

This is the lesson for the month of August (The armor of God). August has 5 weeks, so the pieces are to be taught throughout the month not all at once. The goal is to make sure the students understand the relevance of each piece. I have had the privilege of studying the martial arts for over 20 years, and there are many weapons to learn. I learned more when one weapon was taught over a long period of time, rather than many weapons in one day. Great job guys, and let's move forward in the Lord.

God's will for us

"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **Put on the whole armor of God**, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities**, against **powers**, against the **rulers of the darkness of this age**, against **spiritual hosts of wickedness** in the heavenly places.

"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. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...."

Ephesians 6:10-18

What is the Armor of God?

God's armor brings victory because it is far more than a protective covering. It is the very life of Jesus Christ Himself. "[P]ut on the armor of light," wrote Paul in his letter to the Romans, "...clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 13:12-14) When you do, He becomes your *hiding place*, and *shelter* in the storm--just as He was to David. Hidden in Him, you can count on His victory, for He not only covers you as a shield, He also fills you with His life.

"I am the vine; you are the branches," said Jesus. "If a man abides in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Since living in the safety of the armor means oneness with Jesus, we can expect to share His struggles as well as His peace. Remember, God has promised us victory in the midst of trials, not immunity from pain. So **"do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you, but rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ..."** (1 Peter 4:12-13) Christian heroes who have been tortured for their faith continue to testify to the supernatural strength--even joy--that enables them to endure unthinkable pain.

They affirm with Paul -

"that in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers.... will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39)

This wonderful truth has become reality to all who believe and follow Jesus. When you put on His armor, His life surrounds you, keeping you safe, close to Himself, and free to be His precious friend and trusted companion. So "put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27) He is your victory!

How do I "put on" God's Armor?

This life in Christ begins with learning, affirming, and trusting in each part of the armor. The first part is truth--God's revelation of all that He is to us, all that He has done for us, and all that He promises to do for us in the days ahead. This enduring truth is written in the Bible, revealed by the Holy Spirit, and realized through Jesus Christ. It cuts through all the world's distortions, deceptions, and compromises. When you study, memorize, live, and follow truth, it enables you to see the world from God's high vantage point. Putting on the first piece of the armor means feeding on truth through daily Bible reading and making it part of yourself.

God's Armor	Know the Truth about...	Affirm key Scriptures
Belt of TRUTH	God	Deut. 4:39; Psalm 23:1; 18:1-3
Breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS	The Righteousness of Jesus in you	Psalm 100:3; Rom. 3:23-24, 6:23; Gal. 2:20-21; Phil. 3:8-10.
Sandals of PEACE	Inner peace and readiness	Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14; John 14:27, 16:33, 20:21.
Shield of FAITH	Living by faith	Rom. 4:18-21; Heb. 11:1; 1 Pet. 1:6-7
Helmet of SALVATION	Salvation through Christ today and forever	Each day: Ps. 16, 23; Heb. 1:3-6 For eternity: 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 1 Thess. 4:17; 1 John 3:1-3
Sword of the spirit GOD'S WORD	God's Word countering spiritual deception and accusations	Heb. 4:12; Matt. 4:2-11; 1 Pet. 3:15; Ps. 119:110-112

To put on the "full armor"--and enjoy a daily and eternal love-relationship with Jesus Christ, thank Him for what He has shown you in His Word. *Know* the Scriptures behind your prayer so that your words and faith are grounded in the *authority of the Bible*. (Some of those verses are listed in the chart above.) Then pray through each piece. You can use the following prayer as an outline:

- **The belt of truth:** Thank you, my Lord, for showing me the *truth* about yourself. Thank you

for reminding me that You are the only God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the King of the universe, my Father who loves me, and my Shepherd who leads me. You are my wisdom, my counselor, my hope, and my strength. You are everything I need each day.

