

Ephesians 6:14 by Wayne Barber

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Ephesians 6:14: SPIRITUAL WARFARE, PART 3

by Dr. Wayne Barber

I want us to look at the armored threads of the garment. You see, the garment is our armor. Where are the armored threads to the lifestyle that we now live as believers? Paul begins in Ephesians 6:14. I am skipping Ephesians 6:12-13 (click message), but I am coming back. We are going to look at those two verses during the last part of this series. Why do we need to be armed like we are armed? Since we have just said, "Put on the whole armor of God," let's look and see what the whole armor of God is. What is the full armor of God?

Beginning in Ephesians 6:14, we are going to see two things. First of all he says,

Stand firm (2PAAM) therefore, HAVING GIRDED (AMPMPN) YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH & HAVING PUT ON (AMPMPN) THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

We need to start by understanding what the word **TRUTH** is. It is *aletheia*. It is used several times in the book of Ephesians. Let me give you the basic understanding of that word. The basic, simple understanding of that word is a manifestation of a hidden reality. When you go into a courtroom and you are going to be a witness in a trial, they say,

"Raise your right hand. Do you swear that you will tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?"

You say, "I do" and you sit down. What are they saying by using the term "truth"? They are asking,

"Are you willing to come into this courtroom and manifest something that is hidden to us that only you know so that you will bear evidence to that?"

You will manifest a hidden reality. That is what the word "truth" means. It is something that is manifested of a hidden reality.

In the book of Ephesians we find out what we are talking about. There are many things that you could say are true. If a pilot goes to school and learns how to fly a plane, what he has learned is true. It is the true way to fly a plane. When I get on a plane and he is flying it, I am not so much worried about whether or not he is saved. I am worried about whether or not he knows the true way to fly that plane and to land it. That is what I am concerned with. Yes, I want him to know my Christ, but I will be honest with you, in the midst of a storm, I am more interested in whether he knows how to fly the plane. Now a lot of things in life can be said to be true. But what we are seeing in Ephesians is the essence of all truth, The Truth. You see, we are to be affected by what truth really is, and Ephesians tells us what it is.

First of all, it is what God has done. In [Ephesians 1:13](#) (click message) it is what God has done. [Ephesians 1:13](#) says,

Ephesians 1:13: In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation --having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

The word "[TRUTH](#)" there is associated with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now what is that? Well, it is not only what He has said but what He has done. The gospel is the good news of what Jesus Christ did for you and me. What did Jesus do? He manifested the very essence of the love of God, a hidden reality that has now been brought forth and manifested by the Lord Jesus Christ. What we know as the gospel is the essence of what truth is all about. It is what God has done. It is what God has said. That is the source of all truth. Do you want to know what real truth, eternal truth is? Go back to its source. Its source is God Himself.

So, when we are to have our loins girded about with the belt of truth, part of it refers to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, what God has done and what God has said. In Ephesians 4:21 we see the source of it very clearly. It is who God is truth:

" if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught (5681) in Him, just as truth is in Jesus "

John said God is truth, but truth is also in Him. If you want the source of truth, it is God Himself. God has manifested who He is. The hidden reality is that God is truth. It has been made manifested by the Lord Jesus Christ. His gospel is what we call the truth.

Look at Ephesians 4:24. (click message) This is one of the main armored threads of the garment of the new man:

"and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

The very essence, the very "thread" that I have to have (Ed note: referring to the "thread" the garment I put on) is this truth. I've got to be influenced by it. It is a part of the new man. It is Christ being who He is in my life.

Ephesians 4:25 says,

"Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another"

This truth that we are talking about is made manifest by the way we speak and by the way that we live.

In Ephesians 5:9, (click message) speaking of truth again, it says,

"for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth"

Therefore it is the fruit of the light. Truth is everything God is. It is what God has done. It is what God has said. It is everything related to God. If you want to find the source of all truth, go back to God.

