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ALWAYS BE READY

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and 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. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth...” (Eph. 6:10-14). As beloved children of God, it is important to recognize we are now walking around with a target on our back for Satan to do his very

best to strip us of our hope and rob us of our inheritance. We must recognize temptations are going to be a regular part of life as faithful Christians and must therefore be fully clothed with the armor and protection God has given to us to overcome them. *“Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him,” (Jm. 1:12).* One of the first pieces Paul admonishes us to have on is the belt of Truth. It was common for men and women to dress in long flowing robes and garments which would need to be tied up and fastened when swift movement or running was necessary. In this way, it is as if Paul is implying we need to live every day

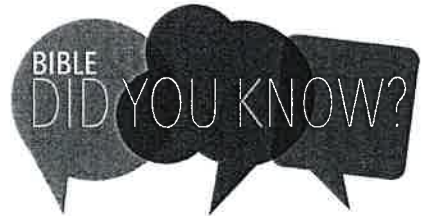
ready for swift action, having our garments tied up with the belt of Truth and fully ready for an attack. We must always have a watchful eye in ready anticipation of Satan's devices being always ready to go to battle and be able to stand.

"Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit," (Lk. 12:35). "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. 1:13). "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour," (1 Pet. 5:8). One of the worst things to happen to someone in battle is to be caught off guard. There's nothing more devastating than a sneak attack when no one is prepared or ready to defend themselves. I have never experienced in all of my Christian life any battles with Satan that were pre-arranged where spectators could sit ring-side like a high-profile boxing match where the bell rings and we both go at each other. I don't get to have a date circled on the calendar in advance and have

several weeks of training in preparation for the big showdown. Since he sneaks up on us with no advance warning, Paul says we must always be dressed in readiness, tying up our loose flowing robes so we have freedom of movement to be ready for battle. For us, the loose flowing robes are not our clothing, but the loose flowing thoughts of our minds that need tightly held together with the Truth of the seriousness of our situation constantly dominating our thoughts. Paul says ultimately this is done through prayer. *"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," (Eph. 6:18).* This is precisely what Jesus was trying to help His disciples understand on the night He was betrayed and arrested. When Jesus went to the garden for prayer bringing His disciples along with them, He urged them to stay vigilant in prayer in preparation for the temptations they would soon face. Being drowsy and falling asleep, their thoughts resembled the loose flowing robes they were wearing, and Jesus urges them to tie them

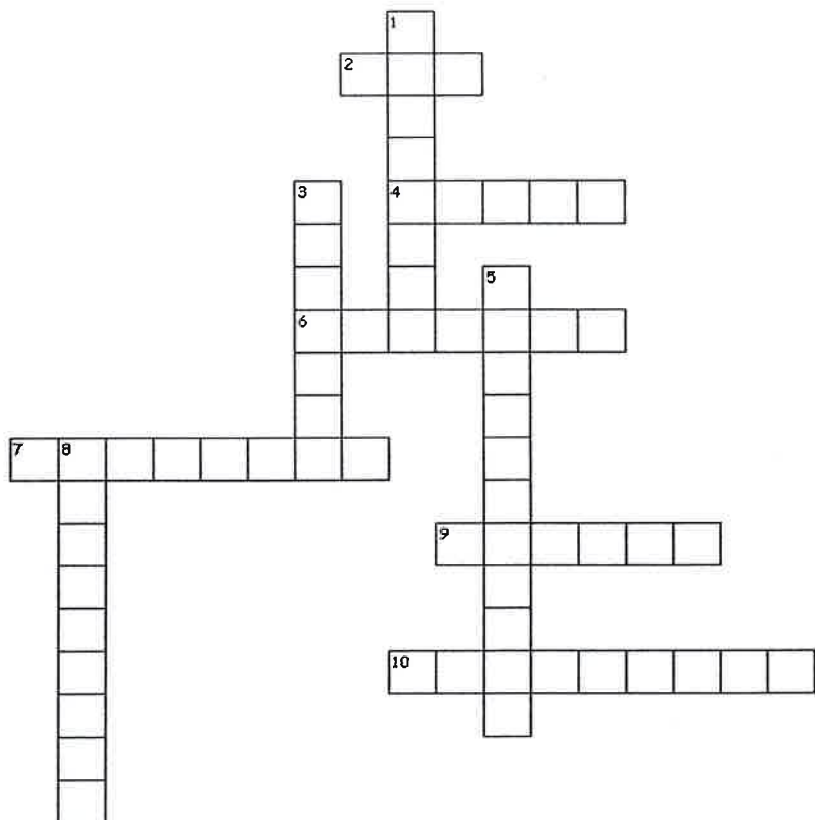
up and be ready for action by engaging in fervent prayer. *“And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. When He arrived at the place, He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter temptation.’ And He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, saying, ‘Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.’ ...When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, and said to them, ‘Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation,’” (Lk. 22:39-42,45-46). “...the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words. And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. And He came the third time, and said to them, ‘Are you still sleeping and resting?’” (Mk. 14:38-41). The disciples failed to gird up the loins of their minds in fervent prayer in anticipation of the temptations they would*

face in remaining loyal to their teacher and friend that night, and consequently were totally defenseless and unable to resist as they all fled and abandoned the Lord. Let us not make this same mistake when temptations come our way, as they are sure to come upon us. Let us gird up our minds with the belt of Truth and be ready in fervent prayer every day to meet Satan head on and have the strength to stand. – Daniel Ruegg



Even a high standing reputation among others made no difference to Paul when arriving at a true understanding of the word of God in discussion and comparison with those at Jerusalem. “But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) – well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me,” Galatians 2:6

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ACROSS

2. We are justified by faith in Christ and not by works of this. (Gal. 2:16)
4. In presence of Gentiles, Cephas began to hold himself ____ (Gal. 2:11-12)
6. Paul warned of those who wanted to ____ the gospel of Christ. (Gal. 1:7)
7. How we are to consider any who will distort the gospel. (Gal. 1:9)
9. Instead of Jerusalem Paul went here after his conversion. (Gal. 1:17)
10. Paul rebuked Cephas to save him from this condition. (Gal. 2:11)

DOWN

1. The hypocrisy of Cephas influenced this brother. (Gal. 2:13)
3. False brethren came not to bring liberty in Christ but this. (Gal. 2:4)
5. If Paul tried to please men he would not be this of Christ. (Gal. 1:10)
8. Paul had been this with Christ. (Gal. 2:20)