day when you wake up and begin your day, you are entering a battlefield. Ephesians 6:11 says to put on the whole armor of God to fight the enemy. Putting on the armor of God is a metaphor the Bible uses to explain vital aspects of our relationship with God and how we are to use them to protect ourselves against attacks from the enemy. The armor of God consists of six pieces – five for protection and one for attack.

The first is the *helmet of salvation*, which represents the mind of Christ that you receive when you ask Jesus into your heart. Accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior is the first step in winning your battle against the enemy. Then as you renew your mind by reading God's Word, you are placing a symbolic helmet on your head that helps you think the right thoughts and protects your mind from the onslaughts of the enemy. As you bring every thought captive to Christ, then you are able to change the way you think about your situation and about life. You will begin to think of yourself as an overcomer.

The second piece of God's armor is the *breastplate of righteousness*, which symbolizes the exchange that happens when you ask Jesus into your life: You give Him your sin, mistakes, and addictions, and He gives you His righteousness or right standing with God.. 2 Corinthians 5:21 explains that Jesus, who had no sin, became sin for you so you can now receive His righteousness. In other words, you can actually exchange your sins and mistakes for God's righteousness-which means that you are now in right standing with God! Because of your standing, or position, when thoughts and feelings of self-condemnation and self-hate come at you, you can refuse them and say, "No. 'I am a new creation!" Understanding this righteousness protects you from the destructive thought patterns that will lead you down a dead-end street-back to old habits and behaviors.

The *shield of faith* is the part of the armor used to protect you from Satan's attacks. The Bible says in Ephesians 6:16 that this shield of faith literally quenches every fiery dart of the wicked one (his lies, temptations, and the trouble he brings into your life). Taking up the shield of faith means that your faith is now in God and that you trust Him as you live the way He wants you to live. It means that you use the faith God has given you to live for Him and that you truly believe what His Word says. God's Word allows you to deflect the arrows of assault, fear, and doubt that the enemy shoots at you.

The *belt of truth* means that you have chosen to align your life with the Word of God and walk in His principles. This represents everything being held together by the ultimate truth, which is believing in and conforming your life to God's Word. By walking in truth, you automatically leave deception behind. For example, when you are walking north, your back is turned to the south and you are literally walking away from the south. Similarly; when you choose to do the right thing, you don't have

to worry about doing the wrong thing because wrong is automatically eliminated by doing right. In fact, the word *repent* in the Bible means to turn around and go the opposite direction (Acts 3:19).

The next piece of armor is *shoes*, or "symbolically wearing the gospel of peace on your feet" (Ephesians 6: 15, NKJV). To wear the shoes of peace means that when you receive Christ as your Savior, you also receive His peace, which will guard your heart and mind. "God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand" (Philippians 4:7 NLT), will be given to you so you don't have to live in turmoil anymore. Therefore, when you put on the shoes of peace, you are walking and living in peace instead of walking and living in turmoil and chaos. Romans 8:31 says that if God is for you, who can be against you? Even when things appear to be bad, you can trust that God can turn them around for your good.

The first five pieces of armor are for your protection, but the last piece is an offensive weapon called the *sword of the Spirit*. The Word of God is the weapon we use to go on the offense against the enemy. To use the sword of the Spirit is to literally speak God's Word out loud. God promises that as you declare and decree His Word, He will watch over His Word to perform it. When the enemy comes to try to bring something into your life something that is not God's will, rise up and speak the Word of God. For example, if fear tries to hit you, you can set a firm boundary and say "No! 2 Timothy 1:7 – God has not given me a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." When we are afraid or in any other situation, we have the opportunity to take God's Word and boldly proclaim, declare, and decree what the Word says in the face of what may seem or feel totally opposite.

This is why it is so important to know the Word of God. You need to be able to speak the Word of God as your weapon. Hebrews 4: 12 says the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is sharper than any double-edged sword, and it has the ability to discern between that which is good and that which is evil, that which is right and that which is wrong.

It may not be easy to resist acting out your thoughts, emotions, and choices, but God's Word planted on the inside of you will actually change your desires and transform you into the person God wants you to be (Romans 12:1-2). As you put the Word on the inside of you, it grows stronger and stronger, and you will be able to fight wrong desires and overcome the enemy. The next time you find yourself struggling to do anything that is not of God, remember that God has equipped you with power and strength to finish the fight victoriously (Philippians 2:13). "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved *us*" (Romans 8:37).

As a child of God, you have authority over the enemy (Luke 10:19). Exercise that authority by boldly speaking the Word of God to take back the areas of your life where the devil has had you bound (1 John 5:4-5). Don't allow yourself to be defeated. Rise up in Jesus' name and be who you were born to be. Remember, without God, you can do nothing (John 15:5). Allow Him to be your strength.

When you stand firm with the armor God gives you, you will be fully protected, and you will win every time!