We then are to gird our loins with the belt of truth. We see that truth then is pure. There is no deception in it. It is something that manifests a hidden reality. To be clothed with truth, as we are talking about in chapter 6, means to be sincerely committed to truth. In other words, I am totally sold out to who God is. I am totally sold out to what God has done. I am totally sold out to what God has said. I am yielded to Him. It is the truth, and I am now completely surrendered to Him.

TO BE CLOTHED WITH TRUTH

...means to be sincerely committed to truth

...I am totally sold out to who God is

...to what God has done

...to what God has said.

Paul says,

"HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH"

(Ed note: Click picture of belt for a description).

The aorist middle participle is used there. Here is what it means. It means I can't put it on for you. A lot of people come to our church, and they feel like when they walk in the door, everybody is just going to love Jesus. The problem is, you can preach the truth but an individual has to make up his own mind as to whether or not to adhere to that truth. Do you understand what I am saying? I can't make it happen. You can't make it happen with me. It is a choice that we make constantly, constantly choosing to be affected, to be totally committed to that which God says, to what He is, and that which He has done. To be girded with truth means that I am sincerely, totally, wholly committed to truth. Obviously that involves God's Word. Paul says, "Having girded your loins with truth, you must choose to allow truth to influence your life." You say,

"Where are you going with all this? Why is it armor? Why is it so important in warfare?"

Listen, we live in a darkened world. Do you realize that we live in a deceptive world? The Bible says the devil deceives the whole world. It is in the present tense. He is constantly deceiving the whole world. This whole world is under the deception of darkness. Now we have been made light in the midst of that darkness. That is what Ephesians has taught us. If we are going to stand firm and wear the garment, part of that garment has a thread and it is armored. That armored thread is that we are totally committed to truth, who God is, what God has said and what God has done.

THE TRUTH

To be girded with truth means that I am sincerely, totally, wholly committed to truth...
Having girded your loins with truth, you must choose to allow truth to influence your life.

Loins (Greek = Oshphus) (click word study) refers to the lower back. Now I don't know if you understand what Paul is saying here but the analogy is beautiful. If you don't know it yet, you are not old enough to find out that your lower back is what really helps you to stand. If you have trouble in your lower back, friend, you are going to start bending and bowing and falling. Years ago I bought a little car to save gas. One day I came to the church, got out of the car and when I did, I swung my body the wrong way. Something went out in my lower back and I fell on my hands and knees. I could not get up. I could not stand. Something happened in my lower back that brought me down. The word refers to the five lower vertebra of the back. The Apostle Paul is identifying a Roman soldier. They wore big wide belts. They carried their weapons on it. But also it would protect their abdomen and lower back. When they went into combat, they were hand to hand and face to face. They were constantly digging in and standing up. Something had to gird them. Something had to strengthen them. The apostle Paul says, "Listen, you are in a dark world. You are in a deceived world. When you get up on Monday morning and walk out you face it." Even on Sundays folks, we face it right in the church. It is brought in. It is everywhere. It is all around us. People who are not surrendered to Jesus Christ and to His Word don't understand how sincerely wrong they can be because the mind is the key. Someone asked me, "Do you mean if you don't wear that belt, the whole garment falls off?" I am not sure we can biblically say that, but that is pretty good to remember. If you don't have the belt of truth on, forget the rest of the armor. Truth means I am totally sold out, loving who God is, what God has said. I am not going to listen to what the world says. I am going to listen to what God says. Now this is an armored thread in that garment. It protects me because the one thing the devil wants to do is to deceive my life.

What we don't understand is, if we are not putting the Word of God into our minds, balancing out the error and deception we are being pounded with every day, we already are misled and don't know it. This is the thing. I feel sometimes that I am out in a field by myself trying to shout to people. Listen, just because you think it doesn't make it right. Examine it. Look at what God says. Folks, we are living in an upside down world and only the Word can put it right side up.

