

# **The Full, Supernatural, Armor of God**

## **Resisting, Deflecting, and Overcoming the Flaming Arrows of the Enemy's Deceptions**

by  
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Marine Corps boot camp is designed to do two things: 1) develop individuals with varying degrees of ability and experience into a single, cohesive group responsive to leadership; and 2) prepare those individuals, and the group entire, to be effective in real combat.

Christian discipleship (being taught, trained, and led by the Lord into combat) is intended to produce the same results on a spiritual level.

Imagine, though, for a moment, a Marine Corps battalion, thoroughly infiltrated by enemy propaganda, in which the Commandant's information and orders are distorted and changed by the officers under his command, the company and platoon leaders, lollygagging in luxury, ignore or change the orders to comply with their own agendas, and the squad leaders are more like gang leaders than soldiers.

Now, imagine that Marine Corps battalion in mortal combat with an experienced military force under the absolute control of its supreme commander, capable of instantaneous communication with every single soldier in his command, having detailed intelligence reports on the status of every single enemy soldier opposing him, and determined, at all costs, to wreak havoc on the confused, divided, uninformed, and untrained enemy in front of him using the powerful spiritual weapon of deception.

That, brothers and sisters, is a picture of the status of our current warfare against the spiritual forces of wickedness.

But our Commander-in-Chief will soon issue an order that will result in numerous recruits "washing out" while the remnant eagerly submits to the rigors of boot camp in order to participate in the glorious final campaign of the age to set the captives free.

Those with "ears to hear" the truth of God, His promises, and His commands, have already entered into the process, and they currently operate as small, highly trained Special Forces units, resisting the enemy's onslaught in rear guard actions as the Lord of Lords and King of Kings directs.

For the rest of us who need to join them, these are our training orders that will equip us to combat the weapon of deception used by the enemy of our souls:

The order:

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.*

The process:

*Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

*Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.*

*Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. Ephesians 6:10-18 NASB*

Having learned scripturally and experientially that deception is HOW Satan kills, steals, and destroys, and, having learned that the serpent is more subtle (read “smarter”) than man and able to deceive the smartest and wisest among us, **apart from the help of the Holy Spirit, our Counselor, who is the Lord**, it then follows that we **MUST** submit our thoughts, words, and actions wholly to the influence of the Holy Spirit in order to overcome Satan’s deceptions.

Our tendency to lean on our own intellect, on worldly authorities, and on various spiritual authorities, including our denominations, our pastors, teachers, and ministry leaders, for “wisdom” in combatting both the natural circumstances in our lives and the Satanic deceptions, traps, and snares, we are in trouble. If, on the other hand, our denominations, pastors, teachers, and ministry leaders are functioning appropriately in the gifts of the Spirit, they will be continually pointing to the light (even if the light reveals something that **conflicts** with cherished presumptions and assumptions that have resulted in errors of doctrine, practice, and the interpretations of scripture.)

Yet, even if they do point us to the light appropriately as the Lord commands, it is up to us individually to receive and respond to the light.

If we trust in the worldly and spiritual authorities in our lives to have the light and guide us externally (i.e. through religious rules and traditions) we are dead Marines, spiritually speaking.

As it is, I believe that the author, and all those who are reading this teaching are deceived in some area of life, including some area of our faith lives, just like all the other Loadiceans we know. Many of us are doing the best we know how, and some are doing better than others. But we are all desperately in need of the Lord's instructions imparted through Paul in Ephesians 6:18-20.

Sadly, many who need it most, will assume that they know all they need to know about the instructions of the Lord in this familiar passage.

I can remember being led through a visual imaging exercise of putting on the full armor of God, but one could go through that visual imaging ten times a day for the rest of one's life without ever actually putting on the armor of God. Putting on the armor of God is a militaristic metaphor for the same process as putting on Christ, of being transformed by the renewing of our minds, of being sanctified through and through, a process of receiving (by revelation), believing (in our hearts), and acting in obedience to ALL the truth, promises, and commands of the Lord and of being guided by the Spirit in ALL that we think, say, and do.

The flesh is involved in the process, but for most of us the flesh primarily hinders it, and it is important to note that it is through the flesh (the mind of natural man apart from the influence of the Holy Spirit) that we are deceived and defeated by the enemy.

It is also important to note that having a doctorate in Biblical Hebrew and Greek and being ordained as a minister is not, in itself, a spiritual accomplishment or proof that one has a "renewed" mind, is surrendered to the Spirit, or is incapable of being deceived.

