

Becoming Who God Created Me to Be



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DEDICATION

Here is a book for my boys.

He gives us grace for us to do certain things in life,
Things we would never be able to do
Without Him.

So as you grow up,
I pray He will make Himself known to you in the
Events of your life.

He has already done the work.

So rest in Him

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Chapter 1: I am Body, Soul, and Spirit

When God created each human being, He thought of this individual before the baby was even born. Read this verse and consider what it is saying.

You saw me before I was born.
Every day of my life was recorded in your book.
Every moment was laid out
before a single day had passed.

--Psalm 139:16

(New Living Translation)

What are some things about these verses that strike you? Ask God to reveal things to you that He wants you to see within these verses. List them here.

God cares very, very much about you. He wrote about us before we were born! Therefore, do not worry about each day. Instead pray about each day so that you can do what He made you to do for that day. But how do we know our purpose and what we are to do?

Well, I'm glad you asked. You have a spirit that is a part of God the Spirit. He gave that part of Himself to you so you don't have to wonder or worry or be afraid that you are doing the wrong thing. God did not choose plants, animals, or even angels to be vessels for His Spirit. You are so special that there is no one else in the world like you, and no one else who will ever be like you. Therefore, it is important to stay connected to God the Father so you can do what you were created to do in life.

But it's not that easy. Our spirits need "houses" of flesh that can dwell in a physical form on this earth. We need a body to live in and a soul (mind, will, and emotions) that add a layer of how we interact with the world around us. It's like how God created many, many types of plants and animals. Each one looks different and has special abilities. Some live in the desert, some live in the water, some have big feet, some have lots of hair, some are microscopic,

some can run fast, and on and on. Each interacts differently with the world and lives in a different part of the world, too. Humans are also created very differently. Some are born on one continent, some on others. Some live in the jungle and some live on mountain tops. Many live in cities or in the countryside or suburbs. We have special talents and purposes, too, and each person looks and acts differently. But many people do not know that we are all created in the image of God, showing a specific part of Himself.

Our bodies and souls are the parts that interact with the world around us so we can exist in a physical form. These are the parts of us that are separated from God when we go against what God wants for us.

Read these Bible verses and write down something about the verse that you have not noticed before after each one. It can even be a question that you have about the verse.

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.” (Ezekiel 36:26, NIV)

“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Ephesians 2:1, NIV)

Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again” (John 3:3, NIV).

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV).

To help understand this three part model of humans, write down I Thessalonians 5:23 below.

You should have written down this verse: Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. – I Thessalonians 5:23 (New Living Translation)

Now not everything about our body and soul is rotten. They're just the parts of us that do not have a direct connection with God, so they are susceptible to death and decay. We were still made by God, but the body and soul are what engage the world around us. So these are the parts of us that sin. The Hebrew word for sin is 'khata', which also means "to fail" or "to miss the mark".

So anything in which we do not hit the standard that God set out for us to do is sin. Does anyone live perfectly in God's will? And is any human capable of that?

Now when the spirit of God comes to live in you, you now have a new master over your body and soul. And so how we live our lives and the decisions we make, down to what we do day to day, come under the direction of the Spirit of God. And only God knows why He made us and what our purpose is. It would be for our benefit to be as close as possible to our Creator, or else we would be living without any purpose and direction, just doing what we pleased, what felt good to do at that moment. Frankly, that is a sad existence. While people can accomplish things and have a good life without their Creator, they ultimately will end up pursuing things that don't really have any lasting meaning—money, power, fun, relationships-- whatever makes them “feel good” at the time.

There is nothing new under the sun. People will end up doing the same things over and over again, but in different ways. Seeking purpose without God ends in the same place, disappointment and a profound sense of sadness and hopelessness.

When you are young, it would be a good time to ask God how and why He made you. So think about who you are and what people who know and love you have said about you. These should be good things. Then let's go to God and ask Him to speak to you about you.

Dear God, help me to see myself the way that you made me. Speak to me about who I am and how you made me.

I am:

Let's finish in prayer for ourselves and each other so we can be in touch with God's Spirit, that special part of Him that lives within you.

Dear God, help me to know how and why you created me. I am fearfully and wonderfully made as it says in your Word. Help me to know my purposes and your plans for me, so I can obey You each moment. I give to you my mind, thoughts, emotions, body and soul to be ruled by your Spirit. Make me your obedient son. Amen.

Chapter 2: Living in the Soul vs Living in the Spirit

“My friends, do not be surprised at the painful things you are now suffering. These things are testing your faith. So do not think that something strange is happening to you.” I Peter 4:12 (ICB)

When you feel the difficulty of life squishing you from all sides, know that experiencing difficulty could mean that you will be growing and being tested. Well, it actually means that God believes you are *ready* for growth, but it will ultimately be your choice as to whether you go through the process, wrapped by His Grace. Remember, it is always your choice as to whether you want to receive His blessings. God has more skin in the game that you do. You are His child. He is invested in making sure that you grow up to do what He has made you to do.

Let's remember King David. He was not always a king. When Samuel anointed him as king, he was likely just a teenager, tending to sheep in a field, and the youngest of Jesse's sons. There was nothing on the outside that would make anyone suspect that David would be the greatest king of the Israelite nation. But what was more interesting was that after David was anointed king by the prophet Samuel, he encounters about another ten to fifteen years of strife and turmoil and many near-death experiences until he actually becomes the king. Many people were out for David's life, including Saul the King of Israel!

Why do you think God allowed such a long period of serious hardships to befall the one that he had chosen as Israel's next king? Write these reasons down.

So if God uses challenging situations in our lives to be used for our benefit and growth, what is it that He is trying to grow up in us by us having these unpleasant and sometimes near-death experiences? He is teaching us to respond to these situations with spiritual responses, not emotional, rational or even practical responses. God is teaching us to not lean on our own

abilities or talents to get things done. He has a particular way that He wants you to navigate each difficult thing that comes up in your life, and He wants to teach you to come to Him and ask Him how to do it. He wants to teach you not to rely on yourself to get the job done or get ahead in life. He wants you to first start with obedience to Him in the little things, like spending a part of your day studying the Bible and praying, for example. When you submit these seemingly little things to him and command your soul to have peace in God, He ends up making each situation into what He wants it to be. All He wants from us is a pure heart that seeks Him above all else, not our own protection and provision in difficult situations.

Therefore, the truth is you are responsible for the reaction that you have to life's challenges. No one can control every various situation that befalls us, but you can control your responses. And that control of your response can be very powerful tool against Satan. There will be more on this topic later when we talk about the armor of God.

Let's look at a particularly interesting story of David. Pay attention to how David responds. This is a point in his life when he has already wrestled and killed a bear and a lion and killed Goliath and was running from the Philistines and the Israelites that were trying to kill him. So I would say he is rather "mature" in the Lord at this point! And he trusts that God will do what is best in the situation, and all he has to do is just submit and not fight in his own strength. Let's read.

David Spares Saul's Life

I Samuel 24

After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi."² So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crag of the Wild Goats.

³ He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. ⁴ The men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said^[b] to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

⁵ Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. ⁶ He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord."⁷ With these words David sharply

rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.

⁸ Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. ⁹ He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you’? ¹⁰ This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord’s anointed.’ ¹¹ See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. ¹² May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. ¹³ As the old saying goes, ‘From evildoers come evil deeds,’ so my hand will not touch you.

