

# THE ARMOR OF GOD

Rose Visual  
Bible Studies



The Armor of God  
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# Contents



## **A WORLD AT WAR**

The Reality of Spiritual Warfare

*Page 7*



## **THE ARMOR OF GOD**

Spiritual Battle Gear

*Page 23*



## **COMBATING THE ENEMY'S LIES**

The Belt of Truth

*Page 39*



## **THE WEAPONS WE FIGHT WITH**

Prayer & the Sword of the Spirit

*Page 55*



## **FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT**

The Gospel of Peace & the Shield of Faith

*Page 67*



## **VICTORY IN JESUS**

The Breastplate of Righteousness  
& the Helmet of Salvation

*Page 81*



## **LEADER'S GUIDE**

*Page 97*

*“Put on the full armor of God,  
so that you can take your stand  
against the devil’s schemes.”*

Ephesians 6:11

# The Armor of God



*Suit up! There's a war going on.*

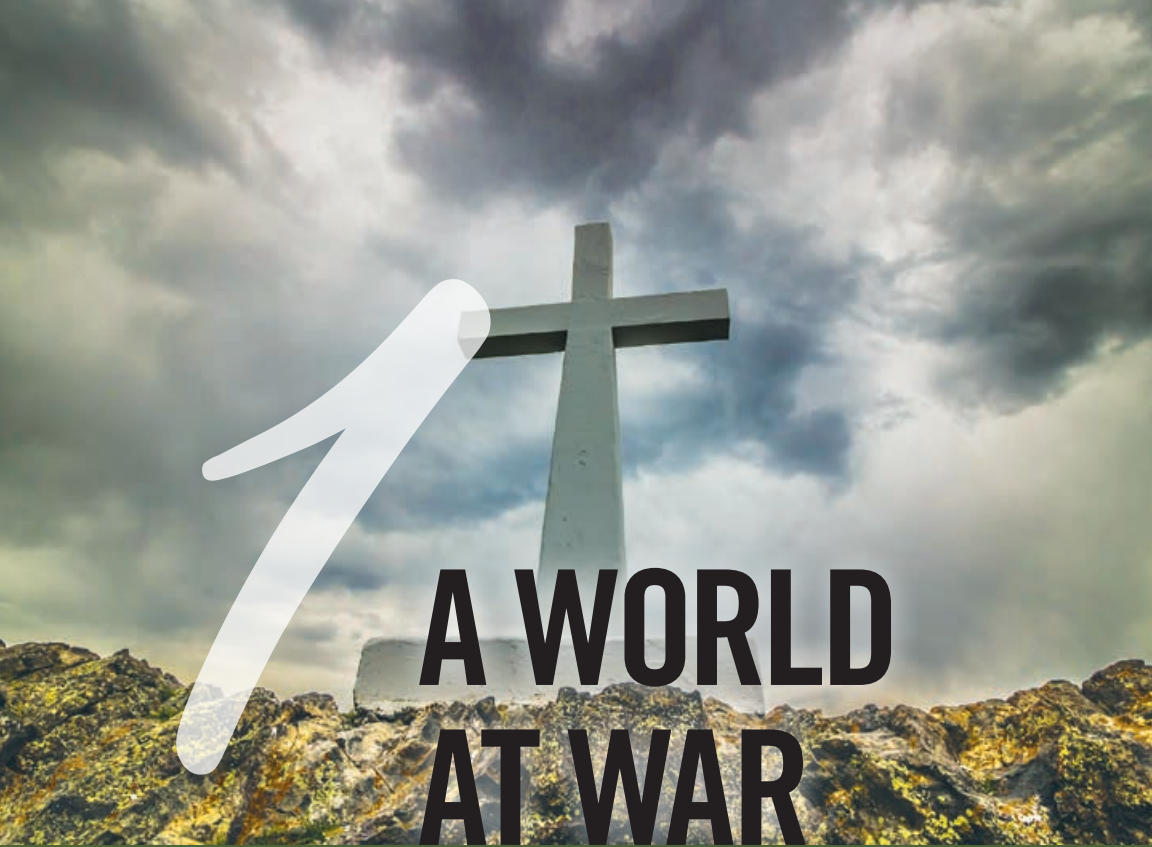
That's the message of the apostle Paul in one of the most famous passages of Scripture: the armor of God in Ephesians 6:10–20.

