

Ephesians 6:12-13 by Wayne Barber

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Word Study on Ephesians 6:10-20

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Ephesians 6:12-13: SPIRITUAL WARFARE, PART 6

by Dr. Wayne Barber

We are going to go back now to verses 12 and 13 because they help us put a perspective on our unseen enemy. We have seen that we have to put on the full armor, and we have seen what the armor is. Now let's go back and look at what our enemy is all about. That is in verses 12 and 13. Verse 12 says,

For our [struggle is \(3SPA\)](#) [not against flesh & blood](#), but [against](#) the [rulers](#), [against](#) the [powers](#), [against](#) the [world forces](#) of this [darkness](#), [against](#) the [spiritual](#) forces of [wickedness](#) in the [heavenly](#) places.

The first thing that hit me as I was studying this was our battle. Our enemy is not flesh and blood. Our enemy is not people! They are not our true enemy. Now I don't know about you, but that kind of confuses me sometimes when I get out in the real world. When I get out there I realize I can see people. I just can't see the unseen enemy. How quickly I am suckered into the trap of thinking that people are my enemy. I have said many times,

"If it were not for people, I could live the Christian life."

You've done it, too. In your prayer time you have said,

"God, if You will just get rid of this person who is bothering me, it will be alright."

We have this paranoia when it comes to people. We think people are our enemies. It is what controls the person that is my true enemy. People are not my enemy. That is why God consistently says in Ephesians,

"Be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."

He is saying, "People, you are not each other's enemy. You've got a bigger enemy than that. Don't get side tracked by what other people are doing."

OUR ENEMY IS NOT PEOPLE

We mistakenly think people are our enemies; our boss, our husband, our wife, our children, people we work with, whoever. What do we do? We think if we can defeat them in some way, if we can get rid of them, we can have peace and victory. That is all upside down. We end up fighting each other. That is what Paul said,

"Flesh and blood are not our enemy."

They are not our enemy. We use hateful words, critical things. We have to tear somebody else down to build ourselves up as if we are in some kind of competition with one another. We forget we are on the same team. If we fight we lose. The war was won at

Calvary. We are not to be each other's enemy.

I read an article some time ago in a magazine called *"The Clergy Journal."* The article was on clergy killers. It was talking about preachers who are being kicked out of churches and are finding all kinds of discouragement and distress in churches all over our country. The article said right now the average stay in most churches for clergy is just a little over a year. That's how fast people are dropping out of the ministry. The author said that is because in every church there are clergy killers. He said they are out to do one thing: they are out to take the person who is leading that church and get him out of that position of authority. There are people who don't want to be under somebody else. There are people who want to force their own agenda. There are people who are all upside down in their minds as to what the church ought to be. When the author closed the article he said,

"I know I sound angry. I know I sound mad. But I just wish somehow we could get these people out of the body of Christ so the body of Christ could rise up and be what it ought to be."

Well, I read that article and said, "Amen, amen." Then I started studying Ephesians 6:12:

"We war not against flesh and blood!"

Now wait a minute. Flesh and blood are the ones bringing me all the harm. Flesh and blood are the ones injuring me. I don't understand. Paul is trying to say, "Hey, folks, you need to realize the war zone you are in is not the people. Our enemy is what controls the people. We don't war against flesh and blood.

I don't war against flesh and blood. What am I doing fearing people? I ought to fear God and love people. When I am strengthened in the inner man, then I am diligently protecting and preserving the unity of the Spirit which Paul clearly says in [4:3](#). When we love one another that solves a tremendous problem we have in our life.

Well, we are in a struggle. Paul uses the word ["struggle"](#) (Ed note: "hand-to-hand" combat) there in verse 12. The word ["struggle"](#) is only used here in the New Testament. I wish it was used someplace else so we could go look and see how it is used, but it is not. "Struggle" comes from the word that has the idea of vibrating or of motion. This is why the term "wrestle" comes out of it. We are struggling. We know we have the flesh to deal with. We know we have the world to deal with, but Paul is saying there is something bigger than all of that which uses the world as its pulpit and appeals to the weaknesses of your flesh. This is your whole unseen enemy and you are in a struggle with him. When you pinned somebody in the wrestling of that day, the way you won was to put your hand around a person's throat and drive him into the ground. In many circles they would put them to death (Ed note: or gouge out his eyes resulting in blindness). Wrestling in Paul's time was not fun for it was a win or lose, live or die situation. I believe we need to understand the seriousness of the struggle we are in. We need to learn not to fight or fear each other, but to fear God and to understand what motivates people. We are living in a war zone. We are on property and territory that is controlled by an enemy, and we are light in the midst of darkness.

Therefore, if we don't war against flesh and blood, if it is not my father, if it is not my mother, if it is not my children, if it is not my brother, if it is not my sister, if it is not my friend, then where is my struggle coming from? Paul tells you. He says

"For our struggle is (3SPA) not against flesh & blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

My second point is this, our struggle is not with flesh and blood but it is with an unseen enemy who is the mastermind of the darkness and deception around us. He is an unseen enemy. Do you understand that all the evil you look at in this world today didn't come from God? There are a lot of people who say,

"How can a loving God let these things happen?"

God determined the consequences of sin before it ever occurred. When sin happened God, being a just God, allowed man now to suffer the consequences of what man chose. Satan is the propagator of all of that. He is the one who came to Eve in the garden. He is the one who got man to listen to him and deceived his thinking. Man believed the lie. As a result, we live in the consequences of that kind of garbage. Thank God, we have been delivered from its domain, but we still have to deal with it every day in our life.

RULERS

The apostle Paul uses several descriptive words to show us the unseen enemy and the territory in which he reigns. I understand in this verse there is a hierarchy of Satan's control in the lower heavens and around this earth. Many military leaders have suggested the term ["rulers"](#) and "authorities" suggests that. We know in the book of Daniel that his prayer was hindered for 21 days as Michael the archangel struggled with the angel over Persia. ([Da10:13](#)) People are saying there are demons over nations and demons over cities. I have no trouble with any of that. But I want to flip it over for a second and remove ourselves from that domain for a second. I want you to look at the words he uses and show you how he illustrates the nature of the evil that is around us. Oh, folks, we have to

realize this. There is deception everywhere, not just in false teaching in the Christian circles. It is everywhere.

