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Read :10-17. :17a And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION. The Roman soldier's helmet was made of thick leather covered with metal plates. A blow to the head would be disabling so this was an indispensable piece of equipment. The **helmet** guards our minds and thoughts, the ability to think and reason, to have a clear perspective. For the Christian, it is to preserve us from 'mental confusion'.

Of 'salvation': *Salvation means deliverance and the Bible talks about past, present, and future salvation, which includes justification, sanctification, and glorification. We have been delivered (which the Bible calls justification or righteousness). We are being delivered (which is sanctification). &, we will be delivered (which is called glorification).* In this context, it's doubtful whether 'salvation' is referring to past salvation because the **breastplate** was **righteousness**, and, the other pieces described are used in regard to battling in the present. In **1 Th. 5:8 (read)**, Paul refers to the helmet as the 'hope' of salvation. In the Bible, hope is referring to something that is certain but still to come. This helmet would then be referring to *the assurance of future and final deliverance*. We usually think of hope as "I hope it will happen; it may or may not." But Scriptural hope is a certainty that is still future. (**Eph. 1:13, 4:30, Rom. 8:23**) *The certainties for every Christian are the redemption of our bodies, we'll receive our inheritance, & Jesus is coming back again, for us, to set things right and to reign as Ruler and King.* We should use these certainties to protect our minds/thoughts, to have a Godly perspective, to eliminate confusion.

How would our opponent Satan engage Christians in battle in this area? The devil tries to get us to rely on the unreal and groundless expectations of the world around us, perhaps placing our hope in a human being or the governing authorities. He tries to make us fearful of how things are going or of what is coming. He tries to make us 'feel' hopeless, depressed! With despair, trying to get us to wrongly focus on everything around us that is seemingly going astray. When one looks at covid, the numerous cults, conflicts around the world, our failing government programs, the up-and-down economy, natural calamities, persecution of Christians, the threat of nuclear war, the crime rate, the drug problems, false messiahs, it can be very disturbing. If we place our focus and minds on any of these, we'll be confused and lose hope and perspective; we'll wonder why or if we should even go on.

How can we practically use the helmet of salvation? If our eyes are fixed on anything other than Jesus, we'll feel hopeless or be fearful or confused or give up. Use the facts—of the *Lordship and return of Jesus, of the redemption of our bodies, and of our receiving our inheritances*—as guides in evaluating the movements of our day. As Christians we need to keep our minds clear, our thinking straight. Our future is certain!!! We need to understand those facts even in the midst of hardships, failures, and/or suffering (**1 Pet. 5:5b-11**). Jesus is even now working out His plans (summing up all things in Jesus **1:10**), and He'll return right on schedule. We also need to use the certainty of His

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How can we practically use the sword of the Spirit, the word of God? Realize that the Holy Spirit inspired and gave us God's written words; He helps us understand them; He brings them to mind. **Rom. 10:17** says, "**Faith comes from hearing, and hearing comes by a word (rhēma) of Christ.**" Our lives are changed by knowing and using God's specific words for specific attacks. Know which passages deal with specific issues. Copy Jesus' example: The classic use of the rhēma of God is where Jesus answered each temptation of the devil by quoting specific OT Scriptures out loud (**Mt. 4:1-11**; also see **Jude 9**). In my own life, I have found that when I'm attacked in the area of peace, I review **Rom. 5:1** and **Phil. 4:6-9**. I have found that when I'm attacked in the area of fleshly urges that quoting **Rom. 6:1-14** and **Gal. 5:16** is extremely helpful for me, reminding me who I am IN Christ and how to walk as the Christian I am. God's words get right to the core of every issue. They eliminate confusion. They enable us to stand firm. The better we know specific verses, the better we're able to resist in the evil days, to stand firm when attacked, to have Biblical information the Holy Spirit can bring to mind. That's the reason for memorization, so the Spirit has ammunition available at any moment, like an ammunition belt filled with bullets. **James 4:7** is helpful.

These are the pieces of armor. We can see that God's provision is a defense against strategy as well as assault. Yet unless we use His armor, even though it's available, we'll be defeated in *every* struggle against our enemy. We're not to fight for victory, but from a position of of victory already won in our Lord Jesus. We're not to try to conquer new territory but to stand firm on the ground already won. The Bible doesn't say, "Having done everything, fight! Instead it says, "Having done everything, stand firm!" The victory has been won by Jesus.

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Christians are under attack! Every Christian has a very real enemy who is invisible, extremely powerful, and clever. YET, we can be strong in the Lord and put on His full armor. Know these Biblical facts, believe them, and live life on the basis of these truths. In what ways are you attacked? Remind yourself of which piece of armor deals with that particular scheme or flesh pattern or worldly pressure, and then use it! Know and memorize, have a working definition of, and figure out a couple of ways the devil would attack each piece. And, have one or two practical sets of verses (words of God) that deal with each piece.

"Lord, may we realize the victory is won; we're just to do battle and stand firm in Your strength and with Your armor."

