

The Belt Of Truth

Ephesians 6:14

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Let's read Ephesians 6:13 and the first part of verse 14. Paul says, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth."

The famous American evangelist, D.L. Moody (Dwight Lyman Moody), used to tell his worship leader, Ira Sankey, not to lead the song that the church would sing "Onward, Christian Soldiers." He felt that the church was kind of a poor example of an army, so he didn't want his worship leader to sing that song. Warren Wiersbe said, "If being a soldier involves obedience, discipline, and sacrifice then many professed Christians have either never enlisted or have gone AWOL."

Are you aware of the fact that as a Christian tonight you are in a war whether you like it or not? A war wages around us, and the war is spiritual. I want you to back up to verse 12 where Paul made that very clear to us. We saw it last week. He says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high," or heavenly "places." Now, we're not sure what he means by principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. Some feel that these are rankings of evil spirits. Some feel that these are territories that demons have been assigned to. I feel that they are actually synonymous terms. They are terms just referring to demon powers. They are different facets of demonic power. All of these titles or terms are talking about one thing; that is, evil, demonic spirits. Our warfare is not material. It's not physical. It's not carnal. Paul said, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." We're in a spiritual battle. When you become a Christian, you are drafted into the Lord's army. You have an enemy of your soul, and he's trying to do all he can to destroy your faith in Jesus Christ.

What must we do? Well, we saw that first we are to know our enemy. We saw in verse 11 that our enemy is the devil. He is also known as satan. The enemy, the devil, is three things: cunning (verse 11), he has wiles or tactics to trip us up; he is powerful (verse 12), the reference to powers; he is very wicked (verse 12), "...wickedness in high places." The devil is cunning, powerful, and wicked. What do we do? We stand in the Lord's strength. Back up to verse 10. It says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." We need to know our enemy, and we need to rely upon our energy—we need to rely upon God's strength. You and I do not have the strength to stand against the wiles of the enemy, the wicked one. In our own resources, in our own strength, we are going to be defeated as far as the devil is concerned; so we must rely, lean, and draw upon the strength of God. Nothing more important for you as a Christian than to realize that the Christian life is impossible to live apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen? That's why earlier in Ephesians 5:18 Paul said, "...be filled with the Spirit." That is a command in the Greek. It's not an option, and it's all-inclusive.

Everyone is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It's also in what is called the passive voice, which means let the Holy Spirit fill you. It's also in what is called the present tense (all in the Greek grammar), which means you should ongoingly, continually, dependently be filled with the Holy Spirit, and only as we walk in the Spirit will we not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. We know the enemy, and we rely upon God's energy or power.

The third thing we need to do is what we're going to focus on for many weeks beginning tonight; that is, put on the armor that God provides. Look at verse 13, "Wherefore," in light of all of this because we have an enemy and because we need His power and strength, we need to "take unto you the whole armour of God..." we rely upon God's power but by faith we must put on God's armor. He says, "...that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day;" interesting statement, "and having done all, to stand." What does Paul mean by "the evil day?" That phrase seems to indicate the day the devil comes to attack you—the times when satan comes against you. One thing about the devil's temptations and attacks, he knows your weaknesses. He knows them well, and he will attack you in those areas of your weaknesses. He will also attack you in the areas of your strength. He will just attack you, and he is relentless. When we put on the whole armor of God, over and over and over the emphasis is the "whole" armor. In the Greek it actually is in what is called the panoplia. The word "panoplia" means the idea of all the armor. What I want you to understand as we go over these many pieces of the armor in the next several weeks, is that these pieces of armor are not optional. You can't say, "I really like the belt, but I'm not into carrying a sword," or "I do like the sword, but I'm not going to take the belt," or "I like the belt, but I'm not going to take the shoes. I want to go barefoot." You can't pick and choose. This is not a smorgasbord. You have to take all of this armor. When we understand what they are (there is not going to be any great revelation, Paul tells us what they are: truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the Word of God. It's clear in the Bible what they are), we just need to know how to apply and put them into practice. You can't pick and choose. You have to take all the armor of God, and you have to wear it 24/7.