But it's not a worldly war that we fight; it's a spiritual one. Jesus conquered humanity's great enemies: sin, death, and the devil. Our Savior dealt with our sin at the cross and defeated death on that first Easter morning. While we wait for Jesus to return again in a final victory, our doomed adversary, the devil, tries to inflict pain and claim as many victims as he can. He “prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Our Lord knows well the dangers and the stakes of this conflict. So he has outfitted us—his soldiers—with powerful spiritual armor. These are the weapons of faith, truth, the Word, salvation, righteousness, and much more.

In these six sessions, we'll explore what it means to put on the full armor of God every day and get fighting “the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12).





# A WORLD AT WAR

*The Reality of  
Spiritual Warfare*

# A World at War

If you're not a combat veteran or have not lived in a war-torn land, *war* might not seem very real to you. When we haven't felt the explosions, when we've only seen the wounded and dying on TV, war can seem abstract and distant.

This is even more true when the subject of *spiritual* war comes up. Invisible forces? Cosmic conflict? Angels and devils? Spiritual armor? Many people think such talk is more suited to the seventeenth century than the twenty-first. Others immediately think of scary, paranormal movies and say, "All this stuff creeps me out. Can we talk about something else?"

Here's the question: who braces for a fight they're not even convinced is real?

In this first session, we'll explore what the Bible says about the reality of this spiritual war. And we'll see why we so urgently need to put on the full armor of God as we go into battle.





## *Read It*

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### **Key Bible Passage**

For this session, read about the spiritual battle in Ephesians 6:10–20.

### **Optional Reading**

Read 2 Kings 6:8–17.

When the king of Aram sent troops to surround and capture the prophet Elisha, Elisha's servant panicked. The prophet prayed that his servant's spiritual eyes might be opened by God. As you read this account, consider what it reveals about invisible spiritual realities.

“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.”

**EPHESIANS 6:12**





PHRASE	WHAT I THINK OF:
“Spiritual forces of evil” (v. 12)	
“The day of evil” (v. 13)	
“The flaming arrows of the evil one” (v. 16)	

**3.** What is your honest reaction to Paul’s sobering challenge about spiritual warfare and the need for armor?

- I’m shocked
- I’m skeptical
- I have chills
- I feel scared
- I’m curious
- I feel humbled
- I’m convicted
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_



## Explore It

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### Who Was Paul?

Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ. As a young Jewish man, Paul (also known as Saul) had persecuted followers of Jesus by having them arrested and jailed.

One day, on his way to the city of Damascus, he was knocked to the ground by a bright light and blinded. The resurrected Jesus told him to take the gospel message to the Gentiles and the Jews.

Following this conversion to faith in Jesus Christ, Paul was baptized and his eyesight restored. This encounter with Jesus radically transformed him. In a literal flash, he morphed from a persecutor of the church of Jesus to a propagator of the church of Jesus! (You can read about his conversion in the New Testament book of Acts chapter 9.)

Paul went on a series of missionary journeys and wrote a number of letters to believers and leaders of first-century congregations. Thirteen of these letters (also called epistles) are in the New Testament.



## Why Did Paul Write to the Ephesians?

During his third missionary journey, the apostle Paul spent three years (roughly AD 53–56) ministering in the city of Ephesus in modern-day Turkey (Acts 20:31). In his comments to the elders of the Ephesian church in Acts 20:29–30, we see that Paul was concerned about false teachers infiltrating the church. Just a few years later, around AD 60 when he found himself under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:30), Paul decided to remind the Ephesian believers of two things:

- In Christ, they had been given immeasurable riches.
- As children of God, they had important responsibilities.

The result is a concise letter we know as the New Testament epistle to the Ephesians. This letter divides neatly into two parts:

- Chapters 1–3 spell out what God has done for believers.
- Chapters 4–6 explain how believers are to live in light of all that God has done.



Near the end of the letter is a very famous and sobering passage about the reality of spiritual warfare (6:10–20). In so many words, Paul tells believers that despite the many blessings of the Christian life, we should also prepare for a life of fierce conflict. At the time Paul was writing this letter, he most likely was guarded daily by armor-wearing Roman soldiers. It is no wonder that he urged his readers to “put on the full armor of God” (6:11).