First of all, he uses the term "[rulers](#)." He puts it in the plural because it is not just Satan. It is all the demonic hosts of heaven. His demons are the masterminds of the evil in this world. The word used there is the word [arche](#). (Click here for in depth study on arche) It is the word that has the basic meaning of that which is preeminent, the origin of something, the leader of something. You have heard the expression, "The buck stops here." Well, that would be a good illustration for [arche](#). It is where it starts. It is where it begins. It is out front. It is that which originates something.

Now we know these are spiritual beings because of [Eph3:10](#). (Click for message)

"in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the **rulers** and the authorities in the heavenly places."

Where are the rulers? In the heavenly places.

So we see a spiritual realm here in 6:12. They are spiritual beings, but they are in the realm of darkness. You must understand this. Where do they rule and reign? Only in the realm of [darkness](#). They do not rule over light. They do not rule over you and me. They rule in the sphere of darkness.

Look at verse 12:

"against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness"

The word "[darkness](#)" is [skotos](#), which is the word that means the essence of all darkness that is around us. It is the ones who are in first place. It is the ones who originate. It is the ones who propagate. The context of this verse to me shows that these unseen rulers are the ones who are originating, the ones who are causing, the ones who are influencing all the evil and darkness around us. Paul is referring to an unseen enemy. He wants us to understand that behind the scenes, what you can't see, there is one who propagates, originates and comes up with all the evil, all the horrible things that you see in this world. All the deception comes right out of him, and he rules in that area. He leads in that area. He earned that right when Adam sinned and man lost his right to relate to God. This world became temporarily his and he is the mastermind behind all the evil that we deal with.

POWERS

The second word he uses there is the word "[powers](#)." It is in the plural also. The word for powers really is the word which means authorities, *exousia* and is the word used in [Colossians 1:13](#) when it says we have been delivered out of the *exousia*, the right and the might of darkness and placed into the kingdom of His dear Son. In other words, in the realm of darkness Satan and his demons have not only the creativeness of propagating evil and originating evil, but they have also the right and the might to carry it out. They work in the realm of darkness.

I don't know about you, but to choose not to obey truth, to choose not to surrender to Jesus Christ automatically puts me into a realm that I am not supposed to be in. Immediately I become one who suffers the consequences of the evil one who has the authority, the right and the might in the sphere of darkness. That scares me. I think of all the dumb choices I have made in my life. Only in the realm of darkness do they have that authority.

to choose not to obey truth... automatically puts me into a realm that I am not supposed to be ... of the evil one who has the... right and the might in the sphere of darkness.

WORLD FORCES

Thirdly, Paul uses the word "[world forces](#)." The word is [kosmokrator](#). *Kosmos* means not only the people of the world but the system of the world. [Kratos](#) means dominion. It is a dominion based on what somebody has already done. If you want to know what Satan has already done to give him the dominion over darkness, go back and study Genesis 1-3. It is no wonder some people try to get this out of our Bibles and say it is not a part of the original Pentateuch. They want to make it a myth because right there is where he proves himself powerful to deceive a man into stepping into darkness. Satan and his demons have their kingdom, their domain, their dominion in the world of darkness and evil we live in every day of our life, but only until the age is ended. It is a temporary time. We know that. It is limited. He is "on a leash". One thing is for sure, you haven't seen anything yet. In the midst of all the evil you see in this world today, remember there is still the restrainer. Think of all the horrible things that are propagated by the devil. Through his authority he ruins people's lives. He tears down nations. Who causes all of that? I will tell you. Jesus said in [John 8:44](#), he is a liar and a murderer from the very beginning.

"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar,

and the father of lies"

He is the unseen force behind it all. But I want to tell you something, folks, we haven't seen anything yet. Wait until the restrainer is taken out of the way and the world starts seeing what really is evil in this world. We live right in the middle of it every day.

Some Christians say,

"Oh, you are always on our backs about getting in the Word. You are always talking about being filled with the Spirit. Oh, man, I am cool. I am having a good time."

Yes, you are also a fool. You are walking down a road that seems right and that way is leading you right to destruction and you don't even know it. I wonder how many of us have upside down minds already, perverted by what the world says, by what he does. He is the mastermind behind it.

SPIRITUAL FORCES OF WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES

Fourthly, Paul tells us one more thing. Paul tells us that Satan and his demons surround the world in the lower heavens. Oh, if we could get a picture. I see the world completely surrounded by the demonic darkness of evil. Satan is the originator of it. Satan has the power in it. Satan has the dominion in it. It is just ugly. What we think is light is really darkness compared to the light of God. We live right in the midst of it. Isn't it beautiful that Jesus is light, not a light, not like light? He is Light. (cf [Jn8:12](#)) Nobody turned Him on. Nobody can ever turn Him off. He came down and pierced through that darkness. He came into this world, went to the cross and now that we have repented and by faith received Him, we have been made light. Don't you think we are an irritation to what Satan is up to in this world? If I were him and I had a master plan, I would keep people who know Christ living upside down lives, living deceived, out of the word of God rather than fool with the lost. To me that would be the most effective way to bring division and to destroy what God is trying to build up through His people. He has done a great job at it. He has done a great job.

Paul is saying, "We war not against flesh and blood." Behind every person who harms and injures us and deceives us is a spiritual enemy. Now I think that is the confusing part to me. Though we don't war against flesh and blood, flesh and blood are the pawns that he uses to come against us. That is what bothers me. Because you see, I can see flesh and blood. I can't see what is behind them when somebody writes a letter, when somebody says something to you, when somebody tears you apart, when somebody disappoints you. That hurts you and you want to go after them. But you have to remember he is using them. Love them but hate what is using them.

[2Cor 10:3-5](#) says our weapons are not of the flesh but they are "[divinely powerful](#)".

