

TONY EVANS

**STRONGER  
TOGETHER,**

WEAKER APART



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## **Stronger Together, Weaker Apart**

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## INTRODUCTION

# THE BATTLE THAT BRINGS US TOGETHER

**D**ivision roars louder now than it has in many years past. Everywhere we turn, it seems a new group rises up against another. We are a world divided by a multiplicity of ideas, values, beliefs, preferences, dreams, and expectations. And yet God calls us to live in unity. As the apostle Paul states, “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men” (Romans 12:18).

As kingdom followers of Jesus Christ, we have been chosen to model unity, love, and peace as an alternative to the ways of a world that stands divided. Yet it seems that division often slithers its way into our churches and Christian organizations as well. Satan’s overall strategies rarely change—whatever he can divide, he can conquer (Mark 3:24). He accomplishes this division through lies, deception, and destruction (John 10:10). But we must remember that in this battle we are not fighting *for* victory; we are fighting *from* victory. Jesus has already disarmed the rulers and principalities of this rebellion (Colossians 2:15) and has secured the victory for us. We walk in the fullness of this victory by standing in truth, abiding in Christ,

resisting the devil and his minions, and waging spiritual warfare according to God's Word.

To say that spiritual warfare happens in this area of oneness with others is an understatement. It's time for us to rise up as the collective body of Christ and call down heaven's authority into the chaos on earth, in order that we might usher in the light, blessings, and favor that defeat the darkness of the enemy.

After all, the call to unity is the great call Christ gave in His high priestly prayer. Shortly before He was arrested and crucified, He prayed,

I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (John 17:20-23 NIV).

Just hours before He laid down His life for us, Jesus Christ placed a tremendous emphasis on His desire for His followers to be unified. This isn't something that He is asking us to do only during "Unity Month" or on "Special Oneness Sunday." This is a mandate from our Commander in Chief that we be one with Him and, as a result, one with each other.

Unity is to be our defining marker as kingdom disciples. Jesus said our unity will show the world that God sent Him and that He has loved us as God loves Him. Oneness is not an emotion. Unity is not a song. It is a strategy, responsibility, and approach to advancing God's kingdom agenda and seeing His rule manifested on earth. To live divided (whether at home, work, or church or in our communities,

nation, or world) is to bow to Satan rather than the one true God. It is to relinquish our spiritual authority on the altar of discord.

Unity is the keystone of spiritual victory. It must be our goal as followers of Christ if we are to be effective in this call to live as overcomers in spiritual warfare.

The apostle Paul warns us about this ongoing spiritual conflict in several of his epistles, but perhaps most importantly in his letter to the believers in Ephesus, where he also spells out our strategy for winning the battle. That strategy has to do with the armor we wear as we enter into warfare with the enemy of our souls.

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.

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 (Ephesians 6:13-18 NIV).

In my foundational book *Victory in Spiritual Warfare*, I wrote extensively on how we're to engage the enemy with our armor in place. Now I'm offering a collection of powerful prayers that addresses some of the major issues we face in this area of oneness. In addition, there are prayers for favor and requests for God to bless your relationships, workplace, community, church, nation, and our world.

For each topic, you'll find prayers based on each piece of our spiritual armor. Pray the prayers word for word, paraphrase them, or use them as a starting point for crafting your own prayers. The main thing is that you pray.

My goal is that these prayers will act as a starting place for you each day and that when the prayer I've written ends, you will go on praying in your own words about your situation. Remember as you pray that you do not pray as a beggar, but as a warrior for the King of kings. If you need help discovering what I mean by that and how critical it is that you claim your legal rights when you pray, listen to my sermon "Claiming Your Legal Rights" at [go.tonyevans.org/prayer](http://go.tonyevans.org/prayer).

You have power over your enemy when you pray. You probably have more power than you realize. Your task is to walk in your God-given authority so you are enabled to live out a strong and impactful life in unity with other believers. And you do that through prayer.

