

The Shield of Faith (Ephesians 6:16)

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 the Icebreaker Activity ~or~ the Conversation Starter:

Icebreaker Activity:

1. Provide each member with a sticky note and a pen.
2. Ask them to write down a challenge that caused disappointment, discouragement or doubt.
3. Then, write a scripture or a faith statement that can act as their shield of faith against this challenge.
4. Encourage participants to share their challenges and faith statements with the group if they feel comfortable.
5. Consider sticking the note to your mirror or coffee maker so that are reminded to put on the shield of faith every morning.

Conversation Starter:

Read Psalm 28:7 then listen to the song [Head to Toe \(The Armor of God Song\)](#) by Christy Nockels. How do the song lyrics inspire you to put on the full armor of God? Consider listening to worship music each morning to remind and inspire you to put on God’s armor and Be Ready.

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

Background:

This week, we focus on the Shield of Faith (Ephesians 6:16).

“The Roman shield or *scutum*, was constructed in much the same way that laminated timber products are today. Two or three thin planks of wood were “cross-plied” and glued to form a cylindrical shape around 1.2 m high by 0.9 m across. The enemy-facing, convex surface was covered in painted leather or heavy canvas and could be doused with water to extinguish the flaming arrows of the enemy. The edges of the shield were made from bands of riveted bronze or stitched rawhide; both added to the overall strength of the shield.”¹



¹ <http://resources.takingground.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2017/04/Roman-Soldiers-of-the-1st-Century---Armour-and-Tactics.pdf>

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

Read Ephesians 6:10-20 and then Hebrews 11:1

1. In Hebrews 11:1, how did Paul define faith?
2. With faith, what are you hoping for right now?
3. A soldier's shield is primarily a defensive device but can also be used as an offensive weapon during close combat. How can faith in Jesus be a 'defensive device'? How can faith in Jesus be an 'offensive device'?

Read Matthew 4:1-11

4. Did Jesus use scripture in a defensive or offensive way to counter the devil's temptations? Discuss the reasons for your answer.
5. Imagine that you are a soldier headed into battle. How would you prepare? Now, remember that you are a Christian soldier and you are headed into a daily spiritual battle. Specifically, how should you Be Ready? Refer to Pastor Jim's first sermon in this series [Six Things You Need to Know to Be Ready](#) if you need help answering this question.
6. If you feel comfortable doing so, share a time when your faith in Christ acted as a shield in a difficult situation. What was the situation? What doubts or discouragement were you experiencing? How did you put on the armor of God? What was the outcome?
7. What are some practical ways to remind yourself to take up your Shield of Faith each day? Consider adopting a new way suggested by one of your group members.
8. Given the answers to the above questions, how would you explain to a non-believer about true faith in God and how this faith will positively impact their lives? Try to make your explanation interesting so that the non-believer will want to know more. Also, consider asking one person in the group to act as a scribe and document your group's explanation so that you will be ready when asked.

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

With the shield of faith metaphor, Paul's emphasis is on trusting in God and not leaning on our own strength to endure the inevitable spiritual battles.

- In prayer, take up the 'shield of faith' covering yourself and your loved ones with the protection that God provides the faithful in Christ.
- As soldiers in the army of God, we must resist our enemy as a united body of believers. As a group, in prayer, take up the shield of faith for Grace Fellowship's leadership, staff, volunteers, and congregation.

Expect to experience God by closing in prayer together:

Pray for awareness of spiritual battles and to make a daily habit of taking up the shield of faith.

So armored, pray for the courage to stand firm in the victory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.