How many of you have found out that the devil just does not leave you alone? He just does not leave you alone! He is also known as Beelzebub, so sometimes I say, "Bug off, Beelzebub! Would you just bug off, Beelzebub?" By the way, Beelzebub means lord of the flies. What a freaky name for the devil. Whenever I have flies in my house I think my house has got a demon in it, you know. It's kind of like, "Bug off, Beelzebub!" He just bugs and pesters you. He comes after you relentlessly. He just doesn't take a vacation. He's constantly coming after you. You come to church on Wednesday night—you're worshipping God and getting blessed—you know, you don't even get out of the service and he's waiting by the car in the parking lot or he's in a car in the parking lot—that demon driving that thing! He just constantly comes after us, so we need to put on this armor. We need to rely upon God's energy and put on the armor to stand. Notice what we do—we stand against the enemy and we keep standing against the enemy. The "evil day" is the constant barrage of days and nights when he constantly comes to attack us.

What do we need to wear to war? First, we need to wear a belt of truth. Look at it with me in verse 14. "Stand therefore, having your," (I'm reading from the King James Bible) your waist or your, "loins girt about with truth." What was the belt the Roman soldier wore? The Roman

soldier first of all wore a tunic. It was the undergarment. It was like a robe. We know that in the middle east at that time of the world (the Romans had conquered the world at that time) the Romans wore, underneath just as the Jews wore, this undergarment. It was like underwear or a big t-shirt—kind of like a robe. The Roman soldiers' robes were a little shorter but they basically wore a robe, and they would put a belt around them. The belt (I'm sorry I didn't get a picture for you up on the screen. There are kind of differing ideas on exactly how they looked) was thick, heavy leather. It wasn't for decoration. On the front of the belt there was an apron (maybe I should've wore one and freaked you out) that was of heavy, thick leather and would cover them over the front. The cool thing about this belt was that it kept everything together, and that's significant. It pulled everything together. Without the belt, everything would fall off and apart.

I want you to notice that the scripture mentions their loins, "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." In the New Testament you'll find this repeated statement about girding up your loins, girding up the loins of our mind, or girding up the loins. It is taken from that culture and time that they wore robes. Because they wore robes, whenever they wanted to work hard or be swift on their feet and wanted to move, they would pull up their robe and tuck it under that belt (it would become a miniskirt, I guess) so it didn't get in the way. They would pull it up, tuck it under, and then they would be swift on their feet and ready to move. That's the idea. They wanted to be swift of foot. They wanted nothing to get in the way or nothing to inhibit them, and they wanted to be free. We would use the expression today, "roll up your sleeves and get to work." That would be the same. It's kind of like, "roll up your sleeves and get to work." They would use the belt to tie up their robe. The belt also was that which the breastplate fastened to and the sword was attached. It was the first thing they would put on. They put on the undergarment robe, and the first thing they did was put on this belt. All the other pieces of armor would fasten to it, so it held everything together.

Here's the question: What does it symbolize? The Bible tells us (we don't have to guess)—truth. "...having your loins girt about with truth..." but what is he referring to exactly when he says "truth?" Let me give you some ideas. First, there are those that say it's a reference to Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," and when we are standing against the devil we need to put on Jesus Christ. I'm cool with that. I think that's fine, but I'm not sure that is primarily what Paul had in mind. I do believe that in each one of the aspects of the armor you can see Jesus Christ. You can see Christ in His living Word, in the righteousness, in the gospel of peace, in the helmet of salvation—Jesus is tied in to all of those. We do need to put on Christ, and the Bible talks about that and uses that terminology, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh," it says. I think that's a valid understanding of that concept.

The second idea is that it is "the truth" as found in God's Word. One of the problems I have with that though, (again, I think this is an important point) he doesn't say that your loins should be girded about with "the" truth. He says, "...having your loins girt about with truth." The fact that he doesn't say "the" truth would indicate that he's not focusing on the Word of God and later on "...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Again, let me say this, God's Word is

important to know and understand and to stand on in your war against the enemy. I would say that is very, very important. We are going to talk all about that when we get to the sword of the Spirit.