## The "Everyday" Pieces of Armor

Before we begin, let's take a brief look at each piece of the armor of God. The first three pieces of armor are items we should wear every moment of every day.

### *The Belt of Truth*

Wearing the belt of truth involves realizing that truth is fundamentally God-based knowledge—His viewpoint on a matter—and acknowledging three principles:

1. Truth is comprised of information and facts, but it also includes God's original intent, making it the absolute, objective standard by which reality is measured.
2. Truth has already been predetermined by God.



3. Truth must be accepted internally and then acted on externally.

When you wear the belt of truth and use it by aligning your mind, will, and emotions underneath God's view on a matter—His truth—He will then empower you to overcome the lies of the enemy and fight your spiritual battles with divinely authorized spiritual authority.

### *The Breastplate of Righteousness*

Righteousness has been deposited within us. Our job is to feed it and nourish it with the truth of God so that it expands to surround us with the protection in warfare we desperately need.

When you were first saved, God deposited deep within you a new heart containing all the righteousness that belongs to Jesus Christ. Righteousness is the standard that pleases God. But to benefit from its restoring abilities, you must dig down with the shovel of truth. Then God will release a brand-new you in your decisions and actions, and He will surround you with the secure protection of a breastplate of His righteousness.

Wearing the breastplate of righteousness involves walking securely in your imputed righteousness by virtue of the cross, coming clean with God in your practice of righteousness, and feeding your spirit with the Word of God so that the Spirit will produce the natural outgrowth of right living from within you.

### *The Shoes of Peace*

A Roman soldier's shoes were called *caligae*—sandals studded with nails. These nails, known as hobnails, were firmly placed through the sole of the shoe for increased durability and stability. Similar to cleats worn on football and soccer fields today, hobnails gave wearers more

traction. It gave them sure footing, increased their mobility in battle, and helped them avoid being knocked down.

So when Paul instructs you to have your feet shod, he is talking about standing firm. When Satan comes, he won't be able to knock you off your feet. You will be able to stand firm because the hobnails on the bottom of your "peace shoes" have dug deep into the solid ground beneath you.

Paul is telling us that we don't have to slide or move with every hit or trial that comes our way. Having our feet shod with the "preparation of the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15) gives us stability so we can resist Satan.

God offers us a peace that reaches beyond what we can comprehend. When we receive and walk in that peace, it settles in as a guard over our hearts and minds (Philippians 4:7). This is the peace that cradles people who have lost their jobs and keeps them from losing their minds. This is the peace that produces praise when there is no paper in the bank. This is the peace that restores hope in the face of failing health. This peace is so powerful that we're instructed to let it control us. We are taught to let it call the shots, make the decisions, and dictate our emotions (Colossians 3:15).

Putting on peace shoes means aligning your soul under the rule of God's Spirit. When you choose to do that, God will release peace into your life because the peace of Christ is now ruling your thoughts and actions. When worry creeps back in, remind yourself that it's lying to you, because God has promised He will provide.

What can you do when peace in your life comes under attack? Take it straight back to the spiritual realm and focus on what God has to say on the matter. When you do that, you will wear shoes unlike any others. You will wear shoes that show the demonic realm, yourself, and others that you are standing firm in God's armor. You will

walk without becoming weary, and in those shoes you will find the calming power of peace.

## The “Take Up” Pieces of Armor

So far we’ve looked at three pieces of the armor of God you need to wear in order to be dressed for warfare. You should wear these first three pieces all the time. The “to be” verb in Ephesians 6:14-15—translated *having* in the New American Standard Bible—indicates “at all times.” We are always to have the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes of the gospel of peace.

The next three pieces are what you are to have at hand, ready to pick up and use when you need them. Paul switches verbs for the next three pieces of the armor, telling us to “take up” the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit.

### *The Shield of Faith*

Faith is critical to achieving victory in spiritual warfare. Faith accesses what God has already done or what God plans to do. The shield of faith can also be called the shield that *is* faith because faith itself is the shield.