"3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,"

Evidently this person is coming against you and his mind is totally upside down. He doesn't have a clue what he is doing. What is going on in your life right now? Who is it that is threatening you? Who is it that is bothering you right now? What is it that is bothering you? Track it back. You will find deception of some kind at the root of that whole thing. The only thing we have in this world to stand on that is the truth, besides the Lord Jesus, is His Word. When you start believing a lie, it will flip you over and you won't even realize it. You will end up fighting the wrong thing and not even know that there was a spiritual enemy behind it. There is deceit in this world we live in today.

Look in Ephesians 1:20-21 (Click previous sermon notes)

"which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come."

Jesus Christ who lives within us far exceeds any power you ever thought the devil had.

Ephesians 5:8 (click for message) says,

for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk [present imperative](#) = command to walk this way as a habit of your life) as children of Light

You have been completely remade.

Look in Ephesians 5:11:

Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them

Who is the propagator of darkness? Satan. Who is the one who has authority in that realm? Satan. Who is the one who has his kingdom set up with people in that world? Remember, we used to be a part of his ploy. Ephesians 2:2 says that we used to walk

"formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

"You mean to tell me that before I came to know Christ I was actually used by Satan to deceived others and literally to tear down other people's lives?"

Exactly. Now the tragedy is when you become a believer and still try to walk that way. You live deceived, upside down. The word of God is not changing you day by day. You produce unfruitful deeds of darkness. It didn't say it was less fruit. It says there was no fruit. There is not one good thing can you say about darkness, not one. Yet there are people who won't get in the Word. They don't examine their conflicts by what the Word of God says. For some reason or another they think it is not relevant to their life. They are getting more and more and more upside down in the way they are thinking, not even realizing it. The very enemy they thought they understood has already turned them inside out by getting them to believe a lie. It probably came through somebody who told it to them because he uses people.

Folks, we are in a war zone.

Thank God for the truth that will set us free.

Verse by Verse Notes Ephesians 6:13

Ephesians 6:13: [Therefore *](#), [take up \(2PAAM\)](#) the [full armor](#) of [God, so that](#) you [will be able \(2PAPS\)](#) to [resist \(AAN\)](#) in the [evil day](#), and [having done \(AMPMPN\) everything](#), to [stand firm \(AAN\)](#)

Greek: "dia touto analabete (2PAAM) ten panoplian tou theou hina dunethete (2PAPS) antistenai (AAN) en te hemera te ponera kai apanta katergasameno (AMPMPN) stenai (AAN):

Amplified: Therefore put on God's complete armor, that you may be able to resist and stand your ground on the evil day [of danger], and, having done all [the crisis demands], to stand [firmly in your place].

Phillips: Therefore you must wear the whole armour of God that you may be able to resist evil in its day of power, and that even when you have fought to a standstill you may still stand your ground.

Wuest: "On this account, take to yourself at once and once for all, the complete armor of God in order that you may be able to resist in the day, the pernicious one, and having achieved all things, to stand."

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| R A Torrey | Warfare of Saints |

THEREFORE TAKE UP THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD: dia touto analabete (2PAAM) ten panoplian tou theou:

"Therefore" in view of the fact that our enemy is not flesh and blood but consists of supernatural forces, we need God's supernatural empowerment. Paul says that because we face such a formidable foe, we must avail ourselves of God's provision lest the enemy destroy our Christian witness and ministry.

Eadie comments...

"Wherefore," the foes being so formidable in power, operation, and nature, what need is there not to be fully protected with this complete and divine suit of mail? (Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians)

C. S. Lewis **wrote that**

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail a materialist or magician with the same delight." (The Screwtape Letters. p. 3. New York: Macmillan, 1961)

Dearly beloved, never leave your home spiritually "undressed" and never underestimate the strategy, schemes and strength of our enemy.

"**Take up**" (3538) (**analambano** from **ana** = up + **lambano** = take) is used 8x in the NT ([Mk](#); [Acts](#) 8x; [Eph](#) 2x; [1Ti](#); [2Ti](#)) and literally means to take up a thing in order to carry or use it.

Analambano is used of Jesus' being taken up into heaven ([Mark 16:19](#), [Acts 1:2,11, 22](#), [1Ti 1:16](#)), of being taken on board ship ([Acts 20, 13,14](#)), and of Timothy picking up Mark to bring him to Paul ([2Ti 4:11](#)).

Analambano was a military technical term describing the last preparation and final step before the actual battle begins! It pictures taking up one's armor and putting it on in anticipation of the coming battle.

Analambano is used in this military sense in the Septuagint translation of Deuteronomy 1:41 where Moses declares

"Then you answered and said to me, 'We have sinned against the Lord; we will indeed go up and fight, just as the Lord our God commanded us.' And every man of you **girded on** (Hebrew = to gird oneself or put on a belt; Lxx = **analambano** = take up) his weapons of war and regarded it as easy to go up into the hill country."

Take up is **aojist tense** which calls for an immediate action and often conveys a sense of urgency. The idea is "Do this now" and "do it effectively". The "**active**" **voice** indicates that the subject (the believer) is to carry out this action. Active voice emphasizes the human responsibility that is necessary, even though the armor is God's. The armor is available, but each believer must "take it up" in order to be ready. We would be neglectful to do otherwise, for the battle is real, and we are Satan's targets. The **imperative mood** is a command. In short, Paul like a Roman general whose troops were about to engage in mortal hand to hand combat delivers his orders that if obeyed assure victory.

Kenneth Wuest explains that

"the Christian is to take up and put on all the armor of God as a once-for-all act and keep that armor on during the entire course of his life, not relaxing the discipline necessary for the constant use of such protection." (Wuest, K. S. Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)

Why "once-for-all"? Think about why this might be so. Do the rulers and powers, etc ever call a truce? take a rest from their relentless attack? Of course not. How tragic then that so many believers become lax & "slip out of the full armor", forgetting the truth that our "[adversary](#), the [devil](#), (continuously) [prowls around](#) (present tense) [like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour](#)." Note that the command or charge also carries with it a promise - the promise being that if we will really put on the full armor of God, we will stand and be victorious.

Paul's point is that every believer has God's His provision, but His strength must be appropriated through our willingness to obey.

