

True Disciple #15 – Battle Basics

Welcome to True Disciple #15. This is Rod Nichols and last week we discussed the fact that we, the true disciples of Jesus Christ, are part of an invading army, led by Jesus. We're invading the darkness and spreading the glory of God here on earth. As with any well prepared army, there is basic training and that's what we're going to talk about Today – Battle Basics.

The first step in battle training is to prepare mentally. We have had two of our sons, a son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and grandson-in-law go through military boot camp and they've all said the same thing. Bootcamp is designed to reprogram your mind for the potential battle. So, just as with the earthly army, the heavenly army must be mentally prepared for battle.

I'll be doing much of this training from Ephesians 6:10-18, so you might want to pause the recording, open your Bible and turn to Ephesians 6:10-18, so that you can review the scripture as I teach.

Let's read Ephesians 6:10-18. I'm reading out of the NIV, so it may sound a bit different, if you're using a different translation:

“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. ¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.”

For this first part of training – mental preparation, I’m going to jump down to verse 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.”

In our battle, we don’t fight against people. Oh, it may seem like it at times, but we are fighting against spiritual forces – satan and his fallen angels. These are powerful angels and on our own, we’re no match for them (we see that in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve). That said, the good news is that, as you learned in message #8 on authority, Jesus gave us authority over everything operating here on earth, which includes satan and his demonic forces.

Now, let’s go back up to verse 10, “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.” Read that over and over until you get that you aren’t fighting the battles. You are only strong in the Lord and it’s His mighty power that will overwhelm the enemy.

The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, operates inside of us and according to 1 John 4:4 (NLT), the Spirit who lives in us, is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. If we let the Holy Spirit work through us, we will win every battle with the enemy. So, that’s the first part of your mental training, is to know who you are: You’re a child of God, a co-heir with Jesus, you have Jesus living in you and you are in Christ, and you have the same power and authority that Jesus had when He walked the earth (not because you are special, but because He is). So, when the devil comes knocking in your thoughts, just send the Word (Jesus) to answer.

Once you are mentally prepared, you need understand your enemy. Let’s go back to Ephesians 6:11, “Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” We will address the armor in a moment, but in this part of your training, we’re going to talk about the devil’s schemes, in other words, his battle plan to destroy mankind.

First, we need to understand that satan is not a counterpart to God. He is a created being and was a powerful angel who worked in the throne room in heaven. He interacted daily with God, until the moment when pride entered and he led 1/3 of the angels in a rebellion against God. The archangel Michael and the

rest of the angels defeated satan and his angels and cast them to earth. He is not all powerful, all knowing, and he isn't everywhere at once, as God is.

Also, satan is not creative. He's still using the same schemes that he used in the garden of eden – twisting God's word. As evidenced by his interaction with Jesus in the wilderness, satan knows scripture and he will use just enough of it to seem right. Jesus answered satan's temptations with scripture and we need to know scripture well enough to do the same.

Satan or one of his demons will whisper things into your ear – it's flu season, you're getting sick; the economy is going to crash and you'll lose your house; you've got cancer and it's going to kill you; the church just wants your money and you need it more than they do; that person hurt you, so you have a right to be offended; the pastor got a new luxury car, he must be making too much money; neither presidential candidates is a Christian, so I'm not going to vote; and so on.

When we hear things (thoughts), we need to do what the Apostle Paul taught in 2 Corinthians 10:5, "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." In other words, we need to compare our thoughts to those of God, in His Word. John 10:10 says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." So, if your thoughts are negative, degrading, demoralizing, dream stealing, or anything else that is about stealing, killing, and destroying, that's from the enemy. On the other hand, if the thoughts are building you up, calling you to higher things, loving, equipping, or anything else that would result in an abundant, successful life, then those are from God.

Your fleshly mind will gravitate toward the negative thoughts and want to embrace them, but you must take every thought captive – hit pause and evaluate whether this is from the devil or from God. If It's not from God, cast it away and as it says in Philippians 4:8, think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. That's where your thinking should be as you enter into the battle. With your thoughts right, it will be easy to see the enemy's schemes.

Next part of your training, is that you need some gear. Let's go back to Ephesians 6 and verses 13-17:

“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. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

God has given us heavenly armor and we need to put it on. If your attacks come only in the day, then put it on every morning. If they also come at night, leave the armor on 24-7 and just remind yourself that you have it on. Otherwise, each morning go through the motions of putting on the armor.

I always start at my head and move down – the helmet of salvation to protect my mind; the breastplate of righteousness to protect my heart and emotions; the belt of truth, so I will always be girded up by the truth of God’s Word; the shoes of peace, so I will always walk in the peace that surpasses all understanding; the shield of faith to ward off the flaming darts and arrows from the enemy forces; and the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, which is my only offensive weapon, but it’s all we need.

Now, you may have noticed that there is no protection on the backside, that’s because, according to Isaiah 52:12, God is our rear guard. Of course, He’s actually all around us, protecting us from all angles, but it’s good to know that the backside is covered, if you know what I mean.

Lastly, we need to know the battle plan. Are we to race out into battle, like David did with the giant? Are we to send worshippers out before the army, as God had them do a couple times in the old testament? Are we to march around 7 times and then shout? Those are certainly battle plans that the Lord used in the past and He may call on you to do something like that in the future, but unless you hear directly from Him with something different, we find our battle plan has two parts.

Let’s first look at Ephesians 6:18, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”

We can see from Paul's instructions that prayer is to be part of our battle plan. In fact, it's a powerful part. The last part of James 5:16 it says, "...The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." Since we can't see the enemy, our battle methodology is through prayer, which empowers the angels to do battle for us. Paul mentions two types of prayer. First, we're to pray in the Spirit, which would be praying in your prayer language. If you don't have your prayer language, go back to message #7 on prayer and review it. Second, we're to be alert and keep praying for all of the Lord's people – this would be prayer in English.

In the latter part Ephesians 6:13 and the first part of verse 14, we see the second part of our battle plan: "...when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then..."

When the enemy attacks, we're prepared mentally, because we know who we are in Christ. We have our armor on and are ready for the battle. We can strike back with the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God – which is why it's good to have scripture memorized) Then, we're to pray and stand our ground and continue standing firm. Remember, that it's God and the heavenly angels who are fighting the battle for us. All we have to do is to complete our part of the battle plan.

Don't allow the enemies lies to cause doubt or unbelief, which will cause you to stagger or fall. Instead, speak the Word of God back to that liar and stand firm. Remind the enemy that you are a child of God, that Jesus is in you and you are in Jesus, that you are destined to spend eternity in heaven and he will be tormented for all eternity in hell. If you're submitted to God and start speaking with the authority of Jesus, satan and his demon forces will flee from you (James 4:7).

There you go. Now you are ready for any battle. I would suggest going over this message several times to really get it down. If you do, it will dramatically change the rest of your life.

As always, I want to commend you for your commitment to becoming a true disciple of Jesus Christ, by listening to these messages and reviewing the other materials on the True Disciple site. Please help me spread the word about True Disciple by directing people you know to the site at www.TrueDisciple.info. There are many great articles, video messages, worship videos, and resources on the

site. And, if you're enjoying and benefiting from the True Disciple ministry, please seek the Lord for whether He might have to contribute either one time or on a monthly basis, to support this growing ministry. As always, we also appreciate your prayers.

That's it for this week. I pray that you win many battles and are abundantly blessed of the Lord in the coming week.