Scripture is full of verses that describe this weapon of faith and show us where to find it. Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus is the “author and perfecter of faith.” In Galatians 2:20, we read that we now live by faith in Christ. “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” First John 5:4 says, “Whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”

Faith is a powerful weapon, rooted in Jesus Christ. Jesus embodies

all the ingredients of faith, from its creation to its perfection. The key to winning in warfare is this faith.

I define faith in practical terms by saying that faith is acting like God is telling the truth. Another way of saying it is that faith is acting like something is so, even when it is not so, in order that it might be so simply because God said so. Your faith must always be directly tied to an action done in response to a revealed truth—otherwise it is not faith. If you are not willing to do something in response to it, even if that something is as small as simply being still in your soul rather than worrying, then the faith you claim to have is not real. Faith always involves your walk, not just your talk.

Keep in mind, though, that the weapon is not just faith in anything at all. It must be faith in God's truth. Faith is only as valuable as the thing to which it is tied.

For example, if faith is tied to your feelings—how much faith you feel—that faith will be empty. You might feel entirely full of faith but not follow up with actions because you really don't believe in what you say you feel. Faith is always based on your feet—what you do in response to what you believe. Faith is a function of the mind that shows up in your choices and responses to life.

The shield of faith has been given to us to protect us from the deceptive strategies of the enemy. When you use it properly, this shield will enable you to advance against the enemy because you will be confident that what God has said about your situation—through His promises in His Word—is true.

Pick up the shield of faith and grab the victory that has already been won.

### *The Helmet of Salvation*

With the helmet, Paul has once again used a physical example to

illustrate a spiritual truth. He demonstrates that just as the brain is the control center for the rest of the body, the mind is the control center for the will and emotions. The mind must be protected with a helmet that's able to absorb being hit by the enemy and even knocked to the ground in the spiritual realm.

One reason we need to wear a helmet is that the enemy is trying to stop us from accomplishing the things God has for us to do. God wants to speak truth into our minds. He sits on high—in the heavenly places—and views the scene below. He can see the field of life much better than we ever could. He can examine the opposition's strategy much better than we can. He has studied the game film much longer than we have. And because of this, God has a few secrets He wants us to hear. They are secrets because often what God has to say to you is meant only for you.

Satan wants to keep us from wearing the helmet of salvation so that his whispers to us become the reality through which we interpret and respond to life.

Everything God is ever going to do for you has already been done. Every healing He will ever give you in your physical body has already been provided. Every opportunity He is ever going to open up for you has already been opened. Every stronghold God is ever going to break in you has already been broken. Every victory you are ever going to experience has already been won. The joy you're desperately seeking already exists. The peace you stay up at night praying and wishing you could enjoy is already present. And the power you need to live the life God has created you to live, you already have. This is because God has already deposited in the heavenly realm "every spiritual blessing" you will ever need (Ephesians 1:3).

Wearing the helmet of salvation means bringing our thoughts in alignment with our new identity in Christ, not our old identity in Adam.

### *The Sword of the Spirit*

This piece of armor stands out from all the others. It's unique because it's the only offensive weapon in the arsenal. Everything else is designed to hold us steady from what the enemy is seeking to bring against us "in the evil day" (Ephesians 6:13). But after God outfits us for battle in order to stand firm, He gives us an additional weapon with which we can attack and advance.

When Paul instructs us to take up the sword of the Spirit, he's letting us know that in this battle, the enemy will sometimes seem to be right in our face—just like a defensive player trying to block a shot in a basketball game. The defender will often stick his body, face, or hands in the offensive player's face so that the offensive player will become disoriented and unable to advance. Satan doesn't want you to send the ball through the net for two points, so to discourage this, he brings his battle—your particular stronghold—as close to you as possible. Oftentimes, that means your battle is being waged within you—in your mind, will, emotions, and body.