Jameison, et al writes that Paul says...

not "make," God has done that: you have only to **take up** and put it on. The Ephesians were familiar with the idea of the gods giving armor to mythical heroes: thus Paul's allusion would be appropriate." (A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments)

Historian Edward Gibbon (See below to read his original quote) relates how the relaxation of discipline and the disuse of exercise rendered the Roman Legionnaire soldiers less willing and less able to support the fatigue associated with active service. They began to complain of the weight of the armor and obtained permission to lay aside their cuirasses (breastplates) & helmets! How many believers "complain of the weight of their armor" and end up laying aside vital components of their spiritual dress?

Kent Hughes draws this parallel with "Christian soldiers" stating that...

"the prevailing materialistic, mechanistic thinking of our age leaves no room for the supernatural, or indeed anything without a physical cause. Sadly, many Christians are so influenced by this thinking that even though they give conscious voice to their belief in Satan and spiritual warfare, their lives show no evidence of this reality. They actually live in unconscious disbelief. For

such persons, this passage (Eph 6:10-18) provides a much-needed antidote."

Hughes goes on to caution us that

"It is possible to move from practical disbelief in the Devil and his minions to a preoccupation with them — like the New Yorker cartoon which pictured a man pointing toward his car's transmission saying, "I think there is a demon in my bell housing." We've probably all felt that way at times, but if we attribute every problem to demons we are in trouble! At the same time Paul's worldview, the Biblical worldview, is that we are in a spiritual battle with evil in which there is no truce... ". (Hughes, R. K. Ephesians: The mystery of the body of Christ. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books. 1990)

Edward Gibbon in his famous work, **The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire** ([click here](#)) has the following interesting note on the deterioration of discipline in the Roman soldier writing that...

"The relaxation of discipline, and the disuse of exercise, rendered the soldiers less able, and less willing, to support the fatigues of the service; they complained of the weight of the armor, which they seldom wore; and they successively obtained the permission of laying aside both their cuirasses (breastplates) and their helmets. The heavy weapons of their ancestors, the short sword ([machaira](#)), and the formidable pilum (javelin), which had subdued the world, insensibly dropped from their feeble hands. As the use of the shield is incompatible with that of the bow, they reluctantly marched into the field; condemned to suffer either the pain of wounds, or the ignominy of flight, and always disposed to prefer the more shameful alternative. The cavalry of the Goths, the Huns, and the Alani, had felt the benefits, and adopted the use, of defensive armor; and, as they excelled in the management of missile weapons, they easily overwhelmed the naked and trembling legions, whose heads and breasts were exposed, without defence, to the arrows of the Barbarians. The loss of armies, the destruction of cities, and the dishonor of the Roman name, ineffectually solicited the successors of Gratian to restore the helmets and the cuirasses of the infantry. The enervated soldiers abandoned their own and the public defence; and their pusillanimous (lacking courage and resolution : marked by contemptible timidity: cowardly) indolence (inclination to laziness; sloth; disinclination to action or labor) may be considered as the immediate cause of the downfall of the empire."

How important then is discipline to the Christian soldier in the arena of spiritual warfare? Surely it cannot be underestimated lest we too like the slothful Roman legionnaires suffer ignominious defeat at the hands of our relentless "barbarian" adversaries.

THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD: ten panoplian tou theou:

Paul's repetition of the "full armor" of God is a reminder that we need the whole package; every piece is necessary. [Full armor](#) is the Greek word "[panoplia](#)" (pas = all + hopla = weapons or tools). Among the Greeks the panoplia was the complete equipment used by heavily armed infantry.

Don't forget the most critical aspect of the armor, "of God"!

We cannot forge our own armor. Our own resolutions, like home-made weapons, will be sure to betray some weakness. The Christian armor consists of God-given graces. "Christian" in Pilgrim's Progress had his armor given him at the house "Beautiful" and we must do likewise. Even a steel breastplate is no protection against a cup of poison and in like manner, the character of our defenses must be spiritual and holy, like the character of God, in order that we may be able to withstand such spiritual foes as Paul has just enumerated.

[Click here](#) for some parallel thoughts by Spurgeon that relate to our "full armor".

John MacArthur writes "Don't concentrate on what the devil is doing, but on what you're to be doing. It doesn't matter that you know precisely when and how Satan is mapping every subtle scheme. We can't do that anyway. The only thing that does matter is that you put your armor on. If you do, you will be ready for battle." (MacArthur, J.. How to meet the enemy. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books. 1992)

In Classic Greek the "full armor" was descriptive of a "heavy armed soldier" (Vincent).

There is an interesting illustration of the "full armor" from Greek mythology. It is reported by the Greek poets that the mother of Achilles the Grecian captain was warned by the oracle and dipped her son, as a child, into the River Lethe, thus providing an impenetrable armor for protection during the Trojan War. Paris, Achilles' archenemy, knowing of this fact, realized the only place he could attack his foe would be the heel, that by which his mother held him while immersing her son in the river. Ultimately, Paris attacked and shot Achilles in the heel and killed him. For the believer, there is "full armor" to protect us from Satan's attacks. We must put on each piece with prayer and God has promised to protect us, even down to our Achilles' heel. We are assailable in

every part of our nature. It is useless to be only half-armed, for the subtle tempter is sure to aim his dart at the most vulnerable spot. Where we think ourselves most secure we are likely to be most open to attack. It will not be sufficient to be sound on all points but one.

Kent Hughes comments that...

"Those who have traveled through J R Tolkien's most imaginative Middle Earth perhaps remember that Bilbo Baggins passed on to his successor, Frodo, a finely wrought coat of delicately woven mail which was secretly made under the mountains by dwarves and was virtually impenetrable, thus saving their Hobbit skins on several occasions. But here with Paul, in the context of ultimate spiritual reality, we are offered real armor wrought on the anvils of Heaven which will protect us in real war if we will but wear it. In this study we are going to examine the first two items on the list: the soldier's belt and his breastplate." (Hughes, R. K. Ephesians: Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books)

HOW DO WE "PUT ON THE FULL ARMOR"? One of the most important ways is to hide God's Word in our heart ([Ps119:9-11](#)) as if our very life depended upon it... because our spiritual life does! As you read the dramatic illustration below ask yourself if you have really acknowledged the reality of daily spiritual warfare or whether you have drifted into apathy and lethargy, and are no longer disciplining yourself for godliness ([1Tim4:7-8](#)).

