

EQUIPPED TO WIN



Mike Canaday

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INTRODUCTION

The enemy endeavors to hinder the Light. He is a deceiver and no light is found in him. We are called to live in the light but how do we accomplish this in reality in a world full of so much darkness, oppression and evil? If God commanded us to live in the light, He gave us the authority and tools to succeed in the directive. “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:4-5). To comprehend means to overtake, seize control, quench or snuff out. Darkness never overtakes the power of the light. If we abide in the light of Jesus we will always prevail.

In order to overcome darkness, we must utilize every piece of protection and every weapon God has provided. We must also resist the carnal desires of man and fight courageously. We have been equipped to win.

I. THE CARNAL MAN’S CHOICE

God does not take control and force people. From the creation of mankind, God gave man a free will to choose whom he wants to serve. God will not take control of your life, your situation, church, school or business. Even if you pray asking God to take control of your situation, God will not. Prayers asking God to take control over a situation are not scriptural. He leads us, not forces. He is the great shepherd, not the great cowboy. Cowboys drive and prod the herd. Shepherds lead by example.

On the other hand, Satan and demons endeavor to possess, take over and take control. Many issues arise due to submitting to the desires of the flesh rather than Satanic initiatives. The

old statement “the devil made me do it” is a fallacy. “What many folks call works of the “devil,” the Bible calls the works of the flesh” (Hagin 45). Satan just sets back and watches us do his work for him while we refuse to put our flesh in submission.

We must choose who we will serve. Many do not recognize it but every man chooses to serve God or Satan. If you do not make the decision to serve God, the result is that you have rejected God and chosen to serve the god this world. There are only two families on the earth. All mankind is either part of the family of God or not. The Godly choice will require you to fight, stand and resist the enemy. To succeed in war, every warrior must have offensive and defensive equipment, strategies and armor. God has equipped us for protection and conquering.

Made Right

We are made right in Christ. We have the authority over the enemy through the righteousness in which we have been made. “When you are dressed in righteousness, you are actually dressed in the Lord Jesus Christ” (Renner 308). Imagine the authority and royalty that comes with your attire. “Satan has Legal Rights over the sinner that God cannot dispute or challenge. He can sell them as slaves; he owns them, body, soul and spirit. But the moment we are born again...receive Eternal Life, that nature of God, -- his legal dominion ends” (Kenyon 3).

We do not war in the flesh but we must control, rule our flesh and submit to God in order to defeat evil spirits in heavenly places. “God has given us three *offensive* weapons, three defensive weapons and one neutral weapon” (Renner 373). All the weapons work in unison for offensive attacking and defensive protection. For example, the breastplate is primarily for defense. If you get pierced in the heart, it is a greater challenge to attack and win the battle.

God instructed us to put on the Armor. Submitting to His command places us under God's protection and authority. It also puts us in a position for the enemy to submit under our commands. The place of protection and power is the place of submission. See Philippians 2:8-9.

II. SPIRIT OR FLESH

The Holy Spirit gives life and quickens but the flesh is fatiguing. We need to recognize what is spirit and what is flesh in order to be strong in battle. Three ways to recognize if something is of the Spirit are as follows:

1. If something glorifies Jesus, it is the Spirit. "Wherefore, I give you to understand that no one, in the Spirit of God speaking, saith Jesus [is] anathema, and no one is able to say Jesus [is] Lord, except in the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3, YLT).
2. If it builds up, edifies and comforts it is in the Spirit. Study First Corinthians, chapter fourteen for more light.
3. If it is Spirit, there is liberty. "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17). The Spirit shows us the truth and sets us free.

Be led by the Spirit and live victoriously.

Victim or Victor

Satan utilizes a couple key tactics to keep us from victorious living. Self-pity is one of his key tactics. Don't identify with being a victim, sufferer or a statistic. Identify with the victorious child who you are in Christ. Never feel sorry for yourself.

Another tactic is doubt. The enemy can take you out with doubt. The spirit of faith is the spirit of victory. Doubt is the spirit of failure. Your flesh will want to yield to doubt and failure in order to get pampered and justify self-pity.

