

WEEK 7

“Stand”

Ephesians 6:10 - 24

The Soldier in the Room

Ephesians 6:13-17 (NIV)

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Paul wrote this passage chained to a Roman soldier. He was not imagining a metaphor from memory. He was looking at one. The belt holding the soldier's tunic in place so it wouldn't impede movement. The breastplate protecting the vital organs. The heavy sandals with iron hobnails that gave the soldier traction on any terrain. The large rectangular shield that, when interlocked with others, formed an almost impenetrable wall. The helmet. The short sword.

Each piece of equipment existed for a reason, designed through centuries of trial and failure to keep a soldier alive and effective in the field. Roman military equipment was among the most sophisticated of the ancient world. Paul was surrounded by it, studying it, and finding in it a picture of something the church desperately needed to understand.

The belt of truth. In Roman armor, the belt was not decorative — it held everything else together. Without it, the armor shifted and became a liability rather than a protection. Paul puts truth there first because a life built on anything less than what is actually real will shift and slide at the worst possible moment. Truth isn't just an intellectual virtue. It's the thing that holds the rest of you together when you're under pressure.

The breastplate of righteousness covered the heart and lungs — the center of life. The righteousness Paul describes isn't your moral resume. It's the righteousness that has been given to you in Christ, imputed and real, covering the most vulnerable parts of who you are. The enemy's most effective attack is almost always at the heart — at your sense of worth, your standing before God, your right to belong. Righteousness is what covers that.

Paul looked at the soldier in his room and saw the church. He sees you in it too. Every piece is assigned. Every piece is necessary. And unlike the soldier's armor, this equipment never wears out.

Personal Response

- Look at the list of armor again: truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God. Which piece do you most take for granted — the one you assume is in place without regularly putting it on?
- The belt of truth holds everything else together. Where in your life is truth being compromised — in what you say, what you tell yourself, what you pretend is fine when it isn't?
- Ask God to show you which piece of armor you most need to deliberately pick up today. Then ask him to help you actually wear it.

The Armor You Can't See

Ephesians 6:18 (NIV)

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Paul lists six pieces of armor in verses 13-17. Then he adds a seventh — and it isn't a piece of equipment at all. It's a practice. Pray in the Spirit on all occasions.

Some scholars argue that prayer is the posture that holds all the other armor in place — not a seventh piece, but the atmosphere in which the other six function. You can put on truth without prayer, but prayer is what keeps truth alive and active in you rather than just intellectually held. You can carry the shield of faith without prayer, but prayer is what keeps faith from becoming a habit of thought rather than a living dependence on a living God.

The phrase “all occasions” is worth pausing on. Paul doesn't say pray when you feel like it. He doesn't say pray in the morning or pray in your designated quiet time. He says all occasions. The Greek word is *kairos* — which means the right moment, the appointed time. Paul is saying: every moment that presents itself is an occasion for prayer. The difficult conversation. The anxious thought. The moment before you respond to the email that made you angry. All of them.

And then he adds something that most people miss: “be alert.” The armor of God is not passive protection. It requires a watchful posture — someone who is paying attention to what is actually happening in the invisible dimension of their life, not just the visible one. Prayer is how you stay alert to that dimension. It keeps the eyes of your heart open to what God is doing and what the enemy is attempting.

The armor you can't see is often the most important piece. The Roman soldier's equipment was impressive and visible. But the soldier who prays is the one who knows what he's fighting before the battle begins.

Personal Response

- How would you honestly describe your current prayer life? Not ideally — actually. What does it look like on a normal week?
- What does “all occasions” look like practically for you? Think of two or three specific moments in your ordinary day that could become occasions for prayer but currently aren't.
- Ask God to make you more alert — to what he is doing, to what the enemy is attempting, and to the moments when prayer is exactly what is needed. Ask him to make prayer feel less like a discipline and more like a reflex.

The Bravest Thing Paul Ever Said

Ephesians 6:19-20 (NIV)

Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Paul has just written one of the most theologically comprehensive letters in the New Testament. He has described the eternal purposes of God, the mystery of the gospel, the nature of the church, the armor of God, and the spiritual forces arrayed against the people of Christ. He has done it from a prison cell. And now, at the end of all of it, he asks for prayer.

Not prayer for his release. Not prayer for his comfort or his safety. He asks for courage. Specifically, he asks for the courage to keep saying what he has been saying, in the way he has been saying it, without fear.

This is worth sitting with. Paul — the man who survived stonings, shipwrecks, beatings, and imprisonment, who said “for me to live is Christ and to die is gain” — this man is asking his friends to pray that he wouldn’t be afraid. Not that the fear would go away. That he would speak fearlessly in spite of it.

Courage, in Paul’s understanding, isn’t the absence of fear. It’s faithfulness in the presence of it. And even the most faithful person Paul’s letters ever describe needed other people praying for his courage to hold.

There is something deeply releasing about this. If Paul needed prayer for courage, you are not failing when you need it too. The battle you are in requires more than you can produce on your own. The courage to keep going, to keep speaking the truth, to keep standing in territory Christ has won — that kind of courage doesn’t come from self-sufficiency. It comes from a community of people who are praying for each other to not be afraid.

Seven sessions of Ephesians. And at the very end, Paul’s final request is not theological. It’s personal. Pray for my courage. That’s where the letter lands. That’s where we land too.

Who is praying for your courage? And who needs you to pray for theirs?

Personal Response

- What is the thing you currently need courage for? Not the thing you should say you need courage for — the actual thing. Name it.
- Is there someone in your life who is in a battle that requires more courage than they feel they have right now? Pray for them specifically by name before you close this devotional.
- Ask God for what Paul asked for: not that the fear would disappear, but that you would speak and act fearlessly in spite of it. Ask him to surround you with people who will pray that prayer over you.