From [Our Daily Bread](#):

"Toward the close of World War II, Allied forces were mopping up against remaining Nazi resistance. One particular unit was assigned a crucial mission in Berlin. Each soldier had to memorize a map detailing all of Berlin's important military sites -- and they had to do it in a single night! In just a few hours, each soldier in the unit had committed the map to memory. The mission was a success. Several years later, the Army conducted an experiment to see if that original feat could be duplicated. They offered a similar unit an extra week's furlough--an attractive incentive--if they could carry out a comparable mission without a hitch. But the second unit could not match the success of the first. What made the difference? The lives of the men were not at stake. Surviving in battle was a greater motivation than a week's vacation. Christians are engaged in spiritual warfare ([Eph 6:10-18](#)). Our road map, our plan of strategy against Satan's military strongholds, is the Bible. The more we read it, the more of it we memorize, and the more thoroughly we know it, the more effective we will be for God. We must approach God's Word as if our lives depended on it--because they do. That's real motivation!"--HWR

Thy Word is like an armory,

Where soldiers may repair,

And find, for life's long battle-day,

All needful weapons there. --Hodder

If your life depended on knowing the Bible, how long would you last?

SO THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RESIST:hina dunethete (2PAPS) antistenai (AAN) :

"Resist" (436) (**anthistemi** from **anti** = against + **histemi** = stand) is used 15 times in the NT ([Matthew](#); [Luke](#); [Acts](#) 2x; [Romans](#) 2x; [Galatians](#); [Ephesians](#); [2 Timothy](#) 2x; [James](#); [1 Peter](#)) and in the NAS is translated cope, 1; has opposed, 1; oppose, 1; opposed, 4; opposing, 1; resist, 5; resists, 2. The KJV also translates **anthistemi** as "withstand".

Anthistemi means literally to stand or set against. It means to arrange in battle against and so pictures **aface to face** confrontation. It means to set one's self against, to stand firm against someone else's onset, to oppose (place opposite or against), to resist by actively opposing pressure or power, to withstand (oppose with firm determination). It involves not only a psychological attitude but also a corresponding behavior. It was used to refer to an army arranging in battle against the enemy force and so to array against.

"**Resist**" means to defend oneself against the devil not to attack him. On the other hand to cower before the devil is to invite sure defeat. Effective resistance in faith to satanic attacks procures his flight. Scripture teaches us to flee from various evils ("*Flee immorality...*" [1Cor6:18](#); "*flee from idolatry*" [1Cor10:14](#); "*flee from these things [love of money], you man of God*" [1Ti6:11](#); "*flee from youthful lusts*" [2Ti2:22](#)). The believer however is **never** instructed to **flee** from the Devil but to stand against him!

Grant Richison writes that **anthistemi**...

"is a term of defense, not offense. The Christian must build fortifications against the Devil. The Christian is at war. We should establish bulwarks of faith against our enemy. We resist by obeying the commands of verse eight. We would do well to remember that we cannot fight the Devil in ourselves." ([Richison, G: Today's Word](#))

The verb suggests vigorously opposing, bravely resisting, standing face-to-face against an adversary, holding your ground. Just as an antihistamine (derived from "anthistemi") block or antagonize histamine, [anthistemi](#) tells us that with the authority and spiritual weapons granted to us we can stand against all evil forces. Note carefully that Paul does not say for us to hunt down or to actively pursue our spiritual enemies (don't worry... they will find us!), but to remain steadfast & immovable girded in the full armor of God in the face of persistent attack.

The **Net Bible** note states that

"the term **anthistemi** carries the idea of resisting or opposing something or someone. In Eph 6:13, when used in combination with stēnai ("**stand firm**") and in a context of battle imagery, it seems to have the idea of resisting, standing firm, and being able to stand your ground." (The NET Bible Notes. Biblical Studies Press)

Note that in spiritual warfare there is **no** middle ground, **no** neutrality. To stand with the Lord is to stand against everything sinful and worldly that formerly was appealing, corrupting, and enslaving.

A Roman centurion, according to Polybius, had to be the kind of man who could be relied upon to resist or stand fast and not give way, even when hard-pressed.

Matthew Henry writes that

"We must not yield to the devil's allurements and assaults, but oppose them. Satan is said to stand up against us, [1 Chr. 21:1](#). If he stand up against us, we must stand against him; set up, and keep up, an interest in opposition to the devil. Satan is the wicked one, and his kingdom is the kingdom of sin: to stand against Satan is to strive against sin. That you may be able to withstand in the evil day, in the day of temptation, or of any sore affliction." (Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible)

Believers are not to fight with one another but stand against their true enemy.

The **Life Application Bible** comments that

"The armor is available, but the believer-soldier must "take it up" in order to be ready. We would be neglectful to do otherwise, for the battle is real, and we are Satan's targets. Only with the armor will believers be able to withstand, a word describing standing against great opposition; indeed, it would be impossible to stand on our strength alone. Christian soldiers must be able to hold their ground and not flee or surrender under Satan's attacks." (Barton, B. B. & Comfort, P. W. Life Application Bible commentary. page 131. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers)

Believers need to guard themselves from an unhealthy and arrogant "we're going to whip the devil" attitude. We go about our business serving the Lord, and we **stand fast against** his every attempt to deter us.

Paul's instruction could be paraphrased so that you might be empowered to "**hold your ground**". This idea of not giving ground in spiritual battle certainly has its counterpart in physical battles where the opposing sides are dug in, hunkered down and not giving an inch. To take this analogy back into the realm of spiritual battle consider Paul's earlier exhortation in this same letter to be angry but "do not sin" and a point so important that you should "not let the sun go down on your anger and do not give (Gk construction = forbids the continuance of this action which was already going on) the devil an **opportunity** (Gk **topos** literally territory, land)." ([Eph4:26-27](#)) In other words, be careful in the area of your emotions and stop giving the devil a **foothold**, which equates with giving him an opportunity or the occasion for acting! Even the best motivated anger can sour, and we are therefore to put it aside at the end of the day. Taken to bed, it is likely to give the devil an opportunity to use it for his purposes. Saying this all another way "**hold your ground**"!

