

Love Thy Neighbor in Service

Are You Prepared?

Prepared for battle. The idea is one I have only recently come to understand. We as Christian are to be prepared for defending our faith.



"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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. 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." (Ephesians 6:10 NIV)

We are called to take specific action.

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 this, take up the shield of **faith**, with which to extinguish the 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**.

Upon first reading, the whole idea seems rather odd and fantastic. No real opposition had ever occurred as long as I was focused on my own life, income, work, family and friends to the exclusion of the rest of the world. I had never thought any war was being waged except those we see here on earth over power, money and land.

If you had asked, I would have replied I was a Christian, but had no real idea of what being a Christian meant despite years of attending church. The concept of telling anyone about Jesus Christ and His saving grace was simply beyond my comprehension. Why would you even bother? Plus I suffered a tremendous fear of

man/woman. What will they think? What will they say? I won't have any friends. I might not get invited to the party next year.

What Will They Think?

After years of Bible study and working with the homeless downtown I now know different. The introduction of an individual to the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ is the most important thing we may do for another person in our entire lives. When you are at a funeral, what matters? How much money did they make? How big was their house? How powerful were they? Those are simply not the things that matter at a funeral. When standing over a grave I have one question in my mind. Was he/she a believer?

If the Bible is to be believed, the only thing that matters is if the individual had a faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. **No one** comes to the Father **except** through me." (John 14:6 NIV)

I have heard this is considered

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a narrow view. However, the opposite is actually true. Accepting Jesus Christ is free, and one of the fairest things on earth. Rich, poor, weak, strong, smart, slow all have the opportunity, if they are willing, to seek the Lord.

For those of you asking the question what about the people in (you choose the country) that either do not know the Lord or do not have the opportunity? The answer is simple, and the Lord may be speaking to you now. Change your life, get on the Internet, a plane, bus, car, bicycle or whatever it takes and go bring the news to them. His plan has been, and is, for us weak flawed humans who are Christians to take the message across the world and show His love through our actions daily. No "Plan B" exists.

Considering the profound task we have all been given, are you prepared? I never read the bible, looked at a commentary about the Bible, prayed or considered seriously being a servant to others until the last few years. I was about as unarmed as a person could be. I definitely knew what Tiger Woods had done the week before and consistently spent too much time watching, or playing all types of sports as well as taking my child to do so. Sports and television are

two of our greatest idols replacing Jesus, the Lord & Holy Spirit.

I have learned that before one thinks of being armed spiritually you have to consider the whole idea yourself. Imagine a person who was serious about being a scientist never bothering to look at or study science books. What if a deep question was asked? How would he/she respond? So it is with Christians.

I have always been able to easily recommend something to anyone if I felt the item was a good product or the idea was useful. If, however, I only had a limited knowledge of something and did not necessarily know what I thought about it my motivation was very limited. Spreading the good news of Jesus Christ will be very difficult if you are

What can you do?

We need your prayers! It is the most important thing you can do for the ministry.

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

(James 5:16 NIV)

LTN is committed to spreading the Gospel by Christ's example to "love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:39. To this end, LTN has designed programs with the purpose of helping clients build a relationship of faith in God, regain their dignity and eventually, regain their self-sufficiency. Contact us to learn more about the services and programs.

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not a strong believer yourself.

When the ministry was just an idea and I was unsure of my faith, I was not willing to tell two homeless alcoholic individuals living in wheelchairs in an alley one block from my office about Jesus Christ. I figured if I first served them and became their friend then they might listen. Two years later I had still not taken the step. Finally, after approximately 2.5 years I gave them the message.

The process, as with most everything involving Jesus, starts with you and me. Where are we spending our time, treasure and talent (TTT)? As long as the bulk of your TTT is aimed at earthly things, your faith will be generally weak.

First, get a good bible with all the notes, maps and references

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Get To Know Him

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you can find. If you call (770-572-6992) or e-mail (jchapmanjr01@talkamerica.net) we will provide you a Life Application Study Bible (NIV) in large print for free. Read the bible daily. A quiet time every day is best. The Bible is a rather large assemblage of 66 books & letters written over 1,400-1,500 years. Once a week or month will simply not get to the depth one needs.

Pray daily. HONEST prayer changes your life. Being honest in prayer is difficult initially. Over time we each learn not to fool ourselves. "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9 NIV)

Attend a church weekly that helps you learn & understand the scriptures. We are called to be *in* Christian community. The journey to Jesus and the Lord is an individual one but not designed to occur alone. You are welcome to come to

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Matthew 22:39

Buckhead Church. The church is nondenominational and has excellent teaching. (You can also watch or listen to the teaching on the internet at www.buckheadchurch.org and click on messages.) Find a small group that works on studying the scriptures (once a week) and talks about what the Lord is doing in your life. Ultimately, through the process each individual will find the reason why the Lord created you. A group of individuals or some type of work will be put before you as your place of service.

The immediate answer to the above is that we do not have the time. The statement is false, and evidence that the heart is deceitful above all else. The fact is each one of us has chosen a certain lifestyle. The lifestyle typically includes an array of very earthly things we like. If we put certain of those things down we would have ample time. We simply choose to spend our time in other endeavors (Idols). If each one of us were to be paid huge sums of money for every page of the Bible we had read and understand, how long would it take for you to get a depth of knowledge of the scriptures and the Lord? We would all be experts. Why wait? It is time to be armed.

God bless you,

John Chapman, Jr.