
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND EQUIPPING MINISTRIES
Institute in the Foundations of Church Leadership
Laurie Boyd

STAND FIRM

Session 8

INTRODUCTION

Every person who becomes a born-again believer in Jesus Christ becomes a soldier in a spiritual battle. There are three enemies we must stand firm against in the battle that rages all around us: the world (Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 3:18-19, Ephesians 2:1-3), desires of our flesh (Romans 6:12, Galatians 5:17-20), and deceivers/false prophets (2 Peter 2:1-3, Matthew 7:15).

I. Who is the Enemy?

- A. God created Satan (Colossians 1:16); however, Satan did not want to worship or obey God, so he and other angels rebelled, and war broke out in heaven (Revelation 12:7-9; Luke 10:18). Satan has no power over God. (John 14:30-31; 16:11)
 - 1. Satan and the evil angels were thrown out of heaven to the earth. (Ezekiel 28:14-17, Isaiah 14:12)
 - 2. Satan is a deceiver and a liar. (John 8:42-44, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
 - 3. Satan knows his time is short, and he is filled with fury against God and God's people. (1 Peter 5:8, Revelation 12:12)

- B. God sets the limits for Satan and his evil angels.
 - 1. God must give His permission before Satan and his followers can do evil. (Job 1:6-12, Job 2:1-6, Luke 22:31)
 - 2. God allows evil for a purpose. (Isaiah 55:8-11)
 - a. Job suffered, and he gained a spiritual understanding of God that he did not have before he suffered. (Job 42:5-6)
 - b. Jesus had to suffer and be killed, then on the third day be raised to life. (Matthew 16:21; John 12:27; John 18:36-37; Acts 2:23-24)
 - c. Paul was given a "thorn in the flesh," and the Lord would not take it away. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 - d. Trials come to all of us so that our faith may be proved genuine and for a purpose. (1 Peter 1:6-7, Romans 8:28)

II. Who is God?

- A. There is no spiritual being that is greater than God. (Isaiah 46:9, Psalm 86:8, John 14:30-31)
 - 1. The Trinity—God/Jesus/Holy Spirit—three in one. (Deuteronomy 6:4, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 Peter 1:2, Ephesians 4:4-6) "Trinity" is the word used to describe God/Jesus/Holy Spirit as an undivided person who has three distinctive characters. God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are equal, yet each has a special work to do and different areas of sovereign control.
 - a. God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:27-28, Colossians 1:3, 2 Peter 1:17)
 - i. God is personal. He is God, yet He loves us and is close to us. He is not far away. (Ephesians 2:12-13, John 14:9-10)

- b. Jesus is God; God's Son (2 Peter 1:17, John 10:30)
- c. Holy Spirit is God, and He lives in us after we ask forgiveness for sin, and ask Jesus to be our LORD and savior. (Romans 8:9, 16, 26-27; John 16:12-15)
 - i. Jesus asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit—the Counselor, the Spirit of truth—to be with us after He went back to the Father after completing His work on the cross. (John 14:16-17, John 16:7)
 - ii. The Holy Spirit came to convict people of their sins. (John 16:8)

Note: A biblical view of the Trinity balances the idea of God's oneness, with having three different names and purposes. It is a mistake to think of God as three separate Gods. God was very careful to emphasize His oneness (Deuteronomy 6:4). It is also a mistake to think of God as being greater than Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Jesus emphasized His oneness with God the Father (John 10:30, 17:11, 17:22) (John 14:28—As God the Son, Jesus willingly submitted to God the Father. On earth, Jesus submitted to the physical limitations of his humanity [Philippians 2:6-11], but He did not give up being God. [John 17:1-5]) This is a mystery that our human minds cannot fully grasp. By faith, just let God be God in every way He shows himself (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

- B. Because the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian (Galatians 4:4-7, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 5:4-5; Ephesians 1:13-14), Satan and his demons have no hold over the believer. (John 17:11, 15; 2 Thessalonians 3:3, Ephesians 1:15-22) Therefore, when bad things happen, the believer stays focused on the Lord. (John 14:25-27, 16:33; Romans 8:35-39; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 4:16-18, James 5:13)
- C. God is jealous for you. Do not worship any other god. (Exodus 20:3-6, Isaiah 45:18-22)

III. God's Call to Stand Firm and Resist

God does not ask us to attack the devil, He asks us to stand firm and resist him. (Ephesians 6:10-11, 1 Peter 5:8-9, James 4:7) When Paul was writing the letter to the church in Ephesus, he was in prison in Rome. The Roman soldier wore his full armor into battle. Paul wrote that as Christians, we must also put on God's full armor to stand firm in the spiritual battle. (Ephesians 6:10-18)

A. Belt of Truth (Ephesians 6:14)

- 1. The purpose of the soldier's belt was to keep all of his clothing and equipment in place on his body.
 - a. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)
 - b. The belt of truth is a reminder to speak the truth.