USES OF ANTHISTEMI IN SCRIPTURE

The following uses of **anthistemi** give you a sense of the meaning of this word in the NT.

In His sermon on the Mount Jesus said that if you are injured by another person

"**do not resist** (anthistemi) (this does not criminal offenses or acts of military aggression) **him who is evil ; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also** (calling for a full surrender of all personal rights)." ([Mt5:39](#))

In discussing the difficult times of the end of the age, Jesus instructed His disciples to

"**make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves for I will give you utterance and**

wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to **resist** (anthistemi) or refute." ([Lk 21:14-15](#))

In the book of Acts we encounter the soon-to-be martyr Stephen described variously as "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" ([Acts 6:3](#)), "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" ([Acts 6:5](#)) and "full of grace and power" ([Acts 6:8](#)), in each description the picture of "full" being that of control, for what "fills" you will control you! And so we see a godly example of how to be prepared for and to face spiritual opposition, which in Stephen's case soon arose among the Jews who began to argue with Stephen

"and yet they were unable to **cope** (stand up against - anthistemi) with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking." ([Acts 6:10](#)).

Stephen was enabled to resist because he was filled with and empowered by the Spirit. He was strong in the Lord and the strength of His might! Later in Acts we see another example of spiritual warfare for

"Elymas the magician (for thus his name is translated) was **opposing** (anthistemi - imperfect tense - over and over again) them (Barnabas and Saul), seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith." ([Ac 13:8](#))

In Romans Paul in discussing the profound topic of God's sovereignty in salvation asks the rhetorical question

"You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who **resists** (anthistemi) His will?" ([Ro 9:19](#) read [Ro9-11](#) for context)

Paul explains that since all government is God-ordained, disobedience is rebellion against God writing that

"he who resists authority has **opposed** (anthistemi) the ordinance of God; and they who have **opposed** (anthistemi) will receive condemnation upon themselves." ([Ro13:2](#))

When Peter began to withdraw from the Gentiles out of fear of the Judaizers (party of the circumcision) Paul writes

"I **opposed** (refusing to yield - anthistemi) him to his face, because he stood condemned." ([Gal2:11](#)).

Paul warned Timothy of spiritual warfare writing that

"just as Jannes and Jambres **opposed** (anthistemi) Moses, so these men also **oppose** (anthistemi) the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected (useless) as regards the faith." ([2Ti 3:8](#))

Paul warned Timothy to

"Be on guard against (Alexander the coppersmith - who did Paul much harm)... for he vigorously **opposed** (anthistemi) our teaching." ([2 Ti 4:15](#))

Finally, the last two uses of **anthistemi** in the NT ([Js4:7](#), [1Pe5:9](#)) are also in the context of spiritual warfare and are discussed below.

James writes...

[Submit](#) (aorist imperative = sense of urgency = "Do this now!") therefore to God. [resist](#) (aorist imperative) the devil and he will flee from you. ([James 4:7](#))

James says that to be successful in spiritual warfare we must first submit ([hupotasso](#) = put yourself under; click for word study) to God (parallels Paul's instruction to put on the full armor) and then we can effectively resist the devil.

Notice that by definition, to submit to God, your new Lord, is to resist the devil, your old lord.

As we stand firm "against the schemes of the devil", we also pray the petition "deliver us from evil" ([Mt6:13](#)). The biblical assurance we receive is that "he will flee from" us

Now remember the "context" for in [James 4:6](#) he has just taught that

"GOD IS **OPPOSED** (present tense = continuously arrays himself against) TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES (present tense = continuously gives) **GRACE** TO THE **HUMBLE**"

Who are the "**humble**"? In context the "humble" are those who are willing to bow low and to "submit" to God, to take in His word, to obey His word, and to live out His word and experience His Spirit's empowering grace to stand against the evil one. To resist the devil without submitting to God is conducting warfare in your strength not His and is a sure formula for futility and defeat.

Kent Hughes commenting on "grace" in [Js4:6](#) says

"The "gravity of grace" works like the earth's water system, which always flows from the highest to the lowest. Just as the waters

of Niagara roll over the fall and plunge down to make a river below, and just as that river flows ever down to the even lower ranges of its course, then glides to still more low-lying areas where it brings life and growth, so it is with God's grace. Grace's gravity carries it to the lowly in heart, where it brings life and blessing. Grace goes to the humble... The unbowed soul standing proudly before God receives no benefit from God's falling grace. It may descend upon him, but it does not penetrate, and drips away like rain from a statue. But the soul lying humbly before God is immersed—and even swims—in a sea of grace. So while there is always "more grace," it is reserved for the lowly—the humble... The last words of Richard Baxter provide a perfect prayer: "Lord, what thou wilt, where thou wilt, and when thou wilt." Some of us need to pray this right now, and if we do, grace will flood our souls. Will you do it?" (Hughes, R. K. James : Faith that works. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.)

[1 Peter 5:8-9](#) (Click for exposition) Peter writes...

Be of sober spirit (aorist imperative = urgency = Do it now), be on the alert (aorist imperative). Your adversary (Greek = opponent in a lawsuit) the devil (diabolos - one who comes between), prowls around, like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm (military term pictures that which is solid, immovable) in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

Kenneth Wuest comments that

"The Christian would do well to remember that he cannot fight the devil. The latter was originally the most powerful and wise angel God created. He still retains much of that power and wisdom as a glance down the pages of history and a look about one today will easily show. While the Christian cannot take the offensive against Satan, yet he can stand his ground in the face of his attacks. Cowardice never wins against Satan, only courage... the Christian is to stand firm against the onset of the devil, not in himself, but in the exercise of a faith that depends upon the strengthening and protecting power of God." (Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)

Anthistemi is used 45 times in the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Hebrew. After Moses died Jehovah Himself spoke to Moses' successor, Joshua, encouraging him with the declaration that

"No man will be able to stand before (**stand against** - anthistemi) you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you." ([Joshua 1:5](#))

God made the following promise to Israel if she was obedient to Moses...

