

VICTORIOUS LIVING WEARING THE ARMOR OF GOD

PUTTING ON YOUR GOD GEAR



A Detailed Instruction Manual *for* Spiritual Warfare
Based *on* Paul's Revelation *of the* Armor of God

PERRY STONE

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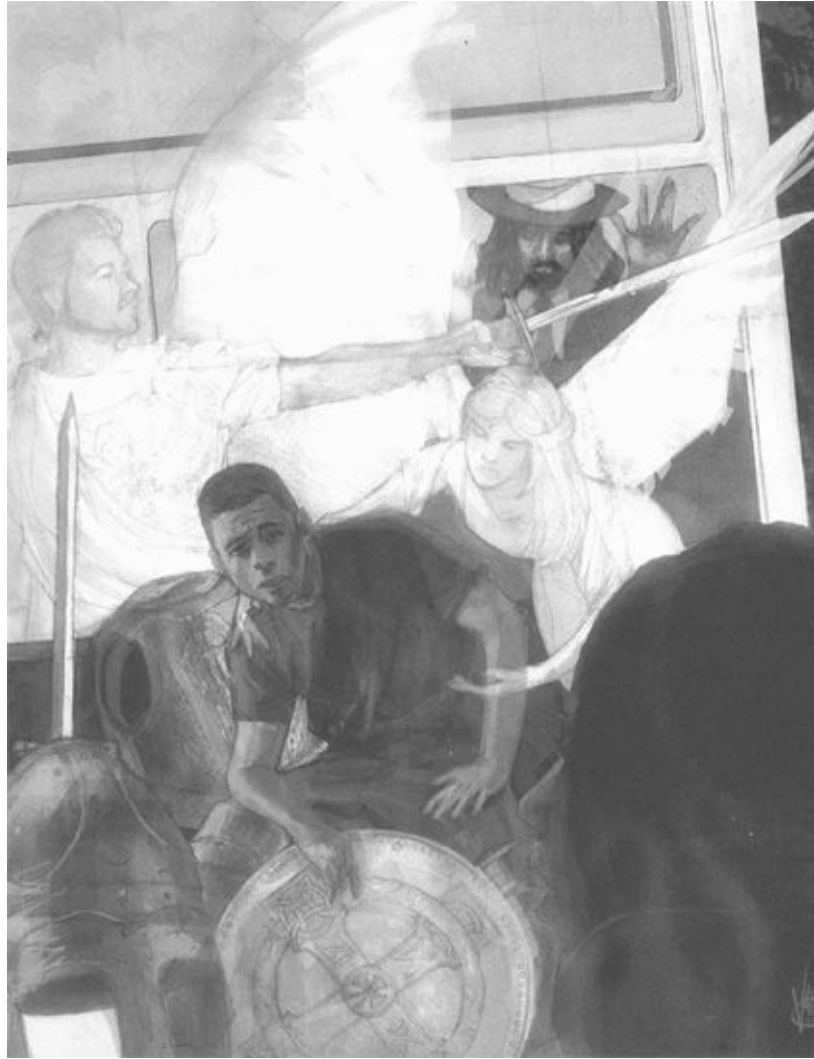


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Introduction

As a child, when I heard people talking about a war between God and Satan, I imagined a tug-of-war with God at one end of a big rope and Satan at the other end. Sometimes God was winning, sometimes Satan was winning. I figured that this battle had been going on for a long, long time.

There was no tug-of-war, of course, because God has already won the war. When Jesus went back to heaven, He sat down as a priest at the right hand of the Father. In the Old Testament, a priest could never sit down until the work on the Day of Atonement was finished. Only then could he sit down and say, "It is finished."

Although the war has been won, there are continuous battles between good angels and bad angels, or between angels of God and what we call principalities and demonic spirits.

Daniel 10 contains an excellent example of an evil spirit wrestling with an angel of God. Daniel fasted and prayed for 21 days. During that time God sent an angel to answer Daniel's prayer, but the angel was hindered as he wrestled an evil angel, called the prince of the kingdom of Persia. The archangel Michael was sent to fight the prince. With Michael's help, the angel was able to get to Daniel and answer his prayer.

In the heavens, Satan is the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). However, Revelation 12 tells us that one day Michael and his angels will cast Satan and his angels out of the second heaven and into the heavens of the earth. Yes, there are battles; but we know who has won the war.

When I first began to study spiritual warfare, I soon realized that the New Testament speaks a lot about warring and warfare. For example, Scripture reveals where our warfare is and refers to our weapons:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds. – 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3, 4

Scripture also reveals that we can have a war within ourselves:

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? – JAMES 4:1

The Book of Peter speaks of fleshly lusts that war against the soul. Expositors interpret the soul as the intellect or the mind:

Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. – 1 PETER 2:11

And in the Book of 1st Timothy, the Apostle Paul says:

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare. –1 TIMOTHY 1:18

In the previous four scripture references, the words war, warring and warfare do not specify that you are fighting a demon or a principality. These scriptures are speaking to Christians. Before you accepted Christ, the enemy of your soul blinded you from the truth. There is no doubt that spirits attacked you to keep you from hearing and believing the gospel. But now that you are saved, where is the battle?

The war is with the flesh. Your flesh can contain attitudes of the old nature and old ways of thinking, known as mental strongholds. Controlling the flesh is a serious aspect of spiritual warfare.

With this in mind, Ephesians 6:14-17 tells us that we have armor for our warfare:

- **the loin girdle of truth**
- **the breastplate of righteousness**
- **shoes of the gospel of peace**
- **the shield-of faith**
- **the helmet of salvation**
- **the sword of the Spirit**

When I was a young minister, I believed that warfare involved only principalities and powers – a demon here and an evil spirit there. In fact, I preached on demons so much that they started showing up. Then an experienced

minister told me, "If you preach more on Jesus than on demons, Jesus will show up and the demons will leave." Sure enough, once I started preaching more on the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ, those demonic attacks stopped.

There are people who give their flesh full reign. In many cases, it is not the devil that is causing our problems; it's our own flesh. People will come to church, and instead of enjoying the presence of God, they find something to complain about. Their minds are on what somebody is doing wrong or on things they do not like. Whether it be the air conditioner, the color of the carpet, or the pastor's sermon, people do not appreciate the blessings that God has given them.

I have seen pictures of, and read articles about, Christians in other countries who are being tortured. They are beaten, burned, hung upside-down on poles, and suffer other indignities that are unimaginable to most of us.

Some Christians in America, however, quit serving God over foolish issues. If they lose their job, they get mad at God. If their salary is cut, they do not tithe. When they get sick and pray for healing, they get angry if their miracle does not come immediately.

We are not producing soldiers -we are producing wimps in the body of Christ. A soldier, the Bible says, must learn to endure hardness. A soldier must be able to stand when everything is going the wrong way.

Several verses before Paul describes the armor of God, he affirms the soldier's duty:

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. -
EPHESIANS 6:10

The Greek word for "strong" is *endunamoo*, meaning to be endued with strength. The Greek word for "power" is *kratos*, meaning a force, a strength that is mighty with great power. Our strength and power is the Lord's strength and power.

In the next verse, Paul tells us how to be strong and with whom we are fighting:

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. – EPHESIANS 6:11

The word "wiles" in the Greek is *methodeia*, which means a method of schemes using deceit and trickery. The wiles of the devil can be planned months or years

before the attack actually hits you. He is a master at setting traps.

Often people do not understand the scheming aspect of Satan's nature. Many think that the sudden breakup of their marriage, the unexpected news of an affair, or the discovery that a brother was in a bar all night drinking is something that even caught God off-guard. But He knows what the enemy is plotting against each of us now for some future attack.

Just after communism fell in the early 1990s, I was preaching in Romania, and a woman told me, "The Lord has showed me that you will soon come under a severe attack." She told me how the preaching of the Word had shaken the principalities and powers in America, and that I needed to be on guard.

After preaching in that city, I went to another city where a different woman told me the same thing. I was convinced that the word was from the Lord, and I wondered what the enemy had planned.

Exactly one year later, a close friend in ministry fell morally. Something happened to my mind and spirit unlike anything I have ever experienced, and I went into a deep state of depression. As I sought the Lord about this tragedy, He unfolded the whole plan of the enemy, and how he set the trap for my dear friend.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 2:11 that Satan cannot take advantage of us if we are not ignorant of his devices. How do we know Satan's devices? Because God revealed them in His Word. He gave us the story of Samson's fall, Peter's denial, and of Lot. We have examples of Satan's devices from Genesis to Revelation. These stories of men and women who fought and won, or simply failed, reveal Satan's scheming methods.

We also have the Holy Spirit who can reveal to us the plans of the enemy through a vision, a dream, a revelation, a prophetic word, a tongue, or an interpretation. The gifts of the Spirit are given to us to edify us and to build us up, but they are also given because the Holy Spirit is the spy in the enemy's camp.

The Holy Spirit sees and hears what the Enemy is planning in secret. This must really frustrate Satan. In 2 Kings 6, Syria was warring against Israel; but every time the Syrian army laid in wait for Israel's army, the Israelites would not pass by that location. So the Syrian king wanted to know who was spying for Israel.

One of the servants said, "Nobody is spying. Elisha, the prophet who is in

Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom" (see 2 Kings 6:12). It is God's people who have a spy, and He can reveal the Enemy's plan to us!

The Enemy might be plotting to destroy you or your family, but if you will listen to the Holy Spirit, He will not only show you the devil's schemes, but He will also make a way of escape (I Corinthians 10:13).

The soldier's duty is to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. The soldier can do this by wearing the whole armor of God. We wear the armor of God because we wrestle against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).

Paul listed the six pieces of our armor in detail; but, before we discuss each piece of the armor, let's look at the weapon that the enemy fears the most.



CHAPTER 9

How to Stand in the Battle

The Roman soldier wore specially designed sandals. At first glance, the sandals appear rather flimsy, especially compared to today's footwear. But with these sandals (called *caligae*), the soldier could march 25 miles a day and not suffer blisters, because the shoes were very comfortable.