¹⁴ “Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Who are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? ¹⁵ May the Lord be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand.”

¹⁶ When David finished saying this, Saul asked, “Is that your voice, David my son?” And he wept aloud. ¹⁷ “You are more righteous than I,” he said. “You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. ¹⁸ You have just now told me about the good you did to me; the Lord delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. ¹⁹ When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today. ²⁰ I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. ²¹ Now swear to me by the Lord that you will not kill off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father’s family.”

²² So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

After David cuts part of Saul’s robe off, what does he call Saul? And is this the truth of who Saul is? Write your answers down below:

David still calls Saul “God’s anointed.” Saul was still God’s anointed first king of Israel. But unlike Saul, David depended on God to establish him as king, whereas Saul had become corrupted by the challenges that came with the position and turned to doing things his own way. The key difference with David was that he upheld what God wanted to do and did not do things out of his own strength, even though he likely had the strength and the ability to do them.

Saul threw a spear at David twice with attempts to kill him before this particular event happened. So here is a situation where David was given the opportunity to kill his arch nemesis. Was David crazy for instead coming up to him and prostrating himself before Saul asking him to forgive him? Couldn’t Saul the king turn right back around and have David killed for trying to murder him? Yes, these are all ways that the world will think. But David had years of training allowing God’s Spirit to rule over his thoughts and emotions. So behaving according to God’s standards was the way that David was used to acting at this point of his life. In short, David saw things from God’s perspective. David knew that Saul had a purpose for being in his life, and it wasn’t going to be to just kill David at that moment. There were two instances before this one so if it was going to happen, it would have happened already. David knew that he had to be a living example of doing God’s will, even if it meant his life was in jeopardy.

This does not mean that we should seek out or stay in situations that will harm us, but we should seek God and what He wants us to do *in each and every situation*. Even if something might seem obvious, God does not always want us to do it the typical way that everyone else in the world would do it. In fact, it would be direct disobedience on your part if you just ignored the prompting of the Holy Spirit and just carried on with life the way that you saw fit. These decisions could come down to anything—what you eat, when you do your work, who you have as friends, and even the thoughts that you think. These seemingly little things in life are where the work of living in our soul versus living in the spirit come into play. When we trust in God in all situations rather than taking things into our own hands, God shows up as your Father.

David was identified as a “man after God’s own heart” (I Samuel 13:14). What does this mean? This verse identifies the difference between Saul and David in terms of what each

man's desires were. When Saul was about to be anointed as king, he was found hiding in the baggage (I Samuel 10:22)¹, trying to avoid the destiny that God wanted to give him. Saul then continues to try to please the people rather than please God by taking things into his own hands time and again. He takes the burnt offerings that only Samuel the prophet was supposed to offer to God because the soldiers were scattering due to their own impatience (I Samuel 13). And by continuing to do things by his own efforts and what seemed "logical" at the time to do, Saul eventually started to lose his mind as he moved further and further away from God's will. It is not surprising therefore that towards the end of his life, Saul eventually seeks the help of the witch of Endor to know what to do next, as he was then cut off completely from God (I Samuel 28). At the end of Saul's life, he had lost all sense of direction and purpose, finally taking his own life.

You could say that Saul made logical decisions based on what he thought was best at the time. Yet those steps took him away from God. David made seemingly illogical decisions, but He sought God's heart in the matters. If you were reading this story from the perspective of a rational human being, David was probably considered "crazier"—he fought a giant with a few stones from the creek and a slingshot. He prostrated himself before his enemy. And he lived day to day trusting in God and seeking Him. Saul did quite logical things, like making "popular" political decisions that the people wanted. But one had the spirit of God guiding him and the other did not. It was this difference that made all the difference in the world.

Dear God, help me to take questions and decisions to you. Help me to ask you for your guidance, especially in things that might seem obvious for me to do on my own. Do not let me walk in disobedience towards you. May I pray daily about how to rule over my body and soul. Let your Spirit guide me in the things that engage in. Help me to submit to your Word.

Chapter 3: Know Your Enemy **(and how to Beat him)**

Did you know that you have an enemy who is after you like a blood hound? Who is Satan and what have you done to him? Well, it's not so much what YOU did as it is your status as a human being that is driving him to antagonize you and every other soul. Satan thought he knew better than God in how to do things. He was at one point, God's principle angel, fashioned to create. He thought God made a terrible choice of choosing humans rule over the earth and carry out the elaborate theatrical events of Creation.

Genesis 1:27 ESV

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Ephesians 2:6 ESV

And raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

These verses show how infinitely important humans are in His plan to carry out the expression of Himself in creation *through humans*. We are the vessels of God in the form of flesh when the Spirit of God dwells within us. But Satan is vehemently stubborn, and nothing will change his mind about God and his opinion that God made the wrong choice by choosing humans. Satan's pride caused him to lead the rebellion in heaven and thus get himself along with a third of the angels kicked out of heaven. Let's study some verses about Satan and his fall from heaven to understand how and why Satan is out to steal, kill, and destroy you.

Satan was one of the most incredible creatures that God ever made. He was adorned with all kinds of jewels and was perfect in every way. So that's why sin entered him and he acted upon it by rebelling against God. Underline all the words that are used to describe Satan in the verses of Ezekiel and Isaiah.

Ezekiel 12:12-18 (ESV)

“Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, Thus says the Lord God: “You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you. By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you.

Isaiah 14:12: "How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!"

Satan is one of the highest beings that God had ever made. He was around before creation started, so Satan knows what’s happened for generations upon generations of human history. He knows each person in the generations before you and saw the ways that they fell. He knows human history, and all the weak points that turn our hearts away from God. He’s invisible, too, which is a huge advantage compared to humans who are clothed in flesh. He is the master of temptation, so anything that turns the hearts and minds of humans away from God. So he will try the same tactics against you, too, BECAUSE HE HATES YOU, namely he hates the potential that you have to do God’s will on this earth. It’s like having lots of mini-men doing God’s will all around the earth. Satan wants to squash each one.

Satan spends a lot of time and energy on weak human beings. It’s a similar concept to a whole army of Orcs going around Middle Earth after one little Hobbit. Because Frodo had the ring, he had all the power. Therefore, it was worth sending these forces of darkness against Frodo and all the other characters that were supporting him on his mission. So why is it so

important for Satan to destroy all of us? Because we are the chosen vessels of God's Spirit. If Satan destroys us, he believes that God will not be able to do His will on earth.

Ephesians 6:12 ESV

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

So what purpose do humans have and what purpose do angels (even fallen angels) have in the entire context of the world? Angels are used to minister to humans and help us to do God's purposes while fallen angels (demonic spirits) are used to counter the will of God on this earth. Without a counterforce, there would be no dichotomization. God also uses these fallen spirits to test us and prove the point that humans were the right choice to harbor God's spirit.

"Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14 NIV)

"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11 NIV)

Now in this context, read through the first two chapters of Job which give an account of God allowing Satan to test his most upright man of that era. Write down your thoughts on these chapters below after reading Job chapters one and two:

Ultimately, Satan will do only what God allows him to do. The reason he maintains authority to do certain things to and through humans is either that our hearts are not aligned with God's and thus authority is given over to Satan by default or God allows for Satan to enact certain events. But remember that Satan is an already defeated enemy. We know this story has ended already, but Satan is allowed to run around with his evil spirits on earth until he is finally cast away forever.