A victor is a winner, conquistador and overcomer according to 1 Corinthians 15:57. A victim is synonymous to loser. The enemy will use a pile up technique and put thought after thought into our minds to convince us that we are losers. Satan endeavors to load us down like a pack mule making it difficult to run our race with victory. This is one reason why you need the

full armor of God in order to resist him. The Lord's way is light and easy. If you are feeling weighed down, build yourself up by putting on the full armor.

III. EQUIPPED TO WIN

The Lord gave us tremendous armor for battle but we must dress ourselves. If God did not expect us to fight, He could have put us in a protective capsule. We are in a world where Satan is the god of this world due to sin. Even though we live in a world that is in a fallen state, God provided us with tools for the battle and made us victorious overcomers through Christ. The adversary cannot devour us if we abide in Jesus. "Evil spirits will dominate believers, if they allow them to – by consent, ignorance, or disobedience" (Hagin 17). The armor expressed in Ephesians chapter six is not to fight other people but for a spiritual battle.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 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. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Paul and James instructed us to vigorously oppose and resist the enemy. The Word is our ultimate authority and answer to the issues of life including how to stand and win the battle. Paul mentions four levels of demonic activity but we have victory in Jesus. We are to be strong in the power of His might, not our ability. Regardless of the rank and file of the darkness confronting us, if we put on the full armor of God, we have the dynamic, explosive power of God working on our behalf. Let's review the armor of God in order to verify that we are fully dressed and how to defeat the enemy.

Belt of Truth

The first piece of armor is the belt of truth. All other pieces of armor are connected to the belt of truth. Without the belt of truth, the body of Christ would be destroyed by lies and deception. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth making truth a foundation of the Kingdom.

Satan is the father of lies. Jesus told us "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6, NIV). The only path to victory is the way of truth. "He has to use deceit because he doesn't have the power to defeat you any other way. He has to win the battle in your soul by tricking you into defeating yourself" (Copeland, 13).

The chief weapon Satan utilizes is deception. He endeavors to get us to believe a lie. He attempts to get us in fear from his lies. Fear is perverted faith that what the enemy is presenting has more authority than God. He endeavors to put thoughts of fear, failure, destruction and lack into our mouth giving him access. Luke 13:3 is our protection.

Breastplate of Righteousness

The Breastplate of Righteousness covers our front and back, from the neck down to our navels. This plate protects the heart. A chest wound is often fatal. "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life" (Proverbs 4:23, NLT). God looks at the heart of a man. It is critical to keep our heart clear and receptive to the direction and correction of the Lord. You have been made right. Even though we have been made righteous we must choose right.

According to Hebrews 12:6, God corrects those whom He loves. Many people resist correction and harden their hearts with bitterness which hinders the blessing of God from operating in their lives. "My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they are life to

those who find them, And health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:20-23). Hard hearts cause us to depart from Him.

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion” (Hebrews 3:12-15).

Beware means to watch out because the enemy will try to get you to harden your heart and give up on putting on the armor giving him free access. People left the church due to unbelief because they were unwilling to change. Keep your mind on Him because evil reports steal faith.

If you attend to or pay attention to the Word, the Word will become your final authority that proceeds from your mouth. It will get deep into your heart. We are to protect our hearts by filling it with the Word. “Your tongue is the most powerful weapon and force of your life” (Hickey 3). It is critical to speak God’s Word over your life daily. It will help you stay on the righteous path. The more righteous we are the brighter our light shines.

Gospel of Peace

We are to shod our feet with the Gospel of peace. Never go to battle without putting on your combat boots. Shoes are for going on attack to take forth the Gospel. The Gospel is both offense and defense. A key to being ready for battle is to have good shoes on our feet. The Civil War was greatly affected by the Confederate Army not having boots in the winter.

The absence of peace is a product of a wondering mind. “You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You” (Isaiah 26:3). Trust is another word for faith. The Gospel of peace is closely tied with the Belt of Truth and the Shield of Faith for offensive and defensive maneuvers.

In the Parable of the Sower, 75% of the Word fell on ground that did not produce. These are people who did not keep their mind on the Word. Satan came to steal the Word. The Word must be our final authority. We should be like a race horse with blinders covering our eyes so all we see is the Word that is before us. This will help us run our complete race.

On the Australian coat of arms and dollar coin, a Kangaroo was selected as symbols of Australia to represent the country progress because they are always moving forward and never move backwards. We should have the perspective of a Kangaroo and always move forward with feet covered with the Gospel of peace.

