Ready For Battle – Part 1
From the audio series “In It To Win It” by Dr. James MacDonald

Ephesians 6:10-17

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,

All God is really asking of us is that we stand for Him, faithfully and firmly. No retreat, no “off to the side”, no compromise. If I fall, I get up again and I stand and keep the commitments that I’ve made.

That means standing firm even when:
- I want to quit
- Living for Christ becomes difficult
- The fiery darts of the enemy are weakening my resolve
- I’ve fallen, and I feel like I can’t go on

God wants us to get up, and stand for Him.

How do we do that?

The title “Ready For Battle” brings to mind a soldier, armed, highly trained, confident, knowledgeable as to the ways of the enemy, and thus in all ways ready for battle.

For the spiritual battle we are in, the key to being ready is the armor of God. This is what God has given us with which to stand firm, and which Paul describes in Ephesians 6.

Verse 11: “Put on the whole armor of God”
Again in verse 13: “take up the whole armor of God”

When the Bible repeats something, that’s like God underlining the importance of the words.

Here’s the context: Paul was in prison, chained to a Roman soldier. Paul couldn’t help comparing the armor that a soldier wears to the protection God has given His children.
There are 6 parts to the armor described in Ephesians 6.

#1 – The Belt of Truth – truthfulness; sincerity; put on truth as a protection against hypocrisy. There is in every one of us a tendency to live apart from the things we know. That’s the #1 complaint against the followers of Jesus Christ: hypocrisy.

Nahum 1:7

7 The LORD is good,
a stronghold in the day of trouble;
he knows those who take refuge in him.

God knows the people who are taking refuge in Him. Are you one of them, or are you just playing the part; looking like a Christian, but not really believing or following Christ?

If you’re taking refuge in Him, you’re wearing the “belt of truth”. This is a sincere desire to love God and to live for God. It’s a hatred of hypocrisy, and a refusal for there to be a gap between what you profess, and what you actually live.

Four areas in which truth is the toughest:

1) – Truth About Personal Responsibility – taking responsibility for your own life; telling yourself the truth; being sincere; acknowledging what every person knows deep down within themselves: I’m the reason for the situation I’m in. I am where I have chosen to be.

2) – Truth About My Motives – why do I do what I do? Is it because I want people to think something about me; to pat me on the back and tell me what a good boy I am? Do I want people to appreciate me and acknowledge me? Do I want to see my name in lights some day? Am I working for the day when people will give me some sort of prize and tell me I’m phenomenal?

Or…

Do I do what I do because I love Christ and I want to put Him FIRST in all areas of my life? Can I honestly say that it does not matter to me if nobody knows me; that I’m hidden in a corner; that I may never get a single piece of human recognition, because I’m living for Jesus Christ and His “Well done…” will be PLENTY for me?

3) – The Truth About My Future – most people live as though they will never die. Every single day we pitch our tents one day’s march closer to eternity. The truth is: we’re all going to die; we’re not going to be the way we are now; there’s something up ahead.

One grain of sand represents our life; all the other grains of sand on all the beaches of the world represent that same amount of time in eternity. If we believe that, why is it that we are grinding and pressing that one grain of sand so that we can get everything out of it, living our lives as though all the rest is not coming?

Are you ready to die and stand before God? Are you ready to give an account of yourself to God?

You will answer for the choices you have made.
4) – The Truth of My Relationship To God – God has made only one provision for your forgiveness eternally, and that’s through faith in His only Son, Jesus Christ.

Put it another way: when you stand before God and He asks why He should let you into Heaven, what will your answer be? If your answer has to do with the fact that you’ve been a good person, or about the things you’ve done, it’s the wrong answer. That answer says to God that you don’t need Jesus.

#2 – the breastplate of righteousness — covers the torso; covers the vital organs. Like a bulletproof vest, the righteousness of Christ covers and protects us completely. We are made to be in right-standing before God because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross.

VERY IMPORTANT POINT COMING UP HERE: IT’S NOT ABOUT BEING A “GOOD PERSON” NOR IS IT ABOUT OUR “GOOD WORKS”!!

Isaiah 64:6

6 But we are all like an unclean thing,  
   And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags

Do you know why our works (our righteousnesses) are like filthy rags? Because they tend to make us think we’ve somehow earned something by our own strength, that we deserve to get to Heaven because of our works. If that were so, then Jesus died on the cross for nothing!

Romans 3:10

as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one” (it is written in Psalm 14:3)

What kind of righteousness is it? Definitely NOT self-righteousness. We are to put on – to accept as a gift – the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. We can’t earn it; we don’t deserve it, but we gratefully accept it. Having been made righteous by Christ, when God the Father looks at us, He doesn’t see our sinful selves, He sees instead His righteous Son.

2 Corinthians 5:21

21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Philippians 3

8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.

Romans 8:1

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

Righteousness – what does the term mean?

Simply put, “righteousness” means to be in right-standing before God. Like salvation, this is something we cannot accomplish on our own. We can obtain it by receiving it as a freely given gift of God. It’s given to those who “walk” (live their lives) according to God’s ways.
Coming next time in part 2: the remaining pieces of spiritual armor

#3 – Gospel of Peace –

#4 – The Shield of Faith –

#5 – The Helmet of Salvation –

#6 – The Sword of the Spirit –