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“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant...”

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

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## Spiritual Warfare

### A Cosmic Battle Over Your Soul Between God and Satan

#### Part II, How to Take Your Stand Against the Devil's Schemes

By Robert C. Benson, President

*“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 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.”*

Ephesians 6:10-13

## Introduction

Note that Paul says “when the day of evil comes,” not if. Therefore, if you want to grow spiritually and experience the “abundant life” the Son of God promises in John 10:10, you are going to need Kingdom resources and know how to use them! Why? Because when you became a Christian you changed sides in a cosmic war, moving from Satan's side (the enemy) to God's side (the body of Christ). In Part I on Spiritual Warfare we discussed “*What You Need to Know about Satan and his 'Schemes.'*” If you didn't have a chance to read it, I highly recommend you read it at <http://www.abadvisors.com/eNewsletter.htm>

In summary fashion, Pastor Shafer Parker, Jr. at Hawkwood Baptist Fellowship says, “*When you believed in Jesus, you received eternal life. Your sins were forgiven. God became your father in the fullest sense of the term. Heaven became your home and your ultimate destination. The Holy Spirit of God took up residence in your heart and became your ever-present companion (and counselor). The people of God become your forever family, along with God the Father and Christ the Son.*” Parker continues with a warning, “*But along with those benefits, you also were noticed by the enemy. You see, if you belong to Jesus, the devil hates you and singles you out for his particular attention. ...when a man or woman is truly born again, Satan knows he can never have that soul. But he also knows that the best way to preserve the souls he still has is to make certain that as many Christians as possible remain as ineffective as possible.*”

This is the fifth issue of a new and separate ABA newsletter, *The Spirit Led Business™*, providing insight on building a Kingdom Business – a company whose intentional objective is to help advance the Kingdom of God and is led by a person who in turn is led by the Spirit of God. The purpose of this article is to help you understand how to “*Put on the full armor of*

***God so you can take your stand against the devil's schemes*** so he can't derail you from becoming a mature Christian or being effective in building Christ's Church (The Great Commission, Matthew 28:16-20.) **And for those who desire to build and lead a Kingdom business you had better know the enemy and how to defend yourself against Satan or he will make your life miserable.**

## **A. Situational Analysis**

### **Why You Need to be Strong in the Lord and His Mighty Power – Daily!**

***“be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”*** Ephesians 6:10

In the previous newsletter, Pastor Parker reminds Christians *“that we believe in a personal God.”* He continues with *“The Bible also teaches that a personality lies behind the evil in this world. The devil is as real as God, although he is not the same as God...he, like us and like all the angels, is a created being, dependent on God for his continued existence. But for all that, never forget he is also a personal being. He communicates with us, after a fashion...he can develop special strategies for individuals. There are people in which he takes special interest. And he is constantly seeking out those whom he can devour, metaphorically speaking.”* See John 10, Ephesians 6:10-16, and 1 Peter 5:8-11 to support Parker's comments.

Satan hates God and is at war with him. The children of God (referred to in the Bible as *“the body of Christ”*) is God's presence on earth. Therefore, it stands to reason that if you are a member of God's family, Satan is at war with you! Why? Because God's children are *“the Body of Christ”* - God on earth! But the Bible teaches that God's children can ***“be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power”*** by putting ***“on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.”***

**There are three key reasons you need to “be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”**

1. We need God's strength to achieve His objectives.
2. We need His strength to defend ourselves against Satan.
3. We need to know how to wield His strength during times of intense attacks.

**A scheme is a plot, a strategy, to outwit you!** And since the Bible says schemes, the devil has several. Following are Satan's core strategies:

1. He lies to you by questioning God's truth.
2. He lies to persuade you to disobey God.
3. He exploits your weaknesses by manipulating your feelings and emotions.

**In Part I on Spiritual Warfare we discussed eleven primary schemes of the devil.** If you didn't have a chance to read it, I highly recommend you read them at <http://www.abadvisors.com/eNewsletter.htm>. I know this is “heavy stuff,” but *“Do not let your hearts be troubled”* (John 14:1). For *“the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world”* (1 John 4:4).

