



1362 US HWY 395 N. Ste. 102-200  
Gardnerville, NV 89410  
E-mail: [lm@liferesource.org](mailto:lm@liferesource.org)  
Website: [www.liferesource.org](http://www.liferesource.org)

**Presentation Transcript**  
**Waging Spiritual War – Part 3 – Weapons Training**  
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Waging Spiritual War – this is the series that we're on now. And this is third one in the series. In the first of the series, we saw that to go to war, a person has to enlist. In other words, we make a commitment to follow God, to believe Him and to obey Him. We do that when we're baptized. In the second on the series, we went to boot camp and learned about the enemy, his objectives, what he wants to accomplish – namely the thwarting of God's plan as He attempts to give us eternal life. And we learned about how he goes about trying to accomplish the objective. He uses lies to deceive us and draw us away from our promise to God. We learned that his lies fall into two primary categories: lies about God and lies about ourselves and others. Today, we're going to learn about the weapons God gives us and the terrain in which we are to fight.

In Vietnam, our soldiers had to know how to fight in the jungle. And in Iraq, much of it was urban warfare – house to house. Two completely different kinds of warfare with different weapons and tactics. What kind of war do we fight? And what will our weapons be?

Before going on, I want to read a scripture to you so that we can be on the same page with God as we go forward – 2 Timothy 3:16.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17 – *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.***

God does not want to send us to war without arming us for the fight. And just like any recruit, he goes to training class and it's up to him to take in the information. God has presented it to us, but do we know what we're supposed to do.

Well, we're going to look at those weapons God gives us today, and talk about what we can do with them. But first, before we do that, let's think about the terrain. It's not urban and it's not jungle. In 2 Corinthians 10:3 through 5, Paul says this:

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5** – *For though we walk in the flesh* – in other words, we are not human – *we are not waging war according to the flesh*. We don’t fight like countries fight each other. And M4 rifle or an Abrams tank isn’t going to help you here. It’s a different kind of warfare. *For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds*. It’s a different kind of weapon and a different kind of warfare – a warfare that involves incredible internal ambivalence in our minds – good against evil. So what strongholds would he be talking about? Well, let’s read more – verse 5: *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion* – so arguments and opinions – *raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ*.

So that’s the terrain we’re fighting in. It’s a battle of the mind. Arguments and opinions raised against the knowledge of God, and every thought taken captive to obey Christ – we’re going to learn how to *do* that, specifically, in this series – how to destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and how to take every thought captive to obey Christ. Now that means every one of our own thoughts. We can’t capture others people’s minds.

So let’s look again at that “against the knowledge of God.” God knows everything. When He talks to us, He speaks about what He knows. And we call the knowledge of God *the truth*. Jesus Christ came to bring grace and truth. Right? And the lofty opinion raised against it? Well, those are lies from the devil – ideas put forth in arrogance as though they are true – arguments contrary to what God teaches us. Think about this: the conversation between the devil and Eve. She had one opinion, he had another. He won the argument. He convinced her. She started believing his lie about God. So our warfare is going to be a battle of belief and a battle of commitment, because we promised, in our commitment at baptism, to believe God. So, who are we going to believe, if that’s what the struggle is about? Will we keep our contract with God, making Him our Father, or will we believe the devil, and thus, contracting with him – make him our father?

Well, God gives us free will, and we get to choose. With our choices come consequences of those choices. If we believe God, then, in the long run, things are going to work out for the best. And, if we don’t, in the long run, they’re not. That’s where the battle is fought for us. So, who are we going to serve? It’s a battle of commitment to obey God. So, who will we serve? Who are we going to believe? Who are we going to follow?

Now, let’s talk about weapons. This is the main part of this presentation. In Ephesians 6, verse 11 through 18, Paul delivers a little speech here (since he wasn’t talking – he wrote it down here) – not a speech, but a presentation. It’s very clever, really.