Now Paul is not specifically talking about just the Word. There is no definite article. But he is talking about truth and all of its essence—who God is, what God has done, what God has said. It is all wrapped up in that. Friend, if I am not going to

be surrendered, if I am going to do stupid things, fill my mind with things of the world, then what happens next is my own fault. I wake up with the most negative, critical and discouraged feeling that just overwhelms me. Have you ever done that? I walk around thinking, "What is wrong?" What happens is, you start being suspicious. You start being critical. You start being bitter. Why? This is where we live every day folks. Now listen to what I am saying. The way you are thinking right now is determined by some standard in your life. If it is not the standard of truth, you have already lost your garment, you are already led astray and you don't even know it. That is what Paul is saying. It is urgent. The Word has to be in your life.

Folks, listen, they are telling us on the news that we are not going to have enough room for everybody in the world in a few years. I was watching *CNN* the other night and they said Social Security is going to go bankrupt. Who cares! God is not bankrupt! What does God say compared to what the world is saying? We talk about truth, and we will defend truth, but how many people are living in it? Folks, until you are adhering to it, you have no strength. No wonder you have grown weak in the back. No wonder you are trying to cower down. No wonder you have been knocked down. Only truth can gird your loins and cause you to be able to stand.

Jesus said the devil is a liar and there is no ounce of truth in him. If I can't do anything else in this series to convince you of anything, let me convince you of one thing. It is not a power struggle. If you put Satan up next to Jesus, I am telling you folks, he doesn't even show up on the scale. But where his power comes in is his power to deceive and what he is doing is deceiving us if we are not living according to the Word of God. It scares me how much deception is already in my mind because I have not examined everything by the counsel of the Word of God.

Now this week, when you are going through some bad times, examine your moods. Examine what you are going through. Examine your critical spirit. Examine your sarcastic attitude. Examine it. Where is it coming from? Something is a standard that is promoting the behavior in your life. Somebody said to me the other day, "You had better behave." I said, "Hey, everybody behaves. But how you behave depends on the standard you adhere to." And the apostle Paul said if you want to stand against the wiles of the devil, you had better adhere to God's Word and nothing else. I don't care how sincere it sounds. I don't care how reasonable it is, in God's reasoning, man's reasoning falls to the sideline. Two plus two equals four to us. Jesus said, "Give me some fish and some loaves and I will feed the 5,000." So you see, you've got to understand what does God say. For years I have been trying to say that. Stick to what God says. I don't care what works. What does God say? And the more I am willing and the more you are willing to adhere to that, our loins girded with truth, not only the truth of the Word, but the truth of who God is, the truth of what He has done. Listen, the gospel means the good news. Why do you think it is such truth? It is good news. God loves us. Respond to that love. Live in that love and watch the difference in your lifestyle. You see, that is the armored thread that runs through the fabric of the brand new lifestyle. Well, when that is on, the rest of the garment will be on. You can't put one on at a time.

Watch what it says in the same verse:

"HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ."

Now what is righteousness? **RIGHTEOUSNESS** is anything that conforms to a standard. Something is righteous if it conforms to a right standard. The world has its standard, and when people try to conform to that standard, they call it righteousness. It is deeds. It is what you do. In Isaiah God said our righteousness, conforming to the standard of man, is filthy rags in His eyes. So when you determine righteousness, you've got to find the standard. The standard is the truth and the truth is God. When you go back to the truth, then He determines the standard. When we start living lives, conforming to His rights over us and to His standards, then righteousness results. Righteousness is not what I do for God. **RIGHTEOUSNESS** is a result of my surrender to Him and my adherence to His truth. It is the deeds that come from that. Regardless of what they are, they come out with His touch upon them. That is what righteousness is. Now, one affects the other. Adhering to truth affects the breastplate of righteousness. The term "BREASTPLATE" there is the term that was used of a Roman soldier. He would wear a breastplate of metal that would cover him from the shoulders down to his loins. It covered the vital organs. Paul is saying,

"It is like that Roman soldier. He wouldn't go into battle without his loins girded. But secondly, he wouldn't go into battle without that breastplate on, because that breastplate is what protects the vital things of his life." (Ed note: The man who lacks integrity can offer no successful defence to the foe; the dishonest man is vulnerable at every point.)