A strip of metal was built into the soles to provide stability. The sandals were supported by leather straps that wrapped the soldier's calf to his knees. Due to their open design, air could easily circulate around the soldier's feet, thus preventing fungi or other skin problems from developing.

The undersides of the sandals were fitted with either of two sizes of studs to provide much greater traction for walking, running and fighting. The smaller studs were worn primarily whenever the longer, one-to-three-inch spikes were not needed. When the soldier wore the spikes, his footing was secure on most any terrain.

The soldier also wore metal shields called greeves that attached at the ankles and the knees. The greeves provided much-needed protection to the shins and knees. If a soldier sustained an impact to either area, his standing and walking ability could be severely hindered or eliminated.

So to enable the soldier to continue standing, marching, or fighting, metal greeves were a valuable piece of the armor.

For the Christian soldier, God's armor provides protection to his feet and shin areas. Ephesians 6:15 says we are to cover our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. It is the gospel of peace that enables us to stand, and having fought all our battles, to continue standing. Jesus said he who endures until the end will be saved (Matthew 10:22).

Standing Anyway

When I was a teenager, my concept of "having done all to stand, stand therefore" was this: I have been in a battle and I am about to take a beating, I'm bruised,

bloody and ready to pass out. If God will help me, I'll be able to stand, but I just don't know if I'm going to make it.

After much study, I discovered that having done all to stand, was a Roman military phrase in Paul's day. It did not mean after you have been beaten up, hope and pray that you do not fall down. It means that after you have fought every enemy you can fight, after you have been cut, bruised, and knocked around, stand up and see if anybody else is coming at you and take them on.

It is not the will of God for people to fall down in the midst of battle. Never give up when things are not going well. Please understand this, and establish it in your heart.

Daniel 7:25 refers to the future Antichrist when it says, "And he shall . . . wear out the saints of the most High." The enemy wants to wear you out. He does not want you standing; you are easier to wound or kill if you are down.

In these last days, we have to fight evil, the likes of which has never been on the earth. Jesus said that good and evil must grow to full maturity and then the harvest will come. So we must be prepared to stand, no matter what happens or what obstacle the Enemy throws at us.

Perilous times are coming. There is an unleashing of demonic power because the devil has great wrath knowing that he has but a short time. But God has provided us with the equipment necessary to keep us standing. He does not want us to slip in the heat of the battle. He does not want us to be injured and unable to walk because the Enemy has hit us, with great impact, in our shins.

With warfare, remember this: preparation is 90 percent of the battle. I have heard that statement all my life, and I'm telling you that in ministry and in every day life, you have to prepare for the battle.

What if the computers are not working today? What if you get hit by a virus that knocks you out for a week? Now, I never plan to have a bad day. But just in case, I always need to have a "Plan B." We make our plans and think that everything is going to be fine; but in life, you must have an alternate plan.

I have been hindered so many times on trips that I have plans B and C. Plus, I have a plan D that the devil doesn't know about!

Consider something as simple as cardboard boxes. We were shipping boxes of my teaching tapes and books to a revival. On the day we left, it was raining long and hard, but I had told the guys to tape up the tops, bottom and all the sides and edges of the boxes. Being prepared for what was coming-being shipped in the

rain-kept all the tapes and books safe and dry.

Now, this may sound simple and insignificant, but when you have a warfare mentality, you have to think like your enemy thinks. You will never win a battle thinking your plan only.

You can never win warfare in the spirit without understanding from where the Enemy might hit. Where might he attack me next? What weakness do I have that he can use to his advantage? How might I prepare in advance for the attack? Elisha, David, and Joshua are three excellent examples of the importance of preparation.

Elisha

Elisha was a farmer who gave up his profession to follow Elijah. For years, he poured water on Elijah's hands—he was Elijah's servant. But when Elijah was being called up to heaven, Elisha was fully prepared and received a double-portion of Elijah's anointing.

While there were hundreds of other prophets in the land, it was Elisha who was at Elijah's hand and received the anointing.

David

When David was a teenager caring for the sheep, he killed an attacking bear. Later, he killed a lion. Then one day, he heard about a 13-foot-tall giant who had been taunting the fearful Israeli army for 40 days. David, going to where the action was, must have been thinking, "God helped me kill a bear and a lion, and God will help me kill that old uncircumcised Philistine!"

Here is a Biblical concept we need to understand: *new levels, new devils*. David went from killing a bear, to a lion, to a giant. He faced three enemies, each being more dangerous than the previous one.

David was also anointed three times.

- When he was a teenager, Samuel anointed him to be king (1 Samuel 16:13).
- Years later, the tribe of Judah anointed him to be king of Judah (2 Samuel 2:4).
- The third anointing came when the people of Israel wanted him to be the king of Israel (2 Samuel 5:3).

Why were there three different anointing with oil? Because David was a prophet, a priest, and a king—a picture of Jesus who was Prophet, Priest and King. Preparation is needed to win spiritual battles.

Joshua prepared for 40 years by serving Moses and assisting him whenever possible. When Moses went up the mountain of Sinai and everyone else stayed at the bottom, Joshua went as far up as he was allowed, halfway. He was one of the 12 whom Moses sent to spy out Canaan. After his time of preparation, Joshua took over for Moses and led God's people into the Promised Land.

When encountering warfare or conflict, many people want to pray one prayer and then say, "I have the victory! I've won the battle!" But the victory does not always come that quickly. Battles will either be skirmishes or very long, drawn-out battles. For example, although David was anointed to be king, Saul was fighting against him:

There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David . . . David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker. – 2 Samuel 3:1

Although we might be in a long war, we can get stronger while at the same time, the enemy gets weaker.

Standing in the midst of a long war can be difficult, but God makes it possible for us to stand. He just needs our willingness.

- We are told to stand fast in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 3:8).
- He will not let us enter any battle that we are not able to win (I Corinthians 10:13).
- Standing in the battle includes watching, being courageous, and being strong (I Corinthians 16:13).
- We can stand because of His grace (Romans 5:2).
- We are to stand with other Christians in one spirit (Philippians 1:27).

God wants us to stand, and He will help us to stand.

The Training Process

Paul said in Ephesians 6:11, 12, that we are to put on the whole armor of God, so

that we can stand against the wiles of the devil. He said we wrestle against principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Along with understanding the Roman soldier's equipment and techniques, let's take a look at the Roman wrestler, because his method of training is analogous to our own spiritual training.

But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. – I TIMOTHY 4:7

To many of us, the word exercise means weight lifting, treadmills and/or aerobics. But the Greek word for exercise in this verse means to "exercise naked." Now that I have your attention, let me explain the three phases of training that a Roman wrestler went through: *working out*, *heating up*, and *rubbing down*.

The Workout

The workout consisted of running many miles, training with heavy weights, and learning wrestling techniques and movements. The trainer put the guy through grueling workouts and regularly took him to the edge of his capability.

In America, the closest thing we have to this phase of training is boot camp. It is not the real war; but through strenuous exercises, the soldier is prepared for most anything he or she might encounter in a real war. It is not lightweight training. It's serious and demanding.

Likewise, after we accepted Christ, we thought, "Whew! I'm saved, going to heaven, and I'm on God's side so life will be peaceful and easy." But almost immediately, we were tossed into a conflict. Old party buddies called on the phone, an old boyfriend or girlfriend stopped by, or we ran into our old drug dealer.

Suddenly, we were struggling over whether to enjoy our old, familiar pleasures or to follow that new voice—the Holy Spirit. What happened? God allowed a challenge to come into our lives to give our spirit man a workout. He knows that we need training now so that we can survive future conflicts.

The Heat-up

The second phase of training for the wrestler was regular hot baths. The wrestler would sit in very hot water, in a steamy room, and perspire for hours. The trainer would sometimes use sand when rubbing the soldier down with oil. Then he would scrape the perfumed oils and sand off their bodies with a *strigil*, or curved metal spatula.

First Peter 1:7 says the trial of our faith is much more precious than gold that has been tried in the fire. Going through the heat, or the fire, is something God wants all of us to experience.

A woman once said to me, "When I was lost, it seemed like I didn't have any problems. I had all the money I wanted and everything was going great. But after I got saved, I started having financial problems and nothing seems to be going right."

I told her, "When you were unsaved, the devil didn't mess with you because he already had you. Since you were already on your way to hell, he didn't have to waste time attacking you. But, now that you are saved, you are a problem to him." We are all destined to go through the heat-trials and tribulations-but this is the key, "go through" it. We go through and come out the other side, victoriously!

The Rubdown

The third thing the trainer did to the wrestler was to rub oil deeply into his skin. This was one of those hard, deep-tissue massages.

The trainer would use five different kinds of oil, meaning the wrestler would get five massages, each with different oil. This made his skin slick so that when he was wrestling, his opponent could not grasp hold of him. He would have great difficulty getting a firm hold on any body part.

In the Bible, oil represents the anointing of God. We should all have the anointing of the five-fold ministry listed in Ephesians 4:11 "rubbed into" us. We need to place ourselves under the anointing of the apostle, prophet, pastor, evangelist and teacher. Their anointing, rubbed into us, will help us to grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ.

For example, God gave me a "teacher and evangelist" anointing. People have told me that when they sit under my ministry, their understanding of the Scripture opens up like never before. Why does this happen? Because they are getting the oil from my anointing rubbed into their spirits.

For the Christian, the five-fold anointing makes it impossible for the enemy to get a firm hold on us. Jesus referred to this when the time was nearing for Him to go to the Cross, and He said, "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me" (John 14:30).

Jesus was telling his disciples, "You are going to see me beaten, tortured, and crucified. Although it will look like Satan has defeated me, he has not. He cannot defeat me because he cannot get a hold on me." So, we see that the purpose for all the discomfort—the training, the heat, the hard rubbings—is to prepare us to be victorious at wrestling with the evil powers.

