

**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 40, No. 28, July 15, 2014 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is a weekly Bible Study, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

IN THE STEPS OF JESUS! (1 Peter 2:18-21)

God floods the heart of all those whom He redeems with His love by the indwelling Holy Spirit! (Romans 5:5) ALL Christians are thusly EMPOWERED and therefore called upon to be channels of His love. God's love is not that of fickle feelings and emotions. **God's love is sacrificial action on behalf of even the unworthy, the undeserving, and the unresponsive. God's love is never more powerfully illustrated than when we behold JESUS walking the road to Calvary and laying down His life on the cross for sinners.** NOTE— this article is not a HISTORY LESSON! CHRISTIANS: We are called to Christ-likeness- Romans 8:28-29; We are commissioned to 'walk in the steps' of Jesus- 1 Peter 2:20-24; We are changed into Christ-likeness by BEHOLDING Jesus- 2 Cor. 3:18; Let us go forth being clear channels for the love of God- 1 John 4:7-8.

NOW CERTAINLY, Jesus lived here on earth as the perfect and good servant of His Father; His fellowship with His Father was unhindered; and no one else has ever experiences such JOY and USEFULNESS in the work of the kingdom of God! MAYBE SOME OF US THINK: I WOULD LOVE TO HAVE SUCH A LIFE AND I COULD; AND I WOULD IF IT WERE NOT FOR _____! What or WHO is in your blank?

What/who, by our confession, is keeping us from usefulness and joy in the kingdom of God?) GOOD NEWS— It is the WILL OF GOD for JESUS CHRIST TO BE POWERFULLY SEEN TODAY in and through Christians! **FOR FRESH EMPOWERMENT for overflowing LOVE— BEHOLD JESUS!**

I. JESUS! Every Step He took was leading to Calvary! IT'S NOT FAIR! BEHOLD THE INJUSTICE! — DRINK DEEPLY! BE ASTOUNDED:

1. JESUS was forsaken and betrayed by His own friends. **2.** In His hours of deepest need His disciples slept, then fled; and Peter cried out with curses, 'I do not know this man!' **3.** JESUS had labored tirelessly on behalf of others: Healing them, feeding them, preaching and teaching the way of salvation. Yet in the hour of His trial and crucifixion, no one stood up for Him or with Him. **4.** The Sanhedrin, the governing body of the Jews, broke no less than 15 laws in their arrest and trial of Jesus. Jesus, the Lawgiver, was denied the just principles of the law! **5.** Pilate, representing the Roman Government, knowingly betrayed innocent blood for the sake of personal political expediency. **6.** There was the mocking, the whips, the spitting and the open shame. **7.** Of course, all of this was followed by the rough, wooden cross upon His already bleeding back, as He willingly made His way along the road to Calvary. **8.** On Calvary, JESUS was nailed to the cross— **all this and more for sinners such as you and I. BUT EVEN SO, all of the above pales into the background as on the Cross— JESUS was paying the sin debt for sinners by satisfying the holy wrath of God!**

IN THE MIDST OF ALL THE INJUSTICE AN MISTREATMENT OF JESUS BY MANKIND,

II. Gaze upon JESUS and See: 1. There was no resentment. 2. There were no plans for revenge. 3. He had no bitterness. 4. He held no grudges. 5. There was no self-pity. 6. He never demanded His rights. 7. There was no anger, no depression. **INSTEAD, we find that there was,** 1. Silent Suffering for the sake of others. 2. Meekness, Gentleness, Humility, and Acceptance. 3. Love and Forgiveness. 4. Prayer for those who had betrayed and tormented Him. 5. Abiding trust in His Father! 6. Sweet Submission to the will of His Father! 7. **DEPENDANCE** upon His Father— for He stated twice that without His Father HE COULD DO NOTHING! **The overflow of His moment by moment DEPENDANCE** upon His Father was that He was that He was anointed with the oil of GLADNESS above all others who have ever lived.

CERTAINLY, Jesus lived here on earth as the perfect and good servant of His Father; His fellowship with His Father was unhindered; and no one else has ever experiences such JOY and USEFULNESS in the work of the kingdom of God!

**** O WHAT AMAZING FOOTPRINTS JESUS LEFT— and in them Christians are to walk! ****

In Hebrews 12:2 we are exhorted to be those who are ***“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”**

III. IN STARK CONTRAST the Road of the World looms before us! BEWARE! A MULTITUDE OF VOICES are calling: 1. Live for yourself: Pleasure, fame, fortune... all for self. Glory and Honor for self. 2. Justify self. 3. Defend self. 4. Blame others, slander, gossip. 5. Fill the air waves with Smokescreens. 6. Seek Revenge, Be Bitter or full of Envy and Hate. 7. Refuse to Forgive and to Sacrificially Love. 8. Trust in self and in those who will encourage self. 9. Rebel against God-given Authority. 10. Be a victim.

WHAT ABOUT MY FOOT PRINTS? Each of us must ask the same question— *“ON WHICH ROAD AM I TRAVELING?”*** LET US BEHOLD JESUS AND SEE WHERE HE WOULD HAVE US PLACE OUR FOOT STEPS!**

V. I MUST WALK IN THE STEPS OF JESUS!

1. I MUST walk in the steps of Jesus because that is the Essence of what it means to be a real Christian! We are called to walk in His steps: John 10: 27-28; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6

2. I MUST walk in the steps of Jesus because that is what God commands in His WORD! Rom. 12:19, 21; Matthew 5:44; 1 Peter 2:18-21. Real Christians have the Holy Spirit’s COMPELLING INDWELLING— EMPOWERING us to heed the voice of JESUS!

3. I MUST walk in the Steps of Jesus down the Calvary Road, less **my actions and reactions** to circumstances and people CAUSE me to deny Jesus and Grieve the Holy Spirit; and rob me of a life of joy and amazing

miracles! **Philippians 1-4, written from prison, testifies to a life of joy in spite of people and circumstances!**

4. I MUST walk in the steps of Jesus down the Calvary Road, for God has not authorized me to take His Divine Prerogative! (Romans 12:19-21; Matthew 5:44-47; Romans 12:14-21) God has not called us to focus on the failures of others or to get even or to get revenge or to DIVORCE. He has called us to love, to bless, to pray for, and to do good to even our enemies and to seek reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

Note: Before taking any attitude and/or before taking any action, I must ask: “Will my attitude, words and/or actions glorify Jesus and proclaim that I am AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST, a minister of reconciliation?”

5. I MUST walk in the Steps of Jesus, remembering that God has personally designed my own Calvary Road for His glory and for my good! (Rom. 8:28; Gen. 45:8; 50:19-20) O HAPPY DAY when we rest in the grand sovereignty of what God brings and allows! Such rest brings a song and **PEACE LIKE A RIVER** flooding our souls; and the ‘saving’ of others!

6. I MUST walk down the Calvary Road in the steps of Jesus, less I lose perspective! (Genesis 50:19-20; Philippians 1:12-14) O happy day, when with the apostle Paul I scan back over all the troubles, trials, tribulations, persecutions, injustices, and say, **“ALL THESE THINGS HAPPENED SO AS TO FURTHER THE GOSPEL!”** Whatever it is that got through God’s ‘screen’ has come because above all else, GOD WANTS to further the gospel through you, through me; and He does so as He leads us along *the Calvary Road! It is the road of deny self, taking up my cross daily and following Jesus!*

Reality: A chief way that God extends the gospel to others is **as they see us RESPONDING when life tumbles** in with sorrow, grief, or pain, or persecution, or disappointment, or injustice, etc.!!

7. I MUST walk in the steps of Jesus because LOVE is better than hate! **FORGIVENESS** is better than bitterness! **FAITH** is better than unbelief! **TRUST IN GOD** is better than despair!
SUBMISSION/OBEDIENCE TO GOD is better than rebellion!

8. I MUST down the Calvary Road, in the steps of Jesus because SUCH IS THE PATH where supernatural GRACE is found— where

POWER AND DESIRE to follow Jesus rises up within me **and where** I experience **anointing** from God and 'CUPS RUNNING OVER!' (Ps 23)

VI. IT IS TIME TO GO FORWARD IN THE STEPS OF JESUS. IT IS TIME TO MAKE THE NEXT FORWARD STEPS ALONG THE CALVARY ROAD!

1. Often, the next forward step must be one of repentance! As I repent of my previous- GOING MY OWN WAY, LEANING TO MY OWN UNDERSTANDING, DRINKING IN COUNSEL THAT HAS JUSTIFIED MY FLESH AND CONDEMNED OTHERS— **THEN** Floodgates of MERCY and GRACE will come open! Proverbs 28:13

2. Next, I MUST announce to myself a Proclamation of Reception of my DIVINELY designed Calvary Road! Romans 8:28; 1 Peter 2:19-23

3. FINAL REALITY: Jesus walked the Calvary Road to CALVARY! We get on the Calvary Road at Calvary; and walk in the power of His resurrection, step by step... **Till we get home!**

MERCY and ABOUNDING GRACE TO ALL IN CHRIST!

James Bell / www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES!

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

**** WEDNESDAYS: PRAYER SERVICE at 7:00PM; IN THE CHURCH AUDITORIUM! ****

NOTE: Jody Allen is ministering to young Children, up to about age 10 during Prayer Service. Older children, but not old enough for the Youth Group... will be with their parents in the Prayer Service. YOUTH GROUP: Wednesdays 6-8pm... led by Byron Smith

➔ **NEXT LADIES BIBLE STUDY— Thursday, JULY 17, 11:00AM**, led by Cindy Bell

* **SATURDAY MORNINGS** @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! *

~~~~ **SUNDAY SCHEDULE FOR JULY [20\*], 27**

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1. **9:30am-** Sunday School Bible Study and Small Group Fellowship
2. **10:45am-** Morning Worship / Children's Church
3. **Noon- Covered-dish Fellowship Meal**
4. **1pm- Early Afternoon Service, fellowship hall**

[*JULY 20: 9:30am- Sunday School; 10:45am- Worship— concludes with LORD'S SUPPER. NO FELLOWSHIP MEAL // EVENING HOME GROUPS— same 3 groups; Each group determine location for 7/20 Home Group ... invite additional ones. Can we start another group?]

SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL! Children are like young plants in a garden— while young and tender they must be protected. Southside Christian School works in harmony with the local Church and empowers parents!

<http://www.aceministries.com/curriculum/?content=presentingACE>

The Armor of God

God's will for us

"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **Put on the whole armor of God**, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities**, against **powers**, against the **rulers of the darkness of this age**, against **spiritual hosts of wickedness** in the heavenly places.

"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **withstand** in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...." Ephesians 6:10-18

What is the Armor of God?

God's armor brings victory because it is far more than a protective covering. It is the very life of Jesus Christ Himself. "Put on the armor of light," wrote Paul in his letter to the Romans, "...clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 13:12-14) When you do, He becomes your *hiding place*, and *shelter* in the storm--just as He was to David. Hidden in Him, you can count on His victory, for He not only covers you as a shield, He also fills you with His life.

"I am the vine; you are the branches," said Jesus. "If a man abides in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

Since living in the safety of the armor means oneness with Jesus, we can expect to share His struggles as well as His peace. Remember, God has promised us victory in the midst of trials, not immunity from pain. So **"do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you, but rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ..."** (1 Peter 4:12-13) Christian heroes who have been tortured for their faith continue to testify to the

supernatural strength--even joy--that enables them to endure unthinkable pain.

They affirm with Paul - "that in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers.... will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39) This wonderful truth has become reality to all who believe and follow Jesus. When you put on His armor, His life surrounds you, keeping you safe, close to Himself, and free to be His precious friend and trusted companion. So "put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27) He is your victory!

How do I "put on" God's Armor?

This life in Christ begins with learning, affirming, and trusting in each part of the armor. The first part is truth--God's revelation of all that He is to us, all that He has done for us, and all that He promises to do for us in the days ahead. This enduring truth is written in the Bible, revealed by the Holy Spirit, and realized through Jesus Christ. It cuts through all the world's distortions, deceptions, and compromises. When you study, memorize, live, and follow truth, it enables you to see the world from God's high vantage point. Putting on the first piece of the armor means feeding on truth through daily Bible reading and making it part of yourself.

God's Armor	Know the Truth about...	Affirm key Scriptures
Belt of TRUTH	God	Deut. 4:39; Psalm 23:1; 18:1-3
Breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS	The Righteousness of Jesus in you	Psalm 100:3; Rom. 3:23-24, 6:23; Gal. 2:20-21; Phil. 3:8-10.
Sandals of PEACE	Inner peace and readiness	Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14; John 14:27, 16:33, 20:21.
Shield of FAITH	Living by faith	Rom. 4:18-21; Heb. 11:1; 1 Pet. 1:6-7

Helmet of SALVATION	Salvation through Christ today and forever	Each day: Ps. 16, 23; Heb. 1:3-6 For eternity: 2 Cor. 4:16- 18; 1 Thess. 4:17; 1 John 3:1-3
Sword of the spirit GOD'S WORD	God's Word countering spiritual deception and accusations	Heb. 4:12; Matt. 4:2-11; 1 Pet. 3:15; Ps. 119:110- 112

To put on the "full armor"--and enjoy a daily and eternal love-relationship with Jesus Christ, **thank Him** for what He has shown you in His Word. **Know the Scriptures** behind your prayer so that your words and faith are grounded in the *authority of the Bible*. (Some of those verses are listed in the chart above.) **Then pray** through each piece. You can use the following prayer as an outline:

- **The belt of truth:** Thank you, my Lord, for showing me the *truth* about yourself. Thank you for reminding me that You are the only God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the King of the universe, my Father who loves me, and my Shepherd who leads me. You are my wisdom, my counselor, my hope, and my strength. You are everything I need each day.
- **The breastplate of righteousness:** Thank you for showing me the truth about myself--that on my own I could never be good enough to live in your presence. Thank you for taking *my sins* to the cross and offering me *your righteous life*. Lord, show me any sin that I need to confess right now, so that nothing will hinder me from being filled to overflowing with your Spirit. [Take time for confession] Thank you for forgiving me and for filling me with your *righteous* life.
- **The sandals of peace:** Thank you for the *peace* you give me when I trust and follow you. Show me how to help others find that peace.

- **The shield of faith:** Thank you for helping me have ***faith*** in you. I choose to count on everything you have shown me about yourself--and everything you have promised me in your Word.
- **The helmet of salvation:** Thank you for promising me ***salvation*** both for today's battles and for all eternity.
- **The sword of the spirit, the Word of God:** Thank you for the scriptures you have given me to memorize. Please show me which one(s) you want me to use to cut through deceptions and gain your victory in any battle I may face today.

How can I explain the armor to my children?

In a world where public schools, television, movies, and popular music all offer tempting counterfeits of what God promises His people, there is only one safe place for our children: in the loving arms of the Shepherd. So train your children "in the way they should go" (Proverbs 22:6) and help them to wear the "full armor of God" each day.

First, read Ephesians 6:10-18 together, then review the chart at the end of this section. It shows why the parts of armor will expose and resist all the main lies of New Age and Neo-pagan religions. Memorize scriptures that show the truth about God and His righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation. Explain that these verses are scripture *swords* that counter the main lies of the enemy. Remember, when children know the truth about God, they won't trust popular counterfeits. Knowing the source of their righteousness, they won't believe sanctification without the cross. Knowing God's way to peace and salvation, they won't choose occult paths.

Remind your children that the armor is not like a magic shield they can casually slip on in order to be safe anywhere they want to go. **One day, my youngest son asked if he could see a popular movie with some friends.**

"No. I'd rather you didn't," I told him. "Why not?" he asked. "Because it makes occultism seem both fun and right. Even though your friends know

it's fiction, the story and images leave the impression that you can win in life by using occult rituals to get supernatural power. Not only does the Bible tell us occultism is evil, it also shows how it destroys people." I started to look up Deuteronomy 18:9-13.

"But I'll put on the armor." "It won't help. When you go somewhere that you shouldn't, you disobey God and "take off" the breastplate of righteousness. **You're never safe if you go somewhere Jesus wouldn't want you to go."**

David got the message and stayed home. He knew that by himself he was no match for occult forces. But by wearing the special protection God offers us through His armor, he would be able to stand firm against satan's strategies. To help your children put on the armor, follow the scriptures and outline shown in the previous section. Make sure they *know* the Scriptures behind the prayer so that their words will be based on God's Word. Then pray through the pieces of the armor, simplifying each part to fit the ages of your children.

THE ARMOR OF GOD:

EACH PIECE	CHRISTIAN PARADIGM	GLOBAL PARADIGM
<i>Put on:</i>	<i>Know and affirm:</i>	<i>Recognize and resist:</i>
Belt of TRUTH	His sovereignty, love, wisdom, and holiness. (Deut. 4:39; Ps. 18:1-3)	Pantheistic, monistic, polytheistic gods and goddesses.
Breastplate of RIGHTEOUSNESS	Jesus Christ and His blood, which cleanses us from sin. The cross which frees us from bondage to selfish nature.	The natural goodness, connectedness, and sacredness of all life.
Sandals of PEACE	Our peace through our union and ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ.	Peace through occult practices and union with a cosmic force or nature spirits.
Shield of FAITH	Our continual trust in God, His Word, and His promises.	Trust in Self, inner wisdom, dreams, visions, gods, goddess, cosmic

		force, coincidences, etc.
Helmet of SALVATION	God's promises of daily and eternal salvation in Jesus Christ.	Evolving spiritually by growing in consciousness staying tuned to the cosmic mind.
Sword of the Spirit His WORD	The power of God's Word to counter deception and triumph over spiritual foes.	The power of thoughts, words and affirmations to change reality and direct spiritual forces.

The above article and charts are from

<http://www.crossroad.to/index.html>