***The Full Armor of God - The Belt of Truth

The Suffering of Spiritual Combat, No. 3 - PH30-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:28-30***

In Philippians 1:28-30, we have found that the apostle Paul has indicated to the Philippian Christians that he is in a spiritual combat. They have seen him in that combat. They now know of his being in that combat in Rome, and he points out to them that they too are in the same spiritual combat.

It is true today that every one of as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ has one main purpose in life. That is to serve as the Lord's ambassadors in this world. Many Christians simply never seem to learn that. Some of you might never learn that. The totality of your life from start to finish is to serve as an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Whatever plans you have in life, if that is not number one, then I can tell you right now that you're already out of the will of God, and your life is beginning to veer off into a useless pointless tangent. Along the line of that tangent will be many distresses and griefs--elements of unhappiness. We are called to serve the Lord. We earn money in order to provide the means to serve the Lord. We have social relationships in order to contribute to that service for the Lord. We have family relationships which contribute to that service for the Lord. We have a church relationship. We have business relationships. Whatever it is, all of this must be geared, if you want to be in the will of God, to the fact that you are His ambassador.

This service is one in which all of us are involved. Please understand that I am not trying to challenge you to serve the Lord Jesus. I am not trying to challenge you to get into the battle. The truth of the matter is that you are already in the battle. This would be as ludicrous as the second lieutenant landing on some beach in the South Pacific during World War II with a group of Marines behind him out of the landing craft saying, "Men, now let's get into the fight." It would be quite obvious in that condition with what was taking place around them that they were already in the fight. At that point, certain things were going to be determined as the result of their preparation and the equipment which they had.

So, the service that I'm speaking of is one that you are already engaged in. It is a spiritual conflict. It is a combat with demons angels which surround every one of us, and to some degree are encroaching upon our lives.

The less that you are oriented to God's thinking and the less equipped you are as a soldier of Jesus Christ to perform spiritual combat, the less trouble you will have with Satan. This is because you're no problem to him. You're pretty well neutralized. But the more you grow in spiritual maturity and the more opportunity for effectiveness you have, the more Satan will zero in upon you.

We've been looking at Ephesians 6:10 which gives us an explanation of the enemy which we as believers face in the angelic warfare, and the weapons of our spiritual combat. We've been told in verse 10 that a Christian soldier should show outwardly a spiritual power which stems from an inward might provided by the Lord Jesus Christ through the Word of God. In verse 11, we were told that the Christian is to enter the angelic battle with battle gear which is specially provided by the Lord in order that we may be victorious against the strategies of Satan. In verse 12, we were told that the enemy in the Christian soldier's service is an unseen enemy. He is not human in nature. He is angelic. As a matter of fact, four major ranks of angels were pointed out to us, and services which they are able to perform with the particular authority that their rank carries. Be sure that you get this straight. Satan is out to neutralize you. He is doing this through the agency of demons. He wants to cut you down. You must be aware of the fact that you are in the battle.

**Ephesians 6:13**

So, beginning at verse 13, we read, "Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God." The word, "wherefore" is the Greek preposition "dia." It is followed grammatically by what is called the accusative case. When this happens, "dia" with the accusative case always comes out meaning "because of." The Greek actually has another word. It has the word "this" in it, so that it is literally, "because of this," or we would say in English, "therefore." What this word is doing is referring back to the fact that there is such thing as an angelic warfare. There are such things as fallen demonic angels who are antagonistic opposing God. The Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven so he cannot be reached. So, the attack is being directed toward the believers who are His body. Thus, the demonic world is getting at Christ by hitting you who are the believers.

Therefore, you have the reality of a spiritual warfare raging about you; there are ranks of demon angels with tremendous authority in each rank; and, these are superhuman powers. You cannot see them and you cannot come to grips with them. Therefore, you have to meet this battle in a totally different way than when you want to argue with your husband or your wife, or when you want to argue with a neighbor over the backyard fence. Whatever battles you may want to do in life on a human plane, they don't count here. This is a totally different situation.

