

BE STRONG IN THE LORD

SERIES TO DATE:

God and the Greats / God and his Servant: Studies from Isaiah on the greatness supremacy of God (specifically over the great nations and kings of history)

Just Dare: Studies from Daniel on courage-in-action that is grounded on a conviction of the supremacy of God

NEW SERIES:

Strong in the Lord: Studies of the "armour of God" --- in which we see how exactly to gain from God the courage to dare to live the life of a good and faithful servant of Christ.

Our ongoing struggle:

How do I live the way scripture commands?

- How do I live the way I KNOW I should?
- *How do I "live in a manner worthy of my calling?"*
- We come to church or go to life group week in and week out... we hear "Dare to _____!" and we WANT to... but day to day, week to week, often times we don't measure up, we don't shake that sin, we don't overcome apathy.

Ephesians 6:10-11

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

"Finally" – implies this is the last of a series of thoughts.

What thoughts?

- The whole letter? → certainly, in a sense.
- Verse 4:1 – "I THEREFORE, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the of the calling to which you have been called..."
 - o 4:2 – 16 – Unity in faith in Christ (baptism into one body)
 - o 4:17—32 – The new reality (and new life) that is available in Christ
 - o 5:1 – 21 – Act morally, love others
 - o 5:22 – 33 – Christian marriages (in Christ)
 - o 6:1 – 4 – Christian households (parent and children)
 - o 6:5 – 9 – Slaves and masters (employees?)
- So I would propose that FINALLY (6:10), is his wrapping up how he would describe one lives worthy of their calling (4:1) → by putting "off the old self" and putting "on the new self"

Ephesians 4:20-24

But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

There are several BIG IDEAS here:

1. Only the "new self" can live in a manner worthy of their calling.

Ephesians 4:1,22b,23

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called... put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires,²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds,²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

- The very written direction to live in a manner worthy of your calling in wrapped up with a call to “put on the new self” who you ARE in Christ... that is, be who Christ has declared you to be and died so that you CAN be!

2. “Putting on the new self” is “putting on the full armor of God”

→ “OF GOD” – God’s armor?

¹⁶ He saw that there was no man,
and wondered that there was no one to intercede;
then his own arm brought him salvation,
and his righteousness upheld him.
¹⁷ He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation on his head

3. Each piece of armor represents a doctrine that protects an aspect of our “new life”

The "armour" metaphor is all about how to be strong in the strength of the Lord's might: strong to live for Christ, obeying, for example, all that we are commanded from Ephesians 4:1 forward.

I would like the action of vs. 11 & 13 (" put on the whole armour... take up the whole armour") to be freed from notions of "claiming" and "visualizing" and all other sorts of self-hypnosis-in-the-name-of-the-Lord, and taught as a matter of gaining a correct knowledge of the "truth" about "salvation" and "gospel" and "faith," etc. AND then gaining skill in living in obedience to the whole counsel of God.

The series then is a piece-by-piece explanation of the practical impact of sound theology and consistent obedience, both of which ARE the "the whole armour of God" and so the real means to being "strong in The Lord."

Why is this important?

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ

- Strongholds – almost always (when used metaphorically in scripture) means a deeply entrenched belief.
- “Opinions” and “arguments” raised against the knowledge of Christ.
- This means both INTERNALLY and EXTERNALLY guarding our minds (and the minds of those God has given us, remember chapters 5 and 6 are on marriages and parenting) against LIES that set themselves up against Gods truth!

THEREFORE

The only way for us to have the COURAGE to DARE, or to be successful in our pursuit of righteousness etc... is in the STRENGTH of the LORD... which comes to us not by mystical armor, but by understood biblical truths that change how we think, feel and act.