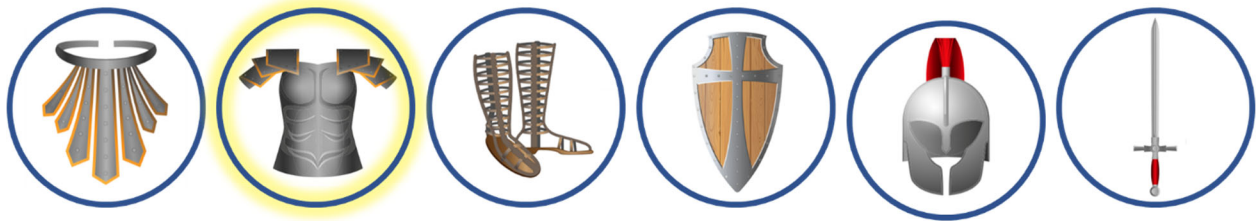




Being Prepared for Battle

Lesson #2 – The Breastplate of Righteousness

Thursday, January 19, 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

Tonight, we're going to discuss the second element of The Full Armor of God – **The Breastplate of Righteousness**. Last week we discussed the Belt of Truth and the importance of having a firm foundation rooted in truth. In battle one of the most venerable part of a soldier's body is his heart. If you can get to the soldier's heart, you can literally kill him. Ironically, the same is true in our spiritual lives. If Satan can get to my heart and your heart, he can wreak havoc to our pursuit of God and His plans for our lives.

In Bill Perkins' book, *Six Battles Every Man Must Win*, he devotes an entire chapter to standing our ground and winning the war for our hearts. In this chapter he makes the following statement.

Today our battle isn't against swords and shields. We don't take on an enemy in hand-to-hand combat in a fight to the death. Our war is against an invisible spiritual enemy and the cultural forces he uses to bully us... I'm convinced that we discover the secret of masculine strength when we follow God's command to stop running, stop being bullied, and stop living passive lives. We unleash the warrior within when we tap into God's power and say, "I will not be bullied any more. From this day forward I'm going to stand my ground and fight for what God values – not what culture values. I refuse to be driven by a desire to win the marketplace war and I will no longer anesthetize my pain with illicit sex or any other harmful processes or substances. I will follow the example of David's mighty men and wage war against the forces of hell that seek to destroy me and my family."

If you and I are cavalier and do not take protecting our heart seriously, we are going to be pummeled by a ferocious enemy who wants to destroy our lives, our witness for Jesus, and His plans for our lives.





There are many Bible passages that talk about the heart and its relationship to righteousness. In addition to the Ephesians 6 passage, listed below are a few other verses 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.

1 Samuel 16:7 (ESV): But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the **heart**."

Proverbs 4:23 (ESV): Keep your **heart** with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Mark 12:30 (ESV): And you shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

Proverbs 3:5 (ESV): Trust in the Lord with all your **heart**, and do not lean on your own understanding.

Hebrews 4:12 (ESV): For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the **heart**.

Questions

1. Based on what we have discussed tonight, why is protecting our heart so important? What happens when we don't protect our hearts?
2. David was described as a man after God's own heart, yet he sinned severely on several occasions. What steps did David take to restore his relationship with God?
3. What are some ways that we "medicate" our hearts to protect ourselves from the emotional we all feel at times? What are the consequences for us with these "brief" periods of medication?
4. If you were to have a conversation with a younger version of yourself, what advice would you give yourself to protect your heart that has been damaged by passivity and not pursuing God?
5. How has our culture taught men to medicate pain and find significance? How have these impacted Christian men and the church?
6. What are some practical steps you can take this next week to protect your heart? Consider the message in Proverbs 4:23 in developing your answer.