The Strengthening Power of Warfare and Wrestling

Satan looks at our trials differently from how God looks at them. Satan sees them as a way to take us down, whereas God sees them as a way to make us grow.

For example, Jesus told Peter that Satan had asked to have Peter and to sift him as wheat. Jesus knows the enemy's plans and can share them with us! Jesus then told Peter that He prayed for him that his faith would not fail. He said He prayed that, when the test was over, he would strengthen others.

Jesus did not pray—and this is important—that Peter would not have to go through that sifting. He prayed that he would be victorious in the trial and he would strengthen others when the trial was over.

Here is the sequence: Satan asked to sift Peter; permission was granted for Peter to be tested; Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not fail; and Peter's faith remained intact after the test. All of this prepared Peter to be the great preacher on the Day of Pentecost, and he led 3,000 souls to the Lord!

Early in my ministry, I was in warfare with depression for about four months. One day while I was in Bulgaria, depression enveloped me so powerfully that my mind became cluttered. I was so overwhelmed that I almost walked out a 15th-story window.

I was not getting even the slightest amount of victory until the Lord showed me that I was so caught up in what the Enemy was doing that I was not engaged in the war. I was doing nothing but watching the Enemy beat me up. I felt hopeless and did not even want to read my Bible. I kept the whole thing to myself and did not ask anyone for help.

One day, while in the middle of preaching a revival service, an anointing came on me and I stopped the service. I told everyone in that meeting that I had been severely depressed for many months and that I wanted to walk away from everything, grow my hair long, and ride a Harley across the country.

It was humiliating to talk about, but I felt a touch of joy and a spark of fire that I had not felt in a long time. When the service ended, many precious saints of God anointed me with oil and prayed over me. What happened that night was the beginning of my victory.

The next day, a close friend said to me, "Perry, you're going to be different, beginning today. You did the right thing. You have been keeping your problem in the dark and, as long as it was in the dark, the Enemy could use it against you. But when you exposed it to the light, he had nowhere to run."

I felt something break in the spirit realm. I put on God's armor, picked up God's weapons, and became engaged in the battle. I went after the devil, and I got the victory. There were no more clouds hanging over me. I knew that I was totally set free. I have been free ever since that day.

It is very important that we understand this: We are to have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, not the gospel of confusion, or depression, or fear. The word "shod in the Greek is *hupodeo* which means to bind under. In context, Paul is saying, "Be firm-footed with the gospel of peace."

Maintaining Your Balance

The Roman soldier, as well as the wrestler, knew he would lose in the battle quickly if he lost one specific thing—balance. With balance, all other physical motions have stability and a firm foundation from which to move.

Combat sometimes involved being so physically close to the enemy that the slightest push could send the soldier to the ground. But the enemy had a difficult time conquering the soldier who maintained his balance.

Let's be honest: losing balance and even falling down is something that all Christians have done and will do at some time in their lives. Only Christ has never sinned and fallen short of God's glory. We must learn how to stand and maintain our balance in the midst of all battles. If we fall, we need to get up immediately. The longer we are down, the more easily the enemy can successfully attack us. He is supposed to be under our feet, not the other way around.

We need balance in our individual lives as well as in the entire body of Christ. Sometimes the body gets way off balance in some teachings or aspects of serving God. For example, there was a faith movement that taught that we needed faith in faith, and faith in having more faith. As a result, people lost focus on having faith in God. The faith message became the ultimate message.

Then, there was a movement in worshiping worship. Whole churches and ministries were built not on the Word, but on worship. Worshiping for an hour and then teaching God's Word for ten minutes is not balanced.

One more example of something that gets the body of Christ off-balance is legalism. There are churches that actually promote styling your hair only a certain way. Early in my ministry, there were pastors who would not let me preach in their church if my hair was over my ears.

Clothing is also an important control factor in legalism. Once, I was wearing a red tie, and the pastor would not let me preach because of my tie. I asked, "What's wrong with red?" He said, "It's the color of a harlot!" I said, "Well, it's also the color of the blood of Jesus!"

The unbalance of legalism caused a lot of people to get hurt simply because they failed to look, dress or talk the way they were "supposed to." Sadly, some of these hurt people have never returned to the church. Jesus said to make disciples, not clones.

The Peace of God

The Bible talks about the steps of the preparation of the gospel of peace. This peace keeps us balanced. The New Testament reveals three kinds of peace: peace *with* God (Romans 5:1), peace *from* God (1 Corinthians 1:3), and the peace *of* God (Philippians 4:7).

Peace with God is given by the Lord when you come into a salvation relationship with Him. Sometimes people who are dying pray the sinner's prayer, and we say, "They made their peace with God." When we have peace with God, He is telling us, "You are no longer condemned and going to hell. You are my child, so there is peace because everything is alright between you and Me."

The **peace from God** comes after we have been born again and we are developing our walk with Him. As we walk with Him, doing those things that are pleasing to Him, He gives us His peace.

The **peace of God** guards your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. The peace of God is the peace that is necessary in times of conflict.

Remember how peaceful you felt when you accepted Christ? It was because you had made peace with God. You had started walking with Him, praying and reading your Bible. So He filled you with His peace. Then warfare came . . . but you have your feet covered with the peace of God to keep you balanced. No matter what kind of test you are in, it is the peace of God that keeps you from losing your balance.

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. – ISAIAH 26:3

The Hebrew word for stayed means "to support or to uphold," as in a pole that holds up a tent. The weight of the tent rests on that one pole. God is saying, "If you will put your weight—the weights and burdens in your mind—on Me, and rest on the post of the Cross of Christ, I will keep you in perfect peace."

The Peace of a Balanced Life

The peace of God will keep you balanced and in His will, no matter how fierce the battle. Somehow we have the idea that if things are going badly, we must have missed God's will. Don't tell the apostle Paul that! He was in jail half the time during his ministry. Don't tell Job that. He lost everything he had, but in the end, he got a double portion back.

A misconception in charismatic theology holds that if you are in God's will, everything is going to be perfect. The truth is, if you are in God's will you are a double threat to the Enemy and there will be battles and strange things you will have to fight. But when you are in God's will, you will have the peace of God. His peace will be with you, and it will guide you into His will for your life.

When I was 16 years old, I felt the call from God to go into the ministry. Three generations of preachers preceded me and when I told my Dad, he did everything possible to discourage me. For example, he said, "Now Perry, I don't know if you're really called to minister. Are you sure about that?" He was a pastor and I was thinking, "What's wrong with this man?"

But I kept feeling the peace of God, so I pursued my calling. Later, I asked him why he tried to discourage me from entering the ministry. He said, "Son, I knew that if I, your father, could discourage you from the ministry, then you

were never called. That was a test to see if you were really called." I thank God that I have a dad who is so full of wisdom.

At 18, I started evangelizing. At the same time, some people in my denomination were telling me I should attend a particular Christian college. After all, it was our denomination's college, and those who expect to get ahead in the ministry and pastor a large church attend this college. Yet, despite the pressure to enroll, I had such a strong peace about not going that I knew I was doing the right thing.

The pressure was at its highest point one day when I was visiting my denomination's state office in Virginia. A well-known minister said, "Brother Perry, I heard that you're called to preach."

I said, "Yes, sir."

He commented, "I'm assuming that you're going to our college to get your degree?"

I replied, "Well, I've prayed and fasted about that and the Lord impressed me to go directly into full-time ministry." His jaw dropped!

"Well, I don't think the Lord is going to tell you that!" he argued.

"Well, He did," I said. The next thing he said put a dagger through my heart.

"I want to tell you something," he said. "If you don't do it the way you're supposed to, you will amount to nothing! You'll just blow over!" Then he walked out the door.

The pain from his words lingered for days, but soon the peace of God returned and I started doing what God called me to do. That pastor was right about one thing: Perry Stone did blow over. I have blown over 40 states and seven foreign countries. I have blown over 500 cities on a weekly basis with a television program, plus 26 stations that reach around the world! To God be the glory!

You see, one day God told me, "Son, in the future, things will happen that I cannot tell you about right now. But I am going to bless your ministry so powerfully that, if you go to this college, they will say that they made you what you are. Do what I want you to do; pray, study, and fast. And when you get where I am going to take you, everyone will say, 'God raised up Perry Stone!' "

The peace that He gave me—His peace—is what has helped keep me from falling prey to man's expectations and pressure. His peace kept me balanced in His will.

The Importance of Endurance, Patience and Longsuffering

The peace of God will guide us and keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. There are three additional things we need in order to remain standing through all the battles, however-endurance, patience and longsuffering.

The word *endure* comes from a Greek word that means to bear up under pressure. Jesus endured the cross, meaning He bore up under the pressure. He endured the Cross for the joy that was set before Him. In other words, He knew it would not last forever. The reason you can endure hardness as a good soldier is because you can know and have faith that things are not always going to be like they are right now.

- The woman with an issue of blood endured it for 12 years. Then, with just one touch of Jesus, she was healed.
- The crippled man in John 5 endured for 38 years. One day Jesus came by and spoke to him and he was healed.
- The man of Gadara in Mark 5 endured evil spirits for a long time . . . until Jesus stepped off the boat and set the man free.

Nero was an emperor of Rome who wanted to rebuild the city. The people of Rome refused to let him do it so Nero took it upon himself to set the city afire. Some historians say Rome burned for a month and that 11 of the 12 sections of Rome were destroyed by the fire.

The Roman Senate began hearing the rumor that Nero had caused the fire and were about to confront him. In order to spare his own hide, Nero blamed the fire of Rome on the Christians. The apostle Paul was imprisoned in Rome at that time; so, knowing that Paul was a leader, Nero blamed him as the instigator.

The persecution of Christians ignited and spread fiercely and rapidly. Many Christians could not endure the suffering, or even the thought that they might suffer, so they denied their faith as well as their commitment to Paul.

