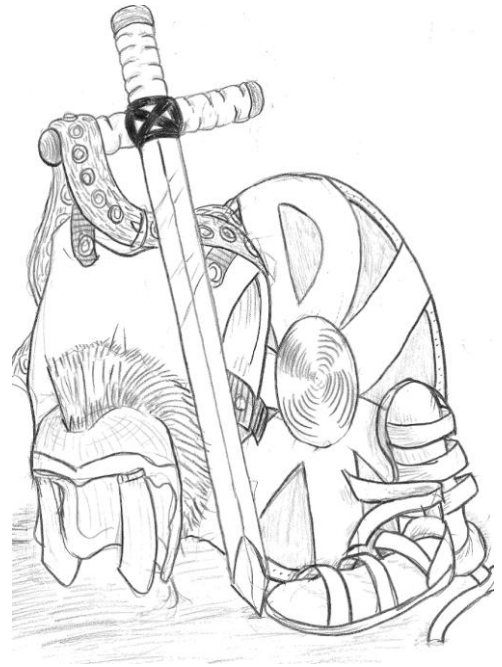


Fight the Battle Against Temptation

1. By Knowing Your Enemy
2. By Putting on God's Armor

Paul's Battle Cry: Fight the Battle Against Temptation!

- 5/2/11 Pres. Obama & Navy Admiral William McRaven executed plan to fight terror, years in development. Sent team of Navy SEALs by helicopter to Abbottabad, Pakistan, to military compound, housed founder of al-Qaeda and one of America's greatest enemies, OBL. Mission code name: Operation Neptune Spear. In May 2011, mission successful. SEALs breached compound, took down one of world's most notorious terrorists. Knew exactly who enemy was: where to find, what to expect from him, his compound; and had right equipment: gear, arms, tools to accomplish mission.
- We may never be Navy SEAL, fighting war on terror; sent by helicopter to take out America's great enemies. But every day, we go to battle, vs God's enemy, ours, Satan & forces of evil, who tempt us to sin, defect to enemy's side. So in lesson from Eph, Paul rallies troops. He addresses us as soldiers of cross, at war vs devil. **Vs. 10** – we need Lord's strength to fight temptation, because every day, constant spiritual warfare against the devil. So today Paul's battle cry for us, as soldiers of the cross, is: fight the battle against temptation, by knowing your enemy and by putting on God's armor.



By Knowing Your Enemy

- Helps us to know by describing: **vs. 12**. Worst enemy not of this world. Can't see him, track him down, locate him with expert intelligence, send in Navy SEALs to take him out. Our struggle not against flesh, blood, not human enemy. Talking about "**powers ...realms**" (**vs. 12**). This is Satan and the evil angels we're talking about. If we want to fight battle against their temptations, really need to know our enemy.
- What know about Satan's history, background? Not eternal, but created being. When creating, God created angels, sinless, holy – to serve him. "Very good," incl angels. Sometime between day 7 and fruit incident, rebellion. Large number of angels, under one angel, rebelled; foolishly, pridefully sought to take heaven from Lord. As punishment, banished to hell. Rest of angels, confirmed; never tempted again. For angels who rebelled, Satan, demons – separated from God, but were left with ability to tempt on earth.
- Jude: "**The angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home – these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment**" (**6**). Satan not warden of hell; first inmate in oldest cell block. He & evil angels never getting out of this prison; they're mad about it! They know God treated sinful angels & sinful humans differently: when humans sinned, God gave them second chance; sent a Savior, to heaven. Never did for fallen angels; never get back into heaven. Way for them to get back at God is to do everything to keep you out of heaven. He wants you in hell; will do anything to get you there.
- How accomplish goal? Temptation. He knows temptation leads to sin; to weakened faith; to no faith; to hell. Temptation so dangerous: starts us on path to hell. James, same thing: "**Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death**" (**1:14-15**). Whether from sinful world around us or sinful nature inside us, all temptations stem from hateful heart of Satan, "**your enemy the devil [who] prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour**" (**1 Pt 5:8**). Understand: when you're tempted in any way, that's Satan at work. **Vs. 12**. We need to know our enemy – where from, how operates – so that we can fight battle against temptation.

By Putting on God's Armor

- Once we know enemy, need to defend ourselves against him, so can fight battle temptation, by putting on God's armor. Famous Eph 6: **vs. 13-17**. Belt, breastplate, boots, shield, helmet, sword – provisions of Roman soldier. His torso & head protected; feet ready to move; shield blocked attacks; sword delivered attacks. With

these pieces of metal, leather, wood, this soldier was ready for battle. But Christians don't need metal, leather, wood to protect us against Satan – wouldn't do us good anyway. Christians have different kind of armor.

- In OT, David had different armor. Remember D&G. First, conv with Saul. Take armor. Can't! David faced enemy armed only with faith. When saw Gol: **“You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel” (1 Sam 17:45).** David didn't put on Saul's but God's armor, same armor in lesson. All these pieces (**vs. 13-17**), picturesque ways of describing same thing: armor of God is gospel of Jesus Christ, good news of God's love, forgiveness through Jesus. So to put on full armor of God = to believe in Jesus. That's what David did. That's what we do as we fight battle against temptation: we protect ourselves with God's armor by trusting in our Savior Jesus.
- Really, this armor is the same armor Jesus put on when he fought his battle against Satan. Battle fought on cross. So when you look at cross, you're looking at battlefield on which Jesus and Satan waged war. Eternal fate of billions, every human, would be decided on battlefield of cross. Of all times in Jesus' life that he was tempted by Satan, worst of all on cross. Satan screaming: “What doing? Why bleeding, suffering? These people don't love you, care about you. Why going through with this? Let these people rot in hell; let me have them. That's what they deserve anyway!” On cross Jesus was tempted. But even in worst moment of temptation, Jesus, who had clothed himself with armor of God, fought battle against temptation, and won. When Jesus died on cross and rose from grave, he conquered Satan and won war for our salvation. Jesus is victor, champion; Satan is defeated.
- So now when Satan screams in your ear and tempts you to sin, **vs. 13-17**. You have defensive weapons and offensive weapons to keep you safe. Whenever Satan fires hell's flaming arrows at you, block them with the shield of your faith in Christ. And whenever Satan confronts you with guilt of your sin, attack him with sword of Spirit. Say: “Yes, I know I'm a sinner; I know you've struck me down. But I know the one who crushed your head. His name is Jesus Christ; he is my Savior. Jesus died on the cross to forgive me and to keep me safe from you forever.” That is the fatal blow that you strike against Satan whenever you wield the sword of the Spirit.

“Fighting...in the power and strength of God Himself” (Luther)

- So keep fighting, your own personal temptations to sin. Always trust in Jesus – he's already won war for you. So fight battle against temptation with same focus and determination as Navy SEALs who took out OBL: by knowing your enemy and by putting on God's armor.
- Luther on armor of God and sword of Spirit: *“Every Christian should use this sword in hearing the Word, reading it, singing it, speaking it, and meditating upon it. For its power is such that wherever it is proclaimed in its truth and purity, wherever we learn it with diligence and sincerity, wherever we think upon it, there no Satan and no devil can abide...For even though we are weak in our own reason and strength, yet if we grasp this sword of the Spirit, if we take these weapons of defense and offense and use them in accordance with this instruction, we become too strong for all the devils, for then we are fighting not in our own strength, but in the power and strength of God Himself.”¹*
- May God give us the power and the strength always to fight the battle against temptation.

Ephesians 6:10-17

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

¹³ Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹ Martin Luther, quoted in G. Stoeckhardt, *Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians* (Concordia: St. Louis, 1952) 263.
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