## What Was Life in Ephesus Like?

Ephesus was a major port city of the Roman Empire. The city was also the center of the worship of Artemis (the Roman goddess Diana), the goddess of hunting and fertility. Devotees of Artemis built a large ornate temple in her honor there. Life in Ephesus largely revolved around this temple and its religious activities. Thousands of priests maintained a well-organized temple bureaucracy. Businessmen and artisans made money by selling silver idols of Artemis and related souvenirs to visitors.



Model Reconstruction of the Temple of Artemis

When Paul arrived in Ephesus to preach the good news about Jesus, people listened to his message (Acts 19). Many put their faith in Christ. Some sorcerers who turned to Jesus even came together and burned their magic books—worth a fortune at the time! But when local silversmiths and other merchants began to worry that too many people were converting to the Christian faith and thus threatening their businesses, they rioted against Paul and his coworkers. Consequently, Paul left the fledgling church at Ephesus and continued on his missionary travels.

In all likelihood, the citizens of Ephesus (including followers of Jesus) faced strong social, cultural, and legal pressure to support the status quo of Artemis worship. Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians to remind them of God’s infinite love and power. He wanted them to stand firm against these influences and pressures and “to live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (Ephesians 4:1).

“Life is war. That’s not all it is. But it is always that. . . . But most people do not believe this in their heart. Most people show by their priorities and their casual approach to spiritual things that they believe we are in peacetime, not wartime. . . . Very few people think that we are in a war that is greater than World War II or any imaginable nuclear war. Few reckon that Satan is a much worse enemy than any earthly foe or realize that the conflict is not restricted to any one global theater but is in every town and city in the world. Who considers that the casualties of this war do not merely lose an arm or an eye or an earthly life but lose everything?”

—JOHN PIPER, *Let the Nations Be Glad!*

## War and Peace

The Bible begins with a look back at the perfect peace of Eden (Genesis 1–2). It ends with a look forward to a day when that peace will be restored in the new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21–22). In between those realities, the Bible—and life itself—is filled with struggles, fighting, and the lingo of war. Take a few moments to carefully read each of the following verses. Then jot down what is said or suggested about the reality of spiritual conflict. The first one is given as an example.

BIBLE VERSE	THE POINT
<p>“The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them” (Psalm 34:7).</p>	<p><i>The Lord is on our side. He is with us.</i></p>
<p>“Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses” (1 Timothy 6:12).</p>	
<p>“Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 2:3).</p>	
<p>“I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me” (Romans 7:23).</p>	



<b>BIBLE VERSE</b>	<b>THE POINT</b>
<p>“Abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul” (1 Peter 2:11).</p>	
<p>“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong” (1 Corinthians 16:13).</p>	
<p>“The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light” (Romans 13:12).</p>	
<p>“Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you” (1 John 3:13).</p>	



## Live It

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### Every Day a Battle

Pastor and author Tim Keller has said:

The fact is there is a battle going on for your soul every single day. Your soul is being claimed by God and counterclaimed by supernatural evil. That's exactly what Paul is saying. He's saying, therefore, right now counts forever. When you get up tomorrow, you have to recognize there is that battle. Christianity is a fight, and we're not simply wrestling with flesh and blood. We're talking about eternal things. We're talking about spiritual things. We're talking about the great future, and you have to start thinking like that.

In a sense, it's exciting. On the other hand, it's extremely frightening. Do you see that? . . . You no longer can think of just the simple horizon, "I'm going to get up tomorrow. I'm going to make a few decisions. It's going to be a pretty boring day." You can't look at it that way. Christianity is a fight. Every day is a fight, the battle is desperate, and the stakes are tremendously high. . . . It's a fight for your soul every day.

*(From sermon delivered November 17, 1991.)*

## Life Application Questions

1. Looking at society and at the world around you, what examples would you point to as clear evidence of spiritual warfare?

2. When in your life have you been most aware of the reality of spiritual warfare? What happened?

3. Where are you currently in your own experience with spiritual warfare? (Check all that apply.)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mapping out strategy           | <input type="checkbox"/> Trying not to think about it  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunkered down in a foxhole     | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxing back at the barracks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing up a hill            | <input type="checkbox"/> On a mission to rescue POWs   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engaged in combat              | <input type="checkbox"/> AWOL                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wounded in action              | <input type="checkbox"/> Separated from my platoon     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In basic training              | <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling captured by the enemy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marching to my next engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                  |

**4.** Does your faith feel like a fight most days? Why or why not?

**5.** Do you think it's possible to be under spiritual attack and not know it? Why or why not? How can a person know whether an attack is happening?