- **The breastplate of righteousness:** Thank you for showing me the truth about myself--that on my own I could never be good enough to live in your presence. Thank you for taking *my sins* to the cross and offering me *your righteous life*. Lord, show me any sin that I need to confess right now, so that nothing will hinder me from being filled to overflowing with your Spirit. [Take time for confession] Thank you for forgiving me and for filling me with your *righteous* life.
- **The sandals of peace:** Thank you for the *peace* you give me when I trust and follow you. Show me how to help others find that peace.
- **The shield of faith:** Thank you for helping me have *faith* in you. I choose to count on everything you have shown me about yourself--and everything you have promised me in your Word.
- **The helmet of salvation:** Thank you for promising me *salvation* both for today's battles and for all eternity.
- **The sword of the spirit, the Word of God:** Thank you for the scriptures you have given me to memorize. Please show me which one(s) you want me to use to cut through deceptions and gain your victory in any battle I may face today.

How can I explain the armor to my children?

In a world where public schools, television, movies, and popular music all offer tempting counterfeits of what God promises His people, there is only one safe place for our children: in the loving arms of the Shepherd. So train your children "in the way they should go" (Proverbs 22:6) and help them to wear the "full armor of God" each day.

First, read Ephesians 6:10-18 together, then review the chart at the end of this section. It shows why the parts of armor will expose and resist all the main lies of New Age and Neo-pagan religions. Memorize scriptures that show the truth about God and His righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation. Explain that these verses are scripture *swords* that counter the main lies of the enemy. Remember, when children know the truth about God, they won't trust popular counterfeits. Knowing the source of their righteousness, they won't believe sanctification without the cross. Knowing God's way to peace and salvation, they won't choose occult paths.

Remind your children that the armor is not like a magic shield they can casually slip on in order to be safe anywhere they want to go. One day, my youngest son asked if he could see a popular movie with some friends.

"No. I'd rather you didn't," I told him.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because it makes occultism seem both fun and right. Even though your friends know it's fiction, the story and images leave the impression that you can win in life by using occult rituals to get supernatural power. Not only does the Bible tell us occultism is evil, it also shows how it destroys people." I started to look up Deuteronomy 18:9-13.

"But I'll put on the armor."

"It won't help. When you go somewhere that you shouldn't, you disobey God and "take off" the breastplate of righteousness. You're never safe if you go somewhere Jesus wouldn't want you to go."

David got the message and stayed home. He knew that by himself he was no match for occult forces. But by wearing the special protection God offers us through His armor, he would be able to stand firm against satan's strategies.

To help your children put on the armor, follow the scriptures and outline shown in the previous section. Make sure they *know* the Scriptures behind the prayer so that their words will be based on God's Word. Then pray through the pieces of the armor, simplifying each part to fit the ages of your children.

THE ARMOR OF GOD:

EACH PIECE	CHRISTIAN PARADIGM	GLOBAL PARADIGM
Put on:	Know and affirm:	Recognize and resist:
Belt of TRUTH	His sovereignty, love, wisdom, and holiness. (<i>Deut. 4:39; Ps. 18:1-3</i>)	Pantheistic, monistic, polytheistic gods and goddesses.
Breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS	Jesus Christ and His blood, which cleanses us from sin. The cross which frees us from bondage to selfish nature.	The natural goodness, connectedness, and sacredness of all life.
Sandals of PEACE	Our peace through our union and ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ.	Peace through occult practices and union with a cosmic force or nature spirits.
Shield of FAITH	Our continual trust in God, His Word, and His promises.	Trust in Self, inner wisdom, dreams, visions, gods, goddess, cosmic force, coincidences, etc.
Helmet of SALVATION	God's promises of daily and eternal salvation in Jesus Christ.	Evolving spiritually by growing in consciousness staying tuned to the cosmic mind.
Sword of the Spirit His WORD	The power of God's Word to counter deception and triumph over spiritual foes.	The power of thoughts, words and affirmations to change reality and direct spiritual forces.

