

shield of faith Ephesians 6:16

Last year we looked at three of the six pieces of God's armour in Ephesians 6 : Belt of Truth, Breastplate of Righteousness, Gospel Shoes of Peace.

This month I want to look at the Shield of Faith. A verse that comes to mind immediately is Hebrews 11:6 *"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."*

Faith is the key ingredient to standing strong against the attacks of Satan. Hebrews 11:1 reads *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* The word SUBSTANCE can have a two-fold meaning; of foundation, or the idea of having a confident assurance in God. The word EVIDENCE has the idea of testing or proving God by faith.

The key to growing in our faith is the Word of God. Romans 10:17 states, *"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God."* With the present epidemic of biblical illiteracy amongst Christians, it is no surprise that putting on the Shield of Faith is a tough task indeed.

In Psalm 91, the writer is proclaiming the wonders and blessings of God's care and protection. In v4, he says this; *"He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge: His truth shall be your shield and buckler."* The word TRUTH has the meaning of the truth about God's character and attributes. Our growing understanding of God's character and how He works is a critical part of putting on the Shield of Faith. Knowing and praying the promises of God is also an important part of putting on the Shield of Faith. In fact, faith is the key element of all the other pieces of armour.

A Roman shield was a very important part of a soldier's equipment, for standing against the wiles and cunning of Satan. A Roman shield was around 1.5 metres long and made of wood. The shield was then covered in either animal hide or a thin layer of metal.

The reason for this covering was to be able to deal with Barbarians the Romans fought against. They would use fire-arrows as a means of causing confusion and chaos among their enemies. With a covering of animal hide or metal, the arrows would be extinguished without setting the wooden shield on fire.

The idea Paul is conveying to us here is that the enemy comes with all sorts of temptations that are like a flaming arrow that can enter our minds via our eyes and ears, and inflames our minds and hearts against God. A classic example of how the

PRAISE the Lord for:

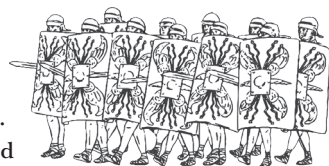
- The ongoing responses from prisoners around the world and the increasing demand for the paper is so encouraging. In South Africa we work in 243 prisons and USA 385.
- The many opportunities Carl Carmody and new staff member Kevin Taffurelli have had to visit and encourage churches who use Challenge and for a number of new orders coming in due to their visits.
- A wonderful response to the inaugural Impact WA weekend. The travelling team consisted of 12 plus a number from the receiving church ... both encouraged with the response.

Continued over

enemy does this is through our computers and the Internet. I was meeting with a good friend of mine recently in his office. As we were chatting, he received a hard-core pornographic email. He indicated that somehow the particular group had managed to get his email address and had been targeting him with these worded emails. These emails can be viewed as a fiery arrow of temptation to ignite a fire of lust in our minds and hearts.

Key to maintaining this shield is **faith** because as Hebrews 11:6 states: *“It is impossible to please God without faith.”* If we are not walking by faith we cannot deal with these fiery arrows that Satan constantly launches at us. My friend’s response was to immediately delete the emails that had the potential to poison his heart and mind.

Another important aspect of the Roman shield was that at the edge of it a curved section allowed it to connect to the shield next to it. So a group of soldiers could go into battle as a unified group.



It goes without saying that we need each other and to be accountable to each other in varying degrees, to help each other to ward off the fiery darts of the evil one.

The other aspect of this unity is the church and how it is perceived in the community. Satan has been using the fiery arrows of division, dissension and disharmony for centuries in the church. This is why it is important that we connect our Shields of Faith as a body to deal with these fiery arrows. Church splits and constant in-fighting is doing the church unbelievable harm both inside and outside. The non-Christian community has, I think, a low view of the church as a whole. Thankfully, not all churches fit into this category.

So let us walk by **faith** not wavering, trusting God to keep us and protect us. 1 Thessalonians 3:3 says this: *“The Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.”* May you know and believe and pray that verse.

CARL CARMODY
EDITOR CHALLENGE

PRAYER needed for:

- Upcoming Impact WA trip (rural day outreach) February with a suburban Perth church.
- New project area in the Philippines to commence. We are still in a holding pattern due to Covid19. Pray the Lord will open this door soon.
- A request for a Portuguese Military edition of the paper commencing June 2021. Funding is required.
- Ministries our Impact Africa mission team work with. These include Multi Ministries, Cornerstone Community Church, World Hope prison ministry, **RICO** (see panel this page), Tabitha House. Please pray for the Lord’s protection and His provision for these ministries.

Challenge seeks to work with ministries on the ground.

RICO is a ministry in suburban Johannesburg, led by Willie and Henriette Vermaak. cheerfulgiverssa.org.za



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