

# DSYC25 || PREPARING FOR THE FIGHT (THE GOOD FIGHT) – ???DAY, 07.1?.25 – MATT HOUSTON

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## INTRO:

Good morning!

Hey – this is the day the Lord has made – I will REJOICE and be GLAD in it, amen?

We’ve got a great day ahead of us, and I’m excited to start it off in God’s Word.

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Turn in your Bibles to **1 Corinthians chapter 9**. And as you do, I want to let you know of an exciting opportunity for our rising juniors and seniors here today.

Here on our campus at Calvary Chapel Stone Mountain, we’re starting our inaugural semester of CBI – NEXT MONTH!

*[CBI SLIDE] – CBI South is an extension of Calvary Bible Institute – which is a one-year Bible college for young adults who are looking to either go into ministry – or take a gap-year and get a solid, Biblical foundation in God’s Word before continuing further education.*

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We are very excited about this new venture – but we want YOU to know that this is for YOU!

CBI South exists to equip young adults here in the Deep South region.

So, if you’re feeling that tug today – and you’re interested in taking a year to come to CBI South, we still have a couple of spots left.

**Here’s what you can do** – if you have any interest at all, come talk to me at some point today.

I’m going to be walking around and spending some time at the CBI table in our foyer. Come find me (or Henry) at the table and get more info.

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ALSO – this afternoon – we’re going to be offering a couple of tours of our CBI campus for rising juniors and seniors. If you’d like to see the campus and ask a few questions, you’ll need to sign up for one of the tours at the CBI table at some point this morning.

That said – we have a short video for you with a little more info on CBI South, so let's roll it.

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## CBI SOUTH VIDEO (2 MINS)

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Alright, great. Again, if you want a tour later, you'll need to sign up in the foyer at the CBI table.

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*Okay – well let's take a look at 1 Corinthians chapter 9.*

Before we do, let's pray – and ask the Lord to bless our time in His Word.

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## PRAYER

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In 1 Corinthians chapter 9, Paul likens our time on this earth to two things: ***He calls our journey a RACE – and the refers to our struggles as a FIGHT.***

*Here in Atlanta, one of the largest foot races in the world occurs each year at The Peachtree Road Race. Runners come from all over the area to compete for the best times.*

Now – I have never participated in this race – and there's a reason. I can tell you it's NOT because I'm afraid I will finish BEFORE other people. In fact, I wonder if I'd even be able to finish before sundown!

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But here's the deal with any foot race. Everyone who participates – HAS A CHOICE. You either register to run in the race, or you don't!

Those are your two options!

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But there's a different race in life. And it's a ***spiritual*** race. And over the course of that race, you ***will*** encounter obstacles.

The moment you're born, you're thrown into the ring for the fight of your life.

Your only choice in the race – and in the fight – is HOW you choose to run your race – and fight your fight.

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***Look with me here at 1 Corinthians 9 – starting in verse 24.***

***Paul says to the church in Corinth:***

***<sup>24</sup> Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. <sup>25</sup> And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. <sup>26</sup> Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. <sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.***

At the time that Paul was writing these words, the Romans celebrated the Olympics with much passion. **SECOND** to the Olympic Games were the **Isthmian Games**, where contestants for both games would spend up to **ten months** in very difficult and strenuous physical training.

So, because the Corinthians were so familiar with these events, Paul appealed to their love for the Olympic races by using them as an analogy for the Christian life. Only, we don't run for a **temporary crown** – but for an **eternal crown**.

And as Paul states here in verse 25, not everyone who competes wins the prize. It's unfortunate, but many will disqualify themselves from finishing.

***2 Timothy 2:5 reminds us, "And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules."***

God has a very clear set of rules and standards He expects from each of us. But there are those in the world who try to ***change the rules*** – and ***move the finish line*** – or move the boundary lines – so that they can still run the race in such a way that *visually* appears to be within the rules – and yet by doing so, they disqualify themselves.