On the contrary, many of those with seminary degrees who are ordained as ministers, are heavily deceived.

The self-evident PROOF of this statement is the obvious, observable fact that they all disagree with one another concerning doctrine, practice, and various interpretations of scripture. Yet, this is not a condemnation of seminary training or of being ordained as a minister. It is merely evidence that the flesh (the natural mind apart from the influence of the Spirit) is in control to one degree or another.

**Intellect, apart from the direct influence of the Spirit, divides. Intellect, under the direct influence of the Spirit unites.**

***I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.***

1 Corinthians 1:10 ESV (emphasis is the author's)

Therefore, if any two are in disagreement where doctrine, practice, or the interpretation of scripture are concerned, at least one is not in union with the Spirit, and possibly both are not in union with the Spirit. And, as our passage from Ephesians demonstrates, it is from our union with Him that we are united with one another and are empowered individually to overcome the enemy's "strategies" and "deceits."

When I am questioned or challenged by a brother or sister in the Lord concerning a doctrine, practice, or interpretation of scripture that I have adopted, I am always reminded

of this principle, and I do not assume that I am the one in union with the Spirit.

Those who do habitually assume that they are the ones in union with the Spirit when questioned or challenged concerning a doctrine, practice, or interpretation of scripture cannot be corrected when in error. This error then, originating from presumption and assumption and reinforced by various sources of “authority” (other than the authority that comes through Christ) becomes a secret, disguised, enemy “**stronghold**” of opposition to the truth of God.

And it should be shocking to us to realize that the enemy maintains numerous strongholds (fortresses) of deception in the church and in us individually.

*...we are...children...(immature)..., **tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;** Ephesians 6:13 NASB (insert and emphasis is the author’s)*

How then, do we individually and corporately, put on the full armor of God so that we can “wrestle” effectively with the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places, resisting and deflecting the enemy’s powerful weapon of deception, and then, as a unified body, obedient to the commands of our Commander-In-Chief, aggressively rescue the captives and set them free?

### **1. Be strong in the Lord, through our union with Him:**

Being strong in the Lord is the goal of putting on the full armor of God, and the process of putting on the full armor of God is the process of becoming united with Him by bringing “every thought and purpose...into the obedience of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5) This process is also described by Paul as being transformed (into Christ likeness) by the renewing of our minds.

*...**That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings**...Phillipians 3:10 NASB*

The word “know” in this passage means to know in an experiential way, indicating relationship with the object known. The metaphor of the vine and the branches illustrates the relationship of intimate interaction with Him, not mere worship of Him from afar. Peter describes it as participating in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). We share not only in His power, by grace through faith, but we also share in His sufferings, not His individual sufferings on the cross, as some have interpreted this passage, but His real and continuing sufferings as the living body of Christ, both in part and in whole, as we experience persecution, hardships and various forms of demonic assaults and deceptions in our pursuit of His will to set the captives free.

And, when we are participating fully in this relationship, we have an amazing promise:

***He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him**...John 14:21 KJV (emphasis is the author’s)*

If you “see” or “hear” this promise, it should cause you to get up and shout. Those who have received a revelation of His truth, promises, and commands, believing in their hearts what they have received, and obeying what they have received and believed by grace through faith will not only experience His love being expressed to them but through them, which is the Lord manifesting Himself to them and through them.

If that isn't an amazing, experiential participation in the divine nature of our Lord, Jesus Christ, then I cannot imagine what would be.

## 2. Stand firm therefore:

I am reminded of an ancient plains Indians tradition of the strongest and bravest who drove a stake into the ground and tied a short teather to one ankle, saying, in effect, "I will stand in the face of the enemy no matter what."

This order addresses our willingness to fight the good fight of faith, not, necessarily, our willingness just to do what the pastor thinks needs to be done in our local fellowships, but the willingness to "hear" and "obey" the commands of the Lord, no matter what.

This order tells us that we have **NO** excuse for yielding to the onslaught of the enemy against us, our families, our friends, our church fellowships, or any institute of world systems such as politics and law, media, art, and entertainment, education and science, or business and finance.

Nothing in this fight is "secular" (though the enemy's agents would have us believe so). Everything is spiritual, and everything is a manifestation of the warfare taking place between the enemy of our souls and the kingdom of God as the kingdom of God is manifested through the body of Christ.

Therefore, we must stand individually and corporately, like the brave soldiers at the Alamo, knowing that we might have to take a beating individually or corporately, but, in the end, the enemy will be defeated.

Are we willing to take this kind of stand? If not, we have already "washed out" of the training that the Lord wants to take place in our lives.

## 3. Gird yourself with truth:

I have spoken frequently about this subject, because it is essential to our fight of faith. This is a reference to the absolute, immutable truth of God as imparted to us by revelation through Bible study, through anointed preaching, through anointed teaching, through meditation on scripture, in prayer, through the spiritual gifts of others, through our own spiritual gifts, through spiritual dreams and visions, and through the still, small voice of the Spirit, our Counselor, the Spirit of Truth who was sent to guide us into all truth.

I have been confronted on several occasions by men who objected to the use of the term "revelation" in relation to ordinary believers, as if only those men throughout biblical history who wrote scripture received "revelation."

I believe that the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ ended the canon of scripture given to men, and I believe men guided by the specific revelation of the Spirit have confirmed what is, or is not, scripture. But God communicates with mankind through revelation, not with the intellect apart from revelation (as in scripture alone).

***I pray...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the...(experiential, relationship)... knowledge of Him.***

***I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened...(by revelation)...Ephesians 1:18,19 NASB*** (insert and emphasis are the author's)

Without receiving, by revelation, the absolute, immutable truth of God and believing it in our hearts (our unique spirit-soul connection) we cannot be born again and we cannot act by faith in any subsequent manner. Obedience to God is not obedience to the traditions, rules, and expectations of men, though we will be pressured to be in conformance with those.

We will also be pressured (tempted) to adopt or assume the belief system of our denomination, our pastor, or some other authority other than the Lord without testing it through our own Spirit-guided, revelatory examination of scripture.

It is truth, not belief, with which we arm not only all of our protective armor but our weapons as well, and it is truth, not belief, that trumps the deceptions of Satan.

Satan's primary assault on the body of Christ is an assault on truth, because, apart from truth none of the rest of the armor of God can be effective. That's why it is so important to each believer individually and to the corporate body of Christ as a whole to continually seek the truth of God in all that we think, say, and do – even if that contradicts what we, and others associated with us, have “believed.”

#### 4. **Put on the breastplate of righteousness:**

This is not having a righteousness of our own, but the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of our faith. Although we have an imputed righteousness in relation to our right standing with God through our faith in Jesus Christ, this is only the framework and straps of the breastplate, not the breastplate entire.

The breastplate entire includes the righteousness of our individual conformance to His revealed will in our thoughts, words, and actions by grace through faith.

Satan's “watchers” are keenly aware of whether or not we have an effective breastplate, and any believer who thinks that they are not almost as aware as God concerning even our thought life (though they cannot read our minds) is only fooling himself or herself. Nor is outward observance of religious rules and the traditions and expectations of men any help in this regard.

When it comes to the Spirit arming His sword (turning on the light sabre) in a believer's life, He will first make sure that the breastplate of righteousness is in place. If it is not, then that believer will not be able to wield the sword, much less dodge the fiery darts of the enemy.

Early in my walk with the Lord I was thrust into combat with various demonic manifestations in the lives of both believers and the lost, and this while attending a Southern Baptist church. But at one point my breastplate of righteousness was shaken loose, and the Lord pulled me out of this extreme form of combat and took away my sword until I had the breastplate of righteousness back in place.

We must seek first the truth of God, His promises and, especially His commands (i.e. “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...”). And let nothing in the world or in the flesh (human nature apart from the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit) stand in the way of our pursuit of His revealed truth and His righteousness (which is our obedience to the revelation of His will in all that we think, say, and do).

***...bringing every thought and purpose into the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NASB (emphasis is the author's)***

This would seem to be an impossible task to most believers, and it cannot be accomplished through external tasks or disciplines. It can only be accomplished with any degree of success if we eagerly seek a revelation of His truth, promises, and commands on a more or less continual basis, awake or asleep, eating or fasting, working or resting, playing or studying, celebrating or mourning, in blessing or in defeat.

***And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ ... (i.e. if our hearts do not condemn us)...rule (act as umpire continually)...(24/7)... in your hearts...(our unique spirit-***

soul connection)... [*deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds...*Colossians 3:15 Amplified (emphasis and inserts are the author's)

I don't know how this looks in the life of other believers, but in my life I am aware in every circumstance of the temptation to try to hide from the "umpire." I am successful at fooling myself from time to time, but He always brings me back in repentance to that place where I willingly submit my thoughts, words, and actions to Him. Because I know, by experience, the pain and defeat I am causing myself or those for whom I have been given pastoral responsibility.

**5. Have your feet shod with the readiness (and preparedness) that comes from the gospel of peace:**

This would seem to have a simple application in regard to being willing and prepared for ministry, especially the ministry of evangelizing the lost, but it goes much deeper than that.

At the point at which our intimate relationship with Him has matured so that we want to participate in the warfare with the enemy of our souls, no matter what it takes, and we are seeking truth appropriately and walking out the revelation of His will in personal righteousness through obedience to His specific will in all that we think, say, and do...we now have feet that are shod (enabling us to go forth in warfare for the purpose of setting the captives free).

Most "go" (whatever that means to the individual believer) too soon, and Satan sends them back to training camp bloodied and defeated. But, as I have related elsewhere, much of my life I have felt like Rocky Balboa. I get into the ring eagerly, and I can take a punch. But, eventually Satan knocks me down, and just before I am counted out, the Lord gets me back on my feet again. I have pretty much lost count of the times I have been knocked down, because the Lord always gets me up on my feet again to fight another round.

Each round, though, teaches me to "hear" and "see" better than the last round, and, instead of becoming weaker and more exhausted, I am getting stronger and more determined.

I am prepared and ready for the next round, and I am more willing than ever to "go." But in the latter rounds of my fight I will only "go" when He says, "go," and I will only "do" what He says, "do."

**6. Over all this... (the girding of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shod feet)...take the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one:**

The shield of faith, unlike the breastplate of righteousness, is applied to specific "flaming arrows" of deception that come our way, and to be used effectively, requires alertness.

***Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* 1 Peter 5:8 NASB**

The word, "sober," in this instance, means to be free of intoxicants. Our "intoxicants" are the things and cares of this world (the weeds and vines that choke out the word). A meditative, spiritual review of our interests, involvements, and time allotments will reveal the intoxicants. But there is no rule here. A kids' soccer coach can be spiritually alert or intoxicated in his/her activity. A business person can be spiritually alert or intoxicated in his or her business.

There are, of course, some activities that are in themselves intoxicants, but the level of intoxication or alertness in many of our worldly activities is related to our individual attitudes.

Just remember, nothing is secular. Everything, every thought, every word, every action, has a spiritual effect.

Being on the “alert” has an obvious militaristic application, and, in this case, it simply means that we need to be ready to raise the shield of faith in application to any assault by the enemy on ourselves or on those whom the Lord has assigned us to protect.

The shield of faith is not about our “passive” faith in Jesus Christ as savior. It is about our active faith response to the specific circumstance of Satan’s assault, and that means, as sober and alert disciples of Christ, we need to stay in an attitude of expectancy to “hear” the voice of the Lord, especially the still, small voice of the Spirit, our spiritual conscience, so that we can respond quickly, even waking in the middle of the night to pray for someone whom the Spirit has brought to mind.

Too many times in my life I did not have the spiritual alertness to raise the shield of faith in time to prevent Satan’s flaming arrows from wounding me or someone close to me. Then we have to be removed from the fight and healed.

Yet, if we are dedicated to being in the fight, instead of seeking the comfort and ease of lollygagging back in camp (or being tortured in Satan’s P.O.W. camp), we will eventually become alert and adept at raising the shield appropriately to keep from being wounded by Satan’s flaming arrows.

Note also that Satan is not a lion, but he is predatory. And he primarily attacks those who are not sober and alert. Unfortunately, as we have experienced, this sometimes includes prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, elders and the leaders of major ministries. These attacks are not always related to moral failure, though. They are sometimes a complex chess move attack on the truth of God in the form of deceptions related to doctrine, practice, and the interpretation of scripture.

The use of the shield of faith in regard to an attack on the truth of God in the form of doctrine, practice, or the interpretation of scripture is to maintain a Berean spirit, examining scripture inductively with a constant desire to know the truth rather than merely protect what we already believe.

## **7. And take the helmet of salvation:**

What does a helmet protect? It protects the head, where the natural process of thinking, enhanced by that which we receive through our spirits (whether from the Holy Spirit or from Satan) takes place. This, then, is a major element of our protection against the enemy’s weapons of deception.

“Salvation” is an event, a process, and an end result. We are saved out of the enemy’s camp when we initially receive Christ by faith, but salvation in terms of our warfare is the continuing sanctification of our souls.