In his latter years, Paul said that all the Christians in Asia had forsaken him (2 Timothy 1:15) Paul had traveled throughout Asia on two major missionary journeys. He started many churches and had many friends and converts there. But near the end of his life, when he was in a prison cell, his spiritual children forsook him.

Even though all forsook him, Paul had still fought a good fight, kept the faith, finished his course and even had a crown of righteousness reserved for him (2 Timothy 4:8). He was an enduring soldier!

Standing Firm in the Face of Evil

The body of Christ has too many wimps today. We get offended over the most ridiculous things. I have even heard of people who left a church because someone sat in the seat they had been sitting in for years.

Recently, 160,000 Christians were martyred by methods such as having their heads and legs chopped off, being thrown into fire, or having their churches burned down while locked inside. In one Islamic country, Muslims killed 56 Christians and their pastor.

In Peru, a terrorist group went to a church and took the children outside. Then they cut off the head of the pastor's son and told the children to play soccer with the head or they would all be killed.

I went to an orphanage in Peru and saw a little Christian boy with the bottom of his ears cut off. It looked like someone had taken a pair of scissors and cut off upside down v-shaped pieces of his ears. I asked him what happened. He said the terrorists kidnapped him and cut off his body parts. They sent them to his father, demanding money for his return.

Yet, we in the United States attend church and complain about everything while throughout the world, our brothers and sisters in Christ are dying for their faith. I'm telling you, it's time to stop being a weakling and a coward. It is time to be an enduring soldier and fight the good fight of faith that Paul talks about!

There is a verse in Revelation 12 that we in North America often quote partially. We talk about how we can overcome the Enemy by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. But the rest of that verse says, "and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12:11).

We are not true soldiers until we are willing to lay down our lives for the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we are fully willing to face any opposition, including death, then and only then are we soldiers of Christ. After I preached on Islam, someone told me, "You keep preaching like that and they're going to take you out. What do you think about that?" I said, "I'll just go to heaven sooner, won't I?" How can you threaten a believer with going to heaven and being with Jesus? What kind of threat is that?

Endure with Patience

There is no need to have a martyr's complex, but you don't have to be a coward, either.

Patience, combined with faith, are two traits that we must have in order to inherit the promises of God. – HEBREWS 6:12

By patience we can protect and keep our souls. – LUKE 21:19

Patience enables us to wait for the manifestation of God's promises. – Romans 8:25

It is impossible for Satan, your enemy, to possess the fruit of the Spirit. Love is a fruit of the Spirit, but Satan's fruit is hatred. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit, but Satan sows confusion. Everything that Satan is and does is the opposite of God's nature.

Patience is the ability to endure a long stretch of trouble. Battles can stretch for a very long time, and trouble can seem to never end. The trait that carries us to the end, to the victory, is patience.

The enemy cannot outlast your patience. Satan will say, "Leave him alone for a season. He is not going to give in." This is why it is so important to grasp this concept of endurance, and running the race with patience.

Longsuffering means to endure a long test by exercising patience or restraint, and by being slow to anger. Paul warned Timothy about the perilous times ahead. Then he complimented Timothy by saying:

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra— what persecutions I endured. And out of them all, the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

– 2 Timothy 3:10-12

Paul knew that longsuffering is a critical component to standing in the midst of battle, and that endurance helped him finish the work God had called him to do. *Having your feet shod with the gospel of peace* enables you to endure, to be patient, and to be longsuffering.

Luke 18 contains the parable of the persistent widow. She went to the judge, seeking justice from her adversary. She kept asking and asking. The judge finally said, "Do something about this woman. She's going to wear me out if she doesn't get what she's asking for." Jesus said:

Shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. – LUKE 18:7, 8

At times in these last days, it will seem that our prayers are not getting through to God. It will appear that we are praying and nothing is happening. Jesus ends the parable of the unjust judge with, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

The enemy is going to plant thoughts in our minds, like, "I have been praying for my son for five years now and nothing has happened." We will be tempted to become weary in well-doing, but Jesus said to have patience and keep believing because you will see the answer to your prayers!

Early in my ministry, God gave me a passage that kept me going as I traveled from one small church to another and from a good revival to a not-so-good revival:

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. – GALATIANS 6:7-9

You can stand, even in the midst of the toughest battle. Clothed in the armor of God, holding the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith in your hands, you will be victorious in every conflict in life.

Fatigue is not an option in the life of the faithful believer. Do not grow weary of doing well!

Increasing Your Spiritual IQ

Questions to answer from this chapter

The Roman soldiers' sandals had spikes and greeves. What purpose did these serve?

How do these spikes and greeves relate to a Christian's armor?

What enables a Christian to stand during a battle?

How does "peace" help you to continue standing?

Explain the meaning of *having done all to stand, stand therefore*.

- a. 90 percent of any battle involves _____.
- b. It is good to have a plan _____, or backup plan.
- c. In warfare, you must _____ like the enemy is _____.
- d. You can never understand warfare with _____ where the enemy may strike.

List three men in the Old Testament who prepared

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

David was anointed three times. List the occasions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List five scriptures that reveal how God helps us to stand and overcome:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

The Greek word for exercise means to _____.

List three phases of the Roman wrestler's workout:

1. _____ out
2. _____ up
3. _____ down

Compare these three phases to the phases a Christian experiences in spiritual preparation:

Describe the importance of spiritual balance in your walk with God.

List the three types of peace:

1. Peace _____
2. Peace _____
3. Peace _____

The Hebrew word *stayed* means to _____.

A believer must also have _____, patience and _____.

1. The Greek word *endure* means to _____.
2. By _____ and _____ we inherit the promises (Hebrews 6:12).
3. Longsuffering means to _____.

You can never win warfare in the Spirit until you _____.



CHAPTER 10

Battle Strategies for the Last Days

Jesus gave us the winning battle strategy for spiritual warfare when He said:

What king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? – LUKE 14:31

Keeping this verse in mind, we look in Ecclesiastes and read that there is no discharge for anyone in the war in which we are engaged. Our true discharge will come at our death:

No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit, and no one has power in the day of death. There is no release from that war, and wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it.

– ECCLESIASTES 8:8

Later in Ecclesiastes, we read:

Wisdom is better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroys much good. – ECCLESIASTES 9:18

Every time I read that, I am reminded of the wars the modern Israelis have won by tricking their enemy. In 1948, one of their villages was overtaken by the enemy. Not knowing what to do, they filled empty oil barrels with rocks, then they removed the mufflers from their cars.

At the sound of a signal, they rolled the barrels off the mountains and revved the car engines to create loud, military-like noises. Thinking that the Israelis had a new weapon or a new series of tanks, all of the Arabs fled the village, enabling the Israelis to regain control over their village. Wisdom is better than the weapons of war.

Plans are established by counsel; by wise counsel wage war.

– Proverbs 20:18

The Resource of Godly Counsel

One of the things I have always done in my life and ministry is to consult with people I trust before making a major decision. For example, when buying equipment, going on TV, or building a building, I want to know what people feel in their spirits about the decision I am making.

We should never reject godly counsel. Sometimes people can see things we do not see. We can be blinded by friendship, by relationship, and by people around us, whereas people on the outside looking in can have a different perspective. So, the preceding four verses come to mind when I hear the verse about consulting before you go to war.

There is no question that we are in a spiritual war. Each generation of believers has had to fight a war, usually unique to its own time period. The first century church had to fight false religion. After the first century, the church was engaged in a war of compromise and unbelief, because of the great persecution that came from Rome.

So what kind of war will we be fighting during the last days? What does the Bible say about this time in which we are living?

1. We will battle seducing spirits and doctrines of devils:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils. – I TIMOTHY 4:1, KJV

A seducing spirit is a spirit that tries to draw you away from the truth. We often associate the word "seduce" with sexual temptations. But these spirits work through the doctrines of devils, which can be anything that is evil.

Too many people today consult the wrong counselors. A *USA Today-CNN-Gallup Poll* found that 70 million Americans believe it is possible to talk to the dead. Former first lady Nancy Reagan consulted with astrologers in the White House. Hillary Clinton said she summoned the spirit of Eleanor Roosevelt before making a decision. God says:

Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God. – LEVITICUS 19:31

2. We will encounter spiritual deception and false prophets.

Speaking of last days, Jesus warned us about the deception that will come from people who are false prophets:

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Eke heed that no one deceives YOU." – MATTHEW 24:4

Many false prophets will rise up and deceive man. – MATTHEW 24:11

Notice that Jesus is warning against people: false prophets and those who would try to deceive us. Demonic spirits on their own cannot do much, except move furniture around and make some noise, but they can do a lot of damage by working through people.

We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but we wrestle against demonic spirits that are working through people. The last days battle will involve the enemy attacking truth:

- The truth of the Bible
- The foundation of Scripture
- Jesus being born of a virgin
- Jesus being the Son of God
- Jesus being the only way to heaven, and so on.

Now that we are politically correct in America, we are supposed to believe that everybody has a way to heaven, and everybody is right in whatever they want to believe. It is this kind of nonsense that the end time generation will have to deal with.

The battle Christians face is to stand up for truth and defend the gospel of Christ. I believe there are three reasons warfare in America is dramatically increasing.

Reasons for Increased Satanic Activity

First, Satan is running out of time. Satan knows his time is short, so he is not going to attack those things he already owns. He is going after those things and people who do not belong to him.

He will do his best to move into high places in our governments and churches, through those in leadership positions. He will attack the leadership in any high realms of authority, through which he can control people.

Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.

– REVELATION 12:12

The second reason spiritual warfare is increasing is that the spirits tied to false religions are being brought into America. For example, in India, they worship millions of gods. They even worship animals, trees, and broomsticks. Demonic spirits can attach themselves to objects that are worshipped, and some of these objects are being brought into America.