**Ephesians 6:11-18** – *Put on the whole armor of God* – he said – *that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil* – his plans to deceive us and lie to us. So God gives us some armor and weapons to help us in our battle against the lies of the adversary. Like I said, these are not bayonets and grenades. These are things that we do with our minds. Notice his reiteration of what he said previously – verse 12: *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against*

*the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.* So not a physical battle, but a battle of the mind. Because there is ambivalence – right/wrong – God sees this as a battle. And Paul says: *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.* So that's the goal – to win! Stand firm. Stand firm in what? Well, the promise we made, believing God, following Him, obeying Him. Here's a little side note: We are always amazed at the clever metaphor Paul uses here to compare our war to war in the world. But we should not let that be our only thought. It is pretty clever what he said – maybe inspired by God, even – but we shouldn't be taken with that and just think about the analogy itself. It has real specific meaning for us. It's not just a clever bit of writing. Let's look in verse 14. He said, first of all: *Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth....*

So the first weapon we have is the *belt of truth*. You know, when I was in college, I took up competitive weight lifting. Not that I was a great weight lifter, or not that I even have the body for it, but I had learned previously that, if you want to do something, if you give it everything you can, you can usually be somewhat successful at it. So I'm not boasting on my physical ability, but just pointing out something I learned from this process. In the kind of weight lifting competition that I participated in, there was one lift called the clean and jerk, where I had to get a barbell at arm's length over my head, with my elbows and knees both locked. And I could use my whole body to do it – arms, legs, back, abs – but at the end, the barbell had to be arm's length over my head, with my elbows and knees locked. One thing I learned doing that was that, if my core wasn't strong, it didn't matter how strong my legs or arms were. This lift required incredible core strength. And because of the vulnerability of the core in this lift – the spine, along with the back, and the abdominals, and the obliques – I would wear a belt around my waist. Now, this isn't the kind of belt you put on your pants when you go to church. It was about a half inch thick stiff leather. And it was about ten inches wide at the back to support the small of my back. It had a huge strong buckle on the front, cinched tight. And that was to support my core while I had somewhat more than my own body weight over my head at arm's length.

In Paul's day, soldiers wore belts, pretty much like this, to support the metal armor they wore and the heavy weapons swung and threw. They had javelins and spears. So, notice in this war against an enemy, whose main weapon is lies, that our first line of defense is a stout belt of truth. So, our core beliefs need to be in the truth. And that belt of truth comes *first*. And the fact that it comes first is not an accident. There is a reason for it. Swords are good. Armor is good. Shields are good. Helmets are good. But if you're not strong enough to swing your sword or move in your armor, they're just not going to do you any good at all. And when fighting against lies, you have to know what's true, if you're going to win the battle! I think that's probably why it's listed first.

Think back into the Bible. It's interesting how God gives us a picture of what salvation – the process – is. In the Old Testament, through the life of Abraham, he was our spiritual father, in a way, we're told. Abraham's standout quality was that *he believed God*. God told him to get up and go somewhere he'd never been before, and promised to bless him, so he did it! He just did

what God told him to do. He obeyed God because he believed God. He believed what God said was true.

When the devil tells us that God is not a loving God, who do we believe? When the devil tells us we are worthless and can never be loved by God, who do we believe? If we're like Abraham, we believe God – the truth! We believe God's truth about what He's like and about what we're like.

And you might think, "Well, that's all well and good, but, in fact, this should be a scary thing for us. Why? Well, in Jeremiah 17:9, God reveals to us that the human heart is deceitful above all things. So, to believe the truth about ourselves and about God and about other people, and to tell the truth about them is *not* what we do usually. Unlike God, we tend to lie to others and to ourselves. Paul said, "Let God be true, though every man a liar." So we all need to *do* whatever it takes to be truthful. And that's hard for us. It's extremely difficult for us, because we live in a world of lies.