*...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Phillipians 2:12 NASB*

In this, Paul is not saying that we have to work out our own regeneration experience. What he is saying is that we need to submit to the sanctifying process of being transformed (into Christ-likeness) by the renewing of our (flesh) minds as described in Romans 12:1,2.

At one time Romans 12:1,2 was being continually opened up and expanded to me so that, for a period of time, I could not get away from it, and those I was teaching would tease me and say, “What are you going to teach on this week? Romans 12:1,2?”

It’s that important.

But why with fear and trembling?

First, out of our awesome respect for who He is and what He has done, so that we dare not hinder the process that He started as the author of our faith. Second, because we know with certainty that we are being thrust into a warfare in which we cannot overcome the enemy's deceptions unless our natural minds are transformed to the degree that we have the mind of Christ, able to "see" and "hear" what the Lord wants us to "see" and "hear."

***Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 1 Corinthians 2:12,13 NASB***

Many believers, including some who are reading this, cannot identify with this passage.

How do we know what things are given to us by God? How do we speak in words taught by the Spirit?

Oh, I know. The pastor (teacher, Bible expert, Pope, TV minister, prophet) tells us what things are given to us by God, and then we can speak the words they teach us.

So...how were they taught?

In a follow up message entitled, "Basic, Inductive, Spirit-led Bible Study," I will expand greatly on this subject, providing an easy to follow guideline for those who have not, yet, experienced being taught by the Spirit instead of being taught by man. But, for now, it is essential that all of us know and acknowledge that we desperately need to seek and surrender to the ongoing process of salvation in order to be protected from the enemy's assaults on our heads.

A passage for study and meditation concerning this process is 2 Corinthians 3:16-18, especially the Amplified version. If you get this passage by revelation, you will jump up and down and shout out loud. Then you will run with it to whomever you love the most.

## 8. ...the sword of the Spirit

At last, our offensive weapon, the light sabre, which is the living word of God, the supernaturally revealed truth, promises, and commands of the Lord, received by revelation, believed in our hearts (our unique mind-spirit connection), and acted on in obedience.

Although George Lucas is a New Age writer and movie producer who deliberately used Christian symbology to "sell" the primarily Bhuddist theology of a neutral spiritual "force" that can be tapped into by both good and evil adepts, the idea of a Jedi knight being able to wield the sword intuitively if he/she is tapped into the "force" is actually a good picture of how Christian believers are to wield the sword of the Spirit.

If we try to direct the sword with our intellects alone that is equal to using the light sabre without flipping the "on" switch...ineffective. The sword of the Spirit is God's *deunamis* power directed through our thoughts, words, and actions of faith, our obedient responses to the living, supernatural, word of faith imbedded in our hearts (having been both received and believed) and triggered by a corresponding command from the Lord, also received and believed by revelation.

I have, for instance, a living word of faith concerning the authority of the believer for casting out demons, but any attempt on my part to use the sword of the Spirit for that purpose without being specifically guided and directed by the Spirit could result in disaster.

Paul and Silas in Philippi were followed around by a slave girl with a spirit of fortune-telling who followed after them saying, "These are men of the most high God."

For a time Paul allowed it, knowing who she was and that she was possessed by a demon spirit, but he did nothing about it. The girl was telling the truth, but when Paul and Silas left Philippi it would be the girl, herself, who would be commended to the people by association, thereby opening the door for Satanic deception.

Eventually, after many days, Paul became “troubled,” and he cast out the spirit. Now, why didn’t he cast out the spirit the instant he recognized it? The result of the incident was that Paul and Silas were thrown in prison, and what we see is that the Lord waited until they had completed what He wanted them to complete before prompting Paul to cast out the spirit, thereby nullifying any authority she had gained by following them around with the announcement, “These are men of the most high God.”

So the sword is empowered by the living word of faith in our hearts, but the wielding of the sword is directed by the prompting of the Spirit, who is the Lord.

And Paul tells us that the most important use of the sword is to be alert and persevering, praying in the Spirit (primarily meaning directed by the Spirit, not, necessarily, praying in tongues) for all the saints.

So...what price, in terms of repentance and the loss of self-will (the laying down of our lives), are we willing to pay in order to gain the full armor of God and the empowerment of the sword of the Spirit in our warfare against the enemy of our souls? A warfare of deception versus the truth of God, a warfare intended not only to inflict damage on us individually, but to enslave and inflict damage on our families, our friends, and the fellowship of believers with whom we have been placed?