

The struggle is *Real*



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THE STRUGGLE IS REAL

1 Corinthians 9:24-25 — Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Galatians 5:7 — You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?

2 Timothy 4:7 — I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight. — C. S. Lewis

1. We Have a Real Enemy

Ephesians 6:10-11 — Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

The Devil is...

Liar, Accuser, Adversary, Tempter, Destroyer, Deceiver

God is...

Omnipotent = All Powerful

Omniscient = All Knowing

Omnipresent = Everywhere

Jeremiah 10:6 — No one is like you, Lord; you are great, and your name is mighty in power.

2. We are in a Real Battle

Ephesians 6:12 — 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.

2 Corinthians 10:3 — 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.

Galatians 5:19-21 — The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

3. We Fight from Real Victory

Colossians 2:13 — When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

HOW TO FIGHT

1. Build Your Spiritual Strength

1 Corinthians 9:25-26 — Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.

1 Timothy 4:7 — Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.

2. Be Covered in the Full Armor

Ephesians 6:13-17 — 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. ¹⁴ Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵ and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 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. ¹⁷ Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Belt of Truth vs. Liar

Philippians 4:8 — Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Breastplate of Righteousness vs. Accuser

2 Corinthians 5:21 — God made him who had no sin to be sin^[a] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Shoes of Peace vs. Tempter

1 Corinthians 10:13 — No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Shield of Faith vs. Adversary

Isaiah 54:17 — No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the LORD.

Helmet of Salvation vs. Destroyer

Isaiah 26:3 — You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

Sword of the Spirit vs. Deceiver

John 17:17 — Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

The Armor is available to us, but we must choose to put it on.

3. Boldly Advance The Gospel

Ephesians 6:18-20 — 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. ¹⁹ Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

The Armor Defends us, but the Gospel takes ground.

THE STRUGGLE IS REAL:

1. We have a real enemy
2. We are in a real battle
3. We fight from victory

HOW TO FIGHT:

1. Build Your Spiritual Strength
2. Be Covered in the Full Armor
3. Boldly Advance The Gospel