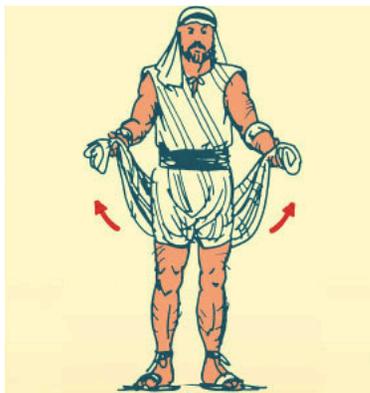


Shoes are just one part of God's armor. Whether you have children/grandchildren heading back to school or just want to be spiritually ready for what the day brings, use this guide to talk about how to put on the full armor of God!

Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. Ephesians 6:11

MONDAY Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth... Ephesians 6:14. Have you ever heard the term "gird your loins?" In the Ancient Near East, everyone wore long, flowing garments. If someone needed to do heavy work or run, they would gird their loins. To do this, you needed a strong, secure belt. Then you'd grab the hem at the bottom of the garment, pull it up and between the legs and tucking it into a secure, tight belt. Doing this creates pants! Soldiers would gird their loins before fighting. They could move quickly and it was hard for the enemy to grab hold of their garment when it was tight against their legs. It allowed them to move quickly wherever their commander sent them! Soldiers loosened their belts only when "off duty."



Do you see why truth is called a belt? How does being truthful help you move forward without tripping? How does honesty make sure the "enemy" can't grab onto you?

TUESDAY ...and the body armor of God's righteousness. Ephesians 6:14 In Jesus' day, Roman breastplates were often made of pieces of overlapping metal that protected the vital organs. If a blow came unexpectedly from behind or got past the shield in front, the breastplate could save your life. How is choosing to obey God and follow God's path (righteousness) like putting on a breastplate? How will you make choices that protect your heart from harm each day?

WEDNESDAY In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Ephesians 6:16. One Roman shield was called a *scutum*. This type of shield was as large as a door and would cover the warrior entirely. Such a shield was not just defensive but could also be used to push opponents. When fighting as a group, a phalanx of soldiers could position their shields to form an enclosure around themselves, called a *testudo* ("tortoise"). This was especially

helpful to protect against arrows launched from the walls of cities. Shields (often made of wood covered in hide), when wet, could extinguish flaming arrows. How is faith like a shield? Is it your first line of defense when the arrows start flying? How might you stand with other believers in times of crisis to strengthen everyone?

THURSDAY Put on salvation as your helmet... Ephesians 6:17

Without a helmet, a soldier would be so vulnerable that the rest of the armor would be of little use. Roman helmets usually had cheek plates to guard the face, and a metal piece in the back to protect the back of the neck. During the early first century, helmets began to include a brow ridge to provide protection for the eyes. How does salvation protect your mind when doubts, discouragements and setbacks occur?

FRIDAY ...and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Ephesians 6:17. The sword used by Roman soldiers was known as a *gladius*; in the hands of a skilled warrior, it was a fearsome weapon. It was sharpened on both sides, making it lethal against an unarmored foe. The point was also sharpened, enabling it to pierce armor. While the *gladius* was the primary offensive weapon, it was also invaluable for defense, used to parry and deflect attacks by an opponent. I doubt God wants us to attack others with his Word. But we see Jesus using Scripture to refute temptation, teach others and spar with the Pharisees. Do you read your Bible each day? How does God's word help you cut to the heart of the matter?

SATURDAY Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. Ephesians 6:18

The final piece of armor is prayer! Have you stopped to consider how powerful prayer is? Don't overlook the gift God gives us in prayer- a direct line to God! Jesus us tells us what when we pray, God answers. We have to be persistent and patient, but God responds to our prayers. Make prayer a daily part of your life.