Folks, when we live righteously, which refers to the conduct of a believer, their speaking or living that comes as a result from his adherence to truth, which is who God is, what God is saying and what God has done, that becomes a breastplate to protect our motives, to protect our heart, to protect all that is valuable about us as we stand in the spiritual war zone that we live in every day of our life. In this battle with the trickery of Satan, we need to make sure that we have our loins girded about with truth. If we do then we will have on the breastplate of righteousness.

So many believers have fallen into the trap of Satan. If you want to know where warfare starts, it is the battlefield of your mind. That is your battlefield. Proverbs says, "As a man thinks so is he."

In Romans 12:2 Paul commands us...

do not be conformed (stop this - implying they were being conformed) to this world (stop copying the behavior and customs of the world), but **be transformed** (continually be changed) by the renewing (the total renovation) of your mind, that you may prove (after examination approve a thing worthy or genuine) what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (See note Ro 12:2)

Rebuild it with what God says. Adhere to Him. Adhere to His truth. As a result, righteousness will flow out. It is like a Roman soldier protecting his vital parts because it becomes like a shield to protect your heart and to protect all that is valuable in the Christian walk.

Diana is such a good wife to me. She is everything that I am not, thank God. She has really been a help to me. She was going to a wedding shower, and she said, "Wayne, everybody is buying new dresses and everything. I don't have that. What about me wearing this? Could I wear this?" She pulled out something that I thought really looked nice and it looked comfortable. I said, "I'll tell you what. You will be the envy of the whole group. Every one of them will be sitting there sweating and trying to impress everybody but you will just be comfortable and cool."

You know, I got to thinking about it after she left. That is a good quality. She didn't want to be there and be out of place. That is important, folks. When you get into the Christian community, you're out of place if you have the wrong garment on. When we walk out of church we don't just represent our church. They are all going to burn one day. The building is going to burn. We represent the living Lord Jesus Christ. The way we honor who He is and what He says has to do with the motivation in our heart of never wanting to bring attention to ourselves, but only wanting to bring attention to Him. You see the new garment is Jesus being Jesus in our life. When I honor His truth, the armor against the devil is not me and does not draw attention to me. It is Jesus who draws attention to Him.

Friend, if you want to frustrate the devil, put on the garment.

Love His Word, love Jesus and you are not going to give the devil an opportunity as Ephesians 4:27 told us.

Roman Soldier's Belt (click figure to enlarge) or "cingulum militare" (soldier's belt) was not the most noticeable piece of the armor but was a soldier's badge of office, worn with the tunic at all times and formed the central piece of his armor holding all the rest securely in place. The belt was broad and composed of sturdy leather. From it hung an overlapping skirt of leather straps almost like an "apron" on which were decorative rivets. Also from the belt hung specialized hooks and holders on which to secure the scabbard that contained the dagger ("pugio"), the quiver which held lances, and an apparatus on which to rest the large battle shield. Also, on the belt were clips with which to hold the breastplate in its proper place. Supplies of bread, oil and water were also on the belt.

Roman soldiers wore at least one of 3 belts or girdles:

- (1) The breech-like leather apron worn to protect the lower abdomen;
- (2) the sword-belt which was buckled on together with the sword as the decisive step in the process of preparing one's self for battle
- (3) the special belt or sash designating an officer or high official.

