

LESSON 10

ANCHOR 10

Get dressed daily for battle by putting on God's armor and taking my thoughts captive.

Ephesians 6:13 – “Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground.”

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 – “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.”

PRAY

Ask God to speak to you as you read His Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a revelation of God's truth and love and give you understanding of what you are about to read. Pray that you will have an Encounter with God as you earnestly seek Him. Don't rush through reading everything and don't rush through praying. Take some time to stop and listen so you may hear anything God wants to say to you.

After you read the scriptures, ask:

- “God, what are You saying in these scriptures?”
- “God, what are You saying to me in these scriptures?”
- “God, how do You want me to apply this to my life?”

Write in your journal as you spend this time with God.

In previous Anchor lessons we have referred to the battlefield being in the mind. Nowhere is that more the case than in spiritual warfare. There is a constant daily battle that starts in the mind, but it affects your entire body and every aspect of your life – your choices, your relationships, your peace and, ultimately, your very existence. Humans can only see their natural environment and are often unaware that they are surrounded by a spiritual – a supernatural – world and reality. There are forces of good and evil in the heavenly realms – angels and demons that are not visible to the human eye. Many people tend to ignore what they cannot see or explain. That would be a huge mistake – denying or not acknowledging that there is a spiritual war going on around you and that there is an enemy to every human soul. That enemy should not be ignored or underestimated.

God loves you and the devil, Satan, hates you. God desires good for you. Satan desires to destroy and kill you. God is greater and more powerful than anything Satan can throw at you, but it would be naïve to believe that Satan won't use every trick and ploy possible to convince you otherwise. Your problems, and the enemy's attacks, may be big and relentless, but God is so much bigger. It is so vital to focus on God's greatness, first and foremost, but to be equipped with the wisdom, truth, awareness and tools that God has given you in His Word to fight the enemy and win your battles against the devil and his tricks. God doesn't want you to be a victim – He wants you to be victorious.

You can know how to be prepared to withstand and win the spiritual battles Satan wages against you - to get dressed daily for battle by putting on God's armor and taking your thoughts captive. Knowing and applying the wisdom of God's Word to your life can equip you to weather the storms of adversity in life and the battles you will encounter in this world. It is not a matter of "if" you will experience adversities in this life, but a matter of "when" you will experience them.

Read **John 16:33** – Jesus said, "I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.". The truth is that you are going to have troubles. But, the good news and encouragement is that God is with you. He gives wisdom and instruction in His Word that can equip you, and He helps you in and through every battle. Even so, you still make the choice of whether to cope and respond in your own way, or to allow God to help you win the battles in life.

God knows that you get weary in the process of fighting off the attacks of the enemy. In your natural thought process and human nature, you try to fight your battles and end up feeling defeated more often than being victorious. Life on earth can truly be brutal when you try to fight your battles in your own strength and power. God fights and contends for His faithful followers, but He also equips them through His Word to be able to stand firm in the spiritual battles in this life. He gives His followers the gift of prayer and an effective strategy as a weapon of warfare against the devil - the enemy of the soul. God not only fights for His own, but He also instructs them on how to suit up for battle and defend themselves, when necessary.

That sounds like a really good plan, doesn't it? Then why do you often get sucker punched by the devil as if you didn't know his plan, or as if God hadn't warned you and left you with a battle plan? It's most often because of what you believe or don't believe. Satan is a deceiver and people don't believe the truth of God and His Word. That leaves you vulnerable to attacks that have the potential to wreck your life.

It has always been, and will always continue to be, Satan's plan to steal and kill and destroy you – Read **John 10:10**. Believing in Jesus and His instructions is the key to resisting the ploys of the devil. Satan is the thief, but Jesus is the shepherd. Satan destroys, but Jesus protects. Satan represents lies, but Jesus is truth. Satan is death, but Jesus is life.

Satan is a menace, but he does not have the divine powers that God has. He cannot read your mind. He does not have access to your innermost thoughts, but he certainly is cunning and deceptive. The temptations he uses to entice you are attractive to you or you wouldn't be interested in giving in to them and taking the bait of sin and seduction. Satan is clever enough to observe you – he watches and waits. He knows what makes you tick and he knows what ticks you off, because he studies your patterns, your habits, your coping mechanisms and your reactions. While he cannot access your thoughts, there is no doubt that he can influence them. He puts subtle thoughts and temptations before you as a way to derail you. He is the master of deceit.

