



# Faith Up to Reality

Adapted from “Spiritual Warfare” series by Dennis Marquardt

The Roman soldier had good armor to cover most parts of his body, but it was impractical to cover every area such as eyes, arms, elbows, lower legs, etc.

To cover everything would mean a man could not move well on the battlefield. So, what was the solution to those areas left uncovered? A large shield.

The kind of shield Paul mentions in Ephesians 6 was not a small hand-held shield like the Greeks had used previously. It was a huge, rectangular shield large enough to cover the entire body of the soldier.

It was covered with leather that had been soaked in water so that fiery arrows would become stuck on the shield and burn out without any damage to the soldier or equipment. The shield afforded flexibility to cover any

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exposed area of the body that could not practically be covered in heavy armor.

However, like in modern warfare, every time sophisticated defensive equipment was invented, an enemy found a way to counter it. Since regular arrows would simply bounce off the heavy armor of a well-dressed Roman warrior, some enemies learned a new trick. They would shoot lit arrows made with a hollow shaft filled with a flammable liquid.

When the arrow struck the metal armor it would shatter releasing the flammable liquid which would then trickle down through the seams of the armor, thus burning the centurion alive. The only recourse for protection was a full-length shield that was flexible enough to move around and large enough to completely everything. It is [this item](#) that Paul likens to **faith**.

Faith becomes the flexible item for spiritual warfare, always pliable enough to cover anything that comes our way, and larger enough to completely protect us from any flaming dart of Satan. Faith allows us to tap the unseen resources of God's power to defeat the enemy.

As a spiritual piece of equipment, it gives us the confidence to stand in battle. The following story from Jill Briscoe illustrates this idea of faith well:

I remember a time when I was waiting for *soon* to become *now*. I went down in Oconomowoc to a little lake where we live, and I sat there very early in the morning praying, pleading with God that my soon would become now. "God, I cannot see you working. What about all these prayers that people are praying? This is a terrible situation. What are you doing about it?" God said to me, "Any fish in that lake?" I looked at the lake, which was like glass, and I said, "Sure. Of course, there are fish there." "How do you know? Do you have to see fish jump to believe they're there, Jill?" I remember sitting there for a long time until I could say to God, "If I never see a fish jump, I will believe they're there and active. If I never see You answer a prayer, I will believe."<sup>1</sup>

The Bible teaches us that faith is the great shield to protect our entire life from the attacks of Satan. With

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<sup>1</sup> Jill Briscoe, "In The Father's Arms," Preaching Today, Tape no. 141.



faith, we can extinguish the fiery darts of Satan that would seek to destroy us.

## **“COURAGE” Level Questions**

**C1:** What comes to mind when you hear the word “faith”? Describe the difference between having faith in what you can see verses faith in things you cannot.

**C2:** As you walk closer with Christ and serve Him better, you will face increasing spiritual opposition. How does your faith come into play to protect you from these attacks? Be specific in your answers.

**Exercise 1:** Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 6:16 (ESV) In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.

**C3:** How does understanding the importance of having faith in Christ give you the courage to live for Christ?

**C4:** The shield Roman soldiers carried was flexible enough to be moved around and still protect them. How does that relate to your faith in Christ when facing attacks from different angles in your life?

**Exercise 2:** Read and answer the following.

Matthew 14:22–33 (ESV) Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night, he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It

is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.” And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

**C5:** How much faith do you think it took for Peter to step out of the boat?

**C6:** If Jesus called you to step out of the boat that day, would you have stepped out? Why or why not? Be honest.

**C7:** Describe a time when you doubted and took your eyes off Jesus.

**C8:** Describe a time in your life where you felt like you were drowning and cried out to Jesus?

## “STRENGTH” Level Questions

**S1:** From the introduction, you read that a Roman soldier’s shield was very important for protecting him from fiery arrows of the enemy. How does this relate to your shield of faith and your protection?

**S2:** In the story of the lake full of fish, you read about *faith without seeing* versus *faith by seeing*. Are you a man who believes *because you see* or a man who has *faith without seeing*?

**Exercise 1:** List some things in which you have faith *without seeing*. List some of the things for which you have faith in Christ *without seeing*.

**Exercise 2:** Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 6:16 (ESV)

**S3:** You will face fiery arrows from your spiritual enemies (the demonic) regarding purity and integrity. Why is it important to carry the shield of faith into these battles?

**S4:** How does faith in Christ protect your entire life?

**Exercise 3:** Read and answer the following.

Matthew 14:22–33 (ESV)

**S5:** From these verses, how far are you willing to go to walk with Christ?

**S6:** How much faith does it take to step out of our comfort zone to follow Christ?

**Exercise 4:** On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being *much faith* and 4 being *not much faith*, rate yourself on how much faith you walk with in your life. Write out a plan to strengthen your faith.

## “ENDURANCE” Level Questions

**Exercise 1:** A Roman warrior had faith in his shield to protect him. On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being *very high* and 4 being *not very high*, rate yourself on how well you trust the shield of faith for protection. Write out a plan to strengthen your faith.

**E1:** In the next 30 days, meet with three men to discuss the importance of the *shield of faith* regarding your walk in an ungodly world? What did you learn from your conversations?

**Exercise 2:** Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 6:16 (ESV)

**E2:** Attacks on your relationships, identity, purpose, and vision will come from many different angles. Write out your plan to walk in victory in these four dimensions.

My Relationships:

My Identity:

My Purpose:

My Vision:

**E3:** Name one good thing doubt has ever done for you? Why is it hard to not doubt?

**Exercise 3:** Read and answer the following.

Matthew 14:22–33 (ESV)

**E4:** How much courage and strength do you think it took for Peter to step out of the boat?

**E5:** Have you ever been called out of the boat (your comfort zone)? Describe this time.

**E6:** In these verses, Peter had faith to step out of the boat. However, when he took his eyes off Jesus he began to doubt. Can taking your eyes off Jesus cause you to doubt and stumble in discipling another man?

**Exercise 4:** In the next 30 days, find three other men to with which to share regarding taking your eyes off Jesus. What did you learn from these conversations?