**6.** Government agencies often refer to threat levels to keep the public aware of imminent dangers. How can believers in Christ raise the threat level in their minds and souls so that they're appropriately cautious regarding potential spiritual attacks?

## Takeaways

Jot down a few takeaway thoughts from this session.

**SOMETHING I NEVER KNEW**

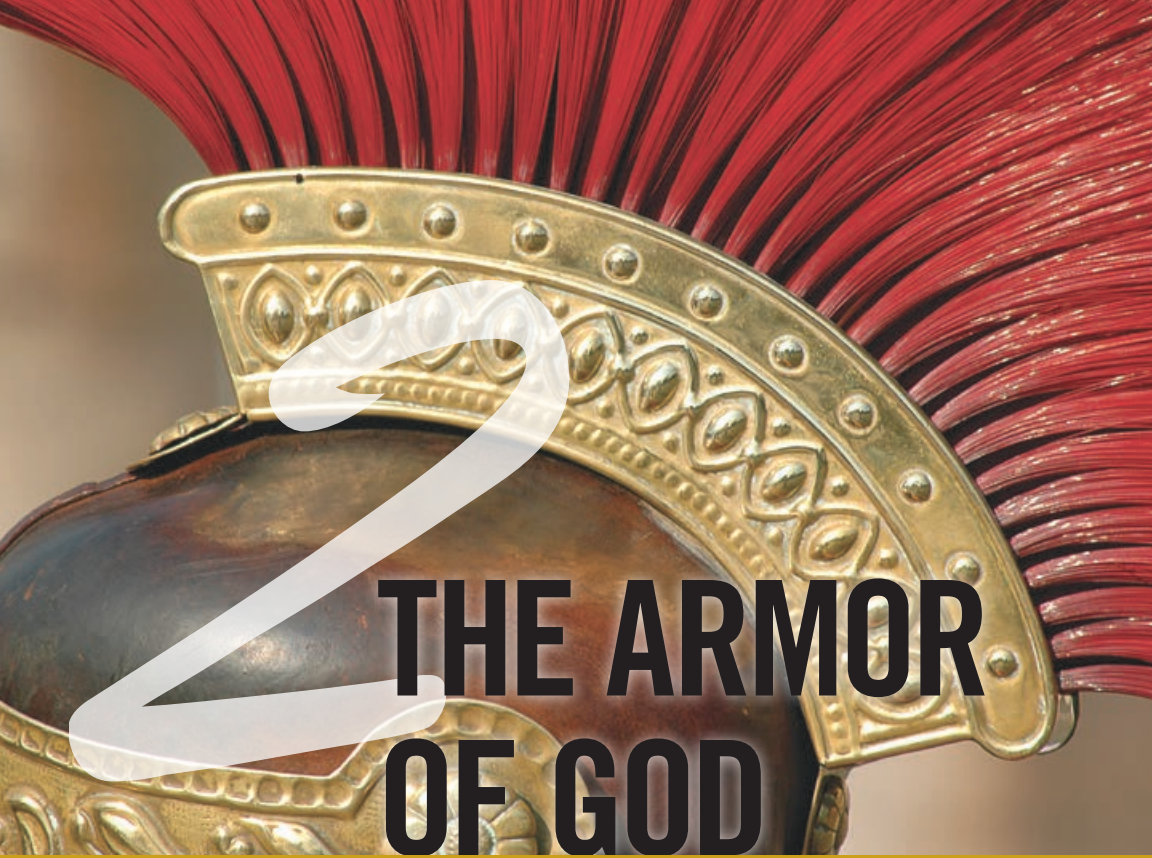
**SOMETHING I NEEDED TO BE REMINDED OF**

**A QUESTION I HAVE**

**A CHANGE I WANT TO MAKE**

# Notes





# THE ARMOR OF GOD

*Spiritual  
Battle Gear*

# The Armor of God

Because of their rigorous training, elite skills, and military success, members of special forces units now have near-celebrity status. Movies, books, interviews—the public can't seem to get enough of such steely-nerved and battle-tested outfits as the Navy SEALs and Army Rangers.