Not even Jesus was exempt from the attacks of Satan, so why would you think he would not come after you, a mere human? Jesus resisted the devil by reminding him of God's Word, the truth. Because Jesus knew the Word and the truth, He was ultimately victorious and did not fall victim to the tricks of Satan. Read the account of Jesus being tempted by Satan in the desert – **Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13**.

Jesus had fasted for 40 days. He was tired and hungry and Satan targeted those areas, so he could tempt Jesus in what he viewed as areas of weakness. He knew that, if he could get Jesus to

be tempted in some way, then he could accuse Him of failure, weakness and even sin, thereby thwarting the plan of God. But, Jesus was steadfast in the Father's love and truth. Jesus answered the distortions and temptations of Satan repeatedly with the words, "It is written". Jesus quoted the Words of truth – the Word of God.

If you know God's Word and the truth, you can also use it to resist the lies and temptations of Satan. If you don't know God and His Word, you will be tricked and devoured by the devil. He will eat your lunch if you try to go up against him in your own human willpower. And, when the devil successfully seduces you with his temptations and lies, he will then accuse you with the very temptations for which you have yielded or given in to. He sets a trap and keeps you in a cycle of insanity – sin, condemnation, shame and guilt.

Someone was speaking recently on a radio program, recounting the wisdom of an older lady he knew as a child. To paraphrase him, he said she would always say something like, "Listen, young man, don't ever do anything that the devil or other people could pick up and use as a stick to beat you up with". That's sound advice, right there! This lady had been around long enough to learn that, once you give in to temptations and believe the lies of the enemy, he turns right back around and uses them against you to condemn you and make you feel guilty and ashamed. It's all part of his strategy to destroy your life. His lies can be very effective if you believe them instead of believing or applying God's truth to your life and problems.

Have you ever wondered why you are so susceptible to Satan's lies and attacks on your life? Maybe it is because you have never known or believed that God fights for you and that He also equips believers to be prepared to fight the battles they will undoubtedly face in this world. God wants you to know how to win the battles in your life with His help and power.

Satan is at the root of much despair, discouragement, doubt, difficulty, discomfort and darkness in this world. He attacks you physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. He goes after you, your spouse, your marriage, your family, your kids, your job, your reputation, your character, your contentment, your peace and happiness. The list is endless. He is often successful because he waits, watches and attacks at just the right time, when you are vulnerable and susceptible to his tricks.

If you don't believe Satan can touch you, watch out, because that is exactly what he wants you to think. Pride will tell you that there is no devil or that he has nothing to do with your life. If that is what you believe, he already has deceived you. Satan knows that your pride doesn't leave much room for God in your life or your reasoning. He will attack a prideful person much more easily than a humble person, because he uses your pride to make you rely on yourself and to get you to believe his lies. He's crafty that way. He wants to keep God's purposes from you and he seeks to replace God with himself in your life, so he can destroy you. He hates you. It would be a grave mistake to underestimate him. You don't have to be obsessed with him, but you do need to be aware of him. Knowing God and His Word is your greatest weapon against spiritual warfare, so let's explore further what God's Word says about this subject.

REMEMBER, there really is no comparison between God and Satan. God is your Creator. Satan is one of God's created beings who rebelled against God, because he wanted to be God. This fallen world is a result of the sin and consequences of sin caused by Satan. But, God's Word says Satan is already defeated. The blood that Jesus shed on the cross defeated sin and Satan. God knows how the story ends. He has already appointed a day when He will not allow Satan to wreak havoc in this world or in your life any longer. Satan also knows this. Satan also knows that humans don't

always believe God and that he can influence people in this world when they do not believe God. Therefore, Satan has pledged an all-out assault to keep as many people as possible from believing in God and spending eternity in heaven with Him. That is why you are in a constant battle here on earth.

The bad news is that you were born for a battle. The good news is that you were born to WIN! Read **1 John 4:4** – “Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” Satan is not afraid of you, but he is afraid of who is in you as a follower of Jesus – he is afraid of God’s Holy Spirit.