## B. The Full Armor of God

### You Have Spiritual Weapons with Divine Power to Defeat Satan

*“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”*  
(2 Corinthians 10:4).



To battle Satan, the Apostle Paul instructs Christians to “put on the full armor of God, so... you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand” (on its divine power). Spiritual battles take place in your mind.

“He (Jesus Christ) calls his own sheep by name...and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger (Satan); in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice...” (John 10:3-5). The challenge for you is to discern which voice to listen to and to believe (trust) the word of God, instead of Satan’s lies and temptations to manipulate your feelings. This includes the lies he has taught others who are trying to get you to believe those lies.

## C. Putting on the Armor of God

### The Belt of Truth

*“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist”* Ephesians 6:14a

The armor of God enables you to “stand against the devil’s schemes” and “they have divine power to demolish strongholds.” “The belt—known as the cingulum or balteus—played a crucial role in the effectiveness of a soldier’s armor. It was the belt that held the scabbard, without which there would be no place to put a sword. Imagine an overzealous soldier, fired up and charging out into battle—but without his belt, and consequently without a weapon! In addition, the Nelson Study Bible says from the belt “hung strips of leather to protect the lower body.” The Matthew Henry Commentary says the belt “girds on [secures] all the other pieces of our armor.” Truth should cleave to us as a belt cleaves to our body” (From Bible Study Guides at <http://www.freebiblestudyguides.org>).

Paul starts his list of God's armor with the belt of truth because Satan's chief weapon is lies. According to Christ, *"He (the devil) was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."* (John 8:44). From a spiritual perspective, Paul is telling Christians to secure anything that will cause us to stumble or fall during our daily battle. The apostle Peter clarifies this, *"Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:13-16 NKJV).* I have had many people; including pastors tell me it is not possible for humans to be "holy." Really! Do they believe God would ask us to do something that is impossible? I don't believe that for a minute. God would not put us on a mission impossible!

**Peter and Paul are telling us to prepare our minds and emotions for battle. Putting on the belt of truth begins by hiding God's word in your heart! There are two ways to put God's word in your heart: 1) Memorize it, and 2) Read and study the Bible, because "the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my (Jesus) name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26). There is only one way to prepare your emotions and that is to make a permanent decision to have your minds "set on what the Spirit desires," "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness! And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.**

*Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation — but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Romans 8:5-17).*

Paul confirms that we are to *"put off your old self"* and *"put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness"* in more detail in Ephesians 5, immediately before he instructs us *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power"* by putting *"on the full armor of God."* **Therefore, it is clear that setting your mind on what the spirit desires is critical to putting on the full armor of God so that you have His protection from the devil.**

Truth can be divided into four types:

1. **Fundamental truth.** The truth about God and His character, His Kingdom, His power, His promises and His Commands. There is only one God and *"You shall have no other gods before"* Him (Exodus 20:3). He is totally trustworthy and if you obey Him, you will receive what He promises (Deuteronomy 28-30 and John 14 & 15).
2. **The truth about Jesus and His teaching.** He is the Son of God, the Messiah, the High Priest in God's Temple, King of God's Kingdom, the head of the body of Christ and the mediator between God and man. *"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men..."* (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

3. **The truth about you.** You are made in God's image, you can be renewed back to man's original nature (Ephesians 5:24) and if you are a "born again" Christian "*you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God...*" (1 Peter 2:9).
4. **The Truth in your inward parts.** It takes truth in your inward parts to cooperate with the renewing of your mind by the Spirit of God, your counselor and the "Spirit of truth." This takes integrity and honesty by you about yourself in order to outwit the enemy in his schemes to deceive you about yourself "*Surely you desire truth in the inner parts, you teach me wisdom in the inmost place*" (Psalm 51:6).