"The LORD will cause your enemies who **rise up against** (anthistemi) you to be defeated before you; they shall come out against you one way and shall flee before you seven ways." ([Dt 28:7](#))

So "**take up the full armor of God**" so that when the battle is at its fiercest, you as a good soldier of Christ Jesus, will be empowered to **hold your line** against even the most determined enemy assault. In so doing you will find that when the assault passes, it will be found that not an inch of territory has been yielded to the enemy.

Remember that ordinary weapons will not do

"for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses." [2 Co 10:4](#)

IN THE EVIL DAY: en te hemera te ponera

When is the [evil day](#)? Although there is not complete agreement on the meaning of this term, the evil day surely began one day in the garden of Eden when the "[Evil One](#)" ([Eph6:16](#)) tempted man & "[through one man sin entered \(5627\)](#) into the [world](#), and [death through sin](#), and [so death spread \(5627\)](#) to [all men, because * all sinned \(5627\)](#)" ([Ro5:12](#)).

And so the "evil day" began the moment sin entered the world. And since God gives no deferments or exemptions from "military service", His people are at war and will continue to be at war until He returns and takes charge of earth. Therefore each day in a believer's life is potentially an evil day in which we face an evil enemy, but "[If God](#) is for us, [who](#) is [against](#) us?" ([Ro 8:31](#))

Any **day** when the **evil** one comes upon us in force is **the evil day**.

Every day of temptation is an evil day in this sense for the Christian.

MacDonald comments that

"**the evil day** probably refers to any time when the enemy comes against us like a flood. Satanic opposition seems to occur in waves, advancing and receding. Even after our Lord's temptation in the wilderness, the devil left Him for a season ([Lu4:13](#))."
(MacDonald, W.. Believer's Bible Commentary: Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

How is this characterized? Paul says it is "[evil](#)" which is Greek [poneros](#) which means "malignant" evil that is actively opposed to & corrupting of that which is good. Thus [poneros](#) is actively harmful or hurtful. The root word for [poneros](#) interestingly conveys the ideas of toil or hard work, implying accompanying pain and distress and signifies the most tense or strenuous effort, e.g., of the soldier in battle, or the exertions of messengers or manual workers.

Calvin comments

"By this expression ("evil day") he rouses them from security, bids them prepare themselves for hard, painful, and dangerous conflicts, and, at the same time, animates them with the hope of victory; for amidst the greatest dangers they will be safe."

The day is evil, and the enemy is evil, but

"if God be for us, who can be against us?" ([Ro 8:31](#))

In an article for Youth Ministries magazine, a 14-year veteran of the Navy SEALs describes the color-code system they use to indicate levels of combat readiness. Each stage has a parallel in spiritual warfare.

Condition White

The soldier is relaxed and daydreaming, unaware of his surroundings. A Christian in this condition is easy prey for Satan.

Condition Yellow

The soldier is relaxed physically but alert mentally. A believer at this level may sense trouble coming, but he's not ready to confront it.

Condition Orange

The soldier is physically prepared, mentally alert, and ready to fight. A believer at this stage has on the full armor of God.

Condition Red

As in condition orange, the soldier is ready to fight. The difference is experience. A battle-seasoned Christian knows quickly what to do because of his experience and familiarity with Scripture.

Wherever we as followers of Christ happen to be--at work, in the mall, on a business trip, even among fellow believers--we need to know about Satan's methods and be prepared to resist. He always seems to attack at our most vulnerable moments. But if we stay alert and armed, we can fend off his most powerful attacks. --DCE

Thinking It Over

Which color code describes your spiritual condition?

How have you responded recently to temptation?

Are you studying and obeying God's Word?

Spiritual victory comes only

to those who are prepared for battle.

AND HAVING DONE EVERYTHING TO STAND FIRM: kai apanta katergasamenoï (AMPMPN) stenai (AAN):

"**Having done**" ([2716](#)) ([katergazomai](#)) means to perform, accomplish, achieve, to do that from which something results, to carry something to its ultimate conclusion.

[Having done](#) all includes both dressing oneself in God's armor and resisting Satan. Having done all these, be ready, for the Devil will attack again and again. Vincent adds having done "everything that the crisis demands" We are not called to do merely as well as our neighbors; nor even to do well on the whole, but to do ALL — to leave nothing undone that can contribute to the success of the spiritual battle and then we shall be able to stand firm. Contrary to what some commentaries say about this verse Paul is not describing a Christian now standing in victory after their conflict, as he clearly continues to describe the contact in the subsequent verses. Standing firm against the enemy without wavering or falling is the goal.

Note that ["stand"](#) is a KEY WORD (in Inductive Bible Study, a "key word" is one which functions like a key to unlock the truths in a passage and is often determined to be "key" by repetition but not all words that are repeated are "key") in spiritual warfare ([6:11,13,14](#)) and even the word ["resist"](#) is derived in part from the Greek word for ["stand"](#).

As J. Vernon McGee says

"The Bible speaks of believers as pilgrims. As pilgrims we are to walk through the world. The Bible speaks of us as witnesses, and we are to go to the ends of the earth. As athletes we are to run. We are to run with our eyes fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ: "... and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ..." (Heb. 12:1-2). However, when the Bible speaks of us as fighters, it says we are **to stand**. Very frankly, I would rather do a great deal of old-fashioned standing than fighting... I have never been enthusiastic about a group of defeated Christians singing, "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war." I think it is more scriptural for the believer to sing, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross." Just to be able to stand in an evil day is a victory for the believer." (McGee, J. V. Thru the Bible commentary. Vol. 5, Page 280. Nashville: Thomas Nelson)

To **"stand"** was used as a military term for holding on to a position. The emphasis on the believer taking a "stand" in part could be related to the repeated use (4x) of the Greek word "pros" translated "against" in ([6:12](#)) which stresses the determined hostility confronting the Christian soldier and the need to "stand firm" without falling.

Stand firm on the truth, the sound doctrines which Paul wrote about earlier in Ephesians -- e.g., our inseparable union with Christ ([2:5-6](#)), Christ's indisputable Headship over all things ([1:22-23](#)), Christ's position far above all demonic powers ([1:21](#)), and the believer's access to the same source of power that brought about Christ's resurrection ([1:19](#)), to mention just a few of the truths Paul had taught the Ephesian saints about their position and power **in Christ**.