One frequent question is: what equipment do they carry/wear/use? Though missions vary and individuals are given some freedom of choice, standard gear often includes tactical boots, a tactical vest (with body armor plates), gloves, helmet, a GPS device, night vision goggles, an assault rifle, a handgun, ammunition, a knife, some sort of tactical assault pack containing a multi-tool, bolt cutters, a hydration pack, a waterproof digital camera, a flashlight, zip ties, and an E&E (Escape and Evasion) kit. Depending on the equipment selected for a particular mission, this gear can weigh anywhere from twenty to forty-plus pounds.

Though a soldier's armor has changed drastically since the time of the apostle Paul, one thing remains constant: those in the heat of battle desperately need adequate protection and weaponry.

In this session, we'll begin looking at the resources God provides for our spiritual battle.







## Read It

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### Key Bible Passage

Read Ephesians 6:10–20 again, but this time read it in a translation different from the one you used in the first session. (You can find multiple Bible translations on websites such as [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) and [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org).)

### Optional Reading

Did you know that Ephesians isn't the only book in the Bible that talks about spiritual armor? Read Isaiah 59:16–17; Romans 13:11–12; 1 Thessalonians 5:4–9.

Why read from different translations? It's common that translators often can't find a single word in one language that exactly and completely captures the essence of a word in another language. A good example is the Hebrew word *hesed* in Deuteronomy 7:12. Notice how these different Bible translations render it:

- “Lovingkindness” (New American Standard Bible)
- “Covenant of love” (New International Version)
- “Covenant loyalty” (Christian Standard Bible)
- “The covenant and the steadfast love”  
(English Standard Version)
- “Covenant of unfailing love” (New Living Translation)

This example shows the advantage of reading from different translations. *Hesed* is a rich word—like so many other biblical words! Alternate renderings in different translations can give us a fuller sense of the meaning of biblical words and phrases.





## Explore It

### A Roman Soldier's Armor



#### BELT

A soldier could not afford to be impeded or hindered while marching or fighting. A leather belt, known as a *balteus* in Latin, gave him a way to tuck in his loose tunic, protected his lower abdomen, and gave him a place to hang his sword.



#### BREASTPLATE

Breastplates made from leather and covered with thin metal plates (*lorica segmentata* or *squamata*) or chains (i.e., mail, *lorica hamata*) protected a soldier's chest and back—all his vital organs—from his neck to his waist. By Paul's day, breastplates were simultaneously light, strong, and effective.



#### SHOES

The Roman half-boot, or *caliga*, was more like an open-toed sandal that featured a hob-nailed sole with leather straps that tied around the ankle and shin. The metal studs enabled a soldier to find firm footing on uneven terrain.



## SHIELD

The most important battle shield was a large oblong variety called a *scutum*. Made of wood, bound with iron, and covered with animal hide, it was designed to stop enemy arrows, including arrows that had been dipped in pitch and ignited before being shot.



## HELMET

Roman soldiers wore helmets, called *galeae*, made of bronze or iron and lined with sponge or cloth. They were often decorated with crests.



## SWORD

The *gladius*, the common Roman sword, was often used in hand-to-hand combat. Measuring a little more than two feet long, this sword was crafted from iron with a handle usually made of iron, ivory, bone, or wood.

## Spiritual Armor

Some Bible scholars say the armor of God is a set of protective *blessings* that Christ has given believers. Others see the armor as protective *virtues* that we are called to cultivate. Probably both views are right. The best protection from the enemy comes when we faithfully do our part to apply God’s protective remedies to our everyday lives.

<b>ARMOR OF GOD</b>	<b>BELT OF TRUTH</b>
<b>GOD’S PART</b>	By way of the living Word (Jesus) and the written Word (the Bible), God has given his truth to us (John 1:1, 14; 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16–17).
<b>OUR PART</b>	When we let God’s truth permeate our hearts and shape our lives, we become people of integrity, and that leads to security.

<b>ARMOR OF GOD</b>	<b>BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS</b>
<b>GOD’S PART</b>	By Christ’s sacrificial death, we are made righteous in the sight of God through faith (Romans 5:19).
<b>OUR PART</b>	As we live out our new, righteous life in Christ, we enjoy protection from sin’s dangers.

