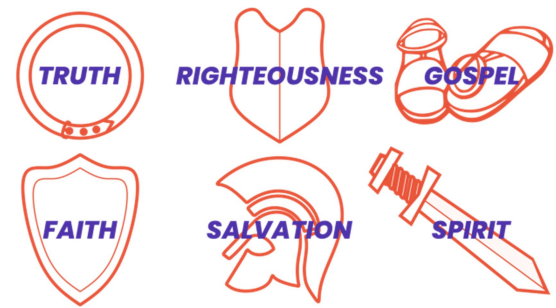


Temptation

(Armour of God)



What is temptation; where does it come from and how do we resist it?

Scripture

Read the following story and take note of anything that stands out to you about temptation.

Matthew 4:1-11 (Jesus is tempted by the devil in the wilderness)

What do we learn about the source and nature of temptation in this story?

What can we learn from Jesus about how to resist temptation?

Story

'One of the largest freshwater turtles is the alligator snapping turtle. Found primarily in the south eastern United States, these massive turtles have been known to weigh close to 250 pounds. They are carnivorous, and while their diet is primarily fish, they have been known to eat almost anything else they can find in the water—even in a few cases small alligators! The alligator snapping turtle relies on a uniquely deceitful method of foraging for fish.

The turtle will lie completely still on the floor of a lake or river with its mouth wide open. At the end of the turtle's tongue is a small, pink, worm-shaped appendage. The turtle wiggles the end of its tongue so that it looks like a worm moving through the water. When a fish comes to eat the worm, the turtle's jaws rapidly close, trapping the fish so that it cannot escape.

Similarly to the snapping turtle's lure, temptation comes in the guise of something desirable, but it always carries destruction with it in the end. If we could see the end result rather than the tempting part, it would be far easier to resist. But Satan knows this, so he cleverly disguises what is deadly in the guise of something pleasurable.'

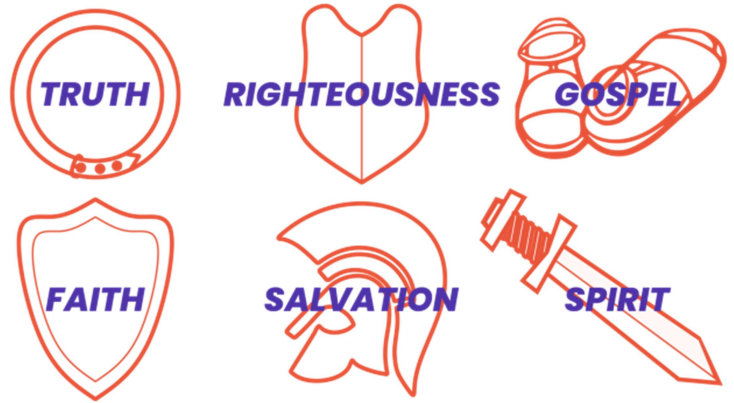
[Ministry127.com, 'The Deceitfulness of Sin']

Like the turtle's tongue, what 'desirable thing' do you feel is being offered to you through recent temptations?

From past times that you have given into this temptation, what is the reality of what you will get compared to what was promised?

Shape

The Armour of God is an image that is used in Scripture to powerfully explain what God has given us to defend against the devil's temptations. You can read about the armour of God in Ephesians 6:10-20, where we are told to 'put on the full armour of God'. This armour includes:



The belt of truth: Knowing the truth of what God is like, who we are, and how the world works brings freedom and stops us from being confused and deceived by the devil.

The breastplate of righteousness: The devil will try and make us feel condemned, guilty and ashamed for the wrongs we have done. Being conscious of God's forgiveness and that he has clothed us in Christ's perfect righteousness (goodness) helps us defend against such attacks.

Shoes of the gospel of peace: More than anything, the devil will try to stop us believing the gospel i.e. trusting the good news through what Jesus Christ has done – through that, and that alone, we have peace with God. Standing on this truth keeps us from being dragged into thinking that we can only have peace through our own effort or good behaviour.

The shield of faith: Sometimes the enemy will come to sow doubt. "Did God really say..." (Genesis 3:1) was the first temptation that humanity ever faced and the devil is still using that line today. Sometimes you just have to hold up your belief in what you know God said and not back down.

The helmet of salvation: Knowing and having the assurance that you are saved and accepted by God solely because of Jesus' work on the cross keeps us safe when the enemy tries to tell us that we've blown it and that God won't accept us anymore.

Sword of the Spirit (which is the Word of God): Just as Jesus used Scripture to defend against the enemy's temptations, so can we. Knowing and declaring scriptural truths and promises can help us escape the attacks of the enemy.

What parts of this armour do you understand and what is still unclear?

Do you have examples when parts of this armour have helped you defend against temptation and spiritual attack?

So What?

In groups of 2-3 people, take some time to consider the following questions:

What specific temptations have you been facing recently?

What lie is inherent in the temptation you are facing? What are you being falsely offered through this temptation? What will you actually get if you give in?

What scriptural truths and promises might you use at this time to fend off attack?

Which part of the Armour of God do you think would most help you to resist this attack?

Spend some time praying for one another, praising God our Defender, and thanking him for each part of the armour he has given to protect us.

Grow Further

Memory Verse:

Ephesians 6: 11-12

Put on the full armour 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.

Other Bible Passages:

- 1 Cor 10:12-13
- 2 Cor 10:3-6
- James 1:13-18
- 1 John 4:4-6

Other resources:

How to Resist Temptation from Satan – Francis Chan –

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_KzU8M3jbs