"Therefore, take unto you the whole armor of God." "Take unto you" is the Greek word "analambano." "Lombano" simply means "to take." The prefix "ana" means to do it again. "Constantly be in this state where, as the result of what you know, you have taken unto yourself the whole armor of God." This is in the aorist tense which refers to the fact that there is an act of preparation and an act of basic training which you need in order to put on the armor. No matter how smart you are, when you go into the United States military service of any branch, they don't just throw the equipment at you. They don't just hand you the gear and say, "Here. Go out and sit under the tree and figure out how to use this, or how it works." It is carefully explained to you. You are given the nomenclature, the name of the parts, and then you are shown how to use these things in various tactical situations under combat.

What we are speaking of here is spiritual combat, and you, in this condition also, have to take to yourself repeatedly a set of spiritual armor. There is no time when you can serve the Lord in your life here on this earth apart from all the elements of this armor, and not get hurt. What I'm trying to get across to you is when you get hurt in your spiritual life; when you get hurt in your daily living; when you are disappointed; and, when your life breaks down, it is because some part of the armor was not there, or some part of the spiritual weapon was not used, and Satan got to you. The demons got to you.

This is fantastic. Once you get hold of this, it will revolutionize your outlook on life. Everything will be seen in a totally different perspective. You'll be off the idiocy of human viewpoint. You'll be on God's divine viewpoint. It will mean worlds to you personally, and you'll come into a position where you'll begin to experience happiness in a way that you've never known it before. This verb is active, which means that the believer has to put on the battle gear himself. It is up to you to see to it that you put on this armor. The Lord is going to explain it to us. He's going to spell it out to us. We have to put it on. Furthermore, just to make it clear that it must be done, it is in the imperative mood. When a verb is imperative, that's a command. God is not inviting you to join Him in the battle. He is telling you to get the gear on, and to be aware of the fact that you are already in the battle. This whole armor, again, is the word "panoplia." Put on the whole "panoplia" of God. It means to put on all the equipment of battle. It is the equipment of God, a divine provision for meeting a specialized kind of combat because it's combat with demon angels.

Here is the purpose: "Therefore, take unto you the whole armor (all the elements of the details) of God." "That" is the Greek word "hina." This introduces the purpose or the reason that you need this armor. "That you might be able," and the word "able" is "dunamai." "Dunamai" expresses the idea of having a capacity to do something. Here it is aorist, and the aorist tense is at a point in time. At the point that you meet spiritual combat, at the point that the demonic world has analyzed you; checked your file; and, moved in on you, at that point, you are to be prepared and you are to have a capacity. Passive means that you are experiencing God's enablement, not your own. If you think you can meet this kind of battle on your own, you are defeated. It is specifically passive. That is very important to notice that God is saying that you should be able as the result of what He does, and not as the result of what you do.

This is why you have heard me many times call your attention to the hazards of challenge--for you as believers to sit under spiritual challenges. Spiritual challenges have a way of inviting the troops of the Lord to fight battles that they are not prepared to fight, and they are devastated. Then they think there's something wrong with God, or there's something wrong with the Word of God. The energy and the capacity that He is speaking of here is something that He provides. We are to have the outward expression of power as the result of the inward might of Christ. And it is subjunctive mood. Subjunctive is potential. If you use this armor, you're going to win. If you don't use this armor, you're going to be defeated. It's just as simple as that.

Therefore, put this armor on for the purpose that you will have the capacity--something flowing from within you from God himself. At any point of combat, "you'll be able to withstand." The word "to withstand" is "anthistemi." "Anthistemi" means "to resist." "That you would be able to resist." "Anti" means "against," and "histemi" means "to stand," so it means "to stand against" or "to cause to stand or resist." In other words, it is telling us not to become a casualty of the angelic conflict. Aorist indicates at any point of combat. Active indicates that you are doing the fighting. Infinitive expresses God's purpose. It is not the Lord's purpose that you just survive. A lot of Christians feel very smug about the fact that they are able to kind of keep going along; keep muddling along; and, keep surviving. But God is not interested in your just surviving and your just happening to hold the line. He is interested in your moving forward and being victorious as believers.