The key here – is as Paul says here in verse 27 – ***"But I discipline my body – and bring it into subjection."***

Sometimes, we just need to tell ourselves, "No."

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***Hebrews 12:1-1 tells us, "... let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..."***

Like with any race, there are things – in each of our lives – that we must lay aside – or else they just become obstacles to us along the way.

They're like heavy weights – becoming hindrances to us – ensnaring us – and preventing us from winning the good fight of faith.

Therefore, what must we do? We must lay aside EVERY hindrance. Everything that prevents us from running our race well – and fighting the good fight – these are the things we must cast aside – IN ORDER TO bring ourselves into submission – to the will of Christ.

The Bible often compares our lives to that of running a race. But here in verse 26, Paul adds something worth looking deeper into.

He says, *"Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. **THUS I FIGHT:** not as one who beats the air."*

When we fight "as one who beats the air," it means we don't even know who our true opponent is. This is the person who fights – "just to fight."

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If we desire to fight the good fight, then there are things in each of our lives that we must first get rid of.

**[PICTURE OF OVERGROWN WEEDS] – There needs to first be a little "Spring Cleaning." We need to trim back the overgrown weeds – so the fruit can grow.**

In order for there to be **spiritual GROWTH**, there must first be **physical SUBJECTION** – to Christ.

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Right now – for many of us – that physical subjection looks like giving in to physical PLEASURES.

Hey, listen – **SIN FEELS GOOD!** I wish it didn't! If it didn't feel good, it would be easy to stop sinning!

But what does Paul say?

He says, "I bring my body – into *subjection*." "I discipline – *myself*."

**Here's a good way to look at it:**

If I bring my BODY into subjection, then I'm putting myself – UNDER a master – OTHER than myself.

But anytime I allow my flesh to take over – I now put MYSELF – above everything else. I become the master – instead of Christ.

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So, when Paul says that he brings his body into subjection – he means that he WILLINGLY subjects himself to the will of his Master – Jesus Christ.

That’s why he tells us in Romans 12 that we are to present our bodies – as a LIVING sacrifice unto the Lord.

When we bring our BODY into subjection for the purposes of God, we can then begin to put ourselves under SPIRITUAL subjection – to the WILL of God – in preparation for the good fight.

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Here’s the deal – if you want to win the fight – it begins ***before*** the battle.

It begins – with preparation – and training.

Athletes who win – are athletes who understand the importance of training for ***endurance*** – ***stamina*** – ***strength*** – and ***speed***.

Winners – know the importance of ***self-discipline***. Because it’s the discipline and training – that will bring ***results***.

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Paul knew that in order to run the race – and fight the good fight – that he needed to forego things in his life – that would hinder his race – and hinder his ability – to fight.

***Paul said this just a couple chapters beforehand – in 1 Corinthians 6:12. He says, “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”***

What he’s saying is this: *I can do anything I want to! Nanna-nanna-boo-boo!*

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Okay, that’s NOT what he’s saying – (at least that last part) ☺.

***But what he IS saying is this:***

*“All things are lawful for me [‘Yeah, I can do them all!’], but I will not be brought under the power of any.”*

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I love that statement.

Paul was a person who knew how to **fight the good fight** – and to do it in a way that pleased the Lord.

Because he realized – that none of his struggles – could become things that rule his life.

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Paul says *"This is the reason I let go of my freedom to do whatever it is I want to do. It's because I understand there is a **bigger picture of eternity** ahead for me."*

*"I care more about where I'm GOING – than I do about where I AM – and the opportunities I currently have."*

Paul's motivation wasn't so he could EARN Heaven --- it was because the prize of the upward call of Christ was all the motivation he needed.

Can that be said of us here today?

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***So, what does Paul tell us? He tells us to "flee these things [flee the fleshly lusts] --- and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. [and to] Fight the GOOD fight of faith, [and to] lay hold on eternal life..." (1 Timothy 6:11-12)***

How is it then – that we fight the good fight?