Read **Ephesians 6:12**. The apostle Paul says we are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. That sounds like a suspense or a fantasybased novel, right? Well, this novel is about the seen and unseen realities of your life - it is about you. God is the author of life, light and good. Satan is the author of death, darkness and evil. You can choose to be a product of goodness or a pawn of the enemy. Your story may have begun a bit shaky and you may have experienced many trials and setbacks, but it’s never too late to let God be the author and finisher of your faith.

It’s important to know that spiritual warfare will happen. It happens because the devil truly hates you and wants to destroy you. It happens because Satan does not want you to have peace or to live according to God’s plan for your life. It happens because followers of Christ are subject to persecution in this life. We live in a broken world and consequences play out that affect us in negative and detrimental ways. Satan does not want any of us to follow Jesus or overcome our problems. When he observes a true follower, a disciple of Jesus, he turns up the heat to try to discourage and derail the committed follower. He is relentless. You can expect it. Yes, spiritual warfare is constant and real. God says it is real and He tells you how you can fight the battles that are sure to come your way in this life for whatever reason.

Since we are talking about a real spiritual war against your soul and recognizing it as a real battle, we are utilizing the biblical reference of a soldier in battle getting dressed for war. War was common in biblical times. Weapons were sharp and deadly, so the soldier would cover his entire body with an external hard “armor” used to protect him and deflect the weapons waged against him in battles he fought. A soldier would never dream of going into battle without his armor, his protection. Therefore, “getting dressed” in battle armor was vital to the soldier’s survival. Likewise, getting appropriately dressed for your battles, in your protective armor, is vital to your survival.

Read **Ephesians 6:10-18**. The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to the church at Ephesus to strengthen and encourage them. Paul told believers in the church then, and he reminds believers in the church today, that there is a real and constant battle for believers against forces of evil – the devil and his demons – and Paul instructs all of us as to how we can utilize every spiritual weapon that God has placed at our disposal to win our battles. Let’s break it down and study what it means to put on the full armor of God:

- **Verse 10** – Paul says to be strong – not in your own strength – but in the strength of the Lord, and – not in your own power or plans – but in God’s mighty power. That’s life recovery 101 right there. Stop trying to do what only God can do. Surrender to Him and allow Him to transform you in His power.
- **Verse 11** – Paul says to put on the full armor of God SO you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. You already know the devil is up to no good. “When” he attacks you, you can

be prepared and take your stand according to God's Word.

- **Verse 12** – Paul talks about the reality of spiritual things that the natural person is either unaware of or is afraid to acknowledge or learn about. Many are in denial that a spiritual world even exists, but God tells us in His Word that it does. Believing the truth that it exists and that it has a great deal to do with your life can help you when the battle comes. Denying the existence of the devil and his demons won't make them go away. It will only serve to defeat you, because you won't be prepared to fight real battles waged against you daily by the enemy of your soul. You cannot face your demons until you acknowledge that they do, in fact, exist. People are not your enemies. Satan is your real enemy. This verse tells you that your battles are not against flesh and blood (real people), but against the rulers, against the authorities and against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms (real, but unseen to the human eye – demons). You may have been exhausting your efforts in fighting the wrong target. You shouldn't blame people or God when trouble hits – you should blame the one who really is your enemy – Satan. If you are going to get mad at anyone, get mad at him. He is the author of any chaos associated with your life.
- **Verse 13** – Paul says to put on the full armor of God. What does that even mean? It means that you are naked and vulnerable to the enemy's attacks if you do not purposefully pray and apply God's Word and armor (covering) over your life daily. Getting dressed daily, by putting on the armor of God, helps you stand your ground, so you can face and win your battles.
- **Verse 14** – Put on the belt of truth around your waist – This is God's truth. Know God and His Word and make it the authority over your life. This belt of truth will help you be victorious in your battles and will protect you from becoming a victim of Satan's attacks. The belt of truth will allow you to exercise godly integrity at all times and in all situations.
- **Verse 14** – Put on the breastplate of righteousness – Righteousness is one of the attributes of God. It is everything that is good and right and holy. It represents purity of heart – the idea of always keeping your motives clean and pure. Satan likes to attack your heart where you have deep-seated emotions. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross made it possible for believers to put on His perfect righteousness in place of their own limited righteousness. He exchanged your sin for His righteousness. He wore your sin so you could wear His righteousness. Satan likes to attack your purity and he will use pornography, movies, books, songs, anything he can to keep your heart from being pure. When you are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, your heart (your breastplate) is guarded to help you remain pure and to resist temptation. The very blood of Jesus is your protection – your breastplate of righteousness worn to protect your heart.
- **Verse 15** – Put on the shoes of peace – This entire passage is about standing firm in God's Word and sharing the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is a message of peace and believers are called to live it out in their daily walk – to tell others. Satan is opposed to the Gospel and he is opposed to anyone hearing it and believing it. He doesn't want you to be able to spread the Gospel effectively. Put on the shoes of peace to help you always be ready to share the Gospel. Strive to have peace with everyone. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. We are to share Him and the Good News about Him with others by going where He tells us to go and doing what He tells us to do.
- **Verse 16** – Take up the shield of faith – A shield is a defensive weapon. Satan is constantly shooting his flaming arrows at you. This verse says that you can extinguish those flaming arrows with your faith and trust in God. Taking the shield of faith can guard you and defend