This isn't that guff about the victorious life which is the kind of thing that's often done. There's a prayer bench down front, and people are invited to come and to pray for victory, and then the professional preacher walks along, and every now and then he leans over to you and says, "Have you got the victory yet, brother?" You look up and say, "I don't think so." So, he says, "Keep praying, brother." Before I was pastor of this church, I stood over in that chapel, and I saw that very thing happen. People were praying for victory in their ignorance, and what they got back was ignorance. We're not asking you to resist something in that spirit. We're asking you to resist because it is the purpose of God for you not to be a casualty of the demonic world. Every time we have a spiritual breakdown in any phase of our lives, it was not God's plan for us. It was our personal choice and doing.

The specific thing that he's speaking of here is that this armor would enable us to withstand to resist "in the evil day." The Greek literally says, "In the day of the evil." The Greek word is "poneros." "Poneros" means "a pernicious evil." This is an evil which causes pain and sorrow--a laborious evil. What he is referring to here is this whole church age in which we live. The pernicious evil that we face is the fact that the demon angels are opposing God. They're fighting Him by attacking us. Therefore, we have come to a point in history where this battle is mounting. It is rising up, and it is now intensified. Consequently, things are worse than they have ever been before in the nature of Satan's attack upon believers. This is the time, as never before, that he must neutralize any believer who has any information about how to live the Christian life.

He says that the point of this is that we may be able to resist in this evil day, "and having done all, to stand." The word "having done" is "katergazomai." "Katergazomai" denotes that we have been prepared for spiritual combat. Aorist means the act of preparing for battle. It is all brought together. It is all the specific steps that you must take to prepare for spiritual battle. It is middle, which means that you do it for yourself. You must take the steps to prepare for the battle. No one else can prepare for you in battle.

In military service, somebody who goes through training as a goldbrick ends up as a dead soldier in combat. No one else can prepare to do your fighting. You must do it yourself. It is a participle which means that it is a statement of God's plan, and a statement of fact. However, it is more than that. It is an aorist participle, and a point of grammar here to remember is that aorist participles always indicate what has to come before the main verb in the sentence. The main point of this sentence is to stand and to be victorious. The aorist participle indicates to us that before we can be victorious, we will have had to do something. Before we can be victorious, we will have had to done all to stand. That is, all the parts of the armor will have had to been put on us, and then we will be able to stand ("histemi"). "Histemi" is aorist. We are undefeated at the point of our Christian service. It is active. We are doing our own service. It is infinitive again, expressing God's purpose: victory, not defeat.

The whole point of this divine armor is to enable us to realize our purpose for living as Christians. This is one of the most important passages in all the Word of God. It is one that, once you become acquainted and you gain a respect for the spiritual warfare that is taking place, then you will also recognize that it takes a specialized kind of preparation to meet it. The point is that that preparation enables us to live for the Lord. So, think of your life in terms of the angelic attacks upon you. Recognize the defeats in all phases of your life as victories that God does not intend the demons to have. It's not just inevitable.

**The Full Armor of God**

In verse 14, he takes up the most fascinating part of this passage, perhaps, in that he begins to spell out for us exactly what is involved in the battle gear. There are seven pieces of equipment that are mentioned in this passage that are essential for us to meet the spiritual combat to which we've been called. Verse 14 begins, "Stand, therefore." The word "stand" is again this word "histemi." "Histemi" here is aorist, which means any point of our serving the Lord. It is active, so it is our decision as Christian soldiers to dress for this battle. It is imperative, so it is God's command for us to prepare for this battle. Combat readiness to be in the right place with the right training at the right time. Therefore, we are to stand, and to be able to be victorious. "Stand, therefore." The word "therefore" is "oun," and it is simply a little particle which expresses the consequence. "Stand, therefore," as the result of having put various parts of this armor on.

**The Belt of Truth**

Point number one is "having your loins girded about with truth." This is the first part of the armor--a belt of truth. Remember that the apostle Paul is looking at that Roman soldier who is guarding him. He is looking at the battle dress of the Praetorian Guard. He is mentioning pieces of the equipment of the guard, and he is relating them to spiritual comparisons. So, the first one is the belt. "Having girded about" is the Greek word "perisonnumi." "Perisonnumi" means "to wrap around yourself." This is exactly what you do with a belt. This is simply the Greek word for describing what you do when you put a belt on.