Pastor Parker says "*Integrity is achieved when you and I are in private what we appear to be in public. Amen? But hold on a minute. Before you accuse me of setting an impossible high standard, listen to this. Integrity is achieved when we confess ourselves to be sinners saved by grace in both public and private, that is, when we reach the place that when we discover sin in ourselves, whether committed publicly or privately, we immediately repent and seek forgiveness from the offended one, whether God or man. When we learn to live like that, the devil has no opportunity to get a foothold in our lives.*"

*Hypocrisy does not mean saying one thing and doing the opposite. It means saying something that one does not believe. Take the example of getting drunk. Let's say that someone believes that getting drunk is immoral. Does it make that man a hypocrite if he gets drunk? No, it makes him weak...A hypocrite, on the other hand, is someone who might say, 'It's okay for me to get drunk, but not for you.'*"

So how does one learn fundamental truth, the truth about God, his Son Jesus and his teachings, the truth about you, and the truth in your inward parts? Obey Christ, read the Bible, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to the truth, "*If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. ...the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you*" (John 14:15-17, 26, 16:12-14).

Try it yourself. I did and found that these verses are true.

## **D. Putting on the Armor of God** **The Breastplate of Righteousness**

***"Stand firm then,...with the breastplate of righteousness in place"*** Ephesians 6:14b

The armor of God is to enable you to "*stand against the devil's schemes*" and "*they have divine power to demolish strongholds.*" "The breastplate was a central part of the Roman soldier's armor—it provided protection for the torso, which contains vital organs like the heart, lungs and so on. Without a breastplate, a soldier would be asking for death, as any attack could instantly become fatal. With a sturdy breastplate, the very same attacks become ineffective and useless, as blows glance off the armor. Without righteousness, we leave ourselves open to almost certain death. With righteousness—just as with a breastplate—the otherwise fatal attacks of our enemy are thwarted" (From Bible Study Guides at <http://www.freebiblestudyguides.org> ).

**Satan's name, which means adversary or *diabolos*, translated devil, which means accuser, is a clue to one of his Key Schemes** discussed in our last issue. He uses accusations, creating false guilt to keep us down. Of course if he fails at that, he will lie about us to keep us down:

1. With non-Christians, Satan will battle to keep their soul by making them feel like they are not “good enough” yet to come to God, or use lies about God so people will distrust Him and manipulate people to put off inviting Christ into their life, putting all people on a mission impossible (a person can only become “good enough” through the power of God’s Spirit in them, which only happens when they put their faith in Christ and invite Him into his/her life).
2. With Christians, Satan will make us feel inadequate or a failure in our Christian walk, discouraging us from growing spiritually and/or diminishing or eliminating our Kingdom effectiveness:
  - a. Satan does his best to find something he can make us feel guilty about because he knows a Christian who feels guilty is discouraged and ineffective.
  - b. Satan uses accusations to destroy relationships, trust, and unity in The Church, the Body of Christ.
  - c. Satan will jump at any opportunity from our slip-ups to overwhelm us with guilt and focus on them instead of Christ’s redeeming work of grace at the cross.

How do we defend ourselves against these accusations? With the Breastplate of Righteousness! There are two types of righteousness:

1. **Imputed righteousness** from Christ to those who ask forgiveness for their sins (breaking God’s law), accepting God’s free gift of Christ’s righteousness accredited to them through Christ’s death on the cross where He paid the penalty for their sins, and receiving Christ into their life as Lord. See <http://www.abadvisors.com/eNewsletter.htm>). As a result, you are righteous in God’s eyes. “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trust God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness” (Romans 4:3-5). **This is an event in your life and it NEVER changes**, even though you continue to “sin” after you become a “born again” Christian. Once you become a child of God, the penalty for your sins (past, present, and future) are paid for and you are righteous in God’s eyes for the purpose of receiving eternal life.
2. **Imparted righteousness** is a process (referred to as sanctification) of learning how to live in your earthly “body of sin” (See issue three, “*The Case for Christianity*” at <http://www.abadvisors.com/eNewsletter.htm>), through the power of the Holy Spirit living in you. As you “walk in the Spirit,” Christ’s righteousness is imparted to you (you are taught how to live righteously through the power of Christ in you!) **This is a process that takes time**. In summary what you need to know to deal with Satan is that the process involves:
  - a. Renewing your mind by removing the lies that Satan and the world have programmed into you during your lifetime and replacing them with truth about the way things really are (reality), found in the Bible (man’s handbook for living.) See Romans 12: 1, 2 Timothy 3:16, Psalm 119:14-16, Proverbs 8 and Colossians 2:2-4, “*My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding argument.*”;
  - b. Believing that you can “walk as Jesus walked” on this earth by setting your mind (making a permanent decision) to walk everyday under the influence (power and leading) of the Spirit of God living in you as discussed in Romans 8:5-17, in “The Belt of Truth” above; and
  - c. Committing yourself to the spiritual growth process below.

