



Buckle Up for Safety

Adapted from “Spiritual Warfare” series by Dennis Marquardt

As a prisoner under Roman guard, the Apostle Paul received an up-close view of a centurion’s armor. He became familiar with the individual pieces of armor as well as their functions. It was from this that Paul was inspired to write about the Armor of God. Interestingly, the armor pieces listed in Ephesians 6 are in the exact order in which a centurion would apply them.

One of the oddest pieces of the centurion’s armor was not really armor at all. It was an undergarment called a “belt”. Paul refers to the “belt of truth”. Really, it was a mostly hidden undergarment worn under the armor and which connected all the pieces together so the centurion had both flexibility and a way of keeping everything tied together. Without this belt the armor would have simply fallen off!

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Paul likens this belt in the Christian life as “truth” – but not truth as in God’s Word, that image is found in the “sword of the Spirit” later. This is “truth” that reflects integrity. Real integrity is like this belt – it is hidden deep within us, but its effects can be seen in **how well we are able to wear the rest of the armor** and hold it together! Our lives should reflect the highest level of integrity, or the rest of God’s armor will not stay on.

To illustrate the opposite of high integrity, a New Hampshire farmer took his horse to see the veterinarian. He complained about the horse, "One day he limps, the next day he doesn't. What should I do?" The vet advised him, "On the day he doesn't limp, sell him!"¹

There is no room in spiritual warfare for us to not be people of integrity. There will be nothing to hold the rest of the Armor of God to our bodies without this hidden “belt of truth.” The Bible teaches us that without godly integrity there can be no ability for us to wear the Armor of God and successfully fight spiritual battles, yet with integrity we have the necessary means in which to go into battle and succeed.

¹ James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), 288.

“COURAGE” Level Questions

C1: Why was the order in which a centurion applied his armor so important?

Exercise 1: Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 6:14 (ESV) Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness.

C2: The belt of truth was the first part of the Armor of God Paul listed. Why is the belt of truth reflected as integrity?

C3: The belt of truth held together the other parts of the armor and provided flexibility. How does your integrity relate to helping hold things together and being flexible enough to face the battle of spiritual integrity?

C4: Although the belt of truth could not be seen, the effects of wearing it can be. Describe what integrity looks like in your life?

C5: You will never be successful in spiritual battles unless you put on the belt of truth/integrity. What does the belt of truth/integrity look like in your life?

Exercise 2: Read and answer the following.

Psalm 51:6 (ESV) Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

C6: Integrity is a tough battle and contrary to the world. How do you find the courage to stand firm upon God and His Word?

C7: A man's battle against spiritual warfare is often two steps forward, one step back. How does understanding the importance of personal integrity come into play in having a successful battle?

C8: Describe a time in your life when your own integrity was called into question. How did your integrity hold up?

C9: When your integrity was in question, how did you find the courage to speak the truth regarding your walk as a godly man?

“STRENGTH” Level Questions

S1: What kind(s) of strength does it take to be a man of integrity and take a stand for Christ? Be specific in what that looks like in your life.

Exercise 1: Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 6:14 (ESV)

S2: The belt of truth is listed as the first piece of armor. How important to you is it for “the belt of truth” to be the first part of the Armor of God to put on?

S3: God's armor, fastened to your integrity will help you stand firm against the enemy. What does this look like in your life?

S4: Real integrity protects our ability to reproduce a Gospel witness to others. Why is integrity so important in being a good witness of Christ?

S5: Has your personal integrity ever been called into question? If so, how did your integrity stand up against the attack?

Exercise 2: Read and answer the following.

Daniel 6:1–28 (ESV)

S6: Why do you think real spiritual integrity in Daniel's life was based on faith in God and His Word?

S7: How has your own faith in God and His Word been developed?

S8: Daniel gained the freedom to proclaim God because of his integrity in remaining faithful to the things of God. How has your own integrity either helped or hurt your faithfulness to proclaim Christ to the world?

S9: What does faith combined with integrity look like in your life? If there has ever been a time in your life when your own integrity was obviously just surface level, describe this time.

“ENDURANCE” Level Questions

E1: In spiritual warfare, nothing hinders more than a lack of integrity. Why is integrity so vital to your success in spiritual battles?

Exercise 1: On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being *very strong* and 4 being *not very strong*, rate yourself on how strong your integrity is in all aspects of your life. Write out a plan to improve in this area.

Exercise 2: Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 6:14 (ESV)

E2: What is the difference between the belt of truth and the sword of the Spirit?

Exercise 3: Find three men in the next sixty days and share with them about the belt of truth. What did you glean?

E3: The belt of truth cannot be seen but holds the other armor in place and is flexible. What are some specific ways your own *belt of truth/integrity* will hold in place the Armor of God and be flexible enough to face the spiritual battle of being a godly man.

E4: How does your integrity relate to your ability to protect your witness of the Gospel?

Exercise 4: Read and answer the following.

Daniel 6:1–28 (ESV)

E5: After reading these verses, do you think Daniel compromised his integrity when it came to honoring God?

Exercise 2: On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being *right on par* and 4 being *far away*, rate yourself on how your integrity lines up with Daniel's integrity? Write out plan to improve.

Exercise 2: Daniel's integrity was based firmly on what he knew God wanted, not what man wanted. Find three men in the next 60 days with which to discuss the difference between honoring God rather than man regarding integrity. What did you learn?