

Chapter 2 – The Belt of Truth

Before we begin to examine the first piece of armor, we must understand that we're not fighting this battle alone.

Paul writes, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (1 Corinthians 10:12, KJV)

The battle belongs to the Lord. He uses the small, the flawed, and the few to further the gospel, so that through our weakness His grace abounds all the more. A young shepherd boy slays a giant, not because he is mighty, but because God, working and moving within David, was bigger than any force on this earth. He pares down Gideon's army, before sending them off to battle, so that He might display His strength and His power. He leads an army to victory, through obedience to His Word in the battle of Jericho, so that all might see the supremacy of their God.

If we want to live in fullness of life, abounding with joy, we must be on guard to protect our hearts and our minds, ready to fight for what's rightfully ours. We need to fight for our families, our faith, our marriages, and in fact, we need to fight for our joy.

Stop and think about that for a minute. When was the last time you let Satan steal your joy? If you're married, when was the last time you let him get a foot hold in your marriage? Are you raising children? If so, are you getting down on your knees to fight for their soul? Are you defeating Satan or is he defeating you?

As we go through this study we'll examine the weapons of spiritual warfare. Weapons that cast down strong holds, destroy arguments, and demolish anything that threatens to stand in our way of living a victorious life in Christ.

Paul writes, "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

Looking to Ephesians 6:14a we find The Belt of Truth, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." (KJV), you'll notice some other translations use the term, "gird our loins" with The Belt of Truth. This is an old saying that isn't used all that much anymore and in fact most of us haven't seen it used outside of the Bible. We do however see it used often throughout scripture. One example we find is in Exodus chapter 12 when the Lord instructed the Israelites

to eat the Passover with their loins girded, their shoes on their feet and their staves in their hands.

The idea of girding your loins is to prepare yourself for battle, or in the case of the Passover they were preparing to eat and run at any moment. In ancient times, Roman soldiers wore tunics, which were masculine forms of a dress. The tunic was held snugly in place by a belt around the waist. The skirt was then lifted up and tucked into the belt so that one could move freely and swiftly. When you're out on the combat field, you don't want your tunic hindering your ability to defend yourself.

We see a similar idea in Hebrews 12:1 where it says, "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." (NIV)

As we talk about truth in this chapter, let's be careful not to confuse it with The Sword of the Spirit. Of course, The Sword of the Spirit is a vital part of our armor, and we will get to that in a later chapter, but we must understand that there's a slight difference between the two in that one is *truth* while the other is *truthfulness*. One is knowing God's Word and the other is living a life of integrity.

The original Greek word for truth in this context is *alētheia* (Strong's G225) which comes from the root word *alēthēs* (Strong's G227) which means "loving the truth, speaking the truth, truthful."

Truthfulness is not only knowing the truth, it's conforming to truth, and loving the truth. I remember a few years ago my son who was about 18 at the time, walked down to the bank to deposit his cheque. By the time he got there, it was getting dark. The parking lot was empty and there wasn't sole in sight, when he happened upon 160 dollars laying on the ground. Eight crisp 20 dollar bills were lying on the pavement waiting to be scooped up and spent. My son picked up the money alright, but then he sat down on the curb, took out his phone and called me.

"Mom," he said. "I'll be a while. I found money on the ground, and I want to hang around here a while just in case someone comes looking for it."

No one did. No one saw him pick it up, and no one came looking for it. Because he loves truth, however, he went to the bank the next day and turned in the money. That's integrity. It's found in those quiet moments when no one but God sees the work of your hands.

Authentic truthfulness is more than doing the right thing, it's a deep-rooted *desire* to do the right thing. It's the difference between generous hands that everyone sees and a generous heart that's hidden with God.

Hebrews 4:13 says, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." (NIV)

If you're not loving truth and walking in truth, you're going to cave the moment you're tempted—and you will be tempted I can promise you that.

Satan likes to isolate us before he attacks because he knows that our actions don't always match up with our hearts. He knows that its best to attack when we're not seeking praise and approval. (Remember, Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan). You know as well as I do that we're more likely to fall when we're not being watched. But integrity isn't integrity at all if we don't practice in secret that which we hold dear in the light.

In Philippians 1:10 Paul writes, "That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." The word he uses for sincerity is the same word Peter uses in 2 Peter 3:1 translated as, "pure minds." (KJV) This word, *elikrinēs* (Strong's G1506) is defined as: found pure when unfolded and examined by the sun's light.

In his commentary on Philippians, James Montgomery Boice writes, "In ancient times the biggest industry in the world was the pottery industry. And pottery varied in quality just as cars, office supplies, or household goods vary today. The cheapest pottery was thick and solid and did not require much skill to make. It is found everywhere at archaeological sites. The finest pottery was thin. It had a clear color, and it brought a high price. Fine pottery was very fragile both before and after firing, and it would often crack in the oven. Cracked pottery should have been thrown away. But dishonest dealers were in the habit of filling in the cracks with a hard pearly wax that would blend in with the color of the pottery. This made the cracks practically undetectable in the shops, especially when painted or glazed; but the wax was immediately detectable when the pottery was held up to light, especially the sun. It was said that the artificial element was detected by "sun-testing." Honest dealers marked their finer product by the caption sine cera—'without wax.'"

And so, Paul tells us to arm ourselves with The Belt of Truth. Walk in truthfulness. Cast off anything that hinders you, turn away from any sin that entangles you, and get ready to fight.

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. (2 Corinthians 4:2, NIV)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When Jesus takes the wheel, He takes us on a journey through rough terrain and barren land. He leads us to and through the heart of a storm before He safely drives us out.

Why? Because one will never be complete without the trying of our faith. And so, we experience sickness and death, poverty and sorrow and pain.

As gold refined in a fire, so is the trying of our faith.

Charles Spurgeon once said, "Whenever God means to make a man great, He always breaks him in pieces first."

We see this throughout scripture as men and women are brought down to their knees before they are lifted back up. Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers. David is relentlessly chased down by King Saul, and then later betrayed by his son. Moses is led through the desert of testing for 40 years. Paul is beaten, tortured, imprisoned, and blind, all for the sake of the gospel.

At the center of each one of their lives, there's one thing that stands out more than anything else. One thing sets them apart from the others. One thing shines bright: it's the simple fact that they lived in obedience to their faith.

Pause and Reflect

Q. What is the meaning of "Sine Cera?"

Q. According to the writer of the book of Hebrews, what are we to run with?

Q. What is the meaning of the phrase "gird your loins?"

Q. Where did the Holy Spirit lead Jesus to be tempted? In what 3 ways was Jesus tempted?

Q. If we want to live in fullness of life, abounding with joy, what must we protect?

Q. According to Hebrews 12:1, what is it that can so easily entangle us? And so, what are we to do?

Q. When does a person's integrity become hypocrisy?