This is aorist. When do you put this belt around you? There's some point when you put this belt around you. You don't put it on after you're confronted with conflict. It's done before. That point before is the point of study of the Word of God. It is middle so that you put it on and you are benefited yourself. It is aorist participle again which means it has to be done before you can stand, which is the main part of the sentence. The Christian minus Bible doctrine is not a believer who is standing ready for battle in the angelic war against God. The Roman soldier that stood before Paul actually wore this large belt which he wrapped around his waist. It had a heavy buckle in the front. From this belt, there were certain loops, one of which was for carrying his sword. Another one was for carrying the sack which carried his provisions, and so on.

The belt was really the basic piece of equipment that he put on, on which other pieces of equipment were attached. So, it was a strategic thing. It was the first thing that you would put on for a combat situation. The word "loins" is "osphus." It simply means "his waist." Wrap this belt around your waist.

In the spiritual comparison, what kind of a belt is this? He looked at that belt that the Roman soldier wore, probably made of leather. Now he is looking at a belt that you and I as believers are to wear. Our belt, he says, is made up of truth. It's the word "aletheia." It is translated as "with truth," but it is better viewed as being "in truth." That is, it is something in which we stand. There is no definite article. It's not "the truth." So, it is stressing the quality of truth as such.

What's the basic source of spiritual truth? If you're going to go into spiritual combat, you're going to have to know spiritual things. You have plenty of friends who have shared with you their ideas on spiritual things. You know how weird; how grotesque; and, how disoriented people are on spiritual things. You know how fanatical that they will be in standing for those things that are completely wrong in their spiritual viewpoints. Where do we find what is truth? Obviously, in the reveal Scriptures, and out of this revelation in categories of revealed doctrine.

**The Grace System of Perception**

This brings up the means for us to secure this spiritual truth. How are we going to secure this basic piece of equipment? Well, God has provided what may be called a grace system of perception. Somehow, we have to be able to perceive to understand spiritual things, and God has given us such a system. All of you are acquainted with human IQ. Human IQ is a ratio between your chronological age and your mental ability which is determined according to a certain test. At physical birth, you have a certain capacity for IQ. That capacity is something you're born with, and you are not likely to change it very much. It may be brought to its maximum use by proper education, but you can't make yourself smarter than you were the day you were born.

However, spiritual IQ is not like that. Spiritual IQ is not something you're born with. As a matter of fact, as you know, the average IQ is 100. If you are born with anything in spiritual IQ, it's zero. That's exactly where you stand. You can't get any worse. Hopefully, you will improve and go up. Here's how you develop spiritual IQ. It is not dependent upon how smart you are on the human level. That would not be grace. It would be very unfair if we would find people with varying human IQs, and we would have to tell some of you that may have lower IQs that you cannot expect as much spiritual progress as those with the highest IQs. That is not true. Your human IQ does not affect the level of spiritual IQ which you may develop.

Your spiritual IQ is determined entirely by your intake of doctrine. It is learning the Word of God, but that is not the belt of truth. Simply knowing the Word of God is not the belt of truth. Many of us know truth, but we are negative to the truth. Many of us listen to some truth, and we think that it is not truth. We think that it is false, and we reject that which is actually true. James 1:18-25 points out to us that the belt of truth is not just knowing doctrine, but it is receiving it as truth. It is believing it. It is actually accepting it. So, the result is that you are able to store this truth. You are able to put it in your human spirit, and thus to develop your spiritual IQ. When you are born again, you have your soul. You have a mind; you have a will; and, you have emotions. You have also a human spirit when you are born again. However, this human spirit is completely empty. It is only as you fill that with doctrine which you have learned and believed that you then develop in your human spirit a spiritual IQ. There is no limit to your spiritual IQ because everybody can listen; can hear doctrine explained; can understand it under the filling of the sphere; and, then you can either accept it or reject it. If you reject it, you lower your spiritual IQ. If you accept truth, you raise it.