The Gospel of peace is to fulfill the great commission of spreading the Gospel of salvation. It ultimately brings peace between God and man according to Romans 5:1. The Gospel is key to successful utilization of the Shield of Faith.

Shield of Faith

The shield of faith is extremely important. It is designed to protect the whole body. The Roman shield was door size, not a small round Captain America size disk. The shield is a key piece of offensive and defensive armor. We are told to contend for the faith in Jude 3.

The Roman shield not only fended off arrows, spears, and swords but would protect others around the warrior. Roman warriors would connect their shields together to create a barrier. Those behind the front line would hold their shields above their heads and cover the heads of the warriors in front and behind them creating a solid covered wall. Our faith in God comes from the truth of the written anointed Word. Our shield of faith keeps Satan's flaming arrows from prospering. No weapon formed against us will prosper but we must stand and fight the good fight of faith.

Our shield of faith guards us against one of Satan's deadliest weapons: doubt. Satan shoots doubt at us when we do not see immediate results to our prayer or actions.

Many people say they are in faith but in who or what? You can have faith in many things and never overcome the forces of darkness. It is critical to have faith in God. Not faith in prayer, Bible studies, medicine, etc. We are created to rule and reign in Him. The way to do this is by speaking the Word. The Word of God in your mouth is extremely powerful when spoken with authority in faith. This will help you resist thoughts of fear and doubt.

Your spoken words are more powerful than the words of God in your life. For example, if God says “confess with your mouth and believe that you are saved and you will be saved” but you say that is hog wash, you are not going to be saved. If God says “I have made you whole” and you say “no, I have cancer” your words will kill you. If you say so, it will be so! “If we think wrong, we will believe wrong. If our believing is wrong our confession will be wrong” (Hagin 1,2). To keep up the faith, we must ensure the helmet of salvation is upon our heads.

Faith comes by hearing the anointed Word of God. Love abounds, increases and can grow stronger. “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other” (2 Thessalonians 1:3). Many times it takes great faith to walk in love with people, but if we want to win we must faithfully walk in love. Keep the shield of faith in front of you at all times. Love never fails but faith must be fed. Lack of love indicates lack of faith which hinders God’s grace.

Helmet of Salvation

The Helmet of Salvation protects the head which is protection of our thought life. We have the mind of Christ according to 1 Corinthians 2:16. Those of us who are in Christ have divine power to "demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the

knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5, NIV). “The helmet of salvation protects your mind – Satan’s chief battleground” (Hagin 185). The battle takes place between our ears, not against other people. Real spiritual warfare is capturing thoughts and imaginations which are fantasies and confirming if they align with the Word of God.

Sword of the Spirit

The sword of the Spirit is the written Word of God. "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). The only way to enter the rest in Hebrew 4:11 is to live by the Word in Hebrews 4:12.

The sword is designed for penetration. It cuts with a sharp edge and penetrates with a sharp pointed tip. It can also be utilized to block the enemies strikes. The Sword is to be utilized for offense and defense. When Satan endeavored to seduce the Master with temptation, Jesus resisted, fought back and overcame with the truth of Scripture. Satan is shrewd but we overcome by the Word as we testify of truth. When the enemy attacks, we must stand our ground and fight making Satan pay for his attacks. Use the Word to put Satan and all his defeated cohorts into retreat. We need to learn what to receive and what to resist and boldly forbid evil to operate in our lives. A key to victory is to ask where is the supporting scripture.

The Power of Prayer

To get results, we must pray the Word. Paul, the Apostle, gives clarity on prayer and defines four different types of prayer. “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men” (1 Timothy 2:1).

Supplications are prayers of requests. This also includes prayers of faith. We find supplication in Ephesians 6:18 as well. These are prayers asking God according to the Word, for God to meet the needs of others. Supplications comes from the Greek word *deeseius*. The second type are Prayers which implies devotion or worship to God. It comes from the Greek word *proseuche*. Intercession is standing in the gap for others like Moses did when God was about to wipe the Hebrews out for their rebellion. Thanks is acknowledgement of the daily blessings, victory and protection by giving God thanks. Notice that twenty-five percent of prayers are giving of thanks.

