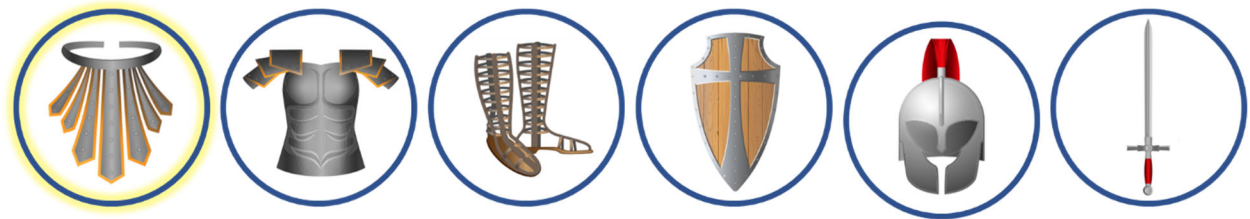




Being Prepared for Battle

Lesson #1 – Overview and The Belt of Truth

Thursday, January 12, 2023 | MBC Men's Group



Series Overview

As in the battlefields of yesterday, there are winners and there are losers; those who survive and those who die. Often, those who won did so because they were better prepared than their enemy because they had the skills, know-how, passion, and tools to be victorious. In the battle for Christianity, we are offered a similar choice – to be prepared for battle or not.

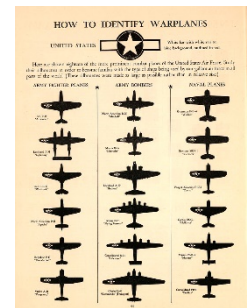
In this series we'll explore Ephesians 6 where Paul does a masterful job laying out the elements of what we call **The Full Armor of God**. Nowhere in the New Testament does a writer so clearly outline the battle gear required for every Christian warrior, including the (1) belt of truth, (2) breastplate of righteousness, (3) feet fitted with readiness, (4) shield of faith, (5) helmet of salvation, and the (6) sword of the Spirit that is the Word of God. Ironically, of the six provided elements, only one was offensive (i.e., sword of the Spirit).

Tonight's Overview

With this being the first lesson in our series, we've got a bit more to cover than in the other lessons. First, we're going to discuss the fact that we're actually in a battle. Absent this understanding, there's no real reason to be prepared and there will be no sense of urgency. Secondly, we're going to discuss the first of the elements of The Full Armor of God – **The Belt of Truth**.

In Ephesians 6:12 we read, *For 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*. We are fortunate that God protects us from seeing into the spiritual realm. I think if we were able to see into this world, we would be mortified. In the Bible when people came into contact with angels they were often terrified. I think the seeing the demonic realm would be even worse. In the United States, Satan is very subtle in how he "woos" us into sin and apathy; whereas, in other countries around the world demonic forces are much more obvious. Until we realize our battle is not against flesh and blood, we'll never prepare.

Fortunately, Paul inspired through the Holy Spirit, penned the letter to the Ephesians where he outlined six elements of armor that are available to Christians in fighting the spiritual battle. Interestingly, Paul started with the belt of truth, which obviously represents truth. Why would he do this? I think the answer rests in **identification of the enemy**. I'm reminded of the training airmen received in WWII to identify friendly versus enemy aircraft (see image at right); for them and their fellow soldiers it was literally life or death. For you and me, it's essential that we know the truth and that every aspect of our life reflects an understanding of that truth. The ability to detect lies is essential if we are to know who and what to fight against.





There are many Bible passages that talk about truth. In addition to Ephesians 6, listed below are a few other for consideration.

Ephesians 6:10-18: ¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For 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. ¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth** buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

James 1:18: He chose to give us birth through the word of **truth**, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

John 1:14: The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and **truth**.

John 4:24: God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in **truth**.

John 8:32: Then you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will set you free.

John 14:6: Jesus answered, "I am the way and **the truth** and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 16:13: But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Questions

1. Why is knowing the truth important? Have there been times in your life when knowing the truth (or maybe believing the truth) was difficult?
2. John 8:32 talks about **truth setting us free**. How does believing a lie create bondage?
3. Jesus often referred to Himself as truth. In what ways did Jesus represent truth to the people of His day and to us as well?
4. There is no doubt that "truth" is under attack in our nation. List some examples of how truth is being attacked in our churches, government, school systems, society, and our families. What can we do?
5. In John 16:13 Jesus talked about what would happen when the Holy Spirit came to Believers. What did Jesus mean when He said that the Holy Spirit will "guide us into all the truth"?
6. Oftentimes there is a disconnect between knowing the truth and acting on it. Are there areas in your life where you know the truth, but you're not acting on it? Share as much as you feel comfortable as this is a personal question.