Loin ([3751](#)) (osphus) or "hip" (as used in classic Greek according to the TDNT) refers literally to the general area of the body between the ribs and the thighs, the midsection between the upper and lower body that includes the hips, the small of the back, the waist, and the reproductive organs. Jews considered osphus as the place of the reproductive organs and so we find the phrases "to go forth from someone's loins" equated with "to be descendant". Finally, In the NT girded loins signified that a man was ready for service or heavy battle. Osphus was used figuratively to describe a state of alertness or readiness.

Here are all the NT uses of osphus -- Matt. 3:4; Mk. 1:6; Lk. 12:35; Acts 2:30; Eph. 6:14; Heb. 7:5, 10; 1 Pet. 1:13

Here are the 67 uses in the Septuagint (LXX) - Gen. 35:11; 37:34; Exod. 12:11; 28:42; Lev. 3:9; 7:3; 8:25; 9:19; Deut. 33:11;

2 Sam. 20:8; 1 Ki. 2:5; 12:10, 24; 18:46; 20:31f; 2 Ki. 1:8; 4:29; 9:1; 2 Chr. 6:9; 10:10; Neh. 4:18; Job 12:18; 38:3; 40:7, 16; Prov. 31:17; Isa. 5:27; 11:5; 15:4; 20:2; 21:3; 32:11; Jer. 1:17; 13:1f, 4, 11; 30:6; 48:37; Ezek. 1:27; 8:2; 9:2f, 11; 21:6; 23:15; 24:17; 29:7; 44:18; 47:4; Dan. 5:6; 10:5; Amos 8:10; Nah. 2:1, 10;

Girding the loins was a symbolic way of saying that one was standing firm or exercising self-control. The picture derived from the fact that Orientals would often tuck their long flowing robes in their belt around their loins, with a view to greater mobility for work, for travel, for battle etc. Thus girded one would thus be enabled to move unimpeded and be less likely to be hindered or tripped.

The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT) notes that in the Septuagint (Lxx = Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) *osphus*...

"is a common figure of speech for "power," Deut 33:11 ("LORD...shatter the loins of those who rise up against" Israel); Daniel 5:6 ("Then the king's face grew pale, and his thoughts alarmed him; and his hip joints went slack, and his knees began knocking together")

One of the most famous illustrations of this custom is found in Exodus where Moses records God's instructions to Israel on the night of the Passover...

"Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins (*Lxx* = *osphus*) girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste-- it is the LORD'S Passover." (Exodus 12:11)

In a description of the Messiah's readiness for conflict (which Paul quotes in his exhortation to the Christian "soldier" in Ephesians 6:14), Isaiah records that righteousness and faithfulness are His preparation, declaring that...

"righteousness will be the belt about His loins (*Lxx* = *osphus*), and faithfulness the belt about His waist." (Isaiah 11:5)

In Ephesians 6:14 believers are to gird their loins with God's truth including His manifold promises which reminds one of C H Spurgeon's comment regarding the physical (and spiritual) warfare Joshua was about to encounter in the promised land. Spurgeon quipped that Joshua...

"was not to use (God's) promise as a couch upon which his indolence might luxuriate, but as a girdle wherewith to gird up his loins for future activity" Or as Warren Wiersbe put it "God's promises are prods, not pillows!"

Warren Wiersbe writes that...

"The loins are the place of action, mobility, and direction. A soldier with a broken hip would not be worth very much! Unless we are motivated and directed by truth, we will be defeated by the enemy. If we permit any deception to enter our lives, we have weakened our position and cannot fight the battle victoriously." (The strategy of Satan: How to detect and defeat him. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers)

Expositor's commenting use of *osphus* in Ephesians 6:14 in the phrase "having girded your loins with truth" writes that...

"First in the list of these articles of equipment is mentioned the girdle. Appropriately so; for the soldier might be furnished with every other part of his equipment, and yet, wanting the girdle, would be neither fully accoutered nor securely armed. His belt was no mere adornment of the soldier, but an essential part of his equipment. Passing round the loins and by the end of the breastplate (in later times supporting the sword), it was of especial use in keeping other parts in place, and in securing the proper soldierly attitude and freedom of movement."