It's not just about believing the truth, but *wearing* it. It's got to be put on. 2 Corinthians 6:7 says:

**2 Corinthians 6:7** – ...*by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left.*

Truthful speech. It's not just that we believe the truth, but that we *say* it. We speak it. We believe it. It's a part of us. We're going to go much further into that later.

Next, he talks about:

**Ephesians 6:14** - ...*having put on the breastplate of righteousness.* So a soldier wears a big breastplate that goes from his neck all the way down to his waist. It covers the front half of his body. God doesn't give us a plate to go on our back, because He doesn't expect us to be in retreat. We're supposed to go forward. Soldiers and police have large vests today, instead of steel breastplates. But the purpose remains the same – to protect the chest where the vital organs are.

We're told that we have an accuser, who goes to God and points out all our weaknesses. If we're no longer slaves to sin and no longer practicing sin, by the grace of God, then we are impervious to those accusations. They're just more of his lies. So, much more about this next week also, as we learn how to wage war with these weapons. There is some talk in the Bible about Satan's fiery darts that he shoots at us. And those are lies. That's what that is.

Next he says, in verse 15:

**V-15** – ...*and, as shoes for your feet* – or boots (I don't think they wore boots back in Jesus' time, because they didn't have them yet. They just had sandals.) – *having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.*

So, the putting on of boots, or shoes, or sandals is having put on the *readiness* given by the gospel of peace.

I read once about a couple of state policemen, who had stopped a car. And they suspected that the people in the car had just committed a very bad crime. So they were being very careful. The troopers got out on each side of their car and kept their car doors in between them and the other car. And they used a bull horn to tell the passengers to get out of the car in a very specific way – hands first. On the passenger side, the man disobeyed this command, and got out with a shotgun in his hand. The trooper on that side already had his gun drawn and pointed at the man, but he froze. He had time to fire, but he didn't. And he died because he didn't.

We can't be like that. We much have situational awareness and readiness to act when confronted with lies that endanger us spiritually – that are not true. For the Christian soldier, freezing up is not allowed. You have to know what a lie is and you have to be able to refute it. Of course, God, in His Spirit dwelling in us, is the One who does that. Some people tend to think quicker than others. This isn't about that at all. It's about allowing God to work through you.

So, it's easy to say we don't believe the devil's lies about God and about us, but it's hard to start refuting them. It seems hopeless. It seems we've believed them for so long, and there are so many of them, how can we ever get past them? How can we find them all?

So, yeah. Let's just sit down and take off our shoes and rest. Paul's talking about how one of our weapons is *readiness*. So we can't succumb to that idea. Just a thought of trying to find all the lies we believe is exhausting. But, if we want to be on God's side, then we have to start doing that to do His work. We have been given a pair of boots that we can wear that will take us where we need to go. And those boots are the good news – the gospel. That good news tells us the outcome of the battle. It tells us that Jesus Christ died for our sins and paid the penalty for us so we can fight on. It tells us that, in the end, those of us who do that are going to win. Winning is within our grasp. Victory is at hand, if we put on our boots and get to work. So let's get up and start moving on this. Let's learn the lies we've been told, and then, let's refute them in our own lives and across the board.

The next one:

**V-16** – *In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.*

When the lies being fired at us, what is it that protects us? Well, it's our shield of faith – our trust in God, our belief in God, our understanding that God exists, and that He protects us, loves us, takes care of us and defends us. And we, in Him, can be victorious. So that's what we position

between us and the lies coming our way. If we hold to the truth, and we believe and trust God, then we're using the shield of faith to do that.

I was talking to a good friend of mine a long time ago now. He was telling me what made a difference for him when our church was barraged by lies about the Sabbath and the holy days. He said, "I listened to everything everybody had to say on both sides, and I kept coming back to the scriptures that say, 'Jesus is our example, and that He kept the Sabbath and the holy days,' and I remembered the scriptures that tell us, when Jesus returns, everyone is going to keep the Sabbath and the holy days again. So it didn't sound, to me, like they were things that were done away with, or unnecessary, because He set the example." So he put up his shield of faith and he let the lies bounce off. And he kept moving forward in his belief. And he's still doing that to this day.