Colossians 1:13-14

"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Jesus is speaking here in these verses to the people in *Luke 10:18-20*. *"¹⁸ He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹ I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ²⁰ However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'*

If Satan and his evil spirits are spiritual beings who work through the soul to entice us to sin against God and use our bodies to carry out the sin on earth, how do we fight against beings who are older than earth, invisible, much stronger and more clever than us? Humans generally stand no chance against them. It's not using your own strength of course. We are mere feeble weaklings compared to these hordes of evil spirits.

James 4:7

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

By submitting ourselves to God, we overcome the enemy. And though He would ask us to do things that seem so contrary to the weapons of warfare that the world understands and

promotes, it is through things like demonstrating love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness, that Satan's tactics unravel before us. And it's in those moments when everything just comes together in peace and harmony that stands testimony that God lives in you and He made the right choice by choosing humans to carry His presence. The real matter is about knowing your King, the one who saved you from Satan's power. So therefore, fix your eyes on God, and you will know what to do and who you were made to be. All the rest of it will just fall away and have no hold over you.

It is not good to spend too much time focused on Satan and all that he is doing, but just remember this about him.

“He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.” John 8:44 (ESV)

There are hoards and hoards of evil spirits who entice humans to carry out sinful acts. These spirits cannot enact sins in the physical world as they do not have fleshly exteriors like we do, but they can influence humans to carry out these sins by working within our souls. And through constantly relinquishing our control over to evil spirits, we become more and more entrenched in the influence of the demonic, especially when we do not know or believe in the power of Jesus.

Dear Father, you are my Maker. You made the angels to minister to me, so I ask that you protect me from the schemes of the enemy and keep my thoughts on you. You made me wise, even if I don't know the end from the beginning. I trust what you are doing. I give you permission to work through me and show that you have made the right decision by choosing me to hold your Spirit and do your work on this earth.

Chapter 4: What is Fasting?

As I am writing this for you, I am currently at the end of a three day water fast and thinking of how to explain the practice to fasting to those who don't engage in it. Fasting seems like a difficult thing to do for the world, but it is actually one of the greatest weapons that we have of spiritual warfare. So what is fasting from the perspective of God? The first instances of fasting come from the Old Testament. It was never a rule, like the Ten Commandments, for example. So why would anyone fast? Let's look at three examples of fasting in the Bible to help us understand how it releases spiritual power and authority and helps us to break through any strongholds within our soul that keeps us from our destiny.

Example One: Moses and the Ten Commandments

Moses fasted when he was up on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments about ten chapters of laws that helped to regulate and judge certain social situations when the Israelites suddenly found themselves out of Egyptian slavery. There could have been total mayhem because this is a people who did not know how to govern themselves. They were slaves for over 400 years! Moses thus really needed to hear from God on how to lead these people.

“Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.”
Exodus 34:28

Example Two: Jesus Fasts for Forty Days

At the end of Matthew chapter 3 into chapter 4, we see Jesus was baptized in water by John the Baptist and the Holy Spirit came down on him. He fasted for 40 days and nights. *Then* Satan came to him and tempted him three times to throw him off course before he even started his ministry to the people. After he overcame Satan's temptations, Jesus then started to preach and grow up his disciples.

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted^[a] by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”

⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’^[b]”

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:

“‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Matthew 4:4-17 (NIV)

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’^[c]”

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Jesus Begins to Preach

¹² When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee.

Later in the book, we are going to come back to this chapter and study it from another angle, but as of now, just know that fasting came before one of Jesus’ trials with Satan. Jesus used fasting for preparation to stand up to the temptations of Satan.

Example 3: Daniel’s vision

Another instance of fasting is when Daniel fasted for three weeks about a troublesome vision he received of a great war. At the end of a 21 day fast, Daniel received a heavenly vision of a man who spoke to him about the coming events. Here is *Daniel 10 (NIV)*.

Daniel's Vision of a Man

In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war.^[a] The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.

² At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. ³ I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

⁴ On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, ⁵ I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶ His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

⁷ I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. ⁸ So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. ⁹ Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

¹⁰ A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. ¹¹ He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

¹² Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. ¹³ But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

¹⁵ While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. ¹⁶ Then one who looked like a man^[b] touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and

began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. ¹⁷ How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe."

¹⁸ Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. ¹⁹ "Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed," he said. "Peace! Be strong now; be strong."

When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength."

²⁰ So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; ²¹ but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince).

In these three examples, each person was encountering an upcoming problem, whether that was meeting with God on a mountain by himself, facing Satan directly, or receiving a troubling vision of a great war that was upcoming. And when you face a situation where you don't know what to do, wouldn't the world tell you to make yourself stronger and prepare yourself physically or mentally? Then why would these people fast, which some might understand as weakening your body and mind?

Fasting strengthens your spirit by weakening your soul. By rejecting your soul's outcries, you are thus actively ignoring the voice of the soul so you can listen to the Spirit of God. Fasting releases more of the power of God by freeing up your time from all these "distractions," whether you are fasting from food or screen time or a certain activity that you know takes up a lot of your time and energy. You are telling your soul (and sometimes your body too depending on from what you are fasting) that it does not need to get what it wants. You then take yourself before God and seek Him. You will then oftentimes hear his voice much clearer and given the grace and His supernatural strength to do what He wants for you in that difficult period of life.

Read these Bible verses about fasting a few times each and discuss each one.

*"Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."—
Matthew 4:4*

What is the spiritual food you are having when you fast?

Now let's look at an example when only fasting and prayer was the answer to overcome a certain spiritual stronghold. Jesus knew right away what the problem was in this encounter with the boy who had seizures.

Mark 9:17-29 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. ¹⁸ And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

¹⁹ He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." ²⁰ Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

²¹ So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?"

And he said, "From childhood. ²² And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

²³ Jesus said to him, "If^[d] you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

²⁵ When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" ²⁶ Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

²⁸ And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

²⁹ So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”

The parent of the boy with seizures, when confronted by Jesus about the own sin in his life of unbelief, becomes convicted of his own sin. Parents sometimes allow for unclean spirits to remain in their children if they do not repent of certain things themselves. Parents are the ones who are directly responsible for the physical, emotional, and spiritual provision of their children, and how they rule over those who they have authority over demonstrates the areas where they rule righteously and unrighteously. And the children can become open to spiritual attack if the parents do not provide the spiritual covering over them.

Using this example, how does fasting help one’s unbelief? Write your thoughts below.

Here is another verse about fasting from Isaiah. This is a Scripture that will come up again and again when there is any discussion on fasting. It shows the power that is given to those who fast and seek God.

As you are reading these verses, highlight or underline the words that stick out to you about fasting and what it does.

Do you call this a fast and a day pleasing to the Lord?

*⁶ “[Rather] is this not the fast which I choose,
To undo the bonds of wickedness,
To tear to pieces the ropes of the yoke,
To let the oppressed go free
And break apart every [enslaving] yoke?”*

*⁷ “Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry
And bring the homeless poor into the house;*

*When you see the naked, that you cover him,
And not to hide yourself from [the needs of] your own flesh and blood?*

⁸ *“Then your light will break out like the dawn,
And your healing (restoration, new life) will quickly spring forth;
Your righteousness will go before you [leading you to peace and prosperity],*

The glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

Isaiah 58: 5-8 (AMP)

When you feel like there is something that feels like it's too much for you to conquer on your own strength, or you feel like there is a block to the spirit of God guiding you on a difficult situation, ask God if you should fast. By intentionally quieting your body and your soul, you are allowing the Spirit of God to rise up. You let the spirit flow freely, as everything else about you falls away. Then you will be better set up to receive the next things from God, and this life is about first seeking God with your whole life.