Paul says that your offensive weapon is the sword *of the Spirit*. It's not your sword. It's not the church's sword. It's not the sword of good works or even religion. It's not the preacher's sword. This is the sword of the Spirit, and in fact, it's the only weapon we're told that the Spirit uses in the spiritual realm.

When you learn how to use the sword of the Spirit—which is God's Word—you can go on the offensive against the enemy who seeks to destroy you. It doesn't matter whether you're young or old, weak or strong. All you need to know is that the sword in your hand is capable of doing more than you will ever need. You can follow the example of Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13) by using the sword of the Spirit to communicate to the enemy specific Scriptures that relate to your specific situation.

## The Battle in the Heavens

Paul ends his discussion on the armor of God with a clarion call to prayer (Ephesians 6:18). Why? Because prayer is how you get dressed for warfare. Prayer is how you put on the armor. I define prayer as relational communication with God. It is earthly permission for heavenly interference.

Why does prayer often seem difficult to us? Because Satan seeks to direct us away from it. He knows how important it is. He will use every possible means to keep you from seriously communicating with God because he knows what prayer does—it activates heaven's response on your behalf in accordance with the will of God. Prayer never forces God to do what is not His will; rather, it releases from God to us what *is* His will. And it is definitely His will for His people to wage victorious spiritual warfare.

In the book of Daniel we find one of the greatest illustrations of prayer. We see Daniel studying God's Word and then responding to God in prayer based on what he has discovered.

In the first year of [Darius'] reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes (Daniel 9:2-3).

First, Daniel heard the truth of God. Then he talked to God about it. Anytime you talk to God about His Word, you are praying. You don't have to do it on your knees. You can do it while you are working, hanging out with others, washing dishes...whatever. Prayer in your war room is critical, but try not to neglect the need for ongoing prayer throughout the day as well.

Notice what we read later in the chapter.

Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding” (Daniel 9:20-22).

While Daniel prayed, God responded. He sent an angel to help him understand his situation even more. Notice that God did not send the angel to give Daniel understanding *until* Daniel prayed in response to what God had already said. We read, “At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision” (verse 23). When Daniel began to pray, God gave Gabriel the directive to go to Daniel and give him more understanding. The following chapter gives us greater insight into this occasion.

Behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said to me, “O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood up trembling. Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia



was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.”

When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless (Daniel 10:10-15).

When Daniel prayed to God in response to God’s words revealed through Jeremiah, God sent a messenger to help Daniel. Twice we read in these two chapters that God sent the angel on the day that Daniel prayed to God about God’s already revealed Word. When you are praying according to God’s own Word, He hears you and responds. For Daniel, the delay in receiving that response was a result of spiritual warfare in the heavenly realm. Gabriel had been dispatched to go to Daniel with a message from God, but the prince of Persia—a demon—blocked Gabriel from reaching his destination for three weeks.

Your battle is fought in the spiritual realm. You must not fail to realize that. If you do, you will not fight in a way that will bring you victory. We’ve seen that God heard Daniel’s prayer when he first offered it, and God responded immediately. Yet because of the battle taking place in the invisible, spiritual realm, God’s response was delayed from reaching its intended destination. In fact, another angel—Michael—was needed to help remove the demon from acting as an obstacle for Gabriel. Ultimately, the prince of Persia got double-teamed so God’s message could be delivered to Daniel.

Rarely is a battle overturned and won in a minute. That is why I want to encourage you to continue in prayer. God may not seem

to respond immediately, but that's only because of the battles taking place in the heavenlies.

Each piece of armor has a specific use in our warfare against Satan. When put together, they present a mighty defense *and* offense against his tactics. As you use the prayers on the following pages, my hope is that you'll develop the fighting spirit you need to win the battle for unity and that you will join the mighty army of overcomers God is raising up. Your part in carrying out spiritual warfare can change the course of your personal history, your family, your church, your community, and even our nation.