

All was well!

NIV Genesis 3:3-11

3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. **5** “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, **who was with her**, and he ate it. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife **heard the sound of the Lord God** as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

Kingdom Advance - The Armour of God

Ephesians 6:10 to 11

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. **11** Put on the **full armour of God**, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.

2 Corinthians 10:3 to 5

3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. **4** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **5** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Ephesians 6:11 to 13

11 Put on the full armour 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.

Belt of Truth: This represents a commitment to truthfulness and integrity in all aspects of life. It holds the other pieces of armour in place. *Brings freedom not restriction to the soul - John 5:24-27 I tell you the truth – Jesus stated throughout the gospels (opposite John 8: 44 Satan is the father of lies)*

14 Stand firm then, with the **belt of truth buckled** around your waist, with the **breastplate of righteousness**

Breastplate of Righteousness: Symbolises living a life in accordance with God's standards and being morally upright. It guards the heart and vital organs.

(Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it)

At salvation, a “breastplate” is issued to each repentant sinner. It is specially designed by God to protect our heart and soul from evil and deception. – Imputed by God – Justified and given a righteousness not of my own but is now my own.

Psalm 16:2 I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.”

Shoes of Readiness for the Gospel of Peace: This represents a readiness to share the message of peace and salvation through Christ.

15 and with your **feet fitted with the readiness** that comes from the gospel of peace. *(a state of being fully prepared, and confident)*

Amplified Eph 6:15 - and having strapped on YOUR FEET THE GOSPEL OF PEACE IN PREPARATION [to face the enemy with firm-footed stability and the readiness produced by the good news].

New Living Translation Eph 6:15 - For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.

Shield of Faith: This is the unwavering trust and confidence in God, which protects against the attacks and doubts launched by the evil one. *Enemy sows seeds of doubt about Gods word and character ... Hebrews 12:2 He is the author and protector of our faith*

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.

you don't have the shield the back... Why because we are Advancing

Hebrews 11:6 Now faith is about being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see

Romans 4:5 However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

17 Take the **helmet of salvation** and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.

For many of us, we tend to get stuck on negative thinking. For some reason, our brains defer to the negative. According to the National Science Foundation, 80% of our thoughts are negative and 95% of our thoughts are repetitive. On average, we have around 70,000 thoughts go through our waking minds on any given day.

Salvation: *His sacrifice and atonement has reunited us with Christ = Salvation* - Need to protect the way we think!

Helmet of Salvation: Represents the assurance of salvation and the hope of eternal life, guarding the mind from doubt and despair.

We are instructed to put on the whole armour of God and to “take the **helmet of salvation.**” When a soldier suited up for battle, the helmet was the last piece of armour to go on. It was the final act of readiness in preparation for combat. A helmet was vital for survival, protecting the brain, the command station for the rest

of the body. If the head was badly damaged, the rest of the armour would be of little use.

We can discern between spiritual Truth and Spiritual deception

Everything we allow into our minds influences our souls, researcher on neurobiology, specifically how what we see affects our mirror neurons and as thoughts enter the mind, creating neural pathways in our brains, which create DNA proteins in our nervous system, which are then disseminated throughout our bodies and become part of us and, some argue, are in turn passed on to our children in our genetic code.

In other words what we give our attention will shape the person we become. What we think about we become

Anxiety – Philippians 4:6 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

Romans 12: 2 *Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: This signifies the power of scripture in spiritual warfare. It's both a defensive and offensive weapon, providing guidance, truth, and defence against deception. *(Matthew 4:1-11 Jesus in the wilderness – ‘IF’ v’s ‘IT’)*

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. **So this is our offensive weapon - It is the holiness and power of the word of God.**

Hebrew 4:12 **For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

God is Calling us not ... Accusing us (conviction, not condemnation)

Possible discussion questions:

- 1: **Creativity and Condemnation:** how does the serpent manipulate eaves perception of God’s command and what can we learn from this in our own lives when faced with temptation?
- 2: **Clothed & Coward:** what is the significance of Adam and Eve’s attempt to cover their nakedness, and how does it relate to our tendency to hide from our mistakes and weaknesses instead of facing them?
- 3: **Alliance and Acceptance:** how does God’s confrontation with Adam and Eve reflect his desire for a restored relationship with humanity despite their disobedience?
- 4: **Armour and Avenger:** how does the concept of spiritual warfare apply to our lives today, and what practical ways you can apply the “armour of God” described in verses from Ephesians and 2 Corinthians?
- 5: **Kingdom Advance - The Armour of God:** How can we understand and apply the symbolism of each piece of the armour of God in our spiritual lives, especially in the context of protecting ourselves from the enemy’s attacks and deceptions?
- 6: **Calling v’s Accusing:** How does understanding the difference between God’s calling and the enemy’s accusations help us navigate the challenges and temptations we face in our faith journey

We are not trying to get the victory; we are releasing His victory into our own lives and communities - our armour can also be...

Discernment through prayer and reflection
Scripture study
Our own and other’s testimonies
Community and fellowship