Dear Lord, give me more of you. I want you more than my own life and everything that I could make my life on my own. As I grow up, let me grow to engage in your spiritual disciplines, including fasting and prayer. Release this understanding and practice of fasting in me when the time is right. Amen.

Chapter 5: Introduction to the Armor of God

Let's move onto the next section of this book where we do a deep dive into what God has given us to overcome the enemy. He doesn't *need* us in the ultimate outcome of overthrowing Satan, but *wants* us to be a part of His plan! So onto the armor of God section of the book.

Ephesians 6:10-11

"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."

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."

We will explore each aspect of this armor of God piece by piece so you have the full understanding of the spiritual parts that are at play. With this study, you are given the choice to believe that you are part of his cohort of righteous children who have been bought for a price. You hold His presence, and you are covered by the Lord your Father who goes before you. Remain in character showing the perfect likeness of God the Father. Let no sin be found in you and Satan will thus have no power over you.

The Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17, NIV)

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² 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. 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, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Chapter 6: The Belt of Truth

*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, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with **the belt of truth buckled around your waist**”- Ephesians 6:13-14 (NIV)*

Let's examine the first piece of the armor of God that is mentioned. This is the belt of truth. The belt is the part of the armor that holds the breastplate and lets the sword hang from the side of the body. It keeps the pieces of the armor together, in other words. That's the way that truth is. Believing that there is one truth, which is the Truth that God provides you with the stability of the other pieces, allowing you to move about your way in battle. If your whole armor fell apart in the middle of a very important tactical move against the enemy, you could be standing there naked, or at least more exposed than you should be. Before one decides what to believe, one would have to ask another more important question, which is, “Is there a source of truth?” Is there a standard or set code of how things work and how things should be run or a standard of behavior on this earth that was set out before humans ever existed?

In this time in earth's history, there seems to be no set moral standard to which most people adhere. Significant laws even get upturned these days and certain individuals are allowed a “get out of jail free” card if they make enough money or are seen as a person of significant influence. The court system has become denigrated. Morals can change by the day or the situation or are just non-existent. People make decisions on how they think and feel for the day. People get passionate about some cause or point of offense that they think is important at the moment, and then it's off to something else the next day. Satan has warped the minds of people so much that there are many who wake up and just do what they like without any clear guidance or direction. They live their life with no connection to God their Creator. And then what happens? It's like a scene of bumper cars! People just changing directions all the time and bumping into each other, and it's complete chaos because people's emotions and thoughts are constantly leading them towards another direction. It leads to a very reactionary life where you are constantly reacting to life rather than having an organized way of living your life. Do you see how this is not a good way to move through life, but actually quite harmful for everyone

else involved? And this is exactly what Satan wants, because can have influence within our mind, will, and emotions. And he does NOT want you live with the purpose and direction of God!

Thankfully, you are not under the rule of Satan. You are a child of God, the only God who existed before anything else and who set out a clear standard of what He expects from those whom He has chosen as the sons of God. You will be driving on the freeway to the next destination that God leads you to while everyone else will be stuck doing mindless bumper cars.

Let's take another example involving driving. If you want to drive on the street, you should know what traffic signs and street lights mean. This is a basic standard. Most countries that have automobiles have government issued testing so drivers can demonstrate their understanding of traffic laws before obtaining a proper driver's license. What if someone came along and decided that the red light was actually a blue light and that the blue (red) light meant that you should do a U-turn on the road? Well, this wouldn't really be accepted as if that driver carried out their beliefs in real life, it would likely would cause a crash, possibly injuries and death. And shouldn't that person be prosecuted by traffic court, especially if it did result in injury or death? And if that person's defense was that he or she just "felt like" the red light should be a blue light and was following another standard of traffic laws. Well, that person would probably be thought of as simply crazy. And what if an innocent person or persons died in that car crash due to the reckless behavior of that person and that driver still staunchly believed that he or she was still right? Do you see how if we continue in the line of "just do what you feel like," that ultimately, criminals will run free, the structure of society can crumble into chaos, and no guiding principles would be present to shed light onto the situation? But in this age, people are bending the laws or even throwing out the laws completely saying that we should live any way we should. The results are truly horrifying.

It is quite sad how deluded Satan has made the people who live driven by the lusts of their souls. So daily meet with God your Father about every situation that is presented before you and truly seek His will for how to proceed. Do you see why it is so important to submit your soul (mind, will, and emotions) to God's Spirit?

"We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5)

So what is truth? What should our guiding principles be? Here are some verses that are about God and His truth. So again, we have the choice as humans of what standard to follow. Circle the words that you see in these verses related to God's truth and write some thoughts about each verse under or beside these verses.

John 1:14

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

James 1:18

18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

John 16:13

13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the 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.

Psalms 145:18

18 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

John 8:31-32

31 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, there is reference to truth and what the standard of God is. God gave to us Jesus so he would be living standard of God's laws in human form. What was then documented about him then gets passed down to the rest of the world, but also the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Truth, encourages the sons of God to guide

you day to day, moment by moment. So now let's look at the belt of Truth and how this becomes a defense against Satan.

When Satan comes to you, he will come to you in your mind, will, and emotions. He will try to remind you of the prior person that was in bondage to him, or entice you with the sin patterns of your past. So if you dealt with rage, jealousy, hatred, a self-reliance on your abilities, Satan will come back and try to get you to fall back into the same pattern of thoughts and behaviors. So now you know what your enemy is trying to do. He will get you to "miss the mark." Remember the Jewish word "khata," which means sin? It is the reference of one who does not meet the standard or hit the specified mark.

Think back to a time in your life when you kept getting caught up in doing the same wrong thing over and over again—whether that was getting annoyed at the same thing again and again, getting into a fight involving the same matter, disdaining someone and refusing to see them how God made them, or getting stuck in a particular frame of mind and not being able to see any other point of view on the matter. These are all strongholds that Satan has over your soul so that you cannot receive God's freedom. But we forget that God has set up free from this type of life by paying the price of our sin already.

Think up of three situations that you have had in your life where you have felt "stuck" in that place and felt like you could not get free, no matter how hard you tried:

1)

2)

3)

Likely, these areas were where Satan was able to enact control over you. So how does truth fit in with all of this? Here is a verse on truth that could help us. These are in two different translations and it may be helpful to look up other translations as well.

1 Peter 1:13 (ESV)

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:13 (NKJV)

¹³ 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.

Why is it called the loins of the mind? The loins are the part of the body that can reproduce, and it is not a part of the body that you would want to remain unprotected when you are in a fight with someone! Ouch. Your mind is what creates your thoughts, and those thoughts then create how you then perceive your life and promulgate the “reality” of what is going on around you.

