

1. Boundaries are important, and the Lord knows them well! Proverbs 18:10 says, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.” Interestingly, it does not say that the LORD is a strong tower. The Proverb says just His NAME is a strong tower. Think about that! Think about the power just in His name, let alone His presence and being.

Jesus says that He is the Door of the sheep and the Good Shepherd in John 10. He says He is our boundary, our wall. The one that the wolves have to get through to get to us. He is a boundary of pure strength and protection, built out of a holy love and dedication to His people.

Take some time to read, meditate and pray through Proverbs 18:10 and John 10:1-15. As you pray, start by praising God- how has His name been a strong tower to you? How has He fended off wolves recently? Then, take some time to consider your calling as a follower of Jesus. What battle do you see coming? What wolves seem to be hunting you? Pray for Him to show you the path to the tower, and pray for His protection, and your humbleness and willingness to be protected.

2. It is awesome that we have a boundary of protection. However, as much as this boundary is for each of us individually, this boundary of protection that we speak of is a boundary around a kingdom- God’s kingdom. And in God’s kingdom there are warriors- royal priests, chosen generations, and good shepherds (notice the lower case). These leave the borders of the kingdom to take part in His battle to bring back into the fold those that are not yet there (John 10:16), and to go after the one (Luke 15:1-7)

A good warrior has good weapons and armor, but they also take care of them. They know them well, even intimately. It is important that we do the same. We need to care for our spiritual weaponry and armor. For example, it was common that Roman soldiers oiled their shields. Why? Shields were made of wood and leather. The oiling of the shield help to prevent the leather from drying out and cracking. When was the last time you oiled your faith? (Feel free to add the idea of anointing to this analogy, since oil and anointing tend to go hand in hand!)

In this second part, take stock of your spiritual arsenal by praying through the armor of God. Practice doing this daily. Try each day adding one of the armors to your prayers. Read Ephesians 6:10-18, then pray through each part:

1. The belt of truth. We live in a world that is actively trying to stamp out truth, and there are many churches, pastors and books, that speak lies disguised as truth. Pray for wisdom and discernment, and for the boldness to stand for truth in a world that actively rejects it.

2. The breastplate of righteousness. Pray for protection from temptations. Pray for guarded eyes. Pray to be ever vigilant, and to remember our enemy, satan, rarely attacks via a frontal assault. Pray for the Holy Spirit to protect your flanks and rear. Where might there be a chink in your righteousness? Be honest with this as you pray, and ask God to show you how this part of your armor can be patched.

3. The shoes of the gospel of peace. How is your witness? When was the last time that you prayed with someone intentionally, and not just over a meal or to start or end a meeting? When was the last time you had shared your faith with someone, disciplined someone, or just had the name of Jesus on your lips outside of a Sunday service or life group? Pray for boldness and opportunity and zeal to go and make disciples and to be the messenger on the mountaintop that brings good news!

4. The shield of faith. Time to rub some oil on that shield! How is your faith doing, lately? Have you been challenged? Heard a question or thought of a question that has rattled you? Have you been at work for exactly that, work, rather than responding to the calling and the gift that God has put into you? Pray to God that he will fan the flames of your faith. Pray for wisdom and counsel as you consider questions that you may have, and pray to remember that doubt does not an unbeliever make!

5. The helmet of salvation. Our salvation is sealed in Jesus, yes. Why then does Paul say to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling?” (Philippians 2:12b) Why does he also say, “if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead?” (Philippians 3:11) We could talk about this all day, but perhaps this is the best way to look at it- have you taken your salvation for granted? Did you have even just a little sin take place and say to yourself, “eh, it’s ok. I’m forgiven.” Praise God for the gift of salvation, and pray that you will not take it for granted. Pray that you will wake up every day with a spirit that is renewed and excited to be saved, and that it would be contagious!

6. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Our weapon. Our glorious, sharp and shining sword, that defies the armies of darkness! No matter how sharp and beautiful the sword, it does little damage if one does not know how to use it. How often do you practice with your sword, the word of God? Pray to develop strong bible study habits, and that your dedication to your sword will be the most important of all practices that you do. Ask yourself, when you have a lot of work to do, do you spend more time in prayer and Bible meditation as preparation for the amount of work, or less?

7. “...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplications for the saints...”

End your time with prayer over the staff, over our families and over the congregation. Pray a watchful prayer, pray a prayer that fights back against the gates of hell and pushes back the darkness as the light shines forth!