***Peter urged Christians in 1 Peter 2:11, "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which WAR against the soul..."***

First – we need to remember that we are NOT of this world (we talked about that last night!). We are just pilgrims. We are merely passing through.

Our time here on this earth is only temporary! But eternity waits for each person – either in Heaven --- for those who put their faith in Jesus Christ – or in Hell for those who choose against Jesus.

Hey – you are either FOR Jesus – or you're against Jesus. This is what differentiates just fighting a fight and beating the air – versus fighting the **good fight** of faith.

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Again – the question is – ***HOW will you choose to fight?***

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Do you see how that works? You don't have a choice to be IN the fight --- you only have a choice of how you CHOOSE to fight.

And if that's true, then it must start now. It's time to PREPARE for the fight.

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I love how Paul likens our journey to a race. Because with any typical race, there's a clear winner – which makes everyone else a loser. You can call them runners-up if you want to 😊, but truth is they still didn't win, so you do the math 😊.

In a race with other opponents, those opponents are your **competition**. But not so with brothers and sisters in Christ.

See – it's not about winning against other Christians.

In the spiritual race, when it comes to the flesh --- we're not competing against each other – we're competing against **ourselves**.

And guess what? Sometimes, we're pretty easy to beat.

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*Once, I was playing in a ping pong tournament at a Men's Retreat. I wasn't any good at all, I knew that.*

*And somehow – I found myself facing one of the top dogs – well-known at these retreats for his top skills at ping pong.*

*So, knowing I wouldn't win, I figured I needed to at least show up and make for the best competition I could bring to the table.*

*But here's the thing... I quickly realized the reason for me losing wasn't because my opponent was doing all that great. In fact, it looked like he was backing off – and I was STILL losing!*

*That's when he said to me, **"You know... sometimes you don't have to work hard to win at all. You just let your opponent beat themselves."***

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I told you... I'm not good at ping pong – and he was right! You don't have to work hard at beating your opponent – when your opponent --- is yourself 😊

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In the book, Art of War, Sun Tzu says you should “Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.”

You have to know – *that your enemy – “your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)*

And do you know why Satan lurks around like a **roaring** lion? Notice it doesn’t say he RUNS around – AS a lion who captures his prey. We’re told he’s a ROARING lion – because he is powerless to take any action against us – **unless – we allow it.**

Jesus said (John 10) that Satan is powerless to snatch anyone from His hand. Therefore, Satan does the next best thing he knows to do. He breathes lies – and implants deception – in the ears of all who are listening.

If he’s the ROARING lion, then the most he can do is roar his deceptive lies. But – unfortunately – it doesn’t stop us from listening. And when we DO – we are devoured of our identity, our effectiveness as a Christian, and our ability to stand for truth.

See – the best strategy in ANY warfare – is always deception. If you can make your opponent believe a lie, from that point forward they will begin to defeat themselves.

You can have the biggest tanks – the best weaponry – the largest number of highly trained troops – you name it! But without the effectiveness of true INTEL on your side, the battle is lost before it even begins.

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You might think this wouldn’t apply to you, but – oh – it does!

In Paul’s letter to the *Galatians*, he tells them in chapter 1 (v6-7), “*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.*”

In *Galatians 5:7*, Paul says, “*You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?*”

And then in *2 Timothy 4:3-4*, we’re told, “*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*”

The truth of the matter is that there is a huge push to redefine truth, which is a foolish concept because you can’t redefine truth!

You can’t call purple orange – and you can’t suddenly say the sky is underneath your feet – and somehow all of this just becomes true!



Truth is truth. It's 100%. It's absolute. It's final.

And yet – Satan knows that if he can just poke some holes here and there in our doctrine – the truth will slowly leak out and leave us empty – and defeated.

All Satan has to do is plant seeds of doubt. If he can get us to question, "What is truth?", our own mind will do the rest.