It is this right here which is the belt of truth. This is what the Scriptures mean by the belt of truth. It means how high a spiritual IQ you have developed as the result of doctrine from the Word of God. All Christians are equally free to believe, and in this way, equally free to build a high IQ spiritually. That's why we call it a grace system of perception.

There are certain elements that are involved here. The grace system of perception requires certain things, and God made all the provision. First of all, you needed a Bible. You needed to have a complete revelation--a completed canon of Scripture. Now we have that. Secondly, for this grace system of perception to work for you to develop a spiritual IQ so that you can put on the belt of truth, you needed a local church. So, God set up the organization of the local church. The purpose of that was public instruction in the Word of God. But public instruction had to come through a certain channel, and therefore, it was necessary to have a spiritual gift called the pastor-teacher gift in order to communicate the Word of God to those who are listening.

Along with this, you also have to have the priesthood of the believers, and God has provided that. This means that you have private reception for the building of the belt of truth. You and I do not know what is going on in the minds of the listeners. However, the minds are either positive (receptive) or they are negative to that which they are hearing. But the point is that priesthood has provided us with privacy. This is essential. There is no other way that you can develop a spiritual IQ except between you and God. You have to have information, and then you have to be left alone with your volition to be free to go against or for what God is providing.

However, we must also have something else to learn spiritual things, and that is the indwelling Holy Spirit. He indwells us permanently in order to teach us spiritual phenomena. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 and 1 John 2:27 tell us of that. Then we must also have the filling of the Spirit. That is, we must be in a condition of spirituality. Thus, when we begin a service, knowing that this was our interest to see that the grace system of perception was working, we know that this is one of the key areas that Satan hits--to bring you into Bible study when you are not filled with the Spirit. We are out of fellowship with the Father, where unconfessed sin has not been faced up to and admitted to Him. Consequently, you are not able to learn the Word of God.

So, the filling of the Spirit through the confession of sins is essential. God provided a way for us to remove the times when our fellowship was broken with Him. 1 John 1:9 tells us of this. Ephesians 3:19 speaks of this. As a matter of fact, Ephesians 3:19 is rather interesting because it says, "And to know the love of Christ (the agape--the mental attitude love of Christ) which passes knowledge." The word knowledge there is gnosis, just plain knowing a thing in your mind, but maybe not believing it. In other words, to know the love of Christ, or to know spirituality--to be filled with the Spirit, so that it is more than knowledge.

Many a Christian has considerable knowledge of the Word of God. This often happens to young people. They grow up with the knowledge of the Word of God, but they had been negative because they have not, as James says, "done" that which they know. They have not utilized the Word of God. They have not used it, and therefore, it has been neutralized. So, it was necessary for us to have the indwelling Holy Spirit and to have the filling of the Holy Spirit.

However, there had to be someplace to put this truth. So, we also had to be provided by God with a human spirit. The human spirit is our storage place of doctrine (1 Corinthians 2:12, Job 32:8). Out of this truth then flows what is called the belt of truth. The belt of truth will include several things. This will include a frame of reference, for one thing. It will enable us to learn more advanced doctrine. It will determine our conscience. It will determine what values and what standards we have. It will give us divine viewpoint in our souls to direct our thinking; to guide our actions; and, to guide our feelings.

Now as you look over this list, these items are necessary for you to develop a spiritual IQ. And developing a spiritual IQ is putting on the belt of truth. You cannot meet the satanic warfare without putting on the belt of truth. The demons know that. The demons know that God has provided you with a system that enables you to put on the belt, to the extent that you're ready to enter into that system. So the demons say, "We'll hit this." Sometimes they hit the Bible. It is not uncommon even for churches to discredit the authority of the Word of God and the inerrancy of Scripture. The reason that's being done is to remove the possibility of believers putting on the belt of truth. If they can discredit the Bible, that's the end of it. There is no other source of truth. Or, they discredit the local church. It is considered very sophisticated to say that the local church is outdated today, and that there is no further purpose for the local church. Well, for a lot of local churches, and what they do, that may be true. But for a local church functioning on the biblical pattern, that is not true. It is part of the key to growing spiritually.