Because we have to know who we are in Christ before we can stand firm, any teaching on spiritual warfare which restricts itself to Ephesians 6:10-18 will at best provide only a partial view of truth on this crucial topic.

John MacArthur writes that

"When Martin Luther stood before the Diet of Worms he was accused of heresy. After being condemned for declaring that men are saved by faith alone in Christ alone, he declared, "My conscience is captive to the Word of God. ... **Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise.**" Every believer who is faithful to God's Word cannot do otherwise than stand firm." (Bolding added. MacArthur, J. F. Ephesians. page 343. Chicago: Moody Press)

MacArthur goes on to add that

"John warned, ["Watch \(2PPAM\) yourselves \(Ed note: note who we are to be "watching"!](#) Present tense command calls for a continual vigilance as our flesh & the forces of darkness are relentlessly out to ruin us & disqualify us for a full reward at the Bema seat although they cannot cause us to lose our salvation) that you do not [lose \(2PAAS\) what we have accomplished \(1PAMI\)](#), but that you may [receive a full reward \(2PAAS\)](#)." ([2 John 8](#)). Paul's one great fear was that, "that possibly after I have [preached \(AAPMSN\) to others, I myself should be \(1SAMS\) disqualified" \(1Cor 9:27\)](#). He was not afraid of losing his salvation but his reward and, even more importantly, his usefulness to the Lord. Countless men and women have faithfully taught Sunday school for years, led many people to Jesus Christ, pastored a church, led Bible studies, ministered to the sick, and done every sort of service in the Lord's name—only to one day give up, turn their backs on His work, and disappear into the world. The circumstances differ, but the underlying reason is always the same: they took God's armor off and thereby lost the courage, the power, and the desire to stand firm." (Ibid.)

In his excellent devotional "Morning and Evening", Spurgeon encourages those of us who might be being tempted to take a short "furlough" from the war we inherited when we became believers. Spurgeon writes that...

"Perseverance is the badge of true saints. The Christian life is not a beginning only in the ways of God, but also a continuance in the same as long as life lasts. It is with a Christian as it was with the great Napoleon: he said, "Conquest has made me what I am, and conquest must maintain me." So, under God, dear brother in the Lord, conquest has made you what you are, and conquest must sustain you. Your motto must be, "Excelsior." He only is a true conqueror, and shall be crowned at the last, who continueth till war's trumpet is blown no more. Perseverance is, therefore, the target of all our spiritual enemies. The world does not object to your being a Christian for a time, if she can but tempt you to cease your pilgrimage, and settle down to buy and sell with her in Vanity Fair. The flesh will seek to ensnare you, and to prevent your pressing on to glory. "It is weary work being a pilgrim; come, give it up. Am I always to be mortified? Am I never to be indulged? Give me at least a furlough from this constant warfare." Satan will make many a fierce attack on your perseverance; it will be the mark for all his arrows. He will strive to hinder you in service: he will insinuate that you are doing no good; and that you want rest. He will endeavour to make you weary of suffering, he will whisper, "Curse God, and die." Or he will attack your steadfastness: "What is the good of being so zealous? Be

quiet like the rest; sleep as do others, and let your lamp go out as the other virgins do." Or he will assail your doctrinal sentiments: "Why do you hold to these denominational creeds? Sensible men are getting more liberal; they are removing the old landmarks: fall in with the times." Wear your shield, Christian, therefore, close upon your armour, and cry mightily unto God, that by his Spirit you may endure to the end.

John MacArthur gives a personal anecdote illustrating the idea of **continuing to "stand firm"**. He writes:

"When I was in Scotland, a man approached me in Frazerborough and asked, "Is your father named Jack MacArthur? I told him yes. He said, "Your father came to Ireland at least thirty years ago with two other men to hold a revival in Belfast and all around Ireland. I went to hear your father speak, and at the meeting I received Jesus Christ and dedicated my life to the ministry. I am a pastor because the Lord used your father to minister to me. Would you tell him that when you see him?" I told him I would. Then he asked, "Where is your father now?" I told him he was ministering like he always had. He asked, "Is he still faithful to the Word?" I said, "Yes, he is still faithful—still standing." "Good," he replied. "What happened to the other men?" I said, "I'm sorry to report that one became an apostate and the other died an alcoholic." Three men went to Ireland and ministered to many people. But thirty years later, when the dust cleared, only one was left standing." (MacArthur, J., Jr. (1992). *How to meet the enemy*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.)

The greatest joys come in the greatest victories, and the greatest victories come from the greatest battles—when they are fought in the power and with the armor of the Lord. -- John MacArthur

[Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus](#)

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,

Stand in His strength alone;

The arm of flesh will fail you,

You dare not trust your own.

Put on the gospel armor,

Each piece put on with prayer;

Where duty calls or danger,

Be never wanting there."

----George Duffield

From Radio Bible Class "[Our Daily Bread](#)":

Do you ever wonder whether the Bible can be trusted? Scottish reformer John Knox confessed that he passed through a dark time when his soul was filled with "anger, wrath, and indignation, which it conceived against God, calling all His promises in doubt." Do you sometimes wonder if God exists? The staunchest of Puritans, Increase Mather, wrote in his diary that he was

"greatly molested with temptations to atheism."

Are you ever so filled with questions that you feel at times like an unbeliever? Martin Luther sadly admitted,

"For more than a week Christ was wholly lost. I was shaken by desperation and blasphemy against God."

Don't be surprised if you pass through similar struggles. As followers of Christ, we are in conflict with God's enemy, the devil, the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). We wrestle against him and "the rulers of the darkness of this age" (Eph. 6:12). Two of the pieces of armor God has provided for us when we are attacked by doubt are "truth" and "the shield of faith." They can "quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one" (v14-16). As we saturate our minds with God's Word, our faith will be strengthened. Then we'll be able to stand when doubts assail us. --VCG

The devil is subtle, deceptive, and sly;

He's clever and tricks us to swallow his lie.

But his cunning methods we're sure to discern

By making God's warnings our daily concern. --DJD

The best protection against Satan's lies

is to know God's truth.