Unanswered Prayer

We need to recognize that prayer is not the first thing. The Word is first, not prayer. “And the Word became flesh” (John 1:14). It does not say prayer became flesh. Many ask for prayer without knowing the Word which results in unanswered prayer. It is last in the Ephesians armory list but it works together for victory with all other pieces of armor.

There are two kinds of prayers that God cannot answer. Requests for Him to do what He has already done. He cannot do something that has already been done or completed.

He also cannot answer requests for Him to do what He instructed us to do in faith. He will not break his Word and do what He has instructed us to do. He changeth not!

Prayers That Get Results

Prayers in faith that are according to the will of God will be answered. You cannot pray His will if you don't know the Word. His will is revealed by His Word. Some people pray “Lord heal them if it be your will.” Why not pray this for salvation? These prayers are not founded in faith. “And how bold and free we then become in his presence, freely asking according to his will, sure that he's listening. And if we're confident that he's listening, we know

that what we've asked for is as good as ours" (1 John 5:14-15, MSG). Find the scripture and pray confidently knowing the will of God. If we don't even know if it is God's will, we will not ask in faith.

There cannot be confidence in a request if God's will is unknown. It is just a plea. Beggars are not believers. Immature faith people are babies in the faith that try to manipulate God and convince Him. This does not work. They try spiritual shortcuts, formulas, step programs rather than standing on the Word of truth that sets them free. They are praying by themselves like the Pharisee in Luke 18:10. The tax collector prayed with truth and humility and got results. Are you getting results from your prayer life?

Prayer is not a weapon to force God to make good on His promises. True prayer is founded upon finding and coming into agreement with God's will. Faith, boldness and confidence begins where the will of God is known. Confidence creates an environment of boldness. When we ask according to His will the result is confidence that what we ask is already ours. We should ask where is the scripture supporting our prayers. Asking God to take out our enemy or give you another person's spouse are unscriptural and of the flesh. "Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:17). The Message version states "Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants." The Amplified states "Therefore do not be vague and thoughtless and foolish, but understanding and firmly grasping what the will of the Lord is."

Saul's Armor

When David showed up at the battle ground and saw the giant that was not in covenant with God, righteous anger arose in him. David had spent time with God while shepherding the sheep. He was not just hanging out in the fields but utilized the time productively. When King

Saul heard the confidence in the words of this young boy, he agreed to allow him to confront the giant. As king, he logically thought that the young shepherd should at least have armor for the battle and tried to get David to wear his armor. The problem was that the armor was not made for David. If he tried to fight with another man's armor rather than fighting his fight he would have been defeated.

God gave us the Armor of God for each of us to put on daily. As we put on the full armor ourselves, we are dressed to win in battle. The enemy will endeavor to load us down with distorted Word and partial truths. He tried this tactic against Jesus but failed as the Master responded "it is also written."

The seven sons of Sceva tried to fight without putting the armor of God on for themselves but used parts of armor from others. As a result, the enemy was able to spank them badly. We must put the full armor on daily. You will not overcome by trying to take short cuts utilizing pieces of other people's armor. Children must be taught to stand and fight for themselves. When they become of age, they will be required to fight their own battles of faith.

Fighting on Behalf of Others

We can help others in their fight but we cannot fight for them as they stand by and watch if they are of age. Help them fight by speaking the Word over them in faith. Pray Colossians 1:3-14, Colossians 4:12, Ephesians 1:15-18, Ephesians 4:13, and Philippians 1:16 over them.

CONCLUSION

Walking in the light is doing what you know is right. Putting the Armor on daily is critical to winning against the schemes of the enemy. Each piece of armor works in unity. Live with the armor on and you can defeat the enemy. If we obey God in this, we will live victoriously. Rightly choose Christ and enjoy the awesome exciting winning life!

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Equipped To Win



Michael Canaday has a heart for the lost and the unchurched. He and his wife Shara have ministered to bikers for over eighteen years, across the US and abroad. As they've shared the love of Christ, they've seen hard hearts softened and broken hearts healed. Mike has also ministered in many churches on Biker Sundays as well as regular services and meetings.

While having a passion for ministry, Mike also spent twenty-four years in the corporate world until 2011, when he left in order to pursue full-time ministry. He has served as International Vice-President of the Tribe of Judah and an in-country missionary through Marilyn Hickey Ministries. Mike is also a licensed pilot, and currently serves at Faith Life Church and Moore Life Ministries in Sarasota, Florida.

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