B. Breastplate of Righteousness (Ephesians 6:14)

- 1. The purpose of the soldier's breastplate was to protect his chest and stomach areas.
 - a. We are clothed in the righteousness of Christ because of our faith and commitment to Him. (Romans 1:17, Romans 3:22-24).
 - b. We are asked by God to live a holy, righteous life that reflects the holiness of our God. (1 Peter 1:15-16, Hebrews 12:14)

- c. Put on the breastplate of righteousness by living a holy life that is a reflection of the salvation you received, once and forever, from Christ. (Hebrews 7:23-27)

C. Feet Fitted with the Readiness from the Gospel of Peace (Ephesians 6:15)

1. The purpose of the soldier's shoes was to protect his feet and to give a firm foundation for his body to do the work of fighting.
 - a. The gospel of peace (Jesus Christ) is the foundation of our faith. (Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:1-5)
 - b. Stand firm on the foundation of your faith in Christ as your Lord and Savior, and Him only. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) Do not believe the lies of any other spiritual teaching. (Galatians 1:6-8)

D. Shield of Faith (Ephesians 6:16)

1. The purpose of the soldier's shield was to protect his whole body. The shield that is talked about in this scripture was as big as a door. Before the battle, the soldiers would soak their leather-covered shields in water. During the battle, the soldiers would stand shoulder to shoulder behind their shields. When the flaming arrows of the enemy struck their shields, they were immediately put out, and the soldiers remained safe.
 - a. Jesus asks us to "take up the shield of faith" and stand behind the promises He has given us. (2 Peter 1:3-4)
 - b. Filter all your thoughts and things you do through the lens of God's Word. Trust in God's Word only. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

E. Helmet of Salvation (Ephesians 6:17)

1. The purpose of the soldier's helmet was to protect his head (his mind) and to help him know by the style and decorations on the helmet if he was near an enemy or a friend during the confusion of hand-to-hand fighting.
 - a. Jesus speaks to the minds (intellect) of people, as well as to our hearts. He asks us to carefully consider becoming a Christ follower. (Isaiah 1:18, Luke 8:18, Romans 11:17-22)
 - b. Compare the "style and decorations" of a person's words with the Word of God so you can know if that person is a true Christ-follower or not. Be humbly ready to share the joy of true salvation in Christ with unbelievers, and to fellowship together with other believers. (Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 5:3-7, 2 Timothy 4:2, Luke 9:1-2)
 - c. The helmet of salvation is salvation. It is the hope of eternal life, which is the protection and assurance that we go into battle with.

F. Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17)

1. The soldier's sword is one of the weapons he used in battle.
 - a. The Christian's sword is the Word of God. (Hebrews 4:12, Matthew 4:1-11, Romans 12:19)
 - b. We are fighting a spiritual battle, so the battle must be fought in a spiritual way. Following Jesus' example of using the Word of God is how we are to fight the many battles around us. Satan and those people who listen to him

will also use God's Word for their own purpose by taking verses out of context to try and make them say what they want them to say. By studying the Word of God, you will know the truth about what God really says so you can stand firm. (Matthew 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)

G. Pray in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18)

1. The Christian soldiers second weapon is prayer.
 - a. The battle is a spiritual battle, so it must be fought by God in a spiritual way. (Ephesians 6:18; Matthew 5:43-44, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
 - b. The way we pray is important. (Matthew 6:5-13)
 - i. Pray humbly in your heart to God, and for him only. (vs. 5-6) Prayer is not to be used to impress other people.
 - ii. Don't use repetitive words. God is not controlled by our words. Our words are simply what we use to talk to God. (vs. 7-8)
 - iii. Praise God (vs. 9), pray for God's work in the world (vs. 10), pray for your daily needs (vs. 11), pray for God's forgiveness (vs. 12), and pray for God to help us to recognize temptations and to say "No" to them, and to protect us from evil. (vs. 13).
 - iv. Keep praying. (Luke 18:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12)
 - c. God answers prayer according to what is best for us.
 - i. Hannah prayed for years for a son, and God said yes when the time was right. (1 Samuel 1:1-20)
 - ii. Paul asked the Lord three times that the "thorn in the flesh" be taken from him. God said no, and to lean on him for the strength to bear it because "...my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
 - d. God does not answer selfish prayers. (James 4:1-3)
 - e. God answers the prayers of those who pray according to God's will in their life and others' lives. (1 John 5:13-15, Luke 1:11-17)

IV. Turn Away

- A. Turn away from the worship of many gods, spirit beings, and ancestors (living dead) (Exodus 34:14, Exodus 20:3)
- B. Turn away from witch doctors, witchcraft, magic, sorcery, and divination. (Deuteronomy 18:9-13, Galatians 5:19-21)
- C. Turn away from idols, charms, amulets, and talismans. (Deuteronomy 4:15-19, 1 Corinthians 10:18-21, 1 Samuel 12:20-21)

CONCLUSION: Stand Firm in Christ Alone and Resist the Schemes of the Devil

"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand!" (Ephesians 6:10-13)