Certainly, I guarantee you that the demons like to hit the pastor-teacher. This perhaps, as a matter of fact, becomes the greatest point of attack. This takes a variety of ways, and it takes all kinds of subtle ways. This is one of the places that Satan is dealing with a human being, in a pastor-teacher, who therefore is confronted with reacting with injured feelings. He is tempted to react with disappointment and frustrations. Particularly, I've noticed over the years, that there is a pattern that pastors often have that people who were once their best friends, in time become their worst enemies, as that pastor increasingly puts on the line what God's divine viewpoint has to say, and increasingly dignifies the belt of truth. A pastor starts telling a congregation, "Until you have the belt of truth on, you don't have anything. Until you have the belt of truth, you can be very impressive in the eyes of people, but you are absolutely nothing when it comes to the eyes of God, and you are nothing in the functioning of the Lord's work, or your personal blessing."

When a pastor starts hitting home on that, then immediately that puts a whole different picture on the local church ministry. People come to a local church for many wrong reasons. Some of them come to a local church because it gives them contacts that they need in their business. There are many churches all around us where people will admit to you that if they go to this church, they'll be in touch with certain businessmen that will be helpful to them in their business. Certain people like a certain social status. If they want a certain social status, then they go to a certain church, and it gives them a great social status.

And here's one of the most ludicrous things: I don't know how many times I have seen people who are attending churches that have great social prestige. It's really quite an honor to be a member of this church, and then they go home and they're bootlegging Bible doctrine through audio recordings from churches that are preaching the Word of God. They go to church on Sunday and they listen to this magnificent famed preacher who is usually stringing together four or five illustrations that make everybody giggle and feel happy and cute, and then they go home as ignorant of the Word and as ignorant about themselves and with as little a belt of truth as they came in, and they think that they have done something very wonderful for themselves. Then they go home, knowing that they are really starving, and secretly they listen to audio recordings. Sometimes, they are listening to audio recordings of a church that's right there in the vicinity where they live. They're going to the big time church for its prestige value. Yet, they're going to somebody else's audio recordings for instruction in the Word of God.

God is not going to bless that kind of audio recording listening. I'll guarantee you. You will not get any belt of truth built around you in that kind of a procedure. The pastor-teacher will be slandered; he will be attacked; he will be vilified; he will be cooled; he will be frozen out; and, he will be treated with gnashing of teeth by people who often ought to be his best friends. He will be that because he has touched the raw nerve endings of realities of the spiritual life, and people who are negative don't want to hear it.

The priesthood can be attacked. The preachers love to do that. Preachers love to show you how holy they are by standing at the door and shaking your hand and saying, "How many souls did you witness to this week? Did you pray a lot today, sister? Did you hustle for the Lord, brother?" And they are invading privacy. Anytime a preacher does that, anytime a preacher will not teach you the Word of God, and then let you move with it to apply it to your life, he is denying you the opportunity to build the belt of truth around you. Without that, you can't start to put on the armor of God because the rest of it is attached to that belt. If you don't have that, then you're out from the beginning. All of these things right down the line, in one way or another, are regularly attacked by the demonic world.

Here's how this grace system works. God has made all this provision. You've got all the pieces, and all the parts of the puzzle of the system are here. God in His grace has provided everything you need. You do have a Bible. You do have a local church. Every group has a pastor-teacher. Whether he's doing his job or not, they have one. Everyone has a priesthood provided. We've got the Holy Spirit indwelling us permanently. He can never leave you. You've got the filling of the Spirit available through confession of sin. You do have a living human spirit if you're born again. And the belt of truth has developed for you a frame-of-reference conscience divine viewpoint.

Here's how this system works. You come to church, and you hear Bible doctrine explained by the pastor-teacher. If he is doing his job, he will be communicating it by the HICEE technique, where he will be taking into account: hermeneutics; isagogics; the categories; the exegesis; and, the etymology of the words. If you have confessed sins before that service begins, under the filling of the Holy Spirit, you will be able to understand what you are taught.