As someone thinks within himself, so he is. -Proverbs 23:7

So say out loud or write out a thought which originates in your mind. These are not just passive things that then end up as nothing. Some will take root in your life and become something huge, just as how a seed can become plants, even massive trees! Mere thoughts have the potential to take root, become a seedling, and given, the right conditions, can flourish and make fruit and flowers. Any gardener would understand this process. Then one plant can become many, producing its own fruit and flowers and so it creates a path of behaviors in life

and even generations thereafter. Thoughts can be aligned with God's or they can be contrary to God's. So take every thought captive under Christ. You have no other choice!

Try this a few times and see what comes of it. Try handing your feelings and thoughts over to God and ask *Him* for His truth about the situation. This is what it means by submitting your thoughts to Christ. God has given us a mind that is very powerful, as we can think ourselves into a certain reality or certain circumstances. So your understanding of truth then becomes the center from which everything else will stem.

Lord, give me Your truth. There is only one truth, and that is you. You have made it clear what your standards are in your word. So let me hold fast to your truth, letting it be the foundation of how I move forward in this life. Protect me from Satan's schemes. Amen.

Chapter 7: The Breastplate of Righteousness

*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, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, **with the breastplate of righteousness in place.**”-
-Ephesians 6:13-14*

In light of the entire armor, what does the breastplate do? What vital organs do they protect? If you said heart and lungs, then you are right. People can survive without a functional brain, kidneys, legs and arms, eyes, ears, but they cannot live but a few minutes without a functional heart and lungs. What will happen if someone cannot breathe for a few minutes? They will die. What will happen if someone is stabbed in the heart and the heart stops beating? That person will also die rather quickly. But if a person has had a stroke or they have diabetes and their kidneys have stopped working, then there are ways to live without these other organs. A blind or a deaf person can continue to live. So what does having God’s righteousness do to protect us?

Let’s start by looking at a simple dictionary definition of righteousness, and then we will look at the Bible verses about it. The dictionary definition of righteousness usually mentions something about being morally correct in behavior and attitude.” To God, it means doing what He would want you to do in all situations, regardless of how it feels. People who do not know God as their Father would not want or be able to do what is righteous in every situation because they don’t have His character and they don’t hold His presence within them. But you would be able to do that because the Holy Spirit empowers you to do so.

If you demonstrate God’s righteousness in all situations, then your emotions won’t cripple you. Why? Because you and everyone else knows that you are acting in the right way and it does not matter what your soul or anyone else’s soul has to say about it. You are protected by the right way of living. So let’s take Jesus as an example. He had to stand trial against

people who made up all kinds of things against him to try to accuse him that he was breaking the Jewish laws. Jesus kept silent when people were accusing him in court about doing wrong. He maintained righteous behavior by simply not responding to their lies, or just saying the truth in an unemotional manner when he was in court. The rest of the situation he left in God's hands.

It is simply by maintaining God's standards, that people get so offended because it does not sit well with their souls. And why would it sit well with their evil, corrupted souls with no life of God within them to understand or appreciate the things of God? If one lives only by the soul and its lusts and desires, so their judgements and values will be as well. It was true in Jesus' time and it is true now. But by living the righteous standard, we are immediately set apart, judged unfairly, and misunderstood, just like Jesus. So do not be surprised that after doing everything right under God's standard, when you are still persecuted and judged. After an unfair trial, beating, flogging,, and crucifixion, what was Jesus' reaction?

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing".-- Luke 23:34

Jesus' response was one that had no soulish response of contempt for his fate or remorse for God having him endure the cross. He did not once respond in his soul, allowing his emotions to control his behavior or his responses to what happened to him. Until the end, Jesus carried out his destiny, which was to serve as the living sacrifice for all men. In living this life set up for us by God, he overcame Satan's charge that humans were not the right choice to hold God's Spirit on this earth. Jesus never sinned, or "missed the mark" of what God wanted to him to do through him.

What did having God's righteousness do? The breastplate of righteousness protected him from getting shot by Satan's fiery darts in the heart and causing a critical failure in Jesus' mission. I'm sure a lot of things happened to Jesus in his life that were perceived as "unfair" and wrong in the eyes of men. But it was God's righteousness protecting him, that covered Jesus in all that he was feeling and doing so that Satan could not derail him in the end or charge him with any sin. Jesus willingly went to the cross, not exerting any resistance against the destiny God had him on the earth for.

When Satan (usually by working through other people) tries to get you to react negatively to a bad situation, you will be absolved from the charge by maintaining righteous behavior through it. Resolution of situations could be quick or we may not see it until after our lives have ended. But through it all, maintain righteous behavior. Remember God is the final Judge of all men and angels, keeping the breastplate of righteousness over your “heart” or your emotional center. This is not easy, but will likely be the hardest thing to overcome in this world. But if you maintain God’s righteousness through the whole situation, then your emotions will be protected from getting out of control. Your reactions will be contained by God’s righteousness and no one’s accusations or attempts to rile you up and get you to behave badly in response will have any effect on you.

Lord, help me to enact your standard of righteousness in my life. If I hold to your standards of righteousness, no critical attack from the enemy will withstand. I know that you are the originator of all righteousness. I trust that even in the evil day of attack, you will help me that nothing that the enemy tries to hold against me will prevail when I am covered by your righteousness.

Chapter 8: Feet Shod with the Gospel of Peace

*“and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.”—
Ephesians 6:15 (ESV)*

When the enemy comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10), you will be well prepared with your feet that are shod with the Gospel of Peace. The Gospel restores order and peace of God to any attack of the enemy.

If there was one thing that we oftentimes forget to do in the middle of battle, it's PEACE. When we are the children of God, we can speak and enact peace over a place or situation that has chaos. We are the administrators of peace when we do God's will.

Let's study one of the most salient examples of enacting peace as demonstrated by Jesus himself from *Mark 4:35-41*:

Jesus Calms the Storm

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don't you care if we drown?”

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

When Jesus was in the midst of a terrifying storm that frightened even the most experienced fishermen (Peter, James, John, and Philip), what was he doing? Resting! He was at peace so much that he fell asleep on the boat. Wouldn't this be a great way to approach anything in life? He trusted that God his Father had the situation and all he had to do was speak peace over the situation, which he did. Here is a demonstration of what a mature son of God does. He rests even in the midst of chaos and then trusts that God will use him to restore peace to a situation. Even when the apostles thought they were on the brink of death, Jesus still showed that he could rest, and then got up, and showed that he was given by the God the ability to have dominion and authority over the dire situation at hand. Now that is power!

Look up and write down these below:

Psalm 4:8

John 16:33

John 14:27

Isaiah 26:3

Colossians 3:15

Spend some time reading over each verse a few times and circle words within each verse that resonate with your spirit. Go slowly and deliberately, studying each word, looking them up to receive a fuller understanding. Find the nugget of wisdom within each verse that will help you in your times of trouble against the enemy. Make notes under the verses.

Questions that you can find the answers to in these verses include: What is God's peace? Is it active or passive? What does it provide to the life of the believer? How can we find God's peace? Why is it important for overcoming Satan and his schemes in our lives? And why do you think peace is what covers our FEET in the armor of God?

If you are doing this study with others, then write down the insights that you receive from others down below. Otherwise, after you have studied each of these verses again, write down further insights that you believe you received.