Specifically, this is what is happening: Years ago, people who moved to America from foreign countries were exposed to Christianity nearly everywhere in this country. Before 1963, foreigners knew that America was a Christian nation, and they honored that fact. Even the children of those adults who moved here were exposed to prayer and Bible reading in public schools.

The decision by the Supreme Court in 1963 to remove prayer from schools ignited a movement to remove any and all references to Christianity. Now citizens, as well as those coming here from other countries, are no longer exposed to Christianity.

Many—perhaps most—schools and colleges have become godless. Vanishing from the public square are references to America's Christian heritage. Wherever God is mentioned in the public square, He is blasphemed and criticized, and His name is banned in some places.

Generations are being raised in America who have no concept of who God is. Combined with this problem, some of those immigrating here are bringing contrary religious beliefs, like Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.

Yes, America is a country of religious freedom. But as people worship false gods, and as they bring into America the idols from their religions, they bring the spirits of those idols with them. America is facing a spiritual battle unlike any previous battle since the formation of the nation.

The third reason that warfare is dramatically increasing is the sin factor. A man from South Carolina once said to me:

Years ago, before I was saved, I was involved with a new age church on the West Coast. We didn't know anything about demons and angels; we just knew that there were positive and negative spirits. I'm ashamed to tell you this, but I became so entrenched in demonism that I didn't realize what I was doing.

There was a woman in this new-age church that I really wanted, but I was married at the time. So, one night I sent a spirit into my wife and she hemorrhaged to death. I caused her death through a spirit.

This was not a dumb man He was a successful computer expert who had been involved in demonic activity before he became a believer. He continued:

Most people are skeptical about this, but believe me, I've been there. I've seen demons. In cities like Los Angeles, they are as big as gorillas and six-or seven-feet-tall. They actually hang onto people.

After I came to South Carolina, I saw, on two different occasions, demonic spirits on people's shoulders. They looked like little chimpanzees, and I watched them get close to the person's ear and whisper evil things to them.

I asked, "Why do you think the spirits in Los Angeles would be so large and the spirits in South Carolina be so small?" He answered:

Demons feed off of sin. If you are in an area where people are heavily involved in the occult, drugs, alcoholism, sexual bondage, pornography, and other fleshly sins, the demons are very large and strong. The more the people sin, the larger the demons grow and the stronger they become. In the Bible belt there is less fleshly sin and a lot of Christian teaching, preaching, and gospel music, so demons cannot go into those areas and feed off the sin.

This story may sound outrageous to some, but remember what Jesus said. When the unclean spirit is cast out of a man, he looks for another host. If he cannot find one, he returns to the person he left. If he does not see God in the person, he takes seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they all possess the man (Matthew 12:43-45).

Levels of Wickedness

So, there are levels of wickedness and power among evil spirits. The point is that

it is becoming easier for people to feed their flesh than ever before in this country.

For example, when I was a kid, pornographic magazines were wrapped and hidden behind the counter. As the years passed, they went from being partially covered with a brown wrapper and moved out from under the counter, to being placed in full view with the other merchandise.

Not too long ago, you had to pay to get adult-oriented cable stations. Now, you can freely download pornography from the internet anytime and almost anywhere.

So, in America, we have a combination of the chief of the kingdom of darkness knowing that he is running out of time; individuals moving into this country with no knowledge of the gospel, bringing their demon-occupied idols; and the increase of sin among more and more people. This montage of spiritual activity is creating spiritual warfare for Christians like they have never experienced before.

This is why many of you who have been saved for 20 or 30 years are saying, *Why am I having a hard time praying? Why is it that when I pray I don't feel the anointing I used to feel?* It is because there are spiritual veils over more and more areas.

Why do you think Daniel had to pray for 21 days before he could get a breakthrough? It was because a demonic prince who was controlling the country of Persia went over the city of Babylon where Daniel was and restrained an angel of God from bringing an answer to his prayer.

Do Not Lose Heart

The previous chapter of this book mentioned the parable of the persistent widow, recorded in Luke 18. That parable, in the context of what is discussed here, indicates that in the last days, it may seem that God is not hearing you when you pray. You may seek Him with a request for a long time. Jesus is saying, "Do not get weary. Do not give up."

The parable is introduced with, "Men always ought to pray and not lose heart," then Jesus tells a parable about a woman, not a man. Women have a tenacity that men do not seem to have, when it comes to hanging on until they get what they want. Here is how most men are: we will pray for something, get excited, and then expect it the next day. If the answer has not arrived within a week, we will

forget about it and begin to figure out how to create the answer on our own.

Women will not do that. When they ask God for something, they will lock onto it until the answer comes. Consider Delilah, for example. I realize she was evil, but she drove a man crazy as she pursued what she wanted. She wanted Sampson to tell her the secret of his strength. She whined daily to Sampson, "If you really love me, you will tell me the secret of your great strength." In fact, Judges 16:16 says that she vexed his soul to death.

A woman can do what a man cannot. She nurtures a seed inside her—an idea, a goal, or the word of God. Say it is a physical seed. The seed grows, she puts on weight, buys baby clothes, and goes into labor with all that pain and effort. All the while, she's waiting for the baby.

If a man had to have a baby, he would die before he gave birth. That's just the truth!

Women know how to conceive something and hang onto it until it is birthed. I believe this is why Jesus referred to a woman in that parable. He was trying to say, "Men, you need to be like the woman in this story. You need to have tenacity, and you need to keep pressing."

Jesus knew, in the last days that living would be so stressful we would get tired of trying to hold on to the promise. He knew that we would pray and it would seem like the prayer was never going to be answered. He knew we would want to give up and faint.

One of the great battles we will have as believers in these last days, is the battle of weariness and fainting. This will be the greatest attack of the enemy—trying to cause us to become weary in well-doing and give up before the answer comes.

The Bible warns us that, in these last days, men's hearts will fail them from the fear and expectation of those things which are coming on the earth (Luke 21:26). There will be great wrath because the devil knows that he has a short time (Revelation 12:12). There will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world (Matthew 24:21).

Even in the midst of all this fear, wrath and great tribulation, the prevailing attitude will be that of scoffers, who will walk according to their own lusts, asking, "Where is the promise of His coming" (2 Peter 3:3,4)?

Christ's Kingdom Will Prevail

The good news is that, while there is great fear, great wrath, great tribulation, and many scoffers, there will also be a great outpouring of God's Spirit and the gospel will be preached throughout the entire world. God is going to have a last-day army:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. – ACTS 2:17-18

The army God assembles, in the last days, consists of youth (sons and daughters) as well as older people (menservants and maidservants). His army consists of dreamers and visionaries who have a prophetic anointing. Notice that both male and female are mentioned, not just men, as some denominations teach. God can use a woman the same as He can use a man.

My dad accepted Christ under a woman's ministry. She held a revival that lasted three years. From that revival, 70 young men accepted Christ, and later preached the gospel all over the United States. I believe God uses women as He does, because a lot of men will not do His work.

When Kathryn Kuhlman received her calling from God, she fought it at first. She said to God, "Why me? I'm a woman. Do you know how hard it is for a woman to be in the ministry?" God said to her, "I tried to give this ministry to three men and they didn't want it, so I chose you because I knew you would do it."

So God will be using women. More women will be in positions of apostle, prophet, pastor, evangelist and teacher. The harvest is going to be so great that God will need to have many laborers in the field. In Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1), the landowner was hiring up until the 11th hour!

Ben [Jesus] said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the Laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." -LUKE 10:2

God uses more young people for His work than ever before. We will see one of the greatest outpourings of the Holy Spirit ever, and that outpouring is already evident. In some other countries it is primarily touching the youth.

Large churches in Africa have congregations of people mostly under age 30.

Latin America is experiencing rapid church growth with people under the age of 35. This fulfills the promise for sons and daughters.

Older people, who have lived under communism in countries such as China and Vietnam, are very traditional and somewhat suspicious of the new things of God. But the younger generation is excited about serving God. Right now, there is a church in Indonesia with 80,000 members. Half of that congregation is under 30 years of age, and this is a predominately Muslim country.

God's last-days army must have men, women and young people. Men are primarily visionaries, planners and rational thinkers. Women bring endurance in prayer and travail, and the birthing of new Christians. The youth are adventurous and unreserved. God will have everybody in this army working together.

The Roman Army and Churches in America

While doing research for this study on the armor of God, I prayed like this, "Lord, when Paul wrote Ephesians 6, he was in prison being guarded by a Roman soldier. You showed Paul how your armor is similar to the soldier's armor. Now I know you do everything with a pattern. How does all this come into play with the Roman army?"

He led me to research the Roman army, and I found some interesting things. The army was divided into sections. Eight men made a unit. Ten units, or 80 men, made a century of soldiers. Six centuries, or 480 men, made a cohort. Ten cohorts, or 4,800 men, made a legion. And 5,280 soldiers formed an army.

In America, the average church has about 70 to 80 people. That is similar to a century of Roman soldiers. The average American church is a century church!

The next largest average size church in America has approximately 400–500 people. This is similar in size to a cohort in a Roman army.

Then there are the churches with thousands. A mega-church would be considered a Roman army.

The 80-member churches are all over America. The 400-500-member churches are usually found predominantly in larger towns or small cities. Mega-churches are generally located in or on the outskirts of major cities.

Let me point out something I believe is very important. The Roman army had to have groups of 80 people to hold down smaller key areas. Is it possible that we have so many churches that have around 80 people and are not supposed to

turn into larger churches? If this is true, then it will take the pressure off a lot of pastors who are perplexed, wondering why they have only 80 people.

In reality, they have a purpose that they can accomplish only by being that size. For example, assume a Roman general wanted to secretly penetrate the enemy's territory and demolish some bridges and food storage facilities. If he sent in a legion, they could be easily detected by the enemy because of their large number.

I believe it is possible that the reason so many churches with 400-500 people are scattered within and around each city is so that they can speak into the prominence of that town and community.