Here's one of the big reasons why Christians become victims rather than victors when they are tempted by the devil—they haven't hidden God's Word in their hearts. The Psalmist says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." You want to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might? There is only one way to do that—get a knowledge of God's Word. Feed on God's Word. Study God's Word. Learn God's Word. You say, "I don't read very well." Then, learn to read a little better. Did you ever notice that we really do what we want to do? What we really want to do, we get done. You want to read God's Word? You'll read God's Word. Get an easier translation. Dig into God's Word. I believe that every Christian should also study Bible doctrine. What does the Bible say about God? What does it say about Jesus? What does it say about the Holy Spirit? What does the Bible say about the trinity? You say, "Well, I believe in the trinity." Can you show me in the Bible why you believe in the trinity? "I believe in the deity of Christ." Can you open your Bible right now and show me verses and explain to me why you believe Jesus Christ is God? "I believe that we're saved by grace through faith." Can you open your Bible and show me that right now and explain it to me or teach me that? I believe every Christian should be a student of Scripture, and you need to make that a priority. Isn't it funny that we know all about the stock market. We know all about our favorite football and basketball teams. We know the stats of our favorite athletes and all that stuff. We know all about movie stars, how much money they make, and what their last movie was. We have all this information but we're ignorant of God's Word, and satan wants to keep you ignorant of the Bible. He wants to keep you out of the Bible—busy, can't study. He doesn't want you to know the Word of God. He doesn't want you to know doctrinal truth. I see so many Christians that are Biblically illiterate, and they don't know their Bibles. It's just a tragedy.

Paul says that we should gird our loins with truth. I believe he's talking here about the importance of knowing God's Word. We cannot combat satan's lies without the Word of God, and every Christian must know God's Word. God's Word is the sword of the Spirit (verse 17), but God's Word, as a sword, must pierce and penetrate our own hearts and transform our inner life, attitudes, and actions.

Here's my third point, and this is what I think primarily Paul has in mind. I believe that the belt of truth is a reference to our truthfulness, our integrity. It's our living with sincerity and integrity of mind and heart. I want to make that real simple and real clear. When Paul the apostle says that you need to gird your loins with truth, he's talking about being a person of integrity, honesty, and sincerity. He's talking about truth in the inner part, in the hidden part, where God looks at our heart. Satan is a liar. Don't give him a place in your life. Live a life of integrity. I believe that satan hates it when we practice integrity. In Psalm 51:6 the psalmist says, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts." God desires truth in that inner part. He's not talking about the truth of God's Word, he's talking about us obeying, believing, and living the truth. We're going to read some other verses here in Ephesians about that. The Bible tells us we need to be

"truthing" it in love. If anyone should be a person of truth and integrity it should be the Christian, the child of God. A soldier without his belt is like a person without integrity—everything falls apart. You can't grow spiritually; you can't stand against satan's attacks without truth in the inward parts.

What good does it do to come to a Bible study on Wednesday night to hear the Word of God if you just blow it off and don't put it into practice? What good does it do to read your Bible if you just read it and don't regard, listen to, or think about it? You know, when you read your Bible you should say, "Speak, Lord, I'm listening." You should say, "Are there any commandments for me to obey? Are there any sins that I'm reading about that I should avoid? Are there any promises that I should claim for myself?" You need to put it in shoe leather, as someone said once that every Christian's Bible should be bound in shoe leather to remind them the Word of God is to be lived out in their daily lives. This truth is in the heart. It's integrity. I like the word sincerity. The Bible uses it over and over and over again. It talks about being sincere.

The word "sincere" we get from the latin word sincerus which literally means two words, without wax. I know that may kind of freak you out like, "What do you mean without wax?" Well, the Greeks were great sculptors and would make sculptures out of stone. When they were carving the sculpture, if they got down to some fine detail and they chipped or accidentally knocked the ear or the nose off or there was a flaw in the stone, they would actually take the dust from the stone and mix it with wax. They would actually fill in the flaw. They would put wax in the statue. You'd buy yourself a beautiful statue and you'd get it home. You'd put it out on the patio, and you're all excited. You invite your friends over for a barbecue. You're sitting out there drinking your lemonade and admiring your statue when all of the sudden the nose starts to melt and run down the face. You're like, "Awww. I got ripped off!" It's not sincere. It's fake! The idea of sincere—without wax—means it's phony. It's not real or genuine. It's not what I thought it was. It's not what it looked like. We need to practice integrity.

Sometimes we can better understand a word or concept if we understand the opposite. Do you know what the opposite of integrity is? Hypocrisy, also known as duplicity. I like that word "duplicity" or "hypocrisy." Duplicity is living a double life. We would use the phrase (I think we would use the phrase...I'm kind of old, and I don't know what cool things to say anymore), "they're two-faced." Do people still say that? You know what I'm talking about. They say one thing to one person, another thing to another person—they have two faces. They've got a face on the back of their head and a face on the front. You'd never know who you're talking to. It's two-faced. They're hypocrites. The word "hypocrite," by the way (all these word studies tonight), hupokrites literally means to speak from under. It meant to speak from under because it was used of the Greek actors—when they acted on stage, they acted under masks. They would put a mask on and speak from under their masks. When they played a different part they would put a different mask on, so the Greek actors were called hupokrites—actors. They'd speak from under a mask. What Paul is telling us not to do here is to be a hupokrite—a hypocrite, an actor, two-faced, or speak from under a mask.

