



A bi-monthly periodical for young men

Issue 5, May-June 2005

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EDITORIAL

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! I pray that you will be encouraged to *"walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;"* (Col. 1:10)

I include these selections in the hope that they will be a blessing to you. I would like to encourage you to consider either writing an article, or sending one you have read and found encouraging. I am sure others would benefit from this!

THE CHRISTIAN'S ARMOUR

*Ephesians 6:10-20*

*'...Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand...'*

I have just completed a study on this passage, and really enjoyed it! Allow me to share some of the exciting truths found in this passage.

*Be Strong in the Lord* (v10)

We must abide in Him daily, and spend much time in secret, that we might strengthen our spiritual muscles and senses. We need to spend much time eating the Bread of Life, in order to have the spiritual nutrients needed to run this earthly race. We must exercise our faith in daily decisions, and never give up.

*And in the power of his might*

Power is strength that has not yet been used. It is available. We must walk in the power of the Spirit, that we might not fulfil the

lusts of the flesh (Gal 5:16). May we not grieve the spirit of God by refusing to heed the warnings he gives within!

*Put on the whole armour of God*

Just being a Christian does not mean that we will be wearing the appropriate armour! No: this is something we are commanded to do. Sadly, many Christians fail to wear this armour, and we have all been guilty of this at some time! We need this armour for it provides protection from evil words, actions, and thoughts

We need the WHOLE armour of God. It is not enough to put on some, or even most of the armour. It is a very human failing to place too much emphasis on one area, and completely forget another!

*May be able to stand against...*

If we would have the strength to stand against the wiles of the devil we *must* have the armour of God. It is absolutely vital! Notice also that our position is one of defence. We are not trying to take the devil's land by force, as it were, but to prevent him from destroying the name of our Leader, the Lord Jesus Christ! We certainly need His strength and encouragement; we would be wise to heed his instruction and take the whole armour of God.

*The wiles of the devil*

Ah, how wily is our foe! He does not come to us and say 'this is wicked; it contradicts the Word of God here, here and here: come and try it!' Oh no! He is no fool when it comes to the Word of God – he can quote it for his own purposes better than many of us! He comes rather as a wolf in sheep's clothing. The things that cause us to fall look so innocent and harmless. We can learn from this. Unless a thing brings us closer to the goal *"That I may know Him"* it will likely prove to be a distraction and hindrance, even if not wrong in and of itself.

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood*

Wrestling is a test of endurance. How long will we be able to withstand the pressure, the stress, sometimes even the pain – not physically perhaps, but spiritually, and emotionally?

*But against principalities*

We fight against groups who set themselves up as a god, or in opposition to God. These, in a way, are kingdoms of darkness, sin or evil, taking men's hearts from the one true God.

*Against powers*

This refers more specifically to people, or ideas that have great influence over many people.

*Against the rulers of the darkness of this world*

The primary ruler of this world is the devil, and his angels. He is very real today, as he has always been, and we can expect him to provide plenty of opposition.

*Against spiritual wickedness*

We can look very spiritual, and yet do a great deal of harm. We may look very spiritual, because of the way we speak or act, but we could be hiding a heart full of wicked intentions. Man may be fooled by our outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.

*In high places*

This has little to do with position, although reminiscent of the original meaning of a place where people sacrificed. Today, we often 'sacrifice' in 'high places' by giving up a good, important truth found in the Word of God for another that seems more logical and spiritual, or even more comfortable. Remember: "a man's morality dictates his theology".

*Take unto you*

Previously we are commanded to *put on* the armour, here the command is to *take it*. It is

ready and available for us, we simply need to take and use it!

*The whole armour of God*

The fact that this is repeated twice makes it doubly important. Man may waste words, but God does not. He repeats something for good reason – we would do well to take heed.

*That ye may be able to*

No matter how hard we try; or how willing and able we are, *without me ye can do nothing* (Jn 15:5). We still need the whole armour of God!