Sometimes it seems that churches spend a lot of time and energy on church growth. Their lack of growth certainly does not indicate that something is wrong with these churches. They have many godly and anointed people serving and attending. Some of these churches have even built larger sanctuaries, but the number of people remained the same. Why can they not get over the "450 hump"? The technique the Roman army used to conquer a city gives us insight into the answer to that question.

When the Roman army conquered Jerusalem, they used the 10th legion. Those 4,800 men stormed the walls of the city and encountered ineffective resistance. So, if we are going to storm the cities of Miami, Tampa, New York or Los Angeles, for example, we need a mega-church-a legion or an army. It takes a larger force to pull down bigger strongholds.

It will take more people wielding the sword of the Spirit. More people must link their shields together and go after the wall. And more people must put their shields over their heads like the Roman soldiers did for protection against the rocks and arrows being thrown at them.

The Standard

Jacob had twelve sons, and the descendants from those sons formed the tribes of Israel (the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Dan, and so on). The Bible says in Numbers 1:52 that Israel pitched tents, every man by his own camp, every man by his own standard.

Each of these tribes camped around the tabernacle of Moses. There were three tribes to the North, three to the West, three to the South, and three to the East. Among each group of three tribes, one was the prominent tribe: Judah was the

prominent tribe on the East, Dan on the North, Reuben on the South, and Manasseh on the West.

Each of the 12 tribes displayed a color banner, or standard, specific to their tribe that matched the color of a stone in the priest's breastplate. When the signal sounded that Israel was going to war, everyone assembled at their standard. "This was a very efficient method for organizing two million people.

The Roman army also used standards. The standard was a rallying point for each division within an entire army, In the church today, we have standards. We have rallying points that we gather around, each according to his division. When the Roman Church became formal and dry, Martin Luther introduced the doctrine that the just shall live by faith. When this happened, the Roman Church split and became two "camps" that rallied around one of two standards: either the Roman Church or "salvation by grace and faith."

Later, another movement came, a deeper revelation, called "holiness, sanctification and separation," introduced by the Wesley brothers. "This movement, called Wesleyan Methodism, created another standard that many people rallied around.

At this point, there were three standards in the church. While each new standard showed a progression of understanding God, many would not move to the newer revelation, preferring instead to remain at their current level. People under each standard built schools, colleges, and institutions that reflected their own standard.

Near the turn of the 20th century, a minister named William J. Seymour was instrumental in the Azusa Street Revival, which introduced the functioning of the gifts of the Spirit and the baptism in the Holy Spirit (the Pentecostal movement).

Now there were four standards: the Roman Church, salvation by faith, holiness, and Pentecostalism. The refusal of many from each of the earlier standards to move to the most recent move of God continued. In fact, some standards split.

The Pentecostal movement, for example, split into eight denominations. Many people from each standard either fought or criticized the other standards, especially the new movement of God. They were peeking around their little standard, saying, "Don't go down there and worship with them because they are not of God. If they were, we would have had that revelation long ago."

What is sad is that the entire body of Christ was supposed to have moved from one standard to the next standard, to the next, and so on. Instead, we have a lot of churches preaching their standard, saying that everyone else is wrong, and you must be part of their movement to go to heaven.

We weaken the army of God when we have one camp here, one over there, another camp somewhere else, and all the time we are fighting each other instead of fighting the Enemy. If you are a Baptist, your enemy is not the Pentecostal. If you are Pentecostal, your enemy is not the Catholic.

Even Jesus' disciples were involved in this kind of division. One day they saw someone casting out a demon in Jesus' name and they rebuked him, saying, "Hey! You can't do that! You're not with our group! You're not one of us!" When those disciples returned to Jesus and told Him what had happened, Jesus rebuked them, saying, "If he is not working against Me, he is working for Me!"

God does not desire separation among His people. There is only one standard:

When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. – ISAIAH 59:19

That standard is Jesus, who was lifted up to draw all men to Him. He is the standard of one message: "one body" and "one spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13); "one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:5, 6).

The old standards that we have today—the many different denominations that once burned with the fire of God—have become cold and are dying. Hundreds of churches in Europe that once had a genuine move of God are being sold and converted into mosques. When we take a new truth from God, make it the one and only truth of God, and ignore any future revelations and movements of the Holy Spirit, we quickly become overrun by the Enemy.

I believe a last days army is coming. This last days army will not get caught up in the divisions of the church that we see today. This army will understand that the standard is the Bible, from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. The standard is the 66 Books of the Bible. The standard is the covenant that we have in Jesus. The last day army will believe that it is okay to clap your hands, to shout, to pray for the sick, to cast out demons, and to speak in tongues.

I am reminded of the bumble bee. By all principles of physics, the bumble bee—with its size, shape and wing span—should not be able to fly. No matter how many laws of physics are violated, no matter how many professors tell the

bumble bee it cannot fly, that bumble bee will fly anyway. The bumble bee is not going to agree with the rules and not do what it was created to do.

Similarly, we should not let a bunch of man-made rules keep us from being all that God has called us to be and to do. One of the greatest military generals of all time was Alexander the Great. By age 30, he had conquered most of the known world of his day. He became ill and died in Babylon in June, 323 B.C. at the age of 33. His short life and brilliant military skills have been studied for thousands of years.

Four Reasons Alexander Was Great

There are four reasons Alexander was a legendary general. Here are those four reasons and how Christians in the last day battle can apply those characteristics to become stronger soldiers.

First, Alexander the Great's army was highly motivated. Perhaps what motivated his soldiers the most was that Alexander would enter the heat of the battle along with all of his other soldiers. Most often, he would lead the charge, whereas the usual practice of generals was to stay in the back and give orders. His courage and fierceness vanquished any fear or hesitancy within his soldiers.

With a comparatively small army of 40,000 men, he warred against the Persian army of one million men and won. The spiritual parallel is that we do not need large numbers of people to conquer the enemy. Scripture tells us:

Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to Fight; your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.

– LEVITICUS 26:8

One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the Lord your God is He who fights for you, as He promised you. – JOSHUA 23:10

Jesus motivated and empowered 12 men to spread the gospel and destroy the works of the enemy.

Second, Alexander studied the weaknesses of his enemy. He looked for holes in their defense. He searched for unguarded walls and psychological weaknesses, because this was what the enemy feared most. Everyone, including our Enemy, has an area of weakness.

The third reason was that Alexander lightened his soldiers' load before the

battle. Alexander's army traveled more than they battled. Therefore, they had to carry items for their daily needs. Before going into conflict, Alexander ordered his men to remove everything except what was needed for battle. They were not to be burdened with unnecessary weight and could walk, run and fight longer.

Paul wrote that we are not to get enmeshed with the things of this life:

No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

– 2 TIMOTHY 2:4

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

– HEBREWS 12:1

Weight and sin slow us down in the race that God has set before us. Weights are different from sins. Weights are attitudes we carry that hinder our spiritual growth. Mark 4:19 lists these weights: the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust for other things.

The cares of this world refer to being overly concerned and worried about our daily responsibilities.

The deceitfulness of riches seduces us to believe that financial wealth is the most important thing in life. Now, being rich is not a sin. God does not care if we have wealth, just as long as the wealth does not have us.

The lust for other things draws us to want anything and everything, not just money. In America, we are constantly bombarded with ads and commercials that try to persuade us that having homes, cars, or anything else is the key to our happiness, self-worth, and acceptance from others.

The fourth reason Alexander was a legendary general was that he always fed his soldiers well before and during the journey. He understood that it is impossible to fight and win without energy.

King Saul once gave a crazy command to his army. They were going to a battle and he told them, "Don't eat anything. The man that eats anything will be cursed. I'll put a curse on him."

His son, Jonathan, did not hear that command and, as they went through the woods, he saw a honeycomb and ate it. His eyes were enlightened and he received strength from the honeycomb. Months earlier, God had put a swarm of forest bees right in Saul's path. He provided food for the soldiers to eat, so they gained strength and energy from the honeycomb.

You cannot fight the enemy when you are physically weak. Why do you think the Bible says that when you are sick, to call for the elders? Because when you are sick you do not feel like praying or interceding! When you are sick, your faith level is not up. What you need to do is lie on your bed and tell the saints to get over there and lay hands on you.

There was a movement within the church a few years ago of not eating meat. Now, if you are a vegetarian due to a personal conviction, that's okay. I am referring to a so-called doctrine that we are not to eat meat. The Bible says that through seducing spirits and doctrines of devils will come a belief that we are to abstain from meats (I Timothy 4:1,3).

The priests in the Old Testament ate meat every day. God gave them the recipe: cook the meat, do not eat it raw, and burn the fat. God knew that the fat of animals can give us cardiac problems. But the priests had to eat meat in order to carry out their priestly duties. These men worked all day at the temple, slaying animals, lifting animal parts, and waving them before God. That kind of work requires protein to feed the muscles and provide the energy for all that physical labor.

Jesus fasted 40 days and 40 nights before He started His ministry. He fasted before He engaged in the conflict that accompanied His ministry. John the Baptist's disciples asked Jesus' disciples, "Doesn't your master fast? It seems like He never misses a meal."

Jesus understood, "I fasted to get a breakthrough before the battle. Now that I am in the battle, I need my strength to minister to these people." When Jesus got really tired, He got Himself apart from people before he fell apart —He rested.

Sometimes people feel like they are superhuman. During the healing revival era years ago, godly and anointed men would preach every night in a tent for weeks on end. They would pray for hundreds of people every night. They wore their bodies out. Don't burn out or rust out; just go in His timing. Whether by death or by the rapture, let it be in His timing.

Conclusion

All Christians are called to be good soldiers for Christ. Remember: we all have trials and battles. But those who understand the specific purpose of each piece of armor, those who clothe themselves in the full armor of God every day, are those who are victorious in battle.

You must be clothed with salvation, sanctification, righteousness, and the power of the Holy Spirit. Your faith will help you overcome your trials and mature in your spiritual walk.