The next one is verse 17, and he says:

**V-17 – ...and take the helmet of salvation....**

This is roughly equivalent to the breastplate, but it's for our head. We are moving toward a goal and, if we keep that in our heads, we will know that the battle will be worth it in the end. So, the helmet of salvation – the knowledge of what's going to be given to us – the most amazing things! The goal is so worth anything that we have to go through in this life. That's what gives us passion for our cause and defeats spiritual weariness – is the possibility of what we can attain through Jesus Christ.

Now, if you feel too tired to fight, just start thinking about how excited you were when you first learned about God offering you salvation and calling you, promising to walk with you on your journey. One of the things that God tells us to do, if we grow weary, is to go back to the first works – to where we first began with God – and see how He called us. That's a thinking process that we have to do. It's in our heads. And that is how we put on the helmet of salvation.

And then he says:

**V-17 – ...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

So then, finally, we get to that. Everything to this point could be seen as defensive, but the Bible is our sword. Do you remember what Jesus did when He was attacked spiritually by the devil? Three times the devil tried to tempt Him. He even quoted the scripture himself once. But three times Jesus quoted scriptures to defeat the devil's lies. So that's a perfect example of swinging the sword of the Spirit. The sword of the Spirit is the Bible. Jesus' experience is a picture of what spiritual warfare is like. It's about being lied to and tempted and refuting the lies with truth – the truth of God out of the Bible. That's where it comes from.

I was talking to someone who had lost a loved one sometime back. She told me that it wasn't fair that God took her husband, and how would He do that? Now, I'm not judging, because I don't know how I would feel, because I still have my sweetie. But I know that is fair, no matter what, and that He has promised to guide me into His kingdom – and you too. So all I have to do is show up, follow orders, like a good soldier. Being a soldier means that you're put in harms way and that bad things can happen to you. We have to understand that and show up to fight the battle and do it the way we're told to do it. And that's what good soldiers do. If we do that, then He's going to take care of us, and teach us what we need to learn, and then usher us into His Kingdom, which surpasses all the trials that we might face in this life.

So, again, what comes out of the Bible? Well, the truth of God! So we use the truth to refute the lies. It is our *weapon*! It behooves us to learn what it says, doesn't it? Because, if you have a sword, and it's so dull that you can see the edge on it where it's flat, you need to sharpen it up. We do that by studying our Bibles and thinking about how to apply those truths in our lives every day. And it behooves us to learn what it says, because what it says is how we make God our Father, instead of the devil. If we believe what the Bible says, then we're following God, not the devil. Very important!

Now, I hope you didn't think, as I went through these things, that I covered the "same old stuff." You know, the armor of God – ho hum – clever metaphor, but we've all heard it a thousand times. But, if you were listening, we were learning a whole new way to think about them – a very specific way. God's truth is important. And not only because it's God's truth, but because the devil's weapons are lies and deceit. So you fight lies with truth. That is what we are fighting. And unless we keep that in mind, we will just float along from one lie to another, and we will be the children of the devil, and he will be our God. He's the god of this whole world. And, if we just float along with it, he's going to be our god, too. But when we turn that around, and start believing and living by what God tells us out of the Bible, then we become, what He calls, the children of light – *His* children. So we turn all that around with God's truth. That's how it happens.

Okay, that's enough for today. So far, in this series, we have identified the enemy. Two, know what he wants and is trying to do. Three, we know the weapons he uses. Four, we know what *our* weapons are. Five, we know that we combat lies with truth, we believe God in faith, and, as we refute lies, we are protected by righteousness. And when confronted, we have the Bible as our offensive weapon, which is the true word of God. So next time, we're going to learn about God's rules of engagement – how we fight. Every army has to have rules of engagement so that they can fight together. And we're going to get down to the grit of that.

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