*To withstand*

As Christians we are under attack. We must stand our ground. We move forward certainly, but our chief purpose is not to gain ground, but as we continue to withstand, the devil must flee (James 4:7). As he does, we make our slow but steady progress over the ground he has already fled!

*Having done all, to stand*

We can, and must do our utmost to stand, but at the same time, it is absolutely vital that we lean on our Lord. How often in a great trial we come to the end of ourselves, and then find we have won the victory after all, but only by the grace of God!

*In the evil day*

We ought to be *redeeming the time for the days are evil* (Eph 5:16). This evil day can be likened to our life, the life we must live in our body of sin, until we see Christ. This helps maintain our focus, and makes it easier to endure, for we know our life soon ends, and we shall be forever with the Lord!

*Loins girt about with truth*

We are to cover our secret parts with truth. Do we live our secret lives as though they were lived before the world? Notice that this is one of the only things people behind us will see – truth. Truth must be on all sides!

*The breastplate of righteousness*

The breastplate covers our heart, lungs, and other vital organs. Proverbs 4:22 says *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life*. Thus, we must be careful to whom we give it: *My son, give me thine heart...* (6:22). We must also

breathe righteousness into our lungs. What is it that we breathe when amongst our friends? Righteous, godly conversation, or the filth and useless waste of the world? What is within will come out! (Mat 15:18) (*also Prov 27:17*)

*Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.*

We use our feet for walking, and they need protection, especially on a long journey like the Christian life! A readiness to share the Word of God, and the truths contained therein provide this protection. The Word of God is what we walk with, it is our constant companion – it should be only natural to include the One that is always with us in our everyday conversations!

*Above all...the shield of faith*

The shield is our most flexible piece of armour. It prevents attacks from coming too close. When tempted to think our cause is lost; if we can believe that God is, and that he will work all things for our good – when we trust him like this, temptations lose their power!

*Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts...*

A definite statement and a definite promise! *If ye have faith...nothing shall be impossible to you!* (Mat 17:20)

*Take the helmet of salvation*

Our head must be encircled by the knowledge that we belong to Christ for all eternity. We believe that no man can pluck us out of his hand (Jn 10:29). This is the only protection to our mind from the doubts and questions that will arise – especially when we fail our Master and Lord!

*And the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God*

This weapon can do much good, or much damage. When we speak the Word of God truthfully, boldly, yet with meekness and fear we use it well, but when hypocrisy and pride are present we can do more harm than good. No soldier would be seen without his sword! *Neither should we!* It should always be clear to others that we *live* by the Word of God.

I think we can almost class prayer as an actual weapon!

Communication with our Leader is absolutely vital to our survival. Though not a weapon as such, we must spend much time in secret with Jesus alone. We need to know the battle plan! We need to know how to use our armour correctly, and effectively.

By J. McPherson

THE HOME FRIENDSHIPS

Friendships in the family require most gentle care and cultivation. We must win each other's love within home-doors just as we win the love of those outside—by the sweet ministries and graces of affection. We must prove ourselves worthy of being loved by those who are nearest; they will not truly love us unless we do, merely because we are of the same household. We must show ourselves unselfish, thoughtful, gentle, helpful Home friendships must be formed as all friendships are formed—by the patient knitting of soul to soul and the slow growing of life into life. Then we must retain home-friends after winning just as we retain other friends—by a thousand little winning expressions in all our intercourse. We cannot depend upon relationship to keep us loved and loving. We must live for each other. We must give as well as receive. We must be watchful of our acts and words.

From *In Green Pastures*

By J. R. Muller

A DECEITFUL BOW

Psalm 78:57

You may like to consider this phrase in light of compromise. Think how we can be like a bow that doesn't shoot quite straight, thus failing to do our work.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author of *Higher Ground* is Joshua McPherson. He is a young man who desires to walk closer to the Lord each day, and wishes to encourage other young men in the same pursuit.

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