The truth of God's word will help you discern deception and delusion. Anoint your shield and your mind through the five-fold ministry of anointed apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Learning the truth of God's Word and speaking it aloud will support the shield of your faith and the sword of the Spirit.

Your sword, the Word of God, prayer, praise, and worship—all of these things are weapons against deception, sickness, mental attacks and temptations. Be balanced in your prayer, praise and worship. Remember that your praise and worship is effective only when it comes from a pure heart and a genuine love for God.

Move out of the realm of the flesh. When the enemy throws arrows of doubt, unbelief, fear, depression, defeat, jealousy, strife, unforgiveness and hatred, remember that those are hindrances and stumbling blocks designed specifically to attack your areas of weakness. Do not let any of these things become a stronghold.

Keep your shield lifted and in place at all times. Be prepared to defend yourself from arrows that will come from all directions. At times, it will become difficult to carry your shield and defend yourself, so it is important to link shields with other believers.

Be unified in the body of Christ. Gather behind the one standard of Jesus Christ and fight the real enemy instead of each other. Think on those things that are true, pure, just, praiseworthy, and of good report. Be righteous without condemnation, guilt and legalism. Resist any evil words that have been spoken against you. Speak the word of God over your situation.

When God has spoken His word over your situation, when you are fully dressed and protected, and when you know the battle is already won, the peace of God will give you the patience to endure until you see the manifestation of your victory.

Don't be a limping, wounded soldier who is constantly being whipped by the enemy. Join God's mighty and powerful army. Dig your trenches and link your shields. Stand firm against the enemy who is coming against you. Instead of you fearing the enemy, let the enemy fear you. With your full armor in place, there is no need to be timid. Go to battle with boldness.

God's armor will enable us to resist, restrain, and rebuke. And it will reveal, redeem, reconcile, renew, and repair.

We are at war. Two major forces that oppose us as we pursue the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ are evil spirits and our carnal desires. Battles will escalate in the last days because Satan knows he doesn't have much time.

But God provided for us His armor, and when used properly, it will protect us from the enemy, give us victory, and keep us from falling short of our destinies. Clothe yourself and be equipped for battle!

Increasing Your Spiritual IQ

Questions to answer from this chapter

List the four main Scriptures that speak of war and battle.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

We should never reject _____.

The Last Days Battles:

- a. are against _____ spirits and _____ of devils.
- b. are against a spirit of _____ that comes through false prophets.
- c. are a battle against the _____ of the Bible.

What are three reasons spiritual battles are increasing in America?

1. _____ is running out of time.
2. _____ are tied into _____ religions being brought into America.
3. Warfare is increasing because of the _____ factor.

In the last days, we must carefully guard against becoming _____ in waiting on God.

The 12 tribes of Israel, individually, were each under a _____.

Roman standards were a _____ point for each _____
of the army.

The Christian standard is the _____ books of the _____

List four reasons Alexander the Great was successful:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Appendix

Being a Soldier

A lot of teaching in recent years has told us about son-ship. We have learned we are heirs and joint-heirs with Christ. We have learned we are overcomers, and He will supply all our needs. But we need teaching that will move us from being an heir of Christ to being a soldier of Christ.

Some Christians prefer not to talk about fighting and warfare; others actually consider it a negative teaching. Unfortunately, when some of us lose our jobs, have marital problems, or experience any other adversity, we simply rely on our son-ship relationship with God, and things do not change. Why not? Because we are also called to be soldiers, and we are called to fight the enemy.

The history of the children of Israel, during their time in captivity, the deliverance from Egypt, and their possessing the Promised Land, clearly illustrates the progression of the Christian's walk. While in Egypt, the Israelites were slaves, just as we were slaves to sin. In the wilderness, they learned to be sons, just as we progress to walking in son-ship. We learn how to receive the blessings from God.

Then, when the Israelites conquered the inhabitants of the Promised Land, they learned how to be soldiers. We need to learn to take territory and to fight the Enemy, who wants to destroy us. So, the progression is: *from slaves, to sons, to soldiers*. Paul wrote to Timothy about being a good soldier.

Timothy was a young pastor at the church in Ephesus, when Paul wrote ~Timothy. Paul had laid his hands on Timothy and imparted a spiritual gift. Timothy had a heritage of faith-filled, praying families. He was taught God's Word from the time he was a child. He had been trained under Paul, possibly the greatest apostle in all of history; however, Timothy was fearful.

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare. – 1 TIMOTHY 1:18

In other words, Paul told Timothy to take the rhema word, the prophecy, that was given to him previously and use it in his warfare. The rhema word is anointed to accomplish what it was sent to do. Paul is saying, "Hold up your rhema, your sword, and fight." Jesus was referring to the rhema of His word when He said:

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. – JOHN 15:7

It is not just a matter of knowing the scriptures. It is also important to know what God said to you through the revelation of the Word. Paul gave Timothy instructions to flee, to follow, and to fight. His advice applies to us today.

1. We are to flee youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22). We see an example of this when Potiphar's wife flung herself at Joseph. He ran away so fast that he left his cloak behind. Even though Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph and he lost everything and went to jail, he ran away from temptation.

2. We are to follow righteousness (2 Timothy 2:22). Follow after the right standing with God. Follow after those things that please God.

3. We are to fight the good fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). Every battle in your life directly attacks your faith. Jesus told Peter, "I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail" (Luke 22:31). We must keep our faith strong, because success in warfare depends on our faith.

Parallels with Roman Warfare

When the Romans won their wars, there were nine specific actions they performed. There are striking parallels between what the Romans did after they won a war and what will happen when Jesus returns:

1. The Roman leader rode in a horse-driven chariot. Jesus and His army will ride on horses (Revelation 19:13,14).
2. The Roman leader wore a royal robe. Jesus will be wearing a robe dipped in blood, and his army will be wearing fine white linen (Revelation 19:13, 14).
3. A crown of victory was placed on the Roman leader's head. Jesus will be wearing many crowns (Revelation 19:12).
4. Roman soldiers' faces were painted red. Jesus will be revealed from heaven in blazing fire (2 Thessalonians 1:8; Revelation 19:12).
5. Roman soldiers had scepters in their hands. Jesus will rule with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:15).
6. The leader was surrounded by all of his soldiers. The armies of heaven will follow Jesus (Revelation 19:14).
7. Victorious Roman soldiers would parade the captured enemy in public. An angel with a great chain will seize Satan and bind him (Revelation 20:2, 3).
8. In Roman warfare, to the victor went the spoils. In spiritual warfare, the overcomer will inherit all things (Revelation 21:7).
9. The Roman victory parade ended at the temple. Jesus will rule from heaven and He will be the Temple (Revelation 21:22).

David's Defeat of Goliath

As soldiers for Christ, we can learn lessons from the details of the encounter between David and Goliath. Goliath was between 13 and 14 feet tall. His spear was at least seven feet long, and he had a regular-size man to carry his shield. He wore full battle armor, similar to the armor the Roman soldier wore.

Regardless of his size, his armor and his strength; Goliath had an area that was vulnerable to injury-his forehead. David's choice of weapon, the slingshot, could fire a rock over Goliath's shield and go directly into his forehead.

David took five smooth stones from the brook, shot one stone at Goliath's head, put the others in a "script," and cut off Goliath's head with the giant's own sword (I Samuel 17:40, 51). Why did David pick up smooth stones? Because a smooth stone is much more aerodynamic than a rough stone, and it provided greater speed and accuracy. The smoothness of the stones was the result of hundreds of years of friction by the water in the brook.

When we first come to Christ, we have many rough edges. God cannot use us with great accuracy, so He provides us with the continual washing by the water of the Word and the working of the Holy Spirit, to knock off those rough edges. Although David used only one stone, he took five from the brook, because there were four more giants in the land. David probably believed that, after he knocked off Goliath, he would have to take on the other giants. He was ready, willing and able to do so.

After David took the stones from the water, he placed them in his shepherd's bag. He brought out one stone and killed the enemy. Similarly, God removes our rough edges, then wraps us in His *Scripture*. He brings us out and uses us when the time comes to conquer the enemy.

Notice that David took five stones. *Five* is the number of grace and of the five-fold ministry of Christ to the church. First Samuel 17:31 indicates that David's stone did not kill Goliath, but knocked him unconscious. What actually killed Goliath was David cutting his head off with the sword. "This is important because David got to the root of the problem and killed it.

In spiritual warfare, we sometimes deal only with the surface issues. However, these things are actually the effects of the root of the problem. We need to recognize and attack the root of the problem instead.

A man once told me, "I was bound by pornography before I got saved, and after I got saved, I was still having problems with it. I had these movie channels coming into my apartment, and late at night they always had pornographic movies. I found myself wanting to find these kinds of movies and watch them.

I asked him, "What did you do?" He said, "I called the cable company and told them to get them out of my house." "That is what I am talking about. Cut the head off! Cut out the root of the problem.

Why put yourself through unnecessary temptation? *The Bible* tells us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Corinthians 7:1). There are some things you could do, but it is

better not to. For example, if you used to have a problem with drinking and picking up girls in bars, then a bar is the last place you need to go and witness.

How many people do you know who have returned to bondage because they did not deal with the root of the problem? I am reminded of the man who threw his cigarettes down at a church meeting and said, "I'm believing God to deliver me no matter what it takes!"

He had a pack at home, and rationalized, "You never know when I might need one." Within a week, he started smoking again. Sometimes we attack our problem, but only knock it unconscious. We go to church, worship, fellowship, and feel better, but a month later, we are back in that same old battle with the same old revived enemy.

We need to finish him off when he is knocked out. We need to take the sword of the Spirit and cut his head off.

When Jesus cursed the tree, He cursed it at the root. The tree did not die at the top, it died at the root (Mark 11:12-20). We often pray surface prayers. A wife might pray for God to save her husband. Well that is good, but it is a surface prayer. She needs to pray about what is keeping him from getting saved.

