

What a Soldier of Christ Needs to Know

Intro:

1. Frank Peretti's novels, "This Present Darkness" (1988) & "Piercing the Darkness" (1989) created an interest in spiritual warfare.
 - a. Christian books flourished, sermons were preached, Bible studies were launched - it was a very popular subject for about 10 years.
 - b. The fad has died down & we don't hear much about it now except in Pentecostal-Holiness churches.
 - c. But the doctrine is still true & we need to be prepared biblically to go into spiritual battle.
2. **ILL: My Reserve Unit Mobilized to Fort Leonard-Wood, MO in February 2003.**
 - a. We equipped & put through collective training National Guard battalions throughout the Midwest.
 - b. They were issued the best equipment & had the finest training available to fit in with active duty units in theater.
 - c. Because they were the best equipped & the best trained, the Invasion of Iraq lasted only 21 days.
3. There are 3 things an army needs to know to have victory on the battlefield. They need to know . . .
 - a. **The enemy:** his doctrine, his weaponry & his training.
 - b. **The location:** the battlefield, the terrain.
 - c. **Their own doctrine:** how they can effectively fight as a team, their mission, their equipment & how to use it.
4. God's word here informs us about our enemy & what we can use to defeat him!

Ephesians 6:10-20

I. v11-12 - Who is the Enemy?

- A. Why is it important to know the enemy?
 1. **ILL: The movie "Patton".**
 2. The German high command kept getting briefings on who Patton was & how he operated.
 3. Patton had Field Marshal Rommel's book of armored tactics setting on his night stand.
- B. Your spiritual enemy is the devil & his demons.
 1. Lord Jesus called the devil **the enemy** (**Matt 13:39**).
 - a. He is a fallen angel with over 6000 years of experience.
 - b. You are no match for him on your own! He has spiritual power!
 2. The devil, Satan, **fell from heaven** (John Milton's "Paradise Lost" & **Lk 10:18**).
 3. Satan has a kingdom (**Matt 12:26**).
 4. **v11** - Satan has a mission
 - a. His purpose is to enslave you into his kingdom.
 - b. His only effective weapon against you is temptations.
 - c. The devil uses **schemes** (μεθοδεῖα) = KJV - wiles, strategies, deceitful methods, craftiness.
II Cor 4:4 - The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
 5. **v12** - His army consists of spiritual beings called demons.
 - a. They are not of **flesh & blood**.
 - b. They are **rulers & authorities** described as **powers of this dark world & spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms** - the spirit world.
 - c. The **struggle**, then, is not with demons themselves, but with temptations they provide.
 6. They will eventually be **thrown into the lake of burning sulfur** (**Rev 20:10**).

II. What is the Location - the Battlefield?

- A. The battlefield is your minds. **Rom 12:2 - Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**
- B. The Lord was tempted in His mind (Lk 4:1-13).
- C. You are tempted in your mind. **Jam 1:14 - each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.**

III. v10, 13-20 - What Will Make You Victorious?

- A. **v13** - You have been issued everything that you need but you must **put it on!**
 - 1. **Put on** (ἀναλαμβάνω) = lift up & carry, bring it along.
 - 2. **v16** - You take up the shield of faith (same word).
- B. **v14-17a** - God gives you all you need for protection.
 - 1. **v14a** - You were issued the **belt**.
 - a. A Roman soldier was issued a thick belt to hold his toga together & holster his sword. It gave him freedom of movement to use his sword, spear & shield.
 - b. A modern soldier is issued LBE: ammunition, canteens, a first aid pack & a flashlight.
 - c. Your spiritual belt is **truth** so you can move freely & decisively when temptations arrive.
 - d. You must know the truth, the Bible, to be a truthful, honest person. This truth will set you free!
 - 2. **v14b** - You were issued the **breastplate**. (Quote from **Is 59:17**)
 - a. The breastplate protected a soldier's chest & mid-section from arrows his shield might miss.
 - b. A modern soldier is issued a flak jacket to protect from shrapnel & some stray bullets.
 - c. Your spiritual breastplate is **righteousness** - doing the right thing before God & man.
 - d. Accusations & slander cannot penetrate your life because righteousness proves them to be lies. Christians were not persecuted after 200 AD because of popular opinion. They didn't do wrong things!
 - 3. **v15** - You were issued **shoes**.
 - a. The sandals a soldier wore were laced all the way up his leg to secure them to his feet.
 - b. A modern soldier's combat boots are designed to protect his feet from the environment. He is ready to go into combat when his boots are securely laced to his legs!
 - c. Your boots are **the gospel** message which makes you ready to go into spiritual combat.
 - 4. **v16** - You were issued a **shield**.
 - a. A Roman's battle shield was 4 foot long with 2 sections of wood & a section of iron. A flaming arrow would be extinguished when it penetrated the first layer, soft wood.
 - b. A strong **faith** in the Lord's promises will extinguish Satan's temptations hurled at it.
 - 5. **v17a** - You were issued a **helmet**.
 - a. The modern kevlar helmet is designed with a light, extremely hard material to protect the head, ears & neck. The round design protected both the Roman & modern soldiers from direct impact. The blows to the head glance off.
 - b. Your spiritual helmet is your **hope of salvation**. Everything in this life is temporary, eternity is permanent! Therefore you should be able to handle temporary trials in this life! **ILL: Voice of the Martyrs**.

- C. v17b - God gives you all you need for offense. Heb 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
1. The Roman short sword (just a little longer than a Bowie Knife). Other countries used arrows & lances. Rome conquered the world with the short sword!
 2. A modern soldier's primary weapon is the M16-A2 & the M9 - the most advanced & accurate individual fighting weapons in the world.
 3. Your primary offensive spiritual weapon is **the word of God**.
 - a. It is to comfort & to encourage God's people.
 - b. It is to convict hearts & to win people to a personal relationship with the Lord. ILL: Matt 16:18 means the church is like an advancing Roman army.
- D. v18-20 - God gives you all the strength you need for victory. How do you get it?
1. The Romans had the best communication system of their day with their couriers. (We get our word "evangelist" from these couriers!)
 2. A modern soldier has the best comms system in the world.
 - a. ILL: East German & Soviet Armor in the Fulda Gap. (One way communication)
 - b. ILL: My Sheridan Tank Experience at the National Training Center.
 - c. Task force CDR was a 1LT.
 - d. The tank CDR was an E-6.
 - e. We whipped the socks off the Infantry Div from the South Carolina National Guard because we were so well trained!
 3. v18 - You have **prayer!**
 - a. It must be constant. I Thess 5:17 - pray continually.
 - b. It must be unselfish for all the saints.
 - c. It must be intense. Alert (ἀγρυπνέω) = awake, keep watch without sleep.
 - d. v19 - It must be for the right purpose - boldness of speech when presenting the gospel.

Fill the worship center every Wednesday night
for prayer meeting & talk to God
as though we really mean it!
That will give you power in your life!

<https://www.biblelifemessages.org>