



## The Spiritual Armor

### Part 5: The Footwear of Peace

The next piece of the spiritual armor that God provides to protect His children from the forces of darkness operating in this world is the footwear. Through this piece God informs us that the quality which will prepare us to stand with surefooted stability against the enemy's unpredictable attacks is a lifestyle of peace, which is possible because of the Gospel (Eph. 6:15). Since this is in the section that describes pieces of the armor that require our taking an active role in "putting them on," this does not refer to the automatic, eternal peace we secure when we are saved from God's wrath through our faith in His Son's atoning death on the Cross (John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; 5:9; 5:1). Instead, this is the inexplicable, supernatural calmness of spirit that God makes available to His children on a daily basis if we are willing to appropriate it by faith (John 14:27; 16:33; Phil. 4:7). It is a profound gift and resource in itself, even apart from its role in protecting us spiritually, as it is able to sustain us through the most difficult and tumultuous situations (Isa. 26:3; Col. 3:15).

The secret to achieving this peace is to believe God's promises that He will *always be with us* and *always love us* (Mat. 28:20; Rom. 8:38-39; Heb. 13:3). If we can live our lives truly grasping this reality, it is the powerful antidote that will effectively quell the anger, fear, and anxiety that can otherwise destroy our peace and put us on slippery ground against an enemy who is poised to take advantage of these times of spiritual weakness to lead us into sin so that we also lose the protection of our critical breastplates of righteousness (Gen. 4:6-7; Eph. 4:26-27; 1 Peter 5:8). Since walking in the reality of God's presence and His love under all circumstances requires significant faith, losing our peace generally means that our shields of faith have slipped as well, making us even more vulnerable.

In order to recover as quickly as possible when this occurs, we must first train our minds to become increasingly vigilant in recognizing when anger, fear, or anxiety has robbed us of peace. If anger is the problem, we must ask ourselves if we have truly been wronged by someone or if someone is failing to live up to our selfish demands. In order to return our hearts to peace, we must forgive those who have genuinely wronged us, remembering that God will take care of bringing justice in the situation (Mark 11:25; Rom. 12:19; Eph. 4:32), or give up our right to have others meet our self-centered demands.

If anxiety or fear robs us of peace, we are most likely facing the situation from a purely human perspective. We must remind ourselves that God is not only with us and perfectly adequate to handle the situation, but He will always do so in a manner consistent with His love for us. In particularly difficult situations, we can make these truths even more concrete by actually visualizing His physical presence alongside us. What a difference that can make to our perspective of the situation—and our peace!

God is able to bring us this peace because He Himself *is* peace (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; Col. 3:5; Heb. 13:20). He carries no fear, anxiety, or unrighteous anger. He shares His own spiritual tranquility with us through the Holy Spirit, who is united with our spirits (1 Cor. 6:17). Therefore, we can only experience this peace if we are living our lives under the leadership of our spirits rather than the flesh (Rom. 8:5-6; 14:17; Gal. 5:22; Col. 3:1-3).

If we are not satisfied with the degree of peace we are living in, we need to examine how strong our faith is in God's love and moment-by-moment presence with us and how consistently we are living in the spirit. Strengthening our faith in God requires growing in our knowledge of who He really is by reading and meditating on His Word (Rom. 10:17; 2 Pet. 1:2) and by personally engaging with Him through prayer and worship. Disciplining ourselves to live in the spirit requires consciously, submissively, and repetitively turning our mental focus to God and the things of His kingdom until living in this place of peace and joy becomes an automatic place of repose for our minds (Isa. 26:3; Rom. 8:5-6; 14:17).