

BE STRONG IN THE STRENGTH OF THE LORD

(Ephesians 6: 10-19)

Be strong in the Lord; draw your strength from Him (Ephesians 6:10). Our victories are not from our might, neither from our own power, but from His Spirit working through us. King Jehoshaphat was strengthened with the words, be not afraid neither dismayed; fear not for the battle is the Lord's, He will fight for you;. To Joshua God said, Be strong and very courageous, that you may do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you. Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go; have I not commanded you? Be strong, vigorous, and very courageous. Be not afraid, neither be dismayed for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:7-9).

The strength of the Lord comes to us by our life of faith, obedience and submission to Him. We draw His strength from His joy. The joy of the Lord in us is independent of circumstances; no matter what, no matter where, no matter who. Yahsua's joy is made complete and overflowing by our obedience to His words (John 15:11); in His priestly prayer He said, I say these things while I am still in the world, so that My joy be made full and complete and perfect in them (John 17:13). We see in the life of Paul that joy was needed in his life for him to finish his tasks for God. He said, But none of these things move me; neither do I esteem my life dear to myself, if only I may finish my course with Joy (the strength from the Lord) and the ministry which I have obtained from the Lord Yahshua, faithfully to attest the good news of God's grace (Acts 20: 24).

He said, I can do all things in the strength of the Lord (Philippians 4:13). His strength is sufficient even in our weakness: "When I am weak, He is strong". Ridding of all our sufficiency, power and strength, we can receive God's strength, by dressing with His armor, to be able to stand against the strategies and deceits of the enemy. Webster dictionary defines **strategy as the science of planning and direction large scale military operations, distinguished by tactics of maneuvering forces into the most advantageous position prior to actual engagement with the enemy**. Putting this definition in perspective and applying it to our spiritual experience, we realize the words of Paul when he said, for we are not wrestling with flesh and blood, but against the despotism, against the powers against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly sphere (Ephesians 6:12).

The armor of God consists of shoe, belt of truth, breastplate of integrity moral rectitude, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit- The Word of God and prayer at all times.

How is the armor of God used and useful on our daily living?

To wrestle with the spiritual forces of darkness, we need to do in the strength of God. Without His armor on is to be unprepared, unprotected and unready. God's Word says that the complete armor of God will make us able to resist the devil, in submission to God first, and the devil will flee from us (James 4:7). It will make us able to stand our ground firmly in place (verse 13).

The shoe is that piece of the armor on which we will be able to stand firmly in place, holding our ground. Stand still, and see the deliverance of the Lord (II Chronicles 20: 17)! To stand firmly in place, is to be at peace with circumstances, with oneself and with others, without worries, anxieties. To hold our ground is to keep doors closed to the enemy; is to hold unto faith, to hold to our position in Christ. A soldier never goes to war without having his feet shod. The feet need to be shod and stable in readiness to face the enemy. Our stability comes from being secured in the teachings of Yahshua- the Gospel. We cannot stand still when we are disquieted, moving around and leaving our grounds unsecured. Be still, stand still holding your ground, and be prepared for battle in the stability of the feet shod!

The belt of truth keeps everything together in the accord of truth; it girds the loins with protection of truth; when tied well around the waist it will give freedom of movement to run our race, to serve God and to fight the enemy. It is impossible to be a faithful soldier in God's army without the belt of truth girding the loins otherwise entangled by our own garment, we will stumble and fall. To gird the loins is to redeem the time, or making the most of the time to serve God. Elisha, when he sent his servant Gehazi to bring life to a dead body of a child, he instructed him to gird up his loins, and he said, if you meet any man, do not salute him. If he salutes you do not answer him. Yahshua gave such instruction to his seventy disciples when He sent them before Him: refrain from saluting and wishing anyone well along the way.

The breastplate of integrity is the piece of the armor that protects the vital organs, especially the heart, because it is the home of our emotions and will; we are troubled in the heart (John 14:1); we believe with the heart (Romans 7:25); we love with the heart (Matthews 22:37); but it is also from the heart that wicked thoughts germinate leading the body to fall into sinful actions. To serve God with all the heart- emotion and will is to fulfill the desire of God for us. Proverbs 4:23 warns us to keep and guard our heart with all vigilance and above all that we guard, for out of it flow the springs of life. The breastplate of integrity is the most certain way to keep our heart guarded from all evil.

The shield of faith is a covering used by lifting it up in defense against the flaming missiles of the devil. This covering will quench the flames from all the missiles sent our way; that is, Satan's strategies formed against us. This shield is the means by which we can overcome the world; without faith we are defeated by the enemy; faith is a very powerful protective part of the armor of God; faith is the victory that conquers the world (I John 5:4); The shield of faith is the secret place of the Almighty; It is the covering of protection under His shadow; the shield of faith is Christ's covering, where we are hidden under His blood.

The helmet of salvation is the assurance, the certainty of God's provision of our salvation through His Son, Yahshua. When Isaac reached the place for the sacrifice, he asked his father, where is the lamb for the sacrifice? Abraham answered; God will provide a lamb for the sacrifice in these mount ranges. Yahshua was that Lamb prophesized by Abraham. The helmet protects the mind and girds it with salvation and no one can take this from us, no one! The mind, the center of control of the body, is very connected with the heart and will, which is the

soul. The mind needs to be renewed daily with thoughts that please God, with thoughts that edify others, thoughts that will lead us to do what is right; our thoughts need to be held captive into submission to God. Only in the strength of God we will be able to do so.

The sword of the Spirit – the Word of God is the only offense weapon used to wrestle the devil. The Word of God is sharper than two edged sword; it is powerful to penetrate into the deepest part of the soul- it exposes and shifts, analyzes and judges every thought and purposes of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). We can fight the devil with the powerful Word of God hidden in our hearts as Yahshua did. Only the Word of God is powerful to make him run from us. His Words in my mind, in my heart- emotion, and will, will strengthen me to recognize that my battle is not with man, but with the devil.

Prayer, a very important part of the armor of God, requires all of us to be aware of the need to defend and protect others by intercession with supplication; Prayer closes the eyes to our needs and compels us to reach out to those who are weak and in need; Prayer takes us to the throne of grace, where our High Priest is interceding for us, as we hold each other before God agreeing with His Holy Spirit in all manner of Prayer, persevering in the purpose for which we are called to pray and to stand in the gap for others at all times.

The armor of God, from where we draw strength to live a victorious spiritual life, is always available to us; we need to know when to use and how to use it, as we recognize the strategies of the evil one against us. The armor of God- put it on; keep it on and use it at all times as soldiers of Christ, called to serve, called to die for Him.