

# TRUTH & RIGHT

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## GUARD YOUR HEART

*“Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness...”*

*(Eph. 6:14).* The benefit of a breastplate in battle is too obvious to need explanation. The Roman soldier of Paul’s day would never have considered fighting without one. It was a tough, sleeveless piece of leather or heavy cloth with slices of animal hooves or horns or pieces of metal. Some were made of large pieces of metal molded or hammered to conform to the body. This breastplate was to protect the heart, lungs, and other vital organs. When it worked it usually saved the soldier’s life, because a wound to the heart or lungs was fatal. For the Christian to be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil and withstand his attempts to fatally wound us in battle, it

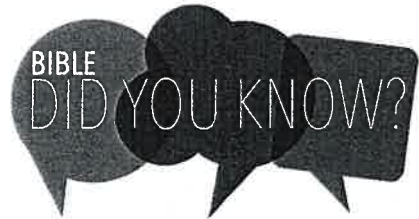
is unthinkable for us to even attempt to do so without wearing the breastplate. Paul says this breastplate we must equip ourselves with in battle is righteousness. A passage in Romans 13 helps shed light on why a breastplate of righteousness is so essential for the Christian engaged in battle with the spiritual forces of wickedness. *“Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and*

*make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts,” (Rom. 13:11-14).* Righteous behavior for the Christian acts as a shield guarding against the sinful allurements Satan fires at our flesh. Consistent, habitual, God glorifying righteous behavior acts as body armor to protect the weaknesses of our flesh from being exposed to Satan’s temptations. We all have three areas in our fleshly existence which are extremely vulnerable to sin – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 Jn. 2:15-17). The more we consistently put on Christ every day in all aspects of our life with righteous living that exemplifies Jesus, the less exposure we permit our flesh to be open for Satan to exploit with his fiery arrows. *“And put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. Be angry, and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity,” (Eph. 4:24-27).* Living righteously robs Satan of his ability to exploit our weaknesses and severely limits and hinders his effectiveness to

bring sin in our lives. *“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace,” (Rom. 6:11-14).* Jesus died to save us from every aspect of sin and teaches us to remove it completely from our lives. If we are using our physical bodies and all of our physical resources for good purposes in righteous behavior, then Satan is left with nothing to work with. Consider the example of Daniel’s righteous behavior and how it protected him. *“Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, insasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. Then these men said, ‘We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel*

unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God,'" (Dan. 6:4-5). When Satan sought a way to destroy the influence of Daniel, he found nothing, as his righteousness was his body armor protecting him from being exposed to sinful allurements. We must remember one of the most vulnerable areas that required protection for a soldier was the heart. In the same way, the most vulnerable area which must be covered with the breastplate of righteousness is the Christian's heart – the central nervous system of all righteous behavior. Notice Christ's warning that we guard our hearts from being defiled with unrighteous thoughts as this is where unrighteous behavior comes from. *"And He was saying, 'That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man,'"* (Mk. 7:20-23). This ought to emphasize how important it is we strive to keep sinful thoughts

from polluting our hearts, as this is where the strength of righteous behavior comes from, which is what our breastplate is composed of. In other words, the thickness and strength of our breastplate of righteousness is only as strong as the purity of the thoughts of our hearts. Corrupt hearts make for weak body armor which makes any battle against Satan an absolute joke and a pathetic attempt to stand firm. *"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life,"* (Prov. 4:23). – Daniel Ruegg



***The love of God is an eternal love which has been eternally expressed between a Father and Son. "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world,"***  
***John 17:24***



**DIRECTIONS:** Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

## 1) Refreshing Challenge

**Philemon 1:7** *"For I have come to have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother."* We are extremely blessed in this congregation to have so many tireless workers for the Lord who give it their all to see the work here thrive and grow. We are grateful for the sacrifices being made on a regular basis so many are willing to make of their time, energy and often money in contributing their part to the overall effective working of the body of Christ in this area. Let's focus this month on refreshing the hearts of the saints here in the congregation that they might feel a renewed sense of appreciation and encouragement to give them a boost in their constant service. "So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set," Ex. 17:11-12. Let's set a goal this month to encourage others within the congregation with random acts of kindness to alleviate their work load a bit and refresh their hearts by our love and support.

## 2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

### *Revelation 21:1-8*

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.' And He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new.' And He said, 'Write, for these words are faithful and true.' Then He said to me, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'"