

The Armor of God – Closing

Ready (*Plant the seed*)

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. Ephesians 6:13

Set (*Get the conversation started*)

God has given us a full set of spiritual armor to both protect us and attack the enemy in the war against sin. We have the belt of truth, which is the word of God, to help us see through the enemy's lies. God gave us a strong breastplate of righteousness to help us put God's truth into action and step in when we see injustice. Our feet are also fitted with the readiness to go out and be ambassadors for Christ confident in the peace we have from accepting Jesus as our savior. Our shield of faith protects us from attack in one hand while in the other we carry the sword of the spirit which strengthens us and pierces through the enemy's efforts to tempt us into sin. With all this armor we take a knee to pray and thank God for all He has given us and seek his help. This part of scripture that we have been studying all season comes from the book of Ephesians which is a letter Paul wrote to encourage the church at Ephesus to stay strong as they faced many challenges. It is meant to encourage us, too, so that we may stand tall and strong in the face of the many challenges we will meet in our lives.

Athletes face many challenges: personal struggles with learning new skills, practicing hard to meet our goals, facing difficult teams and sometimes injuries. Athletes work hard to continue to get better and overcome these obstacles. As a young athlete you have a lot of help: supportive parents, great coaches, maybe you take private lessons, and you watch the professionals as mentors. All these things give you confidence to be the best that you can be. In the same way, Paul tells us that through the Spiritual Armor that God has given us, guidance from the Holy Spirit and trust in Jesus we can have the confidence to not only defeat the temptation to sin but declare it boldly to those around us so that they may enjoy the same confidence that we do.

Grow (*Talk it over*)

- What things do you do to help yourself to be a better athlete?
- What things can you do to help strengthen your relationship with God?
- How does the Spiritual Armor of God make you feel?

Pray

Father God, thank you for the spiritual armor that you have given us through your word, the Holy Spirit and Jesus. It strengthens us and gives us confidence that we will be prepared for challenges in our lives and the battle against temptation to sin. God we pray to grow closer to you and that we may meet others who need to know these wonderful truths. It is in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Overtime (*optional game for reinforcement*) **Soldiers, at your ready!**

The goal of this game is for each team to dress their soldier completely in all the protective gear and equipment they need for their sport. Divide players into two teams. One player on each team is the soldier and must remove all their sport specific armor: cleats, shin guards, flags, helmets, gloves, etc. Place those in a pile with any other equipment they need for play including balls, bats, etc. When you shout, "Go!" each team must get their soldier fitted and ready for battle. The soldier cannot help, he must just stand/sit there while they outfit him. The first to finish wins.

After say: *Great job, everyone! These soldiers look ready! But, we can't only look the part. Having all of this equipment may make you ready for the game but you still have to play to win! In the same way, for God's Armor to be successful, you must work with Him by studying His word, praying, and growing in your relationship with Him. All of that is what will help you to be victorious in battle!*