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The final instruction in this passage on spiritual warfare is not on fighting techniques but on prayer. Why prayer? Prayer admits our lack of strength in these spiritual struggles. Prayer reveals our total dependence upon God for success.

Prayer is spiritual guard duty, keeping our eyes on our Commander. "Your will be done!" It's not part of the armor because prayer is directed God-ward, not toward the enemy. We're to pray in every situation, according to the Spirit's leading, and, we're not only to pray for ourselves but also pray, giving constant attention and intense effort, for all the 'struggling' saints. We can't put on another's armor for them but we can pray for them. No soldier entering battle prays for himself alone; the success of one is the success of all. Our Lord is with us, and we should each have a team of saints to pray with and for each other. Praying, according to the Scripture the Spirit inspired and in His strength. Keeping alert! Be sleepless, alert, vigilant!

:19-20 ...and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Paul asks that he may be given boldness in proclaiming Jesus' name & God's revealed truth to turn people from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God (**Acts 26:18**). "I'm a prisoner but I'm also His ambassador, an official representative of Him who is Lord of lords. May I never forget who I represent." **Read 2 Tim. 4:17.**

:21-22 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. Ty(oo)chicus was an associate of Paul; he was frequently sent on missions by the apostle. A brother dearly loved and a table-waiter kind of servant, they would get first-hand information about Paul from him.

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Practical Ways to Apply God's Word:

1. START WITH JESUS (**Mt. 11:28-30**) and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**). Practice ECRAT: Examine, Confess, Review, Allow, and Thank.
2. AS PART OF YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY, you have a responsible role to play as a husband/wife/parent/child. Be sure you're remaining true to who you are.
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4. FINALLY AS AN INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN: **Rom. 12:9-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-8a, Eph. 4:20-6:18, and 1 Pet. 2:11-3:17** spell out how Jesus will live out His life and love uniquely through you as you trust Him, rest in Him.
5. Be careful who you listen to and what you watch and read, what you're continually thinking about. Choose & be a good role model. Be sure there's a steady input from God's Word. Pray without ceasing. Realize there's a glorious, certain, guaranteed future for you and every other Christian.

Remember, this is a life and love only Jesus through the Holy Spirit can live in/through you! Yet He will as you by faith run the race set before you (**Heb. 12:1-2a**).

Lessons you learned? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus?

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coming as a guide in evaluating where we should spend our resources (time, money, service) and what decisions to make. There are and will always be all kinds of needs; where does the Lord Jesus want you (us) involved? Our spiritual gifts and hearts for ministry are clues! **Read Rom. 15:13, Heb. 12:1-2, Titus 2:11-14, and 1 Pet. 5:10.** Ray Stedman is especially helpful on this piece of armor (raystedman.org, **Eph. 6:17** part 3).

:17b And [take up] the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The Roman sword was the only offensive weapon of the soldier. However, remember we're to stand firm, not gain ground! The weapon was short, only about 2 feet long, sharp on both edges. It was used in hand-to-hand combat. The enemy of that era had a larger sword, with only one side sharp. The Roman soldier was able to get inside the slashes of the larger sword and take care of his enemy.

The Spirit's sword. God's words. Why would the sword of the Spirit be called the word of God? The Greek word is *rhēma*, which refers to *GOD'S specific, individual words, specific truths of the Bible, words given by the indwelling Holy Spirit to meet the critical need of the moment.* There are hundreds, maybe thousands of such 'rhēmas' in the Bible. See **Eph. 5:26**.

What would be the combat strategy of the devil? The devil tries to deceive us by quoting Scripture verses or phrases out of context. He tries to keep Christians out of the Bible. He tries to get us to NOT *know or believe or act on* God's specific words. His main attack would be ignorance; he wants us to stay away from God's words. Another approach would be to misquote Scripture, taking God's rhēmas out of context. A third method would be to try to convince us that the Bible is only partially true (which part is anyone's guess!). He attacks the Bible, condenses it, changes it, doesn't want us taking it literally. He hates the fact that we have an offensive weapon.

How can we practically use the sword of the Spirit, the word of God? Realize that the Holy Spirit inspired and gave us God's written words; He helps us understand them; He brings them to mind. **Rom. 10:17** says, "**Faith comes from hearing, and hearing comes by a word (rhēma) of Christ.**" Our lives are changed by knowing and using God's specific words for specific attacks. Know which passages deal with specific issues. Copy Jesus' example: The classic use of the rhēma of God is where Jesus answered each temptation of the devil by quoting specific OT Scriptures out loud (Mt. 4:1-11; also see Jude 9). In my own life, I have found that when I'm attacked in the area of peace, I review **Rom. 5:1** and **Phil. 4:6-9**. I have found that when I'm attacked in the area of fleshly urges that quoting **Rom. 6:1-14** and **Gal. 5:16** is extremely helpful for me, reminding me who I am IN Christ and how to walk as the Christian I am. God's words get right to the core of every issue. They eliminate confusion. They enable us to stand firm. The better we know specific verses, the better we're able to resist in the evil days, to stand firm when attacked, to have Biblical information the Holy Spirit can bring to mind. That's the reason for memorization, so the Spirit has ammunition available at any moment, like an ammunition belt filled with bullets. **James 4:7** is helpful.