Now let's take this one step further and study the Hebrew word for peace, which is shalom. The Hebrew word for peace—"shalom"—is actually a verb, not a noun. It means to destroy the authority that is associated with chaos, namely the chaos that Satan creates. So in context of Ephesians and the study of the armor of God, feet are the part of the body that touches the world. When God's peace shod your feet, whether you are walking or standing (or running or jumping or playing), you carry peace into that situation. You are called to remove the chaos and establish order as carriers of the Gospel of Peace. The peace of God provides the firm footing for engaging with the world and when doing battle with the enemy.

Lord God, help me everyday to bring peace to every situation that you have me encounter. Show me your way in every matter so that I can be the one to administer peace to the world around me. Your name is Yahweh-Shalom, which means the Lord is Peace.

Chapter 9: The Shield of Faith

"Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one". --Ephesians 6:16

Paul is very clear that the shield of faith becomes the most important part of the armor of God, so it is important to understand why this is and how to use it in every context against the enemy. Think about what the shield would do if a flaming dart came hurtling towards you, or better yet a whole rain shower of flaming darts. You probably wouldn't swat arrows away with your hand. You probably wouldn't charge after them with a sword to try to slice them in midair. You probably wouldn't try to deflect it away like a soccer ball with your helmet. No, you would duck behind your shield.

With Satan, he knows we are weak oftentimes better than we do. He has had generations upon generations of studying your family members on both sides to know how to make humans fall. He studies the country where you live and the cultural standards and laws that govern people's behavior and values and thought patterns. He knows where and when to throw those fiery darts at you. In many ways, he knows how you will react better than how you will react because he has studied you and your reactions. And when a fiery dart hits you, of course, anyone would react. So when we stand behind the shield of faith, those darts are prevented from hitting us in the first place. The shield of faith keeps us hidden and safe as the arrows come flying at us. So what does faith mean?

"Faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

--Hebrews 11:1 (NIV)

Let's first be clear what faith is not. Faith is not referring to a hope in receiving good things from God or that He will make everything "ok" in what you think that should be. You might hear a lot of this type of discussion from those who say they are Christians. Don't believe

this definition of faith! God never promised us an easy life free from trouble if we follow him. Instead, Jesus even told his believers that we will encounter many troubles in this world.

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33 (NKJV)

Instead, faith in the Bible refers to faith in WHO GOD IS. Faith is the belief of the identity of God as your Father and Savior, and knowing that He will stand up on your behalf when you undergo the attacks of the enemy. You will be attacked by Satan, that is for sure. But when you rest and lie down under the barrage of attacks, you expect God to stand up on your behalf and protect you like a shield would. It would not be time for you to wave around your sword or stand in front of the arrows, hoping that another part of your armor will deflect the arrows. No, it will be your faith in who God is that will protect you. It is in your resting stance that you will be saved.

"For we live by faith, not by sight."--2 Corinthians 5:7" (NIV)

This verse reminds us that it is our faith in who God is that will keep us in understanding the situations of life, not understanding things at face value. The reality of the situation is that we are in intense spiritual warfare for the control of our souls. Satan wants control over your soul so he can get you to carry out his evil desires in the world. But those who are saved and believe in Jesus have the Holy Spirit who rules over our souls. We have a real enemy who wants to kill us by turning our hearts away from God our Father and trick us into doing what he wants us to do, which ultimately is going against God.

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

--Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

This verse tells us that we must believe that God exists and also to seek Him. And what becomes our reward? Well, think of the shield again. Our reward is that He covers us when we lie down in a rain shower of Satan's arrows. Our reward is that He becomes our protector and defender when death and destruction are inevitable. This is the inevitable end without God. So our defense against Satan's arrows would be to lie down under the shield of faith, or in the belief that God is who He says He is in the Bible.

Let's look at some verses that clearly give all the examples of faith that have shown up throughout the Bible. This chapter is from Hebrews chapter 11. There are many examples here that go through the Old Testament of these various patriarchs, prophets and men and women of old who were guided in faith when the times of trouble and attack of Satan was coming full force at them. As you are reading, write down next to the verses what the "arrow" was for that person and that person's faithful response to the situation.

Faith

11 Faith means being sure of the things we hope for. And faith means knowing that something is real even if we do not see it. ² People who lived in the past became famous because of faith.

³ It is by faith we understand that the whole world was made by God's command. This means that what we see was made by something that cannot be seen.

⁴ It was by faith that Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. God said he was pleased with the gifts Abel offered. So God called Abel a good man because of his faith. Abel died, but through his faith he is still speaking.

⁵ It was by faith that Enoch was taken to heaven. He never died. He could not be found, because God had taken him away. Before he was taken, the Scripture says that he was a man who truly pleased God. ⁶ Without faith no one can please God. Anyone who comes to God must believe that he is real and that he rewards those who truly want to find him.

⁷ It was by faith Noah heard God's warnings about things that he could not yet see. He obeyed God and built a large boat to save his family. By his faith, Noah showed that the world was wrong. And he became one of those who are made right with God through faith.

⁸ It was by faith Abraham obeyed God's call to go to another place that God promised to give him. He left his own country, not knowing where he was to go. ⁹ It was by faith that he lived in

the country God promised to give him. He lived there like a visitor who did not belong. He lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who had received that same promise from God. ¹⁰ Abraham was waiting for the city^[a] that has real foundations—the city planned and built by God.

¹¹ He was too old to have children, and Sarah was not able to have children. It was by faith that Abraham was made able to become a father. Abraham trusted God to do what he had promised.^[b] ¹² This man was so old that he was almost dead. But from him came as many descendants as there are stars in the sky. They are as many as the grains of sand on the seashore that cannot be counted.

¹³ All these great men died in faith. They did not get the things that God promised his people. But they saw them coming far in the future and were glad. They said that they were like visitors and strangers on earth. ¹⁴ When people say such things, then they show that they are looking for a country that will be their own country. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking about that country they had left, they could have gone back. ¹⁶ But those men were waiting for a better country—a heavenly country. So God is not ashamed to be called their God. For he has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷ It was by faith that Abraham offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice. God made the promises to Abraham. But God tested him. And Abraham was ready to offer his own son as a sacrifice. ¹⁸ God had said, “The descendants I promised you will be from Isaac.”^[c] ¹⁹ Abraham believed that God could raise the dead. And really, it was as if Abraham got Isaac back from death.

²⁰ It was by faith that Isaac blessed the future of Jacob and Esau. ²¹ It was by faith that Jacob blessed each one of Joseph’s sons. He did this while he was dying. Then he worshiped as he leaned on the top of his walking stick.

²² It was by faith that Joseph spoke about the Israelites leaving Egypt while he was dying. He told them what to do with his body.

²³ It was by faith that Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born. They saw that Moses was a beautiful baby. And they were not afraid to disobey the king’s order.

²⁴ It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of the king of Egypt’s daughter. ²⁵ He chose to suffer with God’s people instead of enjoying sin for a short time. ²⁶ He thought that it was better to suffer for the Christ than to have all the treasures of Egypt. He was looking only for God’s reward. ²⁷ It was by faith that Moses left Egypt. He was

not afraid of the king's anger. Moses continued strong as if he could see the God that no one can see. ²⁸ It was by faith that Moses prepared the Passover and spread the blood on the doors. It was spread so that the one who brings death would not kill the firstborn sons of Israel.

²⁹ It was by faith that the people crossed the Red Sea as if it were dry land. The Egyptians also tried to do it, but they were drowned.

³⁰ It was by faith that the walls of Jericho fell. They fell after the people had marched around the walls of Jericho for seven days.

