

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; in *all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Ephesians 6:10-13 “Finally, my brethren, 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.”

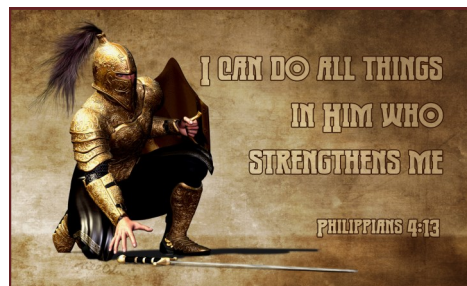
Quote: Romans 13:12 “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us *put on the armor of light*.”

When a member of the military enters conflict, he wears his “Battle Dress Uniform” that is carefully designed to facilitate movement and to maximize protection. Superiors would discipline a soldier who forgot part of his gear for drill because they realize that this same careless attitude in battle might result in far more harmful, or even fatal, consequences! Twice Paul told Christians to put on the whole armor of God so that they might safely secure victory. While true Christians cannot die spiritually,¹ their crafty enemy can “dull” their conscience, deaden their joy, destroy their testimony, and discourage or endanger other soldiers through their failure to stand true. Soldiers who want to make it home safely with honor take combat seriously! They dress for battle! The same can be said of any “soldier of Christ” who desires to make an impact for the kingdom of God.

What does the *whole armor of God* entail for the Christian soldier? The girdle of truth is “an attitude of truthfulness, sincerity, honesty, integrity or COMMITMENT.”² The breastplate of righteousness is CONSECRATION, or setting oneself apart to living a holy life of service. The Gospel of peace is to be the foundation upon which we stand and live a “cross-centered life” of CONFIDENCE in Christ’s victory over sin and the grave. The shield of faith is trust anchored in CONVICTIONS that are based upon the inspired, inerrant, all-sufficient word of God

with which we ward off the fiery darts of our foe. The helmet of salvation refers to CONCENTRATION on our sure hope that protects us against doubt, disinterest, discouragement and defeat. The sword for the Christian is CONQUEST with the Word of God as both a defensive and offensive weapon that is tempered with the power of God.

Those who profess to be soldiers of Christ, but are careless in preparing for the personal battles that daily come their way, should question whether they are fit for combat. If they enter the fray partially dressed, or without a keen sense of what is at stake, they have themselves to thank for the wounds that they receive and the loss of testimony that they incur. Nearing the end of his life and ministry, Paul cautioned Timothy, “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”³ Likewise, our own preparation for



each day reveals how seriously we take our personal struggles against worldly influences and any wrongful desires of our flesh!⁴ As a Christian,

we must choose to be a fully-equipped soldier whose purpose is contending for the faith; whose power lies in the Spirit of God; whose preparation reflects knowledge of, loyalty to and love for God’s Word; whose presentation of the gospel is with meekness, compassion and dependency upon God alone to save souls; and whose perseverance demonstrates commitment to truly be an ambassador for the Lord Jesus Christ at all times and in all places! May we be able to say with Paul, “*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*”

¹ John 6:37; 10:25-30; 17:11-12 ² J. MacArthur ³ II Tim.2:3-5 ⁴ I John 2:16; James 1:14, 15