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If Satan can get us to question God's truth – then our eyes, our flesh, and our pride will take care of the rest.

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Satan takes advantage of your youth – and he does it by appealing to the temptations you are most attracted to.

You need to be preparing yourself – even where you are now – for the good fight of faith.

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***I'm reminded of a young man in the Old Testament named David. Many of you are familiar with him, but his life serves as a great reminder of how to prepare in seasons of waiting.***

You guys are young. You have a lot of life ahead of you. But THIS is also the prime season of your life where – if Satan can divert your path by way of poking holes in what you know as truth at **this** point in your life – you will lose the battle every time.

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David was a young man when we first meet him in Scripture. You don't need to turn there, but if you want to look through his life later in your own time, many of these passages can be found in the book of **1 Samuel**.

Before David became king, there was a man named Saul, who – quite frankly – was a terrible king. He was only king because of the way he LOOKED.

The people of God wanted a MAN to rule over them – someone they could SEE – and look up to (literally). Saul was tall – he was handsome – he was built different.

But the issue Saul had – was he had no heart for God whatsoever. Saul battled with the flesh day in and day out – and unfortunately – he fought the WRONG fight – he fought the BAD fight – and he did it until the day he died.

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## **But DAVID...**

The Bible tells us that God raised up David as king – because **David was a man after God's own heart** (1 Sam 13:13-14; Acts 13:22).

But David was far from perfect! David may have been a man after God's own heart, but he certainly lost the battle a few times in his life. After all, we know David to be an adulterer and a murderer.

But what did David do when he got knocked down? He got back up to fight another day. He repented of his sins – and sought restoration – and fellowship with God again.

David was a man who knew how to RECOVER from the hard hits – and the uppercuts – and cheap jabs.

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Because of Saul's terrible reign as king, God decided that "a little change in leadership" was in order. So, he sends Samuel to find a man out in the fields.

When Samuel arrives on Jesse's farm, he looks at all of David's brothers – one after the other – and with each one, God said, "No. This is not the man."

Finally, Samuel asks Jesse, "Do you have any OTHER sons, by chance??" To which Jesse replies, "Oh, yes, there is one still out in the fields – but I'm sure you don't want HIM. He's not really 'king-material.'"

Okay, I'm paraphrasing there, but that's the IDEA behind this conversation. David (from all OUTWARD appearances) – is far from who we would expect to become king.

After all – David was the youngest of 8 sons. Small in stature. Scrawny and skinny. Overlooked.

Young.

David was somewhere in the range of 12 to 16 years of age. As I look around this room, I see a lot of faces...

I see a lot of faces who may be feeling that THEY too – are too young to be used by God. Scrawny and skinny in their spiritual walk with the Lord.

Overlooked by others.

But as God told Samuel, I say to each of you, ***"For the Lord does not see as MAN sees; for man looks at the OUTWARD appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*** (1 Samuel 16:7)

You may not feel that you can be used by God. But God is preparing you for the good fight – even as I speak.

I believe God is preparing each of you here today – to be a man or woman – after God's own heart.

**THIS – is part of the preparation right here:**

- Staying in fellowship with other believers
- Coming to church
- Developing a life of prayer
- Learning how to repent when you make mistakes
- Becoming a worshiper

THIS – is the preparation.

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**David's BIGGEST moment of faith probably came with the most popular story you think of when you think of him.**

The scene is set.

King Saul and his army are on one mountain, while their enemy – the Philistines – camped on a mountain on the opposite side of the valley.

And then we're told of a "champion" who appears out of the camp of the Philistines. Ugly. Tall. **ALMOST 10 FEET TALL!**

These two armies camped out and waited **FORTY DAYS**. And each day, this monster named GOLIATH appeared and TAUNTED the Israelites – day after day.

He was begging for a man who would dare stand up to him – and fight.

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Suddenly, here comes David. The "other" brother. **"What are YOU doing here??"**, they ask.

