

Chapter Thirteen: Continue to Walk the Walk

As we walk in righteousness, we need to make sure we keep our footing. With each exhortation to walk in a different aspect of righteousness there comes also a warning not to walk in the opposing way. We are to walk in newness of life, not in the old man of sin; in the Spirit, not in the flesh; by faith, not by sight; etc. For each proper way to walk, there is an opposite improper way in which we could also walk. We must realize it is a daily decision to walk in righteousness. The figurative sense of walk used throughout the Scriptures refers not to how we occasionally behave, but to what we habitually do. By definition, walking by faith, in the light, with God, etc. is a way of life. It is a lifestyle we must choose to live. Therefore, we must make constant effort to stay on the right path. In order to maintain our walk of righteousness we must: 1) Be Watchful (1 Peter 5:8), and 2) Resist the Devil (1 Peter 5:9).

In order to maintain our Christian walk, we must be watchful. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Sober, *nēphō* (G: 3525), means “to be self-controlled, clear-headed” (Strong 1629). The context of this verse deals with persecution and casting our cares upon God. If we cast our cares upon God, then we are free to direct our attention to other matters, namely, watchfulness. Sober “does not in itself imply watchfulness, but is used in association with it” (Vine 583). Here, it is paired with vigilant, *grēgoreō* (G: 1127), which means “to keep watch, be on guard” (Strong 1600). We can not be effective watchmen if we are distracted. That is why sobriety, clear mindedness, is a necessity as we are ever vigilant in the face of our adversary the Devil. Adversary, *antidikos* (G: 476), means “enemy, opponent (in battle or court)” (Strong 1642). His mission is to lure us away from God, He is like a roaring lion constantly seeking to devour our souls. “Naturalists have observed that a lion roars when he is roused with hunger, for then he is most fierce, and most eagerly seeks his prey” (Barnes 1435). Satan always has been and always will be our enemy. His name, *Satanas* (G: 4567), actually means “hostile opponent” (Strong 1642). He is always on the prowl, always hungry, using all manner of trickery and deceit, but he can only take us if we allow him. Satan is determined to lead us away from God. We must be even more determined to maintain our walk in righteousness.

In order to maintain our Christian walk, we must resist the Devil. When a watchman sees approaching danger, he does something about it. The alarm is sounded, and preparations are made to ward off the approaching enemy. Therefore, we are always to be watchful and resist the Devil at every turn. “Whom resist

steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Peter 5:9). Resist, *anthistēmi* (G: 436), means “to set one’s self against, to withstand, resist, oppose” (Thayer 45). When we resist the Devil, we “are in no instance to yield to him, but are in all forms to stand up and oppose him” (Barnes 1435). We do not, however, stand alone. God has given us everything we need to successfully resist him. “Feeble in yourselves you are to confide in the arm of God. No matter in what form of terror he approaches, you are to fight manfully the fight of faith...Confiding in God. You are to rely on him alone, and the means of successful resistance are to be found in the resource of faith” (Barnes 1435). God gave us spiritual armor to aid us as we resist the Devil. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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 places. 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” (Ephesians 6:11-13). Stand, *histēmi* (G: 2476), means “to stand firm” and is used of “steadfastness” (Vine 598). The term refers to “one who in the midst of the fight holds his position” against his foe (Thayer 308). Once again, our foe is identified as the Devil who is armed with wiles, *methodeia* (G: 3180). Wiles denote “‘craft, deceit’... ‘a cunning device’” (Vine 676). Satan will do anything and everything he can to take us down. HE lies to us and deceives us in every possible way, but God has given us spiritual armor with which to defend ourselves. Paul twice uses the phrase “whole armour of God” (verses 11, 13). “Whole armour” is translated from one Greek word, *panoplia* (G: 3833). It means “full armor, complete armor” and is comprised of both defensive and offensive tools (Thayer 476). We must utilize every piece of God’s armor in order for it to properly protect us. Leaving any part out, defensive or offensive, will leave us unequipped and unprepared to resist the Devil.

Paul uses the imagery of the armor worn by a typical Roman soldier to illustrate the need for spiritual armor. He likens each piece of armor to traits and tools the Christian must utilize in order to effectively resist the Devil. Verses fourteen through eighteen detail the armor:

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. (Ephesians 6:14-18)