<b>ARMOR OF GOD</b>	<b>SHOES (or FEET FITTED)</b> with Readiness that Comes from the Gospel of Peace
<b>GOD'S PART</b>	The gospel provides the sure foundation of knowing that we have peace with God (Romans 5:1).
<b>OUR PART</b>	We have peace knowing that God is able to keep us from stumbling (Jude 24). When we share the gospel, others find peace and stability too.

<b>ARMOR OF GOD</b>	<b>SHIELD OF FAITH</b>
<b>GOD'S PART</b>	God graciously opens people's eyes, so they might see the truth of the gospel and believe (Ephesians 2:1–9).
<b>OUR PART</b>	Fully trusting who God is and what he has said is how we “extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one” (Ephesians 6:16).

<b>ARMOR OF GOD</b>	<b>HELMET OF SALVATION</b>
<b>GOD'S PART</b>	In Christ, we have been saved (justification), we are being saved (sanctification), and we will be saved (glorification).
<b>OUR PART</b>	By remembering “so great a salvation” (Hebrews 2:3), we are able to hold our heads high with confidence in battle.

<b>ARMOR OF GOD</b>	<b>SWORD OF THE SPIRIT (THE WORD OF GOD)</b>
<b>GOD'S PART</b>	God has given us a weapon of righteousness (2 Corinthians 6:7; Hebrews 4:12).
<b>OUR PART</b>	With God's Word, we can parry the blows of the enemy, and we can set captives free from the blinding, enslaving lies of the enemy.

“In heaven we shall appear, not in armour, but in robes of glory. But here these [the pieces of armor] are to be worn night and day; we must walk, work, and sleep in them, or else we are not true soldiers of Christ.”

—WILLIAM GURNALL,  
*The Christian in Complete Armour*

Gurnall was a British Puritan pastor in the mid-1600s and is best known for his book *The Christian in Complete Armour*. Gurnall's exposition of Paul's famous "armor of God" passage in Ephesians 6 originally stretched to three volumes and almost 1,500 pages!



# Live It

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In each of the following situations, what parts of the armor of God would be most helpful? (Draw lines from the situations to the armor pieces. More than one piece for each situation is okay.)

## SITUATION

You did something you swore you'd never do again. Now you're filled with shame.

Everything is frustrating and irritating. You just want to "go off" on someone.

You're extremely envious of a friend who seems to live a charmed life.

You're wondering if God really loves you and listens to your prayers.

You're feeling tempted to take credit for work you didn't really do.

## ARMOR

**BELT OF TRUTH**

**BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

**FEET FITTED WITH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE**

**SHIELD OF FAITH**

**HELMET OF SALVATION**

**SWORD OF THE SPIRIT (WORD OF GOD)**





**3.** Look again at the *Spiritual Armor* (God's Part, Our Part) chart in this session. When are you tempted to try to do God's part or do it all yourself? How do you resist the urge to try to fight spiritual battles all on your own?

**4.** If a fellow Christian approached you and asked, "How can I put on the armor of God each day?" how would you answer?

**5.** What “flaming arrows” has the devil fired at you recently (verse 16)? How did you respond?

**6.** Which piece of armor stood out to you as something you need for what you’re facing in your current situation?

## A Prayer for Protection

*Father in heaven,*

*I come to you in the name of Jesus—your Son and my Lord and Savior.*

*I praise you for his perfect life, his sacrificial death, and his powerful victory over sin, Satan, and death.*

*I thank you for the great salvation that is mine by your grace and through my faith.*

*Today, I am reminded again of the reality of spiritual warfare. I know that my struggle is not against specific people or problems in my life but against powerful, invisible spiritual enemies.*

*By faith, I now put on the armor that you have given me. Let me experience divine protection as I carry out your commands in righteousness and integrity.*

*Grant that I might know your perfect peace as I stand on the truth of the gospel and as I remember a salvation that is sure and certain.*

*Give me your unending strength as I raise my shield of faith to deflect all the flaming arrows that the evil one will aim at my heart today.*

*With the sword that is your trustworthy Word, grant that I might walk in victory today.*

*In the name of Jesus Christ, I ask these things.  
Amen.*

# Notes



# Notes

