

A Good Defense

In the sports world, clichés like “strong up the middle” and “defense wins championships” indicates the importance of defense to sports teams. Interestingly, the apostle Paul had some words about defense in our walk with God.

In Ephesians 6:11, the apostle writes, *Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* But why do we need an armor to withstand the forces of the devil? Can we not simply go about our daily lives doing good, helping people, and saying no to our friends and acquaintances if and when they would influence us to do wrong? The answer is no! Our enemy, the devil, is not flesh and blood (Eph. 6:12a). He is a spirit and he has power to damage each of us both physically and spiritually. We cannot resist the devil by trusting in ourselves and our own strength and ability.

God knows the struggles Christians face and how each of us must be equipped to defend ourselves. He also knows how powerful and cunning the enemy is. Paul describes the enemy with words like “rulers,” “authorities,” and “powers,” to indicate the strength of the enemy. In Matt. 4:8-9, the devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if He would fall down and worship him. Jesus did not deny the devil had such power. Jesus referred to the devil as *the ruler of this world* (John 12:31). Peter compared him to a *roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour* (I Pet. 5:8). John wrote *the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one* (I John 5:19).

What does the armor of God which the apostle Paul spoke of include? It includes the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, spiritual footwear, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and sword of the Spirit. These comprise the whole armor of God. Even though our defense is *in the Lord* (Eph. 6:10), we, individually, must put on the whole armor to have a good defense.

There is one other help we can call upon: prayer. *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to the end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints* (Eph. 6:18).

--For the elders (Don Denton)