u **Preventive Measures ( Ephesians 6:10-18 )**

 **Week One**

**Definition: Preventive measures includes the measures of steps taken for prevention or disease as opposed to disease treatment. For this lesson our definition includes, to anticipate, prepare, fortify, resist, and gain victory over the attacks of the devil.**

 **Introduction**

**In 1972, I entered the United States Marine Corps, and was in route to Parris Island South Carolina for basic training. I will never forget the day as I was traveling upon a secular bus with false expectations about the world I was about to enter. We arrived in Parris Island , about sixty recruits , that ad not eaten, late and after dark. My expectations were that we would be given a room in a hotel, and that they would have a restaurant waiting for us to have a late dinner. Oh! Was I wrong! The first thing that I heard when entering the gate and stepping off the bus were voices screaming on the left, right, behind, and in the front of me, saying, get off the bus, shut your mouths, lock your bodies up which means to stand in attention.**

**They rushed us off to a squad bay, without food, and no hotel accommodations, and instructed us to hit the bed. The next morning between 4:30-5:00am a trash can was through down the middle of the squad bay as a wake up call, and about sixty recruits jump out of bed on their feet trembling with fear. We were rushed to breakfast eggs were served with a 15 minute time limit to eat-From there the drill instructors rushed us to the barber shop where we immediately lost all of our hair, and that when it hit me, that I had also lost all of my rights. The process of transformation from a recruit to a marine had started. For three months the schedule of training was dictated for us; what time to sleep, what time to awake, when to eat, how long to eat, and a sometimes a 12-16 hour training schedule. It was always between eight and nine o’clock when the lights were out. No one talked because the drill instructor room was inside the barracks, and he would often listen, and looked into the squad bay through his blinds. The drill instructor would say to the platoon, that he want us dressed and ready to leave the barracks at 5:00AM. How do you awake at 5:00Am and be dressed at 5:00AM? He never told us-but we knew he meant what he said. At 4;00AM recruits were dressing in the dark and putting on theirs boots-when the lights came on at 5:00AM-every single recruit was on their feet fully dress, ready for breakfast, and to start the daily training. If one recruit messed up the whole platoon had to suffer the consequences. I remember an occasion when some of the recruits had gotten in trouble-we had run three miles that morning already but the instructor wanted to make the entire platoon pay for the errors of others. That morning after 3 miles he did not stop but continued running with us for several more miles. I had two friends in the platoon that I remember by name. One was Thomas and the other was Gilbert. Gilbert was more than myself, built very well, and Thomas my childhood friend was very fast on his feet. After running additional miles exhaustion was setting in but the drill instructor did not stop. I noticed that Thomas literally dropped out and Gilbert literally started to crying. I learned that the instructor was stretching us-physical strength and speed cannot compensate for mental and or inner strength. A loud mouth is no indication of inner strength; often the meanness people are the scarist people. In like manner, the race is not given to the swift nor to the strong….but the one that endure to the end. ( Matthew 24:13, Hebrews 12:1-2 )**

**This was just one of the many tests to see if we could endure hardship as a good soldier. Not only were we tested repeatedly for mental strength-we were also tested for accuracy-we had to learn our weapon and how to shoot the weapon. Every man had the same weapon and had to learned to break it down piece by piece, and then put it back together again. The weapon was always cleaned to ensure that there would be no possible chance of a miss-fire. One had to go to the rifle range to qualify with the weapon to ensure that he could hit the target. All the training was preventive measures taken to transform us into marines, and to prepared us for war both foreign and domestic. The objective was-in war time, stay alive, and gain the victory over the enemy. The believer have a weapon know as the Sword of the Spirit. It is absolutely imperative that the believer knows the Word, knows skillfully how to us it, and are able to hit the target during spiritual warfare with the devil.**

**Catch It Before It Happens**

**In the natural humans practice preventive measures by having annual physicals that include checking our blood, heart, lungs, eyes, and other organs to ensure that disease is not going un-detected in the body, and to catch it before it becomes detrimental to life.**

**In like manner as believers we must practice preventive measures to ensure that spiritual decay , strongholds, and habits that come against the knowledge of God are not occurring in our lives, and to confront the attacks of the devil on our souls. The bible says, Less Satan should get an advantage over us; we are not ignorant of his devices ( 2 Corinthians 2:11 ) which means that we know where the attack will come from. Every believers know their weaknesses whether we acknowledge them or not. We must takes measures to guard against the enemy. 1 Peter 5:8**

 **Preventive Measures**

 **Week Two**

**In this lesson we will look at biblical preventive measures that must be taken to guards against the adversary. One must be conscious of the fact that we are no match for the devil attacks with out Jesus Christ. The bible declares , Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Ephesians 6:10-11 Spiritual strength and courage are needed for our spiritual warfare and suffering. The Christian armour is made to be worn; and there is no putting off our armour till we have done our warfare, and finished our course. Each piece of armour that we will begin discussing in this lesson is essential to combat, and must be worn according to bible instructions.**

**Understanding the Combat Ephesians 6:12**

**For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**

The combat is not against human enemies, nor against our own corrupt nature only; we have an enemy who has a thousands ways of beguiling unstable souls. The devil assaults us in the things that belong to our souls, and labour to deface the heavenly image in our hearts. Do not fuel the fire but stay away from things that have been bondages in your life in the past whether it’s shopping networks, credit cards, alcohol, addictive chemicals, gambling, gossiping, porn, homosexuality, or lying, just to name a few, stay away. We must draw strength from God’s grace daily not to yield to Satan. The bible say’ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist him, and he will flee from you. James 4:7 If we give way the enemy will gain ground. If we distrust either our cause, or our leader, or our armour, we give him advantage

