

## **Week 2 Suffering to Hope Spiritual Practices: Growing Our Spiritual Roots in Him and in One Another**

**Ephesians 6:13-18** “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. 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 keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”

Spiritual practices instructions: Each day Monday-Saturday of this week, read Ephesians 6:13-18. Pray into each of the pieces of the armor of God, praying for growth of your roots in Him and with one another in this area. Practices 1 and 2 for each day provide a framework to do that, though you can pick something else to do, of course!

**Monday: Meditation on the belt of truth (Ephesians 6:14) that we are girded by God’s truth about:**

**God - He is all powerful, all loving.**

**Ourselves - we are created, loved, redeemed by Him**

**Our world – This world is His; He is redeeming it from evil**

1. Where are my roots weak in regard to the truth about God, myself, and the world? In prayer to God, name any lies you have believed, particularly in regard to area(s) where you have been suffering. Name the truth that should replace that lie. Pray for God to replace that lie with His truth, consider praying into a scripture that speaks that truth.
2. Pray for someone on your heart to grow in knowing God’s truth. Consider speaking an encouraging word of God’s truth to them today (e.g., text, email, send a card).

**Tuesday: Breastplate of righteousness (Ephesians 6:14). We are righteous in Jesus.**

1. What personal condemnation and/or inadequacy have I believed, particularly in regard to any suffering I am experiencing? Confess it in prayer and pray that Jesus’ mercy and righteousness would reign in this place.
2. Pray for someone on your heart who may be facing condemnation/feelings of inadequacy – that they would know Jesus’ righteousness covering them. Particularly pray for anyone who has wronged you, and pray for Jesus’ righteousness to cover that situation. Pray into forgiving this person as you are fully forgiven. If you have wronged someone, consider seeking their forgiveness today.

**Wednesday: Feet wearing the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15). Our purpose as sojourners in a fallen world is to live out the gospel story in our lives and bring the gospel to others, hence bringing glory to God.**

1. In prayer, ask God how in this particular time (particularly if suffering) He may be calling you to live out the gospel story (e.g., in this loss/illness/rejection etc, God is calling me to let go of my anxiety and anger, and trust Him in a deeper way. Where I take up this cross and follow Jesus, even though it feels like death, I can trust that resurrection will come).
2. Pray for someone who needs to hear the gospel, or grow in the gospel in a deeper way. Consider ways this week you might share the gospel with this person.

**Thursday : Shield of faith (Eph 6:16). Our faith, interlocked with others', guards us against evil.**

1. Pray about any 'flaming arrows' from the evil one you are now facing (mind you there are always *seeming* elements of truth to the evil one's schemes). Name before the Lord each of these arrow(s) specifically. Consider what element of faith guards you against that arrow. Proclaim in prayer that you choose to embrace faith in the face of these arrows.
2. Do you see someone else around you facing flaming arrows? Pray for this person's faith to stand strong. Pray for God to give them greater faith. Consider sending an encouraging note, with the goal of fanning their faith into flame.

**Friday: Helmet of salvation (Eph 6:17): Our unique identity is protected in Him and will be saved for eternity.**

1. Before the Lord, consider 1 or 2 ways that you have not grounded your identity in Him. Confess these things to God. Pray that God would continue to build and protect you in being the unique and wonderfully-made person He has created you to be. "For you created me in my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." (Psalm 139).
2. Pray for someone on your heart to grow in their identity in God. Consider sending them a note (text, email, card) reminding them of who they are in Jesus.

**Saturday: Sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17) Our only offensive weapon against evil is His living word.**

1. Pick a scripture to memorize that speaks into the difficulties/suffering you are facing now. Pray into this scripture, and put it up in a visible place so that you can continually be reminded of it and can remember it.
2. Send a scripture to someone who is on your heart and/or who you know is struggling that will be an encouragement them (via text, email, card, etc).