Marvin Vincent has the following note on *osphus* writing that...

"The loins (*osphus*) encircled by the girdle form the central point of the physical system. Hence, in Scripture, the loins are described as the seat of power. "To smite through the loins" is to strike a fatal blow. "To lay affliction upon the loins" is to afflict heavily. Here was the point of junction for the main pieces of the body-armor, so that the girdle formed the common bond of the whole. Truth gives unity to the different virtues, and determinateness and consistency to character. All the virtues are exercised within the sphere of truth." (Vincent, M. R. Word Studies in the New Testament. Vol. 3, Page 1-408)

Vine writes that *osphus* in Ephesians 6:14 is used metaphorically and that the girding of one's loins with truth refers to...

bracing up oneself so as to maintain perfect sincerity and reality as the counteractive in Christian character against hypocrisy and falsehood. (Vine, W., Vine's Expository dictionary of Old and New Testament words)

Osphus is used in the following NT passages:

[Matthew 3:4](#) Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair, and a leather belt about his waist (osphus); and his food was locusts and wild honey.

[Mark 1:6](#) And John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist (osphus), and his diet was locusts and wild honey.

[Luke 12:35](#) Be dressed in readiness (literally = "Let your loins be girded"), and keep your lamps alight." (both metaphors picture a disciple as one living in constant expectancy of the Lord's return).

[Acts 2:30](#) "And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants (literally "the fruit of his loins" where "loins" = osphus); upon his throne,

[Ephesians 6:14](#) (note) Stand firm therefore, having girded (verb in the middle voice is "reflexive" and means the Christian must gird *himself* or *herself* with the truth) your loins (osphus) with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

[Hebrews 7:5](#) (note) And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended (literally come out of the loins) from Abraham...10 for he (Levi) was still in the loins (osphus) of his father when Melchizedek met him.

[1Peter 1:13](#) (note) Therefore, gird your minds for action (literally "having girded up the loins [osphus] of your mind" = Pull your mind together and have the right mental attitude in view of our Lord's return for when you center your thoughts on His return and live accordingly, you escape the many worldly things that would encumber your mind and hinder your spiritual progress), keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought (the tense is the vivid present—"is being brought unto you"—as if to make the future event immediately real) to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Kenneth Wuest has an excellent practical comment on girding one's mind for action writing that...

"It is not physical exertion that Peter has in mind here, but mental. If the purpose of girding up the clothing was to put out of the way that which would impede the physical progress of an individual, the girding up of the loins of the mind would be the putting out of the mind all that would impede the free action of the mind in connection with the onward progress of the Christian experience, things such as worry, fear, jealousy, hate, unforgiveness, impurity. These things harbored in the mind prevent the Holy Spirit from using the mental faculties of the Christian in the most efficient manner, and thus from causing that believer to grow in the Christian life and make progress in his salvation. The word "to gird up" is in the aorist tense which refers to a past once-for-all act. Bringing this oriental expression over to the occidental manner of thinking, enables us to translate, "Wherefore, having put out of the way, once for all, everything that would impede the free action of your mind." Peter treats this as a God-expected obligation on the part of the believer. In 1Pe 1:3 (note) we learned that as the believer definitely subjected himself to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, He would produce in his life through the Word, that Christian optimism that always looks for the best and not for the worst, that always sees the silver lining on every cloud. By the power of the same Holy Spirit, he is able to exert his will in putting out of his mind those things that would impede its free action. Thus, the Christian has the privilege of enjoying the wholesome mental atmosphere called "Christian optimism and a care-free mind," not a mind devoid of an appreciation of the seriousness of life and its responsibilities, but a mind not crippled and frozen by worry, fear, and their related mental attitudes. Living in this blessed mental state, the believer is ready and able to obey the exhortations to which the apostle now addresses himself." (Wuest, K. S. Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)