³¹ It was by faith that Rahab, the prostitute, welcomed the spies and was not killed with those who refused to obey God.

³² Do I need to give more examples? I do not have time to tell you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. ³³ Through their faith they defeated kingdoms. They did what was right and received what God promised. They shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ stopped great fires and were saved from being killed with swords. They were weak, and yet were made strong. They were powerful in battle and defeated other armies. ³⁵ Women received their dead relatives raised back to life. Others were tortured and refused to accept their freedom. They did this so that they could be raised from death to a better life. ³⁶ Some were laughed at and beaten. Others were tied and put into prison. ³⁷ They were killed with stones and they were cut in half.^[d] They were killed with swords. Some wore the skins of sheep and goats. They were poor, abused, and treated badly. ³⁸ The world was not good enough for them! They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the earth.

³⁹ All these people are known for their faith. But none of them received what God had promised. ⁴⁰ God planned to give us something better. Then they would be made perfect, but only together with us.

These are just a few examples of faith could look like. The application of faith is different according to the particular life that we live and the untenable situation that we find ourselves. So of course, "faith" will look differently for every believer. So it is important that we do not compare ourselves and how God calls us to live and trust in who He is within the context of our issues. We are called to live by faith that God will help us to withstand the evil day of attack. It is maintaining a state of rest in God that we are saved. For if we were to stand up and start swatting at the arrows, that is when we would be exposed and maimed. Instead,

let the belief in who God is to protect and cover you in the situation you find yourself. Trust God when He tells you to lie down and rest in faith of who He is as your Father. He will rise up and guard you in a way that is particular to what you need for that moment in time.

Lord, give me the faith to believe that you are my Father and Creator. All things you will work out for those who love you, who have been called to Your purpose. Let me know when to attack and when to lie down under faith. Give me the right maneuvers to do under Satan.

One of the most important tactics against the enemy is to rest under You. Teach me this discipline.

Chapter 10: The Helmet of Salvation

The next and fifth piece of the armor of God that is mentioned in *Ephesians 6:17*:

"And take the helmet of salvation"

To understand the meaning of the helmet, let's first break down the Greek word that Paul used when he was writing Ephesians. The Greek word for helmet that Paul used was "perikephalaia."

- **Peri:** Means "around"
- **Kephale:** Means "head"

The reason that a helmet might be a necessary part of any soldier's armor is pretty obvious. If you lose your head or had a bad knock to the head, you could totally lose your ability to think straight, move your body properly to fight and make quick decisions to save your life or another comrade's life. A severe blow to the head could even result in instant death. Even something that would be considered even a "minor" concussion could make you incapacitated for weeks. So, the purpose of a helmet is pretty obvious.

But the question now becomes why Paul refers to it as "salvation." This reference is not just that Jesus saved us from our sins, and we must protect our thoughts. The reference is actually that He saved us from the Satan's kingdom and put His helmet of rulership around our head. It's the crown of salvation that is reserved for God's sons.

So, what does rule over decisions and judgements as a son of God look like? Let's turn our focus to the Bible's first mention of salvation being a helmet, and this is found in Isaiah 59:17. We actually find the helmet of salvation on God who is depicted as a warrior against all the injustice He saw in the world.

The Lord looked and was displeased
that there was no justice.

¹⁶ He saw that there was no one,

he was appalled that there was no one to intervene;
so his own arm achieved salvation for him,
and his own righteousness sustained him.

¹⁷ He put on righteousness as his breastplate,
and the helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on the garments of vengeance
and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

¹⁸ According to what they have done,
so will he repay
wrath to his enemies
and retribution to his foes;
he will repay the islands their due.

--Isaiah 59:15-18

What riled up God to put on his armor was *injustice* that was found in the world. Injustice is anything that is not according to His eternal standards of how things are run. As children of God who have been brought over from Satan's kingdom to His kingdom, it is our salvation in Christ that should wrap around all decisions that we make. Every act that you do first begins as a thought in your head. You think in your head that you need to go to the bathroom. So, then you move your legs and walk to the bathroom. You think in your head that you need to get certain things done in the day, and then your body is commanded by such thoughts. So, when salvation wraps around your head, which is the place where thoughts originate and then filter down to then determine your actions, everything that you think becomes submitted or understood as a son of God. So that leaves no room for any other thoughts or ways of life. Period. End of story.

Let's take this one step further and explore another verse that Paul wrote about the helmet of salvation. Here is [1 Thessalonians 5:8](#):

“But since we [believers] belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope and confident assurance of salvation.”

You are saved by Jesus, and brought into the fold of Christians living by standards of judgement that are totally different from the world's standards. Let's get to some more verses about the helmet and thoughts/judgements.

Do not copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. -Romans 12:2 (ESV)

Whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. --

Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

So, know that you have a crown of righteousness on your head. Know that you have a crown your head that God gives to those who are a part of the rulership class in His kingdom. Wear it, make decisions and judgements based on it. And set yourselves apart from the rest of the world.

Chapter 11: The Sword of the Spirit

*“Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”—
Ephesians 6:17*

So now onto the weapon of warfare. The only weapon that is described for us in Ephesians 6. So, it's Satan's fiery darts versus your sword. Imagine if all you had was just armor and a shield. As the Bible says, the shield is the most important part of the armor so an entire rain shower of arrows can be fall on you and you could still be ok. However, it is your weapon, the sword, that will really get Satan where it would hurt, and mangle and hopefully cut off the ugly head of the beast.

Here are the various moves that can be used by swordsmen.

- **Slash:** A sweeping cut
- **Stab:** A thrust with a pointed weapon
- **Chop:** A downward cut
- **Deflect:** Knock something off its intended trajectory
- **Block:** Prevent an attack from finding its mark
- **Parry:** Defend from an attack with a countermove
- **Riposte:** A quick counterattack after a parry
- **Feint:** A fake, deceptive, or distracting strike to bait your opponent
- **Thrown Point:** A "flick"
- **Thrust:** An attack made by moving the sword parallel to its length and landing with the point

Now this is where things get really interesting. So imagine, you have a sword, and your enemy just has fiery darts, or arrows. Let's read a description of this weapon that you wield in your hand from the book of Hebrews.

For the word of God is living and active and full of power [making it operative, energizing, and effective]. It is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as the division of the soul and spirit {the completeness of a person}, and of both joints and marrow [the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and judging the very thoughts and intentions of the heart. —Hebrews 4:12 (AMP)

So you do not have a dull and rusty blade, but a weapon that cuts down to the very core of the bones. Let me give you another description which could be helpful. When an injury exposes the joint, it is very bad, and I speak to you from the perspective of a medical doctor now. Usually if this is the situation, the injury has gotten down past the skin, fat, muscle, the fibrous stuff around the joint, and the protective capsule if that joint has one of those. And if the joint is exposed, that person has to get an operation and the healing process becomes much more complicated. And when a joint infection happens, that person can get seriously sick.

This weapon is no joke! Imagine getting sliced by something like this. Not a good day for that person. Let's see an expert swordsman, Jesus, at work using the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, as it says in Ephesians 6:17.