As discussed in The Belt of Truth above, godliness is attainable. How do I know? The Bible tells me so. *“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins”* (2 Peter 1:5-9). But only God can make you “godly” or “holy,” *“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin.* (Matthew 6:28b NKJV).

Jesus is telling us that only God makes things grow and the Apostle Paul confirms this, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow” (1 Corinthians 3:5-8). Our job is to cooperate with him by doing what He instructs us to do in the Bible, his handbook for humans. *“Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent’”* (John 6:29).

The apostle John also instructs us in this regard as he gives us guidelines as to who are really the children of God, *“We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did”* (1 John 2:3-6). *“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life”* (1 John 5:13).

Satan will come at you with accusations of how bad or weak a person you are because you continue to “sin” after becoming a “born again” Christian. This struggle is painful because it grieves God’s Spirit in you. The Spirit convicts you of your sin and you want to stop because you want to please and serve God. But Satan turns up the heat (no pun intended). He accuses you of being a bad person, makes you feel like a failure and makes you question whether you are really a Christian. **Satan will stay at this until he convinces you that living a righteous life is a mission impossible and you get discouraged and give up!** This is easy for Satan to do because he knows that you have to go through a sanctification process and you are going to continue to sin during that time and even after you renew your mind and learn to walk in the Spirit. To make himself more believable, Satan has already convinced millions of Christians, including many pastors, that becoming godly is impossible, so they will support Satan’s lie.

When Satan comes at you with accusations, quote Scripture to him and then “stand firm” on its truth:

1. **Christ’s righteousness has been imputed to me,** “...those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ” Romans (5:17).
2. **Christ’s righteousness is being imparted to me as I learn to walk as he walked and God isn’t finished with me yet,** “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20-21).
3. **It is possible to live a righteous life.** “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (2 Peter 1:3).

Then “keep on dancing” by taking responsibility for your behavior:

1. **Do not blame yourself or others** *“Your battle is not against flesh and blood”* (Ephesians 6:12).
2. **Confess your sin to God** *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9).

3. **Reset your mind** “*on what the Spirit desires*” (Romans 8:5).
4. **Do not believe any spirit or any person who tells you godliness is not attainable** (Peter 1:5-9).

And remember that the armor of God enables you to “*stand against the devil’s schemes*” because “*they have divine power to demolish strongholds!*”

## **E. Standing Firm**

### **How to Stand Firm After You Put on the Armor of God**

*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.”* Ephesians 6:13.

When the devil tempted Christ in Luke 4:1-13 **Christ ALWAYS used Scripture, and ONLY Scripture, to take his stand against the devil.** Knowing that it has “*divine power to demolish strongholds..., demolish arguments..., and...take captive every thought.*” Jesus simply stood his ground with only Scripture as his weapon! Why? Because he knew Satan feared God the Father and that if he stood on the truth of God’s word (had faith in it), Satan would give up and go away, “*When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.*” (Luke 4:13).

“Is that it?” you ask. “Is that all I have to do?” Yes, that’s all there is and that’s all you have to do! Do not battle with people. Do not battle with your flesh. Just quote Scripture to Satan, believe the Scripture and trust and obey God and His Son. Always remember that sanctification is a process, not an event, so keep at it until you develop judgment on how to “*take your stand against the devils schemes*” and complete the process in 2 Peter 1:5-9!

If you don’t have a Bible, you can go online to [www.netbible.org](http://www.netbible.org). In the upper left corner where it says Display Bible, scroll to John and click on Go. And if you want someone to talk to about the things in this letter, call us at ABA!

**In the next issue of *The Spirit Led Business*<sup>™</sup>, Part III on Spiritual Warfare, we will continue with insights on how to use more of the Armor of God to take your stand against the devil (Satan) and his forces of darkness.**

Note: All Bible verses are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. NKJV = New King James Version.

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