Now you may not like what you are taught. You may hate every word of it. You may be itching to get out of the place. However, if you are filled with the Spirit, you will at least understand. The Bible calls that "knowledge," and the Greek word is "gnosis" that we just read about--"having more than 'gnosis'"--a love that is above just knowledge. This is because when you listen and you have grasped knowledge, you have understood, and, of course, this takes concentration. This is one of the first signs of spiritual maturity--that you're able to concentrate and listen to the Word. You may be positive or you may be negative to what you hear. You may be positive or negative toward the personality of the communicator. You may not care too much for him, but that isn't going to affect your belt of truth. The truth is the thing that counts, whether you like the person that you receive it from or not. If you get hung up on the person who is explaining the Word of God, you may find yourself falling into Satan's trap (one of his strategies) to deny you the access to the belt of truth. Don't get God's truth mixed up with your attitude toward the pastor-teacher.

The demons work hard to distract you in a service. This is part of the battle. In a service where the Word of God is being particularly explained (especially like this battle that we're explaining right now), this is a good time for part of the windows to fall off the walls periodically. If we were so foolish as to allow infants to be sitting in this auditorium, they'd be crying all over the place right now because demons would be going and poking their fingers under their little chubby ribs to get them aggravated in order to distract you in one way or another. Satan brings you into a service with a certain attitude to be distracted, and you should recognize that they work hard in a service that's going to give you an opportunity to wrap around yourself the very first step of spiritual strength and stability, and the very first step toward happiness--the belt of truth.

You may need a larger spiritual frame of reference, and that may be why you think the pastor-teacher may be wrong in something that he has explained to you. You may think he's way out in his application, but just put it aside and let it stew there a while. Maybe God will in time develop a larger broader scope of understanding for you, and then you'll look back and say, "I see what he meant. I see how that fits."

You may be negative to the truth because of your own background. That is one of the toughest, especially if you've got somebody that once was helpful to you spiritually, and that person had certain blind spots, or maybe even taught you some wrong things. It's very hard now for you to say, "Well, dear old Dr. So-and-So never held this view," and for you to hold it when he didn't. That is tough. All of us can look back on people who have borne major spiritual influences in our lives, and we have come to the point where the Lord has led us to a larger frame of reference and understanding where we were going beyond what they once taught us and the things that they once believed. Well, you may need a larger frame reference. You may have to have more in your own background.

However, doctrine believed is, by faith, changed to full knowledge, and then it becomes what the Bible calls "epignosis." This full knowledge is what is stored in our human spirit. This is the thing that becomes the belt of truth that we are called upon to put on. Our minds are fed by the truth in the human spirit, and thus we are guided from our belt of truth that is teaching the mind. Thus, we are guided in our feelings and in our thinking. 2 Corinthians 10:5 describes that for us. This is what Romans 12:2 calls the renewing of the mind. This is what enables us to grasp advanced doctrine. It gives us a new conscience with God's values and standards. It gives us God's viewpoint on life. It helps us to take care of our subconscious problems. When our conscious mind is on the things of God, the subconscious is cleared up. It gives discernment when we're listening to false doctrines and when we're listening to human viewpoint.

So, this is the belt of truth. It has an expression toward God that removes callouses off the soul. It will enable us to love God and to lean on him in faith rest. It has an expression toward man. It will enable us to love our friends and to love our husbands and our wives. It will enable us to produce divine good service.

The result of this will be the building up in our souls of the belt of truth. This then will lead to another thing that He calls upon us to be careful to build within our souls. He calls that the breastplate of righteousness. We're going to look at this one in detail. This will be number two next time. I just want to give you this much of a preview--that the breastplate of righteousness is attached by leather thongs to the belt that he wore. Therefore, he could not put the breastplate on and keep it in place in battle until he had the belt on. If the belt were to break, the breastplate was gone as an element of protection.

Now exactly what does God mean by righteousness? What kind of righteousness are you and I supposed to come up with so that we are a match against demons themselves? Well, step number one is to have developed the belt of truth. The belt of truth comes as the result of the grace system of learning spiritual things which God has provided all the parts for, and we enter into through a local church ministry. When we have that in place, then we're ready to take the second step of our protection, which is the breastplate of righteousness.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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