The apostle Paul warns the believer of levels of spiritual battles that people are not our enemy but the un-seen spirits behind the people. In Matthew 16:21-23

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day,

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

23 But be turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

In the above passages Peter spoke without the council or wisdom of God. How often do we consult emotions, flesh and blood, and our own knowledge to deal with spiritual matters. Jesus turn and looked at Peter but immediately address Satan as the true author of his words, Get the behind me, Satan. What appeared to be in support of Jesus, and what was uttered by Peter appeared to be a concern for his welfare, actually, came against the knowledge of God. What Peter sought to prevent was actually the will of God and the purpose for Jesus being born. To This end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, John 1837. Whatever information communicated by people must be tried by the word of God. One of the greatest deceptions of the enemy is dis-information. 1 Corinthian 15:33

 Week Three And Four-The Armour Of God

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Ephesians 6:13 The opposite of stand or rise to opposition is to surrender, yield, cease to resist, or capitulate. The fiery dots of the enemy is weapon that is strategically use in combat against the believer through false doctrine an or having no knowledge of the word. The first armour is listed below:

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with **truth**, and having on the breastplate of **righteousness**. Ephesians 614 Truth or sincerity, is the girdle. This girds on all the other pieces of our armour, and is first mention. There can be no religion without sincerity. Truth confronts false doctrine as light dispel with darkness. The believers must confront the fiery dots of the enemy that’s design to set the soul a course to hell, with truth. In others words, the lies, doubts, fears, violent temptations, thoughts, and imaginations must be confronted and replaced by the Word of God. It is imperative that none of the fore-mention arrows are allowed to land in the heart of the believer les we find ourselves practicing ( Strongholds ) habits that come against the knowledge of God.

The **righteousness of Christ** , imputed to us, is a breastplate against the arrows of satanic wrath. The righteousness of Christ implanted in us, fortifies the heart against the attacks of Satan. The righteousness of God is the believers identity in Christ, our total, absolute, and our complete confidence must be in the Atonement of Christ. If we attempt to live by our own morals, standards, and ability, they will condemn us, and we give place to the devil. God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. Romans 8:3. Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

God showed abhorrence of sin by the sufferings of his Son in the flesh, and that the believer’s person might be pardoned and justified. Satisfaction was made to divine justice and the way of salvation open to sinners.

 Week Three And Four Continued

 The Armour

And our **feet shod with the preparation of the gospel** of peace; Ephesians 6:15 To have one feet shod means to be anchor in the Word of God, to be ready, and to expect the assaults, and ambushes of the enemy. Naturally, when it is cloudy and darkness in the sky, we have an expectation of rain. Therefore, we make preparation by travelling with our umbrella. Motives to obedience, amidst trials, must be drawn from a clear knowledge of the gospel

Above all, taking the **shield of faith**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Ephesians 6:16 Faith is all in all in an hour of temptation. Our faith executes grace when the fiery dots that are aimed at our mind, bombarding the mind, attempting to torment the mind into surrender. Fiery dots are like a natural battle field where bombs, rifle fire, grenades, and tanks are all firing at the same time. The devil is the wicked one and violent temptations are the ammunition that he shoots at us, also our hard thoughts of God that emanate from our flesh. The bible teaches in Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be. The two enemies of God is the devil and the flesh. When attack by either, the shield of faith must be raised saturated in the water of the word. The Word of God have a water in it that distinguish spiritual fires just as water in the natural distinguish natural fires.

And take the **helmet of salvation**, and the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God: Ephesians 6:17 Salvation must be the helmet and a scriptural expectation of victory will keep the soul from being defiled by Satan. There is not a fighting chance with Satan without the grace of salvation; by grace are ye saved through faith. Attempting warfare without Christ is a guaranteed defeat and a victory for the devil in your life. The **sword of the Spirit** is the only offensive weapon given to the believer, and is design to confront the assaults of the enemy. There is no armour for the back as it most dangerous for any believer to turn back from truth, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God and it’s inherent power and have no equal. At the presenting of the Word during the enemies attacks we must trust the Word and it’s inherent power to protect, defend, deliver us, and allow us to gain victory over the assaults of the devil. The devil’s ultimate fear is the Word of God because he knows that it is truth. And the devil that deceived them were cast into the lake of fire and brimstone , where the beast and the false prophet are, and they shall be torment day and night and for ever and ever. Revelation 20:10

In Ephesians 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. The believer’s armour must be fertilized in prayer other wise it will have no strength. It is safe to say that if the prayer life is on suspension, so is the word life, worship. service, and seeking the face of God. No soldier can effectively war with the enemy without communication and direction from the commander in chief. God is our Commander in Chief, and quality time should be spent with him on a daily basis. In fact, the bible teaches us to pray with out ceasing which means to stay in constant communication and fellowship with him. Walking prayerfully with Lord is a defense against the enemy. He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. Psalms 62:6

**In conclusion: For wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places Ephesians 6:12**

**Interpret; Rulers of the darkness of this world; darkness in the Greek is skotos which means “ blindness, ignorance and obscurity that leads to unrighteousness and ungodliness. The rulers of darkness of this world are lord’s and princes that control ignorance, blindness and ungodliness over regions**

**High ranking spirits in this world that that seek to keep nations, countries, and regions ignorant of truth-min. they posses a a great deal of power and use it to sway people opinions and control their minds.**

**The are in control of powerful media empires that flood the world with darkness through radio, television, movies, the internet, books, tapes, CD’s and any form of communication that keeps people blind and ignorant of Truth.**

**Spiritual wickedness in high places mean’s twistedness and twisting things. This was exactly what Satan attempted to do to Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11 The devil twisted the truth. The acid test for knowing that which is false is to know that which is Truth.**

**Discuss with group what they may have learned from theses lessons. Have them write it down in two or three paragraphs below.**