

Passive Aggressive

Two Views of the Armor of God from Ephesians 6:10-18

God's original:

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 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. 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. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 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.” (Ephesians 6:10-18 NIV)

This is a very familiar passage of scripture. Paul uses an allegory based on an image that is very familiar to his readers, a Roman soldier. Read the above scriptures and then read the two alternative perspectives below. At the end there are some questions and a challenge for you.

The Passive Perspective:

Don't worry, relax. God has everything under control and what you do or don't do doesn't matter. Get comfortable. Don't worry. If Satan is real, he doesn't care about you. Don't do anything that might catch his attention and he'll leave you alone. There are always people who want to fight. Avoid them and their causes. Live a quiet life that conforms to everyone around you and life will not be a struggle. Get comfortable. You can deal with things as they happen. Go with the flow and take life as it comes. Trying to prepare for what might happen is a waste of effort. There is no absolute truth, so pick the truth that fits your lifestyle. If your old “truth” belt no longer fits, get a new one. Better yet, get a nice pair of sweat pants with a roomy elastic waistband. If you're hot, go grab a tank top and if you're cold grab that favorite old sweat shirt. The most important thing is to do whatever makes you feel good.

Relationships are for losers, so stay at home. The TV and the couch are all you need, but don't watch the news. It will just distress you and you might feel a need to do something with or for someone else. If someone should ring your doorbell, don't answer it! Always keep your opinions to yourself and avoid the potential conflict that always comes when you speak up. For maximum comfort grab a soft comfortable blanket. Your couch is real, and the blanket is real. What else do you need? If confrontation does come, just pull the blanket over your head and wait. Eventually, your accuser will get tired and go away.

Fill your head with as much useless information as you can. Who knows, you might be a Jeopardy contestant one day. All this trivia will keep you from being distracted by the things that seem to matter to other people. Don't pick up your Bible and read it. You've tried before, and you know it is confusing and when you do run across something in it that you do understand it just makes you uncomfortable. Why bother? If it makes you feel good, go ahead and talk to God occasionally, but make sure you have a thorough list of personal things to ask for. Don't pay any attention to what is going on in the lives of others. They can build their own list. God has said, "Ask and you will receive," so ask often. You deserve a comfortable life.

The Aggressive Perspective

Be strong in yourself and in your own opinions. Arm yourself so that you can stand against anyone who opposes you. Your struggle is against all those idiots you must share life with. Here and now is all that matters. You are surrounded by evil people who make your life miserable. They are your enemies. Be thick skinned and load up with all the opinions and insults you will need to get your own way. You know you are right, so don't let anything they say or do change you. Wherever you go, cause conflict and dissension among those who disagree with you. This will help you win your cause!

Be confident! Your superior intelligence will easily handle anything your enemies say or do. You know that you are smarter than the enemy. Your opinions and ideas are what is important. Write your own list of values and goals and be sure to share them with everyone you meet.

Challenge:

What is your perspective? How would you write this if you were describing your response to the world around you? Take a few minutes and rewrite Ephesians 6:10-18 from your own perspective and using an allegory you are very familiar with. Grandma and Grandpa would love to see what you come up with, so share it in the comments or send it to us through email.

Questions:

1. Which of the above two perspectives do you most identify with? Why?
2. Why do you find it difficult to "arm" yourself?
3. How would you communicate Paul's message to your children or grandchildren?