

The Breastplate of Righteousness (Ephesians 6:14)

Getting started:

Allow each person to introduce themselves (if needed) and share “high, low, buffalo.” (**High**= something good from the week, **Low**=something not good from the week, **Buffalo**=something surprising from the week, or something random). *Note: Anyone can choose to pass and not participate.*

Expect to experience God in prayer:

Pray together, asking God to open hearts to see his holiness and mercy in making atonement for sin.

Expect to experience God in fellowship:

Choose one Icebreaker Activity OR one Conversation Starter:

Icebreaker Activity:

1. Watch this YouTube [video](#) (about three minutes long) by John Piper called Your Only Chance to Defeat the Devil. What surprised you about this video?
2. **The True or False Game:** The game starts when one person (the host), states something about themselves that is either true or false without revealing which one. After the host states a truth or a lie, each member of the group (the contestants), in turn, guess whether the statement is true or false. After all the contestants have guessed, the host reveals whether their statement was true or false. The contestants each earn one point for a correct guess. Another person in the group then becomes the host and the next round begins. When all have served as host, the game is complete. The person with the highest number of points receives a round of applause and cheers from the group!

Conversation Starter:

1. What do you think spiritual warfare could look like in your life? What in your life do you think Satan would like to destroy? *This can be a good way to share prayer requests!*
2. Have you ever had someone unfairly gossip about you behind your back and you ultimately found out? If so, please share with the group what you feel comfortable sharing. How did this affect you? How did it affect your relationship with that person?

Expect to experience God by reading and discussing God’s Word together:

Background:

The Apostle Paul used the metaphor of armor to demonstrate how to walk with God through a fallen world. Why armor? Armor, which in Paul’s time would have been primarily Roman, helped protect the legionary from enemy attacks as he fought to meet a tactical objective.

The Breastplate of Righteousness (Ephesians 6:14)

This week, we focus on the **breastplate of righteousness** (Ephesians 6:14). The Roman soldier's breastplate is called the *lorica segmentata* (see photograph). The lorica protected the soldier's heart, lungs, and abdomen which are, of course, vital for survival. The breastplate, like his belt and shoes were worn constantly during battle. For the Romans, the war was physical. For the Christian, the war is spiritual and for both, armor is necessary.



Together, Read Ephesians 6:10-20.

Discussion Questions (choose from these questions to discuss as a group):

1. How would you describe God's righteousness? How does this compare to human righteousness? (see Matthew 23:1-7)
2. In verse 11, Paul mentions 'the schemes of the devil' which Pastor Jim described as: lies and deception, accusation, division, doubts and discouragement, fear, and temptations. Share with the group which of these schemes you are experiencing lately?
3. The Roman soldier constantly wore a *lorica* during battle to protect his vital organs from blows and missile strikes, i.e., the breastplate kept the soldier alive. How does God's righteousness protect you in the day-to-day spiritual battles?
4. What doors are still open in your life for the enemy to attack?
5. In what ways is God calling you to turn away from sin so you can put on the breastplate of righteousness?
6. Imagine that a non-Christian is with you right now and asks "*Why on earth does the bible mention warfare and armor? Isn't the bible only about church?*" As a Group, develop brief but clear explanations of spiritual warfare, the armor of God, and why this is so important that it's in the bible. Try to make your explanations interesting enough that the person will want to know more.

Readiness Check (a simple way to add intentionality to your daily spiritual preparation):

"When Satan accuses the Christian, it is the righteousness of Christ that assures the believer of salvation. But our positional righteousness in Christ, without practical righteousness in our daily lives, only gives Satan the opportunity to attack us."¹

- Name one battle you expect to face this week and ask God for strength beyond your own.
- Pray for one person you know is struggling with righteousness.

Expect to experience God by closing in prayer together:

Pray for awareness of spiritual battles and to make a daily habit of wearing the 'breastplate of righteousness'. So armored, pray for the courage to stand firm in the victory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

¹ W. Weirsbe (1979) *Be Rich: Gaining the Things that Money Can't Buy*, David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO.