

DOES THIS
ARMOR MAKE
ME LOOK FAT?



**BEING PREPARED FOR THE
BATTLE OF YOUR LIFE**

BY LONNIE CRUSE

*Does This Armor
Make Me Look Fat?*

by Lonnie Cruse

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Spiritual "equipment" for the contest of life.

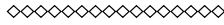
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DEDICATION

For all my sisters in Christ who strive every single day to wear the whole armor of God, no matter how difficult it may be or how it makes them look to the world. May God bless us all in our efforts.

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Thanks to the team at Spiritbuilding for publishing my books. Thanks to Pam Windhorst and Debby Biles who always read my manuscripts for me, before I attempt to have them published and keep me on track. Thanks to my hubby, Don Cruse, for his love, support, and patience. I promise I'll cook more meals just as soon as this book goes to press. Honest.

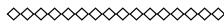


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INTRODUCTION

In today's world, celebrities fight to see who can starve the most and/or look the thinnest while the rest of the world cheers them on. But what are their lives really like? Most of the time, when we get an inside peek, we realize we wouldn't want to trade places with them. Not if we're smart. Would we really want all that stress and frustration? No real privacy, followed about constantly, our every move announced to the world. And the media loves to pounce on the least whisper of a scandal. Nope, not for me, and I hope not for you.

But the truth of the matter is, we're often affected by the world's perception of outward appearances more than inner, whether we admit it or not. We worry about what to wear, what everyone else is wearing, what shoes match which purse, and worst of all, does this outfit make me look fat.

We diet religiously, sometimes right up to the very minute we die, trying to get back to what we weighed as teenagers or young adults who haven't eaten all the meals we have nor faced all the stresses and challenges of life we have. We check the bathroom scales just as religiously and grit our teeth when the arrow moves forward.

And while we're on the subject of bathroom scales, did you know that someone invented one that announces your weight out loud (as if you couldn't read the bad news all by yourself) and tells you how much you've gained since you last weighed? My sister used to own one. You ask me, that little electronic sucker belonged in the nearest garbage dump.

If you are ready to worry less about what the scale says and more about what the Bible says, to focus on the spiritual woman more than the physical, this is the study book for you. And thanks for reading it. We will be studying Ephesians 6:10-18 using the New King James Version.

Lonnie Cruse 2010

DOES THIS ARMOR MAKE ME LOOK FAT?

A STUDY OF EPHESIANS 6:10-18



Chapter One

THE REAL ARMOR

DOES THIS ARMOR MAKE ME LOOK FAT?

Chapter One THE REAL ARMOR

1 Kings 20:11b 'Let not the one who puts on his armor boast like the one who takes it off.'

Before we begin our study of Ephesians 6:10-18 about the spiritual armor of God—what it is, and how we wear it and/or use it—let’s take a look at how real armor was used in the Old Testament and see if we can find lessons that apply to the armor we Christians wear today.

The first use of physical armor mentioned in the Bible is in 1 Samuel 14:1. Jonathan is the son of King Saul, and therefore, second highest in the kingdom, which gives him some privileges. One of those privileges was the company of a worthy young man who toted Jonathan’s armor around for him.

According to Easton’s Bible Dictionary, armorbearer means: an officer selected by kings and generals because of his bravery, not only to bear their armor, but also to stand by them in the time of danger. They were the adjutants of our modern armies (Judges 9:54; 1 Samuel 14:7; 16:21; 31:6).

Keep in mind, real armor isn’t light, nor is it easily toted. In this chapter, Jonathan wants to take a look at the enemy up close. He discusses it with the armorbearer who agrees. They face the enemy, kill about twenty men, and start a ruckus that results in the Philistines scrambling for cover in the woods and Saul and his men scoring a huge victory . . . but only because God helped them.

In today’s spiritual warfare we don’t have the luxury of an armorbearer to carry our armor around for us. Each and every one of us has to wear our own armor. But Jesus assures us in Matthew 11:30, “*For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*” The only time our armor becomes heavy is when we try to do something we know the Bible teaches against or resist obeying something the Bible teaches us we should do. And while no one can carry our armor for us, our fellow soldiers in Christ can and should stand by us in time of danger, fully armored and prepared to help.

1 Samuel 17:4-7 - And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span. He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with

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*a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze. And he had bronze **armor** on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. Now the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead weighed six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him.*

Wow, impressive description of Goliath's armor, isn't it? I wonder how he found a shield bearer strong enough to carry his shield. Saul and his men were certainly impressed with the giant, to the point of sitting under a tree, waiting for someone or something to come along and rescue them. But this particular armor didn't frighten young David. His trust was in God, not in Goliath's armor. Where is our trust?

*1 Samuel 17:38-39 - So Saul clothed David with his **armor**, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. David fastened his sword to his **armor** and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. And David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested them." So David took them off.*

Later on, in 1 Samuel 18:4, *And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his **armor**, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.*

David couldn't even walk easily in Saul's armor much less wage battle in it. It wasn't made for him. Apparently Jonathan and David were nearer in size. David was able to wear both Jonathan's clothes and his armor. Friends of comparable size often share personal items like clothing, but our spiritual armor cannot be lent to someone else. We must each forge our own armor to wear, not borrow it. Another Christian's armor will not fit us. It was not made for us. The faithfulness of a parent, spouse, or child will never count as faithfulness for us nor become our armor, protecting us in a spiritual battle.

*1 Samuel 31:9-10 - And they cut off his head and stripped off his **armor**, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines, to proclaim it in the temple of their idols and among the people. Then they put his **armor** in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan. (See also 1 Chronicles 9:10)*

When Saul stopped trusting and obeying God, his spiritual and physical armor stopped protecting him. When he died, his armor was placed in the temple

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of a Philistine idol as a means of the enemy thumbing their noses at him. We can't afford to allow our armor to become useless . . . ever!

*2 Samuel 2:21 - And Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and lay hold on one of the young men and take his **armor** for yourself." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him.*

Abner was commander of Saul's army and as such was trying to appoint one of Saul's surviving relatives to be king over Israel. An early form of job security? Most likely, because if David became king, Abner would obviously be fired, but if Abner could appoint the new king from among Saul's relatives, his job would be secure.

But God had designated David to be king in Saul's place. Asahel, one of David's men, went after Abner. Abner warned him to turn aside and take up armor from one of the young men. In other words, go somewhere else and pick a fight and leave me be. Asahel refused, and he died. Asahel was in the right, but he hadn't worn armor to protect himself. Let's not be caught in a life or death battle without our spiritual armor.

*2 Samuel 18:15 - And ten young men who bore Joab's **armor** surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him.* If you read verse 14 you will see that Joab had already thrust three spears into Absalom's heart. Talk about overkill! These armorbearers were only following their leader, but they were going against the king's direct orders. Just because we have on our spiritual armor doesn't mean we can't be led astray by someone else.

*2 Samuel 20:8 - When they were at the large stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came before them. Now Joab was dressed in battle **armor**; on it was a belt with a sword fastened in its sheath at his hips; and as he was going forward, it fell out.*

How embarrassing for Joab, having part of his armor fall off. Or was it? Read the next few verses and we discover that the sword was in Joab's hand, but hidden, and Joab struck and killed Amasa. As we will learn later in our study, our spiritual sword, a very important part of our armor, is the word of God. May we never try to use that sword to teach error or lead anyone astray.

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1 Kings 10:24-25 - *Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, **armor**, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year. (See also 2 Chronicles 9:24)*

Part of King Solomon's enormous riches came in the form of gifts, including armor and gold, which he made into shields.

1 Kings 14:26 - *And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made.*

The "he" in that Scripture is Shishak, king of Egypt. Solomon had taken off the strong spiritual armor he wore early in his reign in order to worship idols. God took ten tribes away from Solomon's son and Rehoboam also lost much of the riches his father had gathered. Rehoboam apparently never put on any spiritual armor. I am speculating here: was Rehoboam's lack of faith, his decision to follow the advice of the young men rather than consulting God, caused in part by the later examples set by his father?

1 Kings 10:25 - *So the king of Israel answered and said, "Tell him, 'Let not the one who puts on his **armor** boast like the one who takes it off.'"*

This is one of my favorite Scriptures, even though it was said by the most wicked king ever, King Ahab. It's still a good lesson for us today. King Ben-Hadad of Syria decided he wanted all that Ahab owned, so he gathered his men up, warning Ahab that he was on his way to collect. But it wasn't in God's plan for Ben-Hadad to be the one to overthrow Ahab, nor would Ahab's armor fail him just yet. The lesson for us today is in 1 Corinthians 10:12, *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.* 'Nuff said.

Did I mention that King Ahab was wicked and one day his armor would fail? 1 Kings 22:34, *Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his **armor**. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded."* (See also 2 Chronicles 18:33)

Have you ever tried to shoot at a target, one that had a big bull's eye drawn in red in the exact center? How easy was it for you to hit any part of that target?

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Right. It's that difficult for me, too. And what are the odds of someone drawing a bow at random, firing off an arrow, and hitting the king (who was likely surrounded by dozens of his men) **between** the joints of his armor and killing him? Boggles the mind, unless you factor in God and His plan for Ahab. If King Ahab had worn the proper spiritual armor, he probably would have survived.

Let's take a look at another king who trusted in his men and their armor, King Uzziah. 2 Chronicles 26:14-16, *Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, body **armor**, bows, and slings to cast stones. And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong. But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.*

The strongest armor and weapons are no help when one leaves God out of the preparations. But Nehemiah and Ezra were far wiser than Uzziah. Nehemiah 4:16-20, *So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore **armor**; and the leaders were behind all the house of Judah. Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me. Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, "The work is great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another on the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us." These warriors knew better than to trust only in physical weapons, including armor. They trusted in God and in His armor.*

Isaiah warns the people about trusting in physical armor in Isaiah 22:8, *He removed the protection of Judah. You looked in that day to the **armor** of the House of the Forest. And he tells them why their armor failed in verse 11b, But you did not look to its Maker, Nor did you have respect for Him who fashioned it long ago.*

Isaiah 45:1 - *"Thus says the LORD to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I have held to subdue nations before him And **loose the armor** of kings, to open before him the double doors, so that the gates will not be shut:*

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Did you get that? God loosens the armor of kings, meaning He caused the armor to fail of those who did not obey. And he did the opposite for those who did obey. We want our armor nice and tight and strong.

Speaking about Babylon God says in Jeremiah 51:3, *Against her let the archer bend his bow, And lift himself up against her in his **armor**. Do not spare her young men; Utterly destroy all her army.* Scary!

Though the armor mentioned in the Old Testament is physical, used in real battles, still we can learn important lessons from how the users fared in battle, depending on how strong or weak their spiritual armor was.

Moving into the New Testament, let's look at what Jesus says about armor in Luke 11:21-22, *"When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his **armor** in which he trusted, and divides his spoils."*

We know we have an enemy who wants to divide our spoils. We can't let him.

Paul warns in Romans 13:12, *The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the **armor** of light.*

Paul gives us an example from his life that we can follow in 2 Corinthians 6:7, *But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the **armor** of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor; by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

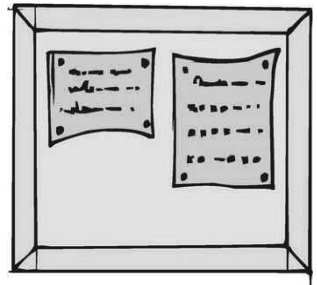
Which brings us to the last Bible Scripture about the armor of God which is found in Ephesians chapter six.

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Questions for Chapter One:

1. Under what circumstances did physical armor help the wearers in the Old Testament? Was it the armor alone or something else?
2. If you can't wear someone else's armor for them, how can you help them keep their armor strong?
3. Why didn't David need armor in order to face Goliath?
4. Does size really matter in a battle, particularly a spiritual battle? Why or why not?
5. Did you learn anything about the strengths and weaknesses of the Old Testament soldiers that you can apply to your life today? If so, what did you learn?

Suggestions: If you don't have one already, why not create or buy a small bulletin board where you can place Scriptures or pictures as visual reminders to help keep your faith strong? You could hang your new Armor Bulletin Board near a desk, in the kitchen, or anywhere you're likely to see it often. (If a bulletin board is simply not feasible, how about an Armor Journal with blank pages to tuck pictures and Scripture cards into?) As a reminder of this first lesson, how about placing a small picture of real armor on it and a 3 X 5 index card with Ephesians 6:10-18 copied onto it?



If you are studying this book on your own, consider asking a friend to study it with you. Sharing studies or Scriptures is a great way to strengthen our armor, and our friendships!