When David spots the giant and takes notice of the situation, he asks the men standing near him, "For WHO is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

David may have been young. He may have been tiny. But he would not stand for anyone to come against the name of the Lord.

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David then gets accused of pride – and coming only to WATCH the battle. Only, David didn't come to *watch*. See – David realized there was no one there – who would **FIGHT** the issue.

Let me tell you something – **the church NEEDS fighters**. But It needs fighters who will fight the GOOD fight – and stand up for the REAL issues – in do it in a Biblical way. To do it – GOD'S way.

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What made David such a good fighter for the Lord?

***His hands were not trained for physical battle; they were trained for prayer.***

***His heart was not trained to receive glory; it was humbled to GIVE credit where credit is due.***

He didn't seek to take down men; instead, he killed lions and bears that posed a threat to the sheep in his care.

David learned how to care for sheep while working in the fields – which prepared him to care for God's sheep – years later as king of God's people.

He learned how to pray. He learned how to worship. He became a mighty warrior – through becoming a man after God's own heart.

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And now – on top of this mountainside, all of David's preparation so far came down to this moment.

After 40 days of no man stepping forward to fight the battle, David knew it was because ***this was HIS battle to face***. This was HIS fight.

That's when he says, ***"The LORD – the Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, HE will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."*** (1 Samuel 17:37)

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***"So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk,***

***for he had not tested them. And David said to Saul, 'I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested them.' So David took them off." (1 Samuel 17:38-39)***

In other words – Saul's armor – the KING's armor – **it didn't fit**. It was too heavy. Too burdensome. It was the WRONG armor.

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So, David removed SAUL's armor – and, instead, put on GOD's armor. He put on – the armor of FAITH.

He told Goliath, ***"YOU come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defiled. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may KNOW – that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall KNOW – that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle – is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands."*** (1 Samuel 17:45-47).

And you know what? David did *just that*.

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See – David had many "smaller" battles – that prepared him for the "bigger" battles.

***It's how you fight those smaller battles – day by day – that will determine the outcome – of the bigger fights.***

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In your seasons of waiting on the Lord to do something... how will YOU choose – to wait on Him?

Like a server who waits on others in a restaurant, I pray each of us can learn to be servers of the Lord – allowing Him to work in us – and prepare us for the bigger fights we'll face.

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***I want us to close by taking a quick look at Ephesians 6. Why don't you go ahead and flip forward with me in your Bibles.***

I mentioned before that the reason Saul's armor would not work for David in battle – is because it was the WRONG armor.

It was fleshly armor.

But here's what we're told in Ephesians 6, starting in verse 12:

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***<sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.***

If our battle is not against flesh and blood – then no amount of fleshly armor will do the trick.

You can't fight the battle on your own. ***You need the Lord's armor.***

You can't fight the fight in your own strength. ***You need the Lord's strength.***

And you can't fight the good fight with secondhand faith (from Mom or Dad – Grandma or Grandpa). ***You need your own.***

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***In verse 10:***

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***<sup>10</sup> Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.***

The answer to the battles that stand before you each day? Is to STAND up – and FIGHT those battles.

Listen – in that boxing ring?? You cannot fight if your feet are not planted firm on a solid foundation.

The only time we should find ourselves not standing on our feet is when we're fighting on our knees – from a posture of prayer.

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***Verse 13:***

***<sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth,***

Think about what your belt does for you:

Your BELT – holds your pants up, right? You have loose pants and no belt? Well, guess what? *People are going to see things about you that nobody should have to see!* ☺

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We're to bring every loose thought into captivity as God's Word says. You're to keep your mind sharp by not letting it stray down destructing paths.

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And I wish we had more time to discuss the importance of truth this morning. Because you guys are INFILTRATED with false ideas today that are so FAR from the Truth of God's Word.

You're being pounded and attacked on every side!

What we need now more than ever – is the TRUTH of God's Word. The truth that sets us free.

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***After having put on your belt of truth, then:***

***having put on the breastplate of righteousness,***

Righteousness – meaning – “doing the right thing before the Lord --- in GOD's eyes – not our own.”

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SIN causes us to cower away in shame. But the best way to stand in confidence is to stand RIGHTEOUS – without the feeling of shame.

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***<sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;***

What do shoes do? They protect your feet.

It seems good to ME that IF you want to be able to STAND, it might be important to have good shoes protecting those feet, which cause you to be able to stand. Am I right?

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But not just with ANY shoes!

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If you think you can go out into battle wearing crocs, you're insane! It's just not happening! You can't go out there wearing sandals. Slides won't save you now! No Heelys, no Nikes, and no Adidas will be able to protect you the way that a proper pair of shoes can.

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No, we are to shoe (“shod”) our feet with the **PREPARATION** of the gospel of peace.

*The word, "preparation," means, "a prepared foundation." And the word, "gospel," means, "Good News."*

How do I prepare for the fight???

I prepare myself with the Gospel – the Good News --- that Jesus saved me from death and Hell. I am no longer a slave to sin – but I bring myself into SUBJECTION – as a BONDSERVANT – to my Master in Heaven.

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**Verse 16:**

***<sup>16</sup> above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.***

Our FAITH – is represented as a SHIELD.

Think about this now – your shield of faith – is a shield that you must move around, placing it in the necessary spot – in the necessary moment.

Because Satan will attack you from ALL sides – not just the front! You've got to be able to take up your faith and use it in whatever area of attack is taking place.

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**Verse 17:**

***<sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation,***

What kind of FOOL – would dare enter battle without a helmet?

You guys know what good a helmet does! You've been wearing one since you were old enough to sit on a bike!

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***[PICTURE OF ROMAN HELMET WITH PLUMAGE ON TOP] – In Paul's day, a soldier's helmet didn't look like helmets of today's armies. They had some kind of plumage on top that signified what army they belonged to.***

It was OBVIOUS – which army you belonged to – just by looking at the helmet alone.



And it should be obvious to the world around us – exactly Who we belong to – when we take up that helmet of salvation. That signet – of the acceptance of the salvation offered to us through Jesus.

And what is a helmet good for? It protects the mind. It encompasses the logic. It embraces the area of reasoning.

Our salvation – is an ESSENTIAL part of our spiritual warfare – because it reminds us of who we belong to – as it protects us from allowing the lies of the enemy into our head.

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***And – finally:***

***and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;***

Notice – all of the armor mentioned so far is meant to DEFEND. But the Word of God is used as a SWORD.

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***Hebrews 4:12 reminds us, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”***

God’s Word – can reach to any depth – and address any problem that we might ever face.

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Here is the key to using your Bible as a weapon. You’ve got to accept it for what it is.

You’ve got to pick it up DAILY – and put it to use. You must get to know it. That’s why I recommend a Bible with actual pages that you can turn with your hands – that you can write notes in – and that you can get to know in an intimate way.

Not knocking anyone who uses a phone, but I think sometimes a phone is just a cheap way out of bringing your Bible to church.

Imagine – reaching for your sword in battle – and ***pulling out a butter knife!***

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In closing, this is what Paul said towards the end of his life... ***he told Timothy, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4:7)***

My prayer for each of us here today – is that WHEN each of our race is over (because one day it will be) --- when our fight has come to an end --- can each of us here today say of how we lived our life: “I have fought the GOOD fight. I have FINISHED the race. And above all – I have kept the faith.”

On your obituary one day, there will be two things you can’t control. The date you were born and the date you die. But the dash in between... that is entirely up to you.

How will you choose to run your race?  
And how will you choose to fight?

Will you be like one who beats the air? Fighting over the wrong issues – with the wrong armor – in the wrong name?

Or will you be the one who fights the GOOD fight? **THE GOOD FIGHT** – of faith.

***Let’s pray.***

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**CLOSING PRAYER**  
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