The idea of duplicity actually means that they live a double life. We've all known people like

that. They come to church on Sunday and live like the devil on Monday; they get saved on Wednesday and go to a party on Friday and live like the devil again. Have you ever known somebody that you found out wasn't who you really thought they were? They were practicing duplicity and hypocrisy? Sadly, sometimes people get married and find out years later, "This is not the person I thought they were." There is a hypocritical attitude, so they are living in duplicity.

Integrity. Do you know what integrity means? It means oneness. It means wholeness. It means you're not divided. It means Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday—wherever you are at any time—you're always the same person. You don't change. You're not different in church than you are when you get home. You're not different in church than you are when you go to work on Monday. You're not different in church when you're around Christians than you are at work when you're around unsaved people. You are a person of integrity, and there is no duplicity or hypocrisy. When we practice duplicity and hypocrisy, then we play into the devil's hands. That's where Satan wants us to be. Jesus said it like this. He said, "No man can serve two masters...ye cannot serve God and mammon," or money. He made it very clear. No one can serve God and mammon. You can't love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love money and live for the things of the world. Jesus also said (and this is one of my favorites), "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single," what does that mean? It means that it's not practicing duplicity. It's set only on God. "...thy whole body shall be full of light...but when thine eye is evil," which actually in the Greek means double-sighted—you're trying to look at God, and you're trying to look at the world. You're trying to love God and love the world. A lot of Christians try to do that. They try to love God and be like the world or love the world. God says you can't do that then, "...thy body also is full of darkness," and Jesus said, "...how great is that darkness!"

What is your eye set on tonight? Is your eye set on God? Is it practicing integrity? Do you have a heart of honesty and humility and brokenness before God? The light of the body is the eye, and the eye has to be singly set upon God. You can't live for the world and live for God at the same time. You know, the contrast of the two can be seen in many different lives of the Bible. I think of Abraham and Lot in the Old Testament (Genesis 14). The first war in the Bible happened when Lot was taken captive by the five kings. Abraham, the man of faith, the man who looked for a city whose maker and builder was God, had to go down and rescue his nephew Lot. What a contrast between Uncle Abraham and his nephew Lot. Abraham looked for a city whose maker and builder was God. God promised him everything, but he said, "I don't care, I don't want it. I just want God. I just want heaven. I just want the things of God. I want to live for God," and his life was marked by altars—everywhere he went he built an altar and worshipped God. Not Lot. The Bible says Lot looked down with his eyes and saw the well-watered plains of Sodom and Gomorrah. You know what that's all about, right? Sodom and Gomorrah. Man, they had malls, theaters, and all kinds of cool stuff, colleges, nice highways, you know, a beautiful community to live in. He just pitched his tent toward Sodom—the next thing you know, he's at the gate of Sodom, then he's in Sodom. He started looking at the things of this world. Abraham had his gaze and sight fixed on the things of heaven, and Lot was looking at things of the world. Does that mean that we don't own anything, we don't have any

property, or we sell everything and just put on a white sheet and sit up on a hill waiting for the rapture? No. What it means is that our eyes are set on God. We may have things, but the things don't have us. We may have things, but we hold them lightly and realize that in light of eternity they are nothing. You can gain the whole world but if you lose your soul it profits you nothing. What a contrast between Abraham who practiced integrity and Lot who practiced duplicity. He didn't walk in truth and ended up with his life, family, and everything lost and destroyed.