The first part of the armor is the girdle or belt of truth. To the Roman soldier the girdle was key for to it all the other pieces of armor attached, thus keeping them in their place and preserving “firmness and consistency” (Barnes 1012). So is truth, *alētheia* (G: 225), vital to the Christian. Truth, that which is real and objectively fact, must be a part of us and our daily lives. The Dutch scholar Grotius stated, “Great is the laxity of falsehood; truth binds the man” (Barnes 1012). Without a basis of truth we have no true standard of duty, morals or religion; we have no foundation. The Christian soldier must walk in truth. Second, Paul cites the breastplate of righteousness. Righteousness, *dikaiosynē* (G: 1343), is “the character or quality of being right or just” and refers to “right action” (Vine 535). “‘Righteousness’ is here joined with ‘truth’... *righteousness* in works, *truth* in words” (Jamieson 1298). Such integrity will protect our spiritual hearts just as the breastplate protected the vital organs of the Roman soldier. If we allow our integrity to falter, we become vulnerable to Satan’s attacks. Compromising our integrity allows that one small opening the Devil needs to plant his seeds of doubt and wickedness, penetrating to our hearts and causing us to fall. The Christian soldier must maintain his righteousness. Third, Paul likens the shoes of a soldier to the preparation of the Gospel of peace. Preparation, *hetoimasia* (G: 2091), means “readiness” (Strong 1613) and also refers to a “firm footing (foundation)” (Vine 483). Some suppose Paul is calling for a readiness to go and preach the Gospel while others see a call to prepare the feet for the march, thus protecting them and ensuring sure footing during the battle. Both aspects, likely others as well, can easily be seen. No matter Paul’s direct intent, the key is certainly preparation. As soldiers train and prepare for battle so must Christians. We use the Gospel to prepare ourselves to defend our faith and teach others. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15). Christian soldiers must be prepared. Above all, or covering all, the Christian needs the shield of faith. The Roman shield, the fourth part of the armor, protected the entire body. So faith, properly conditioned, will quench the fiery darts of the Devil. Faith, *pistis* (G: 4102), is a “firm persuasion,” or conviction, that leads to action (Vine 223). We can do nothing without faith for it is the basis of everything we do. Our faith leads us to act, so with no faith we do not act and are useless on the battlefield. Christian soldiers must maintain an active faith. The fifth part of the armor is the helmet of salvation. First Thessalonians 5:8 calls the helmet the “hope of salvation.” The head is one of the most vital parts of the human body. It controls everything we do, directing even our hearts and lungs with no conscious thought. For the Christian, the hope of salvation defends and encourages us. Without the hope of victory, the battle is lost before it is even begun. The hope of salvation gives us the strength and determination we need to continue the fight. Salvation,

sōtērion (G: 4992) is “deliverance from the wrath of God” (Vine 545). The saved have peace with God now and the hope of eternal peace with God (Romans 5:1-2). While on earth, however, it is sometimes difficult to fully appreciate this peace. Humans are short-sighted. How easily we are discouraged, waiting for our peace to be fully realized in heaven. Hope, *elpis* (G: 1680), is the key. We can know that we have eternal life (1 John 5:13). The hope thus generated, the “confident expectation” (Thayer 205), gives us the strength and determination we need to maintain our faith and protect ourselves from the onslaught of attacks we face on a daily basis. The Christian must maintain the hope of salvation to be an effective soldier.

Thus far the armor has been defensive in nature, but no soldier is complete without offensive weaponry as well. To this end, Paul cites the sword of the Spirit and prayer. No Roman soldier would feel safe without his sword. Neither should the Christian soldier feel safe without the Word of God. It is here called the sword of the Spirit as the Spirit provides us with the sword (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). This sword, the Word of God, is used not only to defend but also to go on the offensive. Jesus used it to withstand the temptations he faced in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). Phillip used it to teach the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40). Paul told Timothy to study the Scriptures for they are profitable to us (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16). Not only must we be prepared with the Gospel but also we must use it. We must study, know and live the Word of God for only it can defend us against temptation and give others the hope that we enjoy. The Christian must make use of the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, to be an effective soldier. Finally, Paul cites prayer as part of the Christian’s arsenal. It is certainly wise for a soldier to pray before entering battle. Since we are at war on a daily basis, it is also wise for Christians to pray as we rise to battle each day. Jesus encourages us, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation” (Matthew 26:41). Prayer is how we talk to God. When communication between family or friends falters the relationship fails. The same is so with our relationship to God. When we do not talk to God on a regular basis our relationship with him suffers. We drift further and further away and become vulnerable. Christian soldiers must maintain an active prayer life for our armor is not complete without it. We must daily adorn ourselves with the full armor of God, thus protecting ourselves from the darts and snares of the Devil. If we neglect even one piece, we become vulnerable and endanger our Christian walk.

We must not talk the talk unless we are willing to walk the walk. The Christian walk is no easy path. We must always be watchful and resist the Devil at every turn. Though the world will not help us, we are not on our own. God has supplied

us with spiritual armor. All we have to do is put it on and use it. We must remember, however, that we need to daily put on God's armor and daily use it. We ought not lose hope, but use hope to find the strength and determination we need to continue to walk the walk. "Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee" (Psalm 143:8).

Questions:

1. What does each exhortation to walk in righteousness also imply?

- a. What does walk indicate? _____

- b. Generally speaking, how do we maintain our walk of righteousness?

2. What do sober and vigilant mean? _____

- a. How do sobriety and vigilance relate to watchfulness? _____

- b. Who is our adversary? _____

3. What do watchmen do when they see approaching danger? Why? _____

- a. What does resist mean? _____

- b. Who aids us as we resist the Devil? _____

4. What did God give us to help us resist the Devil? _____

- a. What does stand mean? _____

- b. What are wiles? _____

- c. What is the significance of “whole armor”? _____

5. What imagery does Paul use to illustrate spiritual armor? _____

- a. What offensive weaponry does God supply? _____

- b. Why must we use every aspect of the armor to maintain our Christian walk?