you against Satan's fiery darts of doubt, denial and deceit. Your unwavering faith in God and His Word is a very effective shield to defend you in the battles you face, so you will not be so vulnerable to spiritual defeat. If you don't take up the shield of faith, you are vulnerable to Satan's attacks and you open the door for Satan to waltz on in and create chaos. Your faith and confidence in God shuts the door and denies Satan access to you and your life.

- **Verse 17** – Take the helmet of salvation – A helmet protects your head, your mind. And we all know that the battlefield is in the mind. If your head is wounded in a battle, it is a mortal blow – one cannot live without their head. The helmet of salvation protects your mind from evil thoughts. Salvation is the process of saving someone from something. The salvation of Jesus saves people from their sins. The helmet of salvation serves to save you from the thoughts that come to your mind. Your thoughts influence your beliefs. Satan doesn't want you to believe God. He wants you to doubt God and your eternal salvation. Salvation, through the blood of Jesus Christ, gives you a new mind. This new mind protects you from evil. Satan will try to access your mind by any means possible – through what you view on television, what you read, the music you listen to – he will try to use all these things to impact your thinking and your mind, and, ultimately, your behavior. You have to guard your mind and thoughts with the helmet of salvation
- **Verse 17** – Take the sword of the Spirit – The sword is God's Word and the Holy Spirit of God living within you, as a follower of Jesus. The more you know God and His Word, and the more you are led by the Holy Spirit, the more equipped you become to withstand the temptations of the enemy. Using your sword is going on the offensive against Satan. The sword enables you to effectively recognize truth, to know what is from God and what is from Satan. With the sword, you can put Satan on notice that you know God's Word and you know how to use it! Knowing and following God's Word and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and direct you is your best defense in combatting the lies and arrows of temptation from Satan. You can do as Jesus did and say with confidence, "It is written". You can recognize when and how the devil is twisting or distorting God's truth so you can say, "Get behind me, Satan"! That means He has to get behind the Holy Spirit of God living inside of you. That means that the blood of Jesus has covered your sins and that truth has already defeated Satan's end game.
- **Verse 18** – Pray! Pray! Pray! Paul instructed the church to pray in the Spirit with all kinds of prayers. Be on guard and be alert – pray. Praying in the Spirit doesn't have to be confusing or scary to those who do not know what it means. The Holy Spirit of God leads you into truth. The Holy Spirit of God points you to Jesus. The Holy Spirit of God knows what you should do and how you should pray – yield to His guidance. Pray as He directs and be discerning and aware. He can see the big picture and He can counsel you to win any battle by praying effectively for yourself and for others in the battles we all face. He knows how to win the battles. Pray that you may be able to yield accordingly and be led into victory.

That's a great battle plan for your everyday life. It can be the difference between living in victory and living in defeat. Whether it is your past, your present or your future, the only way to recover from the pain and hurt in life, to be free and to get well, is to follow God's battle plan for victory.

Our other key passage for Anchor 10 is **2 Corinthians 10:4-5**. It serves to lay the foundation that there truly is a battle going on between good vs. evil, between truth vs. deceit and between God vs. Satan. Paul wrote this letter to specifically denounce those who were twisting the truth of God and His Word. He stresses that there is an ongoing spiritual battle. Satan will do anything and everything to make you reject the truth of God, so you will believe his lies that are opposed to the

truth of God – lies that he will use to condemn you and defeat you.

Paul says that the weapons followers of Christ have in their arsenal are mighty, because they are not natural weapons – they are not of this world, but are of God’s heavenly world. Paul says that God’s divine power gives you the power to demolish strongholds. That’s a strong statement, but it is a true statement. The weapons God puts at your disposal, as His disciple, are supernatural weapons that have divine power to demolish strongholds. That means that you don’t have to walk around in defeat, with your head hung low. You can activate the divine power of God in your life to overcome the strongholds that afflict you.

Satan has lied to you and pretended that he is bigger than God and that your problems are bigger than God. Yet, in this passage, Paul says that the weapons in your heavenly arsenal allow you to demolish every argument and pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God (every twisted and distorted lie from Satan). Paul instructs believers to “take captive” every thought to make it obedient to Christ. In other words, God can give you the wisdom, discernment and power to recognize the lies of the enemy and speak the truth of God, so God’s truth will overcome the lies of Satan and the strongholds in your life.

When you take something captive, you take possession of it. You stop allowing it to control you and you take control of it. You don’t have to believe the lies of Satan or others. You can yield to the truth of God’s Word and the power of His Holy Spirit to help you discern what is really going on and say, “Not today, Satan!”. When you have a thought that is not godly or a temptation that opposes godly character and integrity, you have the ability - through the heavenly weapons God has equipped you with - to take that thought “captive to the obedience of Jesus Christ”. That simply means that you don’t give in to that thought. You stop and evaluate that thought and measure it against the truth of God. You can pray something like this, “Is this good? If this of You, God? Does this line up with what I know to be true of God, God’s Word and God’s character? Will I believe and act upon this thought or temptation, or will I surrender it to God?”

When you utilize your heavenly arsenal, and start to effectively take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, you will start to experience victory over the strongholds in your life. You will start to recognize the lies of the enemy and speak the truth of God. You will be able to live out God’s truth and reject Satan’s lies. You will no longer let your thoughts hold you captive, but you will take those thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ – thereby taking control of them. You will no longer be a hostage to the temptations Satan throws at you, but you will readily use the weapons within your heavenly arsenal to allow God to make you strong enough to reject those temptations and surrender them to Him.

Finally, it’s important to know that you should not look for a demon around every corner or beneath every rock, but you should have an awareness that the war Satan has waged against you and your soul is very real. But, ultimately, God is always greater and He has given you the provision of His truth and the tools you need to defeat the lies of the enemy. Don’t deny that Satan exists, but focus on the fact that God has his number and has shared it with you. God has given you everything you need to have victory in this life. Look to Him and trust in Him. Yield your battles to Him, but be ready to get in the fight and use the weapons God has given you to fight with when the responsibility is yours. There is a way to win the spiritual battles in your life – choose God and make godly choices. **James 4:6-7**, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves then to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”.

An easy way to remember this is to think of it in this way:

HUMBLE + SUBMIT + RESIST = HE WILL FLEE

As you humble and submit yourself to God in every area of your life, the more power you will have to resist the enemy, so he will flee, in Jesus name!

QUESTIONS FOR YOU:

1. Give an example of spiritual warfare in my life. How can getting dressed daily for battle guard me against Satan's lies and help me resist the temptations in my life?
2. What keeps me from applying God's truth in my life to help me with my thoughts and temptations that oppose God and His Word? What thoughts do I need to take captive to the obedience of Christ and how can I do this more effectively in the future?
3. Everyone gets dressed daily before leaving their house. Going outside naked is not an option. My spiritual life should be no different - I need to get dressed every day before going out into the world. God's armor is my covering of protection. With this in mind, write my own prayer and battle plan, based on Ephesians 6:10-18, and share it with my group. (From this point moving forward, I will become intentional about putting on God's armor and getting dressed daily by using this prayer to help me win the spiritual battles in my life).