There is also (2 Kings 5) the story of Elisha (not Elijah) and his servant Gehazi. The story is that of a Syrian king that had leprosy. He came to the prophet to be healed of his leprosy (to make a long story short), and the prophet told him to dip into the Jordan. He dipped into the Jordan and was healed of his leprosy. He was so excited that he wanted to give Elisha a gift. He wanted to pay him and make him rich for healing him. Elisha said, "No, no, no. God healed you. I didn't heal you. I'm not going to take any of your money." That's what's called integrity. He takes off, but he had a servant named Gehazi. Gehazi heard the offer of money and thought, "What is my master thinking? We could get rich off this heathen." So, when his master was gone and not looking, he went around behind the tent and took off intercepting this Syrian king. He said, "Oh, my master changed his mind." He says, "Somebody dropped in on him and he needs to help take care of him; so if you want to give him some silver, some robes, and some clothes, that would be really wonderful. That'd be awesome." The king said, "I'll double that, man. Here!" He gave him some silver, gold, all these clothes and things. Gehazi gets on the donkey and comes back. He doesn't tell his master, Elisha, and goes in and buries them in his tent. I don't know how secure things could be in a tent, but he digs a hole and puts them in the tent. He gets that all taken care of and comes out like nothing has happened. Elisha says, "Hey, what you been doing?" You would think, "Oh, man, he's busted!" Gehazi says, "Oh, nothing. Just kind of hanging out," (that's a free paraphrase). Then Elisha says, "Did not my heart go with you? Is it a time to get silver, gold, and clothes, buy vineyards and to build houses?" He said, "The leprosy that was on Naaman, the king of Syria, that leprosy is now going to come upon you." Wow. This is why Paul says to put on that belt of truth and practice truthfulness. Don't live in hypocritical duplicity.

The story of Joshua, when they took the city of Jericho and God instructed the people of Israel to take nothing—no garments, gold, no spoil—it was all to be burned and destroyed. There was a man by the name of Achan (you know the story). He saw a beautiful Babylonian garment—just a beautiful garment. He looked around and no one was looking, but he forgot to look up. He took the garment, went home, and stuck it in his tent—all these tent hidings. I wonder what you may have hiding in your tent? Do you know that God sees and God knows. You can fool your spouse, but you can't fool God. You can fool the pastor, but you can't fool God. They went out to battle and were defeated. This duplicity brought weakness and impotence, and they were ineffective against the enemy. Joshua sought the Lord and said, "Lord, what's going on? Why did this happen?" The Lord said, "There's sin in the camp." So they made the people to parade by and God exposed Achan's sin. Achan and all of his family were destroyed and judged by God for their duplicity, hypocrisy, and their disobedience.

There's a story of David and Saul. What a contrast between David, the man of integrity, and Saul, a man who practiced duplicity and hypocrisy. If ever there was a two-faced individual it was King Saul, but the Bible tells us that God called David (Psalm 78) because he would feed Israel according to the integrity of his heart. Remember David was also called "a man after My own heart." So David, even though he wasn't perfect, had a heart for God. He had a heart that sought after God and looked to God. Many times we let duplicity and hypocrisy come into our hearts, but David was a man that sought after the Lord. When David did sin with Bathsheba... having integrity doesn't mean we're perfect, it doesn't mean we never sin; but when we sin, we repent and turn back to God. Read Psalm 51 where David turned back to God. In Psalm 139:23 it says, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." That's the prayer that we need to pray if we're going to put on the belt of truth—search me and know me and try me, O God. There is no way to leave here tonight wearing the belt of truth if there is sin in your life and it goes unconfessed and unrepented of—then you're not wearing the belt of truth, and you're giving satan a place in your life. Don't do that. David was a man after God's own heart.

I want you to turn back in Ephesians 4. I want to point out a couple of other places earlier in the epistle of Ephesians where Paul mentions truth. In Ephesians 4:13 he said, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive," and notice verse 15, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." That phrase "speaking the truth in love" means we are "truthing" it and everything we say comes from a heart of integrity—we're speaking truth. Look at Ephesians 4:25, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another." Satan is a liar. He is the father of lies, and when you are practicing duplicity and hypocrisy then you're living a lie and you're falling into satan's camp. We need to abandon lying and "speak every man truth with his neighbour."

Look at Ephesians 5:8-10. He says, "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light," that's that concept of walking in truth and integrity, "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." Again, that's the idea of "truthing" it—walking in truth, speaking the truth, having a heart of truth, having a heart of integrity. What we need to do is pray with David. I want you to write this down and then we're going to close, Psalm 86:11. David says, "Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name." That Psalm summarizes the belt of truth where David cries out and says, "Teach me thy way, O LORD." God's Word is true, and we have our minds renewed by the truth of God's Word. We're not going to believe satan's lies. Then, we live a life of integrity—we "truth" it—and our hearts are united to reverence and fear the name of the Lord. Amen?

So what do we do tonight if you find yourself here and say, "Man, there's these areas in my life—I got this stuff hidden in my tent, trying to hide it from God." The Bible says if you seek to cover

your sin, you will not prosper; but whosoever confesses and forsakes their sin, they will find mercy. Let's pray.