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These are the pieces of armor. We can see that God's provision is a defense against strategy as well as assault. Yet unless we use His armor, even though it's available, we'll be defeated in *every* struggle against our enemy. We're not to fight for victory, but from a position of victory already won in our Lord Jesus. We're not to try to conquer new territory but to stand firm on the ground already won. The Bible doesn't say, "Having done everything, fight!" Instead it says, "Having done everything, stand firm!" The victory has been won by Jesus.

Are there evil days? Certainly! There are constant conflicts, evil days, going on in every Christian's life. I have found that these take place in my life in two main areas: worry and thoughts that seem to come out of nowhere. When those days hit, when there's great discontentment with everything and everyone around me and I'm stretched like a rubber band, or those days when evil thoughts seem to come out of nowhere and I can't seem to shake them, I have found the only way of victory is to use the resources, the armor, God has abundantly provided. Victory is guaranteed when we are strengthened in Him. He is everything we need for victory. Join me as we check our armor at the start of each day. Then throughout the hours of the day, review our armor and take it up with each battle, all the while praying that the Lord through us will work out His will and His glory will be displayed. To arms, fellow soldiers, to arms!

Christians are under attack! Every Christian has a very real enemy who is invisible, extremely powerful, and clever. YET, we can be strong in the Lord and put on His full armor. Know these Biblical facts, believe them, and live life on the basis of these truths. In what ways are you attacked? Remind yourself of which piece of armor deals with that particular scheme or flesh pattern or worldly pressure, and then use it! Know and memorize, have a working definition of, and figure out a couple of ways the devil would attack each piece. And, have one or two practical sets of verses (words of God) that deal with each piece.

"Lord, may we realize the victory is won; we're just to do battle and stand firm in Your strength and with Your armor."

:18-24 Please Pray and Trust! Peace, Love, Grace be Yours!

:18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

The final instruction in this passage on spiritual warfare is not on fighting techniques but on prayer. Why prayer? Prayer admits our lack of strength in these spiritual struggles. Prayer reveals our total dependence upon God for success.

Prayer is spiritual guard duty, keeping our eyes on our Commander. "Your will be done!" It's not part of the armor because prayer is directed God-ward, not toward the enemy. We're to pray in every situation, according to the Spirit's leading, and, we're not only to pray for ourselves but also pray, giving constant attention and intense effort, for all the 'struggling' saints. We can't put on another's armor for them but we can pray for them. No soldier entering battle prays for himself alone; the success of one is the success of all. Our Lord is with us, and we should each have a team of saints to pray with and for each other. Praying, according to the Scripture the Spirit inspired and in His strength. Keeping alert! Be sleepless, alert, vigilant!

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:19-20 ...and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. Paul asks that he may be given boldness in proclaiming Jesus' name & God's revealed truth to turn people from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God (**Acts 26:18**). "I'm a prisoner but I'm also His ambassador, an official representative of Him who is Lord of lords. May I never forget who I represent." **Read 2 Tim. 4:17.**

:21-22 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. Ty(oo)chicus was an associate of Paul; he was frequently sent on missions by the apostle. A brother dearly loved and a table-waiter kind of servant, they would get first-hand information about Paul from him.

:23-24 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love. Paul's final wishes for the Christians at Ephesus: God's peace, His wholeness, contentment, calmness of soul. God's love, His commitment to do what is best for us. With faith, a deep trust in God and His Word, and living life on that basis. God's grace, His undeserved favor is offered without any expectation of return, but given out of the wealth and generosity of the Giver. Only by God's grace, His undeserved favor upon us, do we experience what we do! Who agapē our Lord Jesus with unceasing, imperishable, immortal love.

Practical Ways to **Apply** God's Word:

1. START WITH JESUS (Mt. 11:28-30) and fix your focus on Him (**Heb. 12:1-3**). Practice ECRAT: Examine, Confess, Review, Allow, and Thank.
2. AS PART OF YOUR IMMEDIATE FAMILY, you have a responsible role to play as a husband/wife/parent/child. Be sure you're remaining true to who you are.
3. THEN AS PART OF THE FAMILY OF GOD, pray for, love, be hospitable to, serve one another, using your Spirit-given gifts (**1 Pet. 4:7-11**). Also, consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds (Heb. 10:24-25).
4. FINALLY AS AN INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN: **Rom. 12:9-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-8a, Eph. 4:20-6:18, and 1 Pet. 2:11-3:17** spell out how Jesus will live out His life and love uniquely through you as you trust Him, rest in Him.
5. Be careful who you listen to and what you watch and read, what you're continually thinking about. Choose & be a good role model. Be sure there's a steady input from God's Word. Pray without ceasing. Realize there's a glorious, certain, guaranteed future for you and every other Christian.

Remember, this is a life and love only Jesus through the Holy Spirit can live in/through you! Yet He will as you by faith run the race set before you (**Heb. 12:1-2a**).

Lessons you learned? Applications you made? Questions you have? What impact does this passage have on your daily walk with Jesus?

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