

Introduction.

This booklet is about the Christian life. Its purpose is to explain what the Bible teaches about the Christian life and how we are to live that life. There are two very important things you need to remember about the Christian life.

1. Firstly, the Bible makes it very clear that while many people may say that they are saved, only those who live the Christian life are actually saved and will enter heaven. This is what the Bible says about this matter:

“No-one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God” (1 Jn. 3:9).

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God” (1 Jn. 4:7).

“Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (1 Jn. 5:4).

“We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him” (1 Jn. 5:18).

These verses show very clearly that if a person is saved, then he will live the Christian life. If he does not live the Christian life, then it is proof that he is not saved.

2. Secondly, the Bible teaches that the Christian life is a process whereby we learn more and more about the Lord Jesus Christ, and as we learn more and more about Him, so we become more and more like Him. The Bible says, “And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect [or contemplate] the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18).

In this passage, Paul says that as we reflect upon or think about the glory of Christ, we are gradually transformed into His image. The Christian life can be summarised like this: “To live the Christian life means to study the Lord Jesus more and more and to think about Him more and more, and therefore to become like Him more and more until we are perfectly like Him.” The goal of the Christian life is to be perfectly like Christ. That is His goal for us, and so that is the goal we must to pursue.

Lesson One, Galatians 5:16-26, Living the Christian Life.

This passage is one of the most important passages in the Bible on the subject of living the Christian life. There are many people in our country who are saved by the grace of God and want to live a life pleasing to Him, but they do not always know how to live the Christian life. In this passage, we have some very important principles that will help us in this.

1. We need to understand that there is a struggle going on inside us after we are saved.

Paul writes in this passage, “For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want” (v. 17). This verse tells us that every person who is a believer has in him what the Bible calls the sinful nature, and that he also has the Holy Spirit living in him. Before he was saved, he was a slave of sin and sin ruled his entire life. Everything he did was sinful because he was under the control and rule of sin. But when a person gets saved, then sin no longer rules his life, he now belongs to God: “But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness” (Rom. 6: 17-18). So the saved person used to be a slave of sin but he is no longer so, he now belongs to Christ and obeys Christ. Sin is no longer his master. However, there are still some remains of sin in him which try to lead him to live a life of sin.

Imagine that a country has a really cruel and wicked dictator who oppresses the people through the army. He has his agents everywhere and the people live in terror and have to obey his rule otherwise they will be killed. Then one day there is a revolution and a new ruler takes his