Perhaps he had a bad experience with a pastor or a bad experience at church when he was growing up. She needs to pray, "God take this bitterness out; heal him of this bitterness."

I know a girl who was molested by her dad. To make matters worse, her dad was a minister. She grew up, got married and stayed away from church, because she believed that all ministers are hypocrites. We can pray that God will touch her, but that is a surface prayer.

Instead, we have to pray that God will heal her from the pain of the molestation. When we pray in our warfare, sometimes we are not getting our breakthrough, because we are praying too generally. In spiritual warfare, deliberately pick a stone, a weapon. Slay the enemy, not the symptom!

The Power of Words

This could be controversial, but some people do not understand how to pray for healing for the sick. I asked my dad if, in all his years as pastor, he ever saw anyone healed when the church prayed, "Heal this person if it is Your will." He thought about it and said he had not.

I asked several other pastors the same question, and they responded the same way. I asked the Lord why this happens. He said, "Those are not aggressive prayers. The Kingdom of God suffers violence, and the violent take it by force (Matthew 11:12). Forceful people force their way into the kingdom of God." Jesus illustrated this by healing the leper:

Behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Ben Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, " I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. – MATTHEW 8:2, 3

Jesus turned off the "if" factor. It is the will of God that you live a full life, die at a good old age, and not fall short of the days that He has assigned to you. Therefore, we should not be praying "if," when we already know what God's will is.

We should be more aggressive in our praying. If we know it is not someone's time to die, we should pray aggressively against the power of the spirit of death that is coming against the person. We really need to be aware of the words we speak in prayer.

Words are powerful. Our Enemy knows they are his greatest single weapon against the believer. Words cause the greatest damage in our lives. Words can split churches, cause divorces, and even bring death (Proverbs 18:21).

There is a familiar childhood saying, "Sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me." This is absolutely not true. Words can crush and hurt people.

The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness, but who can bear a broken spirit? – PROVERBS 18:14

A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle. – PROVERBS 18:19

I want to encourage you as a soldier. I have many opportunities during my ministry to walk in offense. I have many opportunities to retaliate against those who use words to attack me or my ministry; but it is not the Christian soldier's duty to war against people. The Word of God is stronger and more powerful than any words Satan or someone else uses. Words meant to wound often come in the form of an opinion.

If anyone should have gotten offended, Jesus should have. Some said He cast out demons by using Satan's power, that His miracles were fake, and He did not raise people from the dead; but He kept on ministering, allowing the critical words to fall to the ground. Since His resurrection, billions of people are going to heaven or are already there, because Jesus did not allow wounding words to offend Him.

Paul could also have been offended by words. Near the end of his life, he was in a prison, blamed for the fire in Rome. He did not retaliate when the Asian Christians forsook him. He simply stated that many had left him, and he was ready to be offered as a martyr. Paul told us how to react to words that are meant to inflict wounds:

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful

– 2 TIMOTHY 2:23, 24, NIV

If you can endure offenses then you will be able to endure to the end.
(Matthew 24:13)

How To Be Saved

Step 1: Realize that you are a sinner and for your soul to be saved, you need to come to God.

God created us to have a relationship with Him. He wants us to experience true and lasting peace in this life. Blaise Pascal, the French philosopher and mathematician, said, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus."

The Bible confirms what we already know: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). This is why the peace of God eludes you in your vain search for reality: "Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you" (Isaiah 59:2). Reality is knowing Him!

Step 2: Acknowledge the fact that you cannot save yourself.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. – PROVERBS 14:12

Nothing works. Regardless of which path you choose, it seems, the peace of God eludes you. Your own attempts to solve your problems have ended in disaster.

You have tried good works and found your efforts to be meaningless, empty, without Christ. Riches cannot buy salvation. Fame or good breeding does not impress God. Personal suffering cannot save. Yet, you realize you desperately need the touch of God in your life!

Step 3: Believe that Jesus Christ can and will save you!

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." – JOHN 14:6

The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. – JOHN 6:37

Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for our sin and restore our lost relationship with God.

Step 4: Confess your sins to God and accept Jesus Christ as your Savior.

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

– REVELATION 3:20, NIV

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved "– ROMANS 10:9,10,13

You can receive Jesus Christ into your heart right now. Wherever you are, whoever you are, whatever you have done in the past, He will gladly come to your spirit and give you peace. His free gift of salvation is your only hope to find the answer to your lifelong quest for meaning and true happiness. He awaits your decision. Will you sincerely pray this sinner's prayer with me?

Dear Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins and give You my heart. I repent of my sins and invite you to come into my life. I now trust you as Savior, and make you Lord of my life. In Jesus' name. Amen.

If you prayed this prayer sincerely, and you believe God has heard, you are saved! We believe with our hearts, then we tell others what God has done for us.

It is important to me to hear about your commitment to Christ and to celebrate with you! I want you to share your story with me. Write me a letter or send an e-mail and tell me when you made this decision to follow Christ and share with me the circumstances of this outstanding event. I will be praying for you that God will keep you and protect you in His great love.

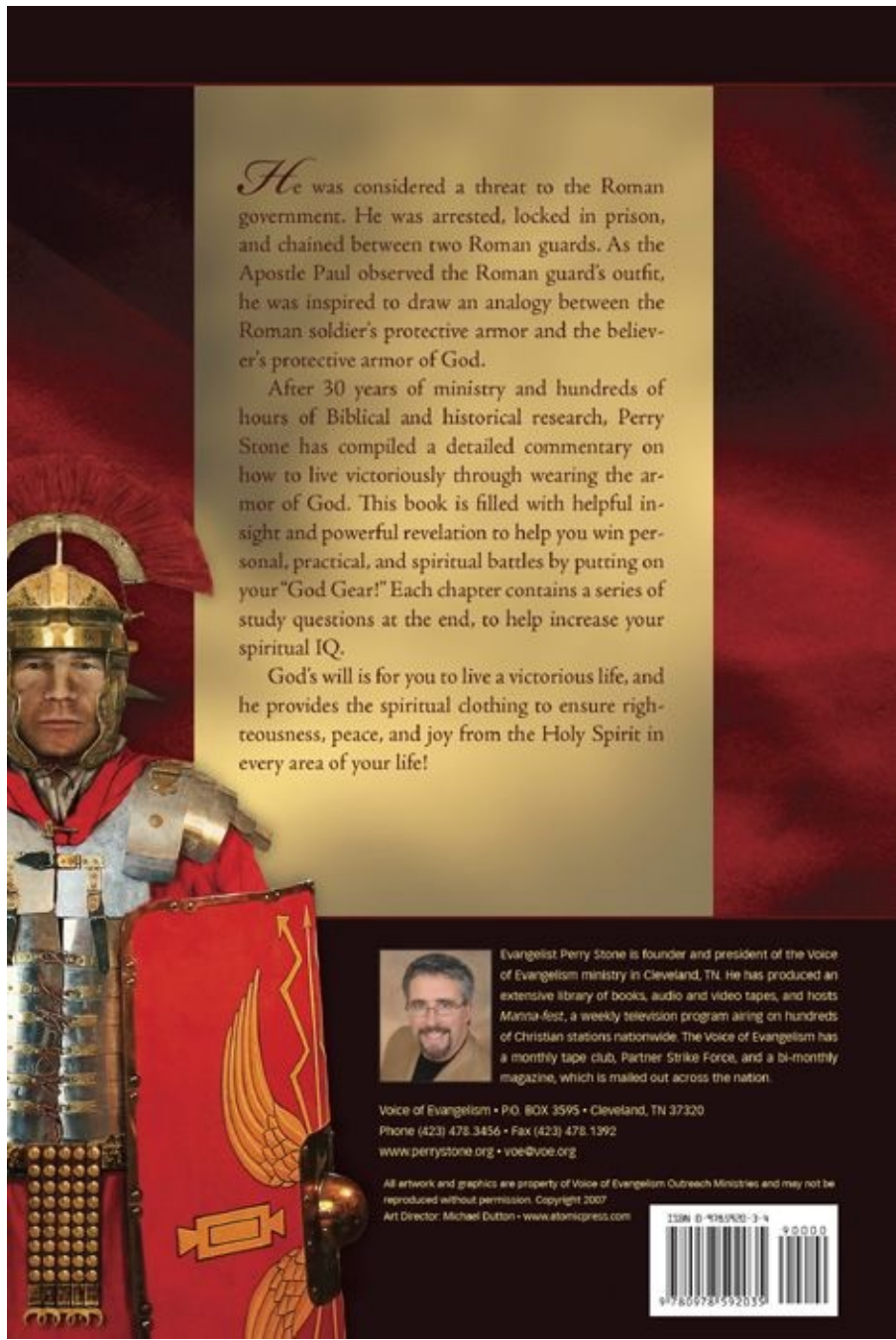
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You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day (Psalm 91:5).



*H*e was considered a threat to the Roman government. He was arrested, locked in prison, and chained between two Roman guards. As the Apostle Paul observed the Roman guard's outfit, he was inspired to draw an analogy between the Roman soldier's protective armor and the believer's protective armor of God.

After 30 years of ministry and hundreds of hours of Biblical and historical research, Perry Stone has compiled a detailed commentary on how to live victoriously through wearing the armor of God. This book is filled with helpful insight and powerful revelation to help you win personal, practical, and spiritual battles by putting on your "God Gear!" Each chapter contains a series of study questions at the end, to help increase your spiritual IQ.

God's will is for you to live a victorious life, and he provides the spiritual clothing to ensure righteousness, peace, and joy from the Holy Spirit in every area of your life!



Evangelist Perry Stone is founder and president of the Voice of Evangelism ministry in Cleveland, TN. He has produced an extensive library of books, audio and video tapes, and hosts *Manna-fest*, a weekly television program airing on hundreds of Christian stations nationwide. The Voice of Evangelism has a monthly tape club, *Partner Strike Force*, and a bi-monthly magazine, which is mailed out across the nation.

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