The Temptation of Jesus (AMP)

Then Jesus was led by the [Holy] Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After he had gone without food for forty days and forty nights, He became hungry. And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But Jesus replied, "it is written and forever remains written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took him into the holy city [Jerusalem] and placed Him on the pinnacle (highest point) of the temple. And he said [mockingly] to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw

Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You [to serve, care for, protect and watch over You]’;

And ‘They will lift you up on their hands, so that You will not strike your foot against a stone.’
“Jesus said to him, “on the other hand, it is written and forever remains written, ‘You shall not test the Lord your God.’”

Again, the devil took Him up on a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory [splendor, magnificence, and excellence] of them; and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if you fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written and forever remains written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’” Then the devil left him; and angels came and ministered to Him [bringing Him food and serving Him]. –Matthew 4:1-11

Ok, so let’s break down this epic fight. So we have Satan in one corner of the rink. He is the well-versed Ruler of the Air, who knows humans inside and out. In fact, he has an impeccable track record. He has beaten humans at every round and gotten them to turn their hearts away from God since the beginning of time. That was, until Matthew chapter 4. At this point, he may or may not have known that he was dealing with the Savior. It is not very clear, but what is clear is that Satan seems to be interested in finding out who Jesus really was. Notice that Satan is very specific in his tactics to test Jesus. Satan likely suspected that Jesus was the chosen one, but he really hasn’t seen a human succeed against these traps. What he offers Jesus has tempted men for years upon years. He is the unbeatable enemy at this point in history. He had taken down so many judges, kings, prophets, and even the Jewish patriarchs. Satan thought he was unstoppable. So this is how he went into this battle.

Then take Jesus. What did he do to get ready? He starved. Not just starved but really, really starved, like to the point of probably having lost all the fat stores he had. You know what it feels like to skip a meal or two? Well, he went for 40 days without any calories. Now, why do you think he did that? Take any fighter for example, whether you want to talk about boxing or wrestling or judo. None of them would probably recommend fasting for 40 days before the biggest fight of your life. Yet Jesus worked on a different principle. This chapter isn’t about fasting but is about the sword of the Spirit, which is the weapon that we see Jesus so skillfully use against Satan. We even see Satan trying to use the sword, too, but fail of course. So we know is that there is a right way to use the Word of God and obviously lots of wrong ways.

Let's take each section and begin the journey, and we can see what is actually going on in the spirit.

Let's take each temptation and study each one—what the weakness that Satan is looking for in the context of who Jesus was and also the response that Jesus gives using the Word of God. They're quite familiar to what would appeal to the human soul, especially someone like Jesus who was in the stage of his life where he had been “marked” as the next best thing to sliced bread, but had not really started his ministry yet.

First, let's take the stones and the bread. Read this section again. What do you think this exchange means? Write down your thoughts as to what you think Satan is tempting Jesus with. And it's not about eating stones!

If you said something about how Satan is trying to get Jesus to provide for himself for the times that he is hungry and without sustenance, then you are right. Jesus must have been quite physically weak at this point, but he turned Satan away by choosing to highlight that he was going to wait for the Word of God to come to him first and not provide for himself.

“It is written and forever remains written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God.’”

Nice strike! Satan didn't have anything to say to that. Jesus was going to wait for God's provision, not strive and get his own.

Next, Satan throws a dart at the human desire for protection, a sheltered and safe existence, by telling Jesus that he will remain safe even doing something clearly unsafe like throwing himself off a cliff. Jesus knew that God would keep Him safe, as long as He was in God's will and purposes. This speaks to the old human adage of “If God loves me, then He will keep me safe in His arms no matter what. And if he doesn't keep me safe then He must not love me.”

Well, Satan saw that argument make so many people turn away from God, so he wanted to see if that would work for Jesus, too. Well, it didn't. Jesus knew exactly what he was getting at, so he turned Satan's use of the sword against him with another blow back at him to make him shut up. And that verse talked about something completely different than God providing safety for his children, and that was not to test God, especially when you are not doing His will.

And finally, the oldest trick in the book—trying to tempt man with money, lots and lots of money. Money is power in this world. You can do lots of things with it to get where you want to go in life and exert influence over others with it. You can't ever have enough and that will turn a man's heart away more quickly than many other things, especially if quite a huge sum of it is involved. Satan must have seen this one ruin so many lives at this point. Just throw a bit of money into the mix, especially enormous amount of riches, and that will turn a man's heart around quickly! I suppose this was his last "cool trick" in Satan arsenal. The counter strike that Jesus said was that God is his treasure, not riches. And then after that, Satan probably knew he was dealing with a proper swordsman. So he fled quickly away, beaten up and bleeding. It must have been like his head was chopped off with one swoop of the sword. Jesus knew what verses (or sword maneuvers you can say) to use and how to use them against Satan. Now that is using the Word of God to do some serious damage on Satan! It's amazing how Jesus responded because many other verses could have been used to counter what Satan was saying. But Jesus did not pick any verses. He had an excellent command of the Word of God and used it to apply it to the crux of the matter that Satan was bringing up. Do you remember how when he was twelve years old that even the Bible teachers of the day who were probably four or five times his age were amazed at the knowledge that Jesus the young boy had? So you know that Jesus started early in learning God's Word. When you are being trained up as a warrior, you have to start early. You can't give a huge sword to a young child. He might not be able to pick up a sword! Likewise, anyone unskilled in the application of God's Word can use the Bible to hurt other Christians. But you must be trained properly and not use the Word for improper purposes. You will need to go through daily training, learning all the tactics and practices of using your sword skillfully. The ways you can use the sword are varied, as you have read. With the intense training that is required you will get to a point that you will be quick in battle, employing all the right maneuver and changing your stances in a blink. And with the right use of the sword, you stop Satan dead in his tracks and can cut off his ugly head with one fell swoop.

While the sword is deadly against your enemy, there is another aspect to this weapon to consider a healing component. In fact, when you study Hebrews 4:12, you see that when the sword of the Spirit is used on man, it paints a different picture than using it to kill. It is described as an artful instrument, almost like a scalpel, rather than the brute slashing and dicing that one might imagine in battle.

When the Word of God is used on humans, it helps one to distinguish between the diseased
¹²For the word of God is alive 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.--Hebrews 4:12

In other words, it divides between the diseased parts and the healthy tissue, namely the soul and the spirit. Many things in the world appear “good” or like the right thing to do or pursue, but they can be misleading if not using God’s insight. So that’s when you can use the Word of God to help you distinguish what would be His will and everything else, because it is impossible without using the Word of God to distinguish the matter.

So I hope this is encouragement to you that all the time you spend learning, memorizing and eating of God’s Word is training. You have to start small. You have to be consistent in your practice of studying God’s Word. Learn this weapon and all the ways to apply it. Every situation in your life will call for a specific portion of His Word that God will guide you to distinguish what is of Him and everything else. The Word will bring what is needed to the situation you are facing and clarify the issue for you. This is what is meant by the Word being alive and active.

Father God, I pray that you will train me up in the Word. I want to have the skills to use the weapon that you have given me. I want to be able to apply your Word in my life skillfully against Satan and all his schemes against me. Grow me up to study and practice speaking the Word daily. Give me a love and respect for it. I know that with it, I will be able to overcome every situation, and lead me to doing Your will. Amen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Elizabeth Park is an emergency medicine doctor. She wrote this book in its original form for guiding her sons in hearing the voice of God through study of God's Word. It then evolved into a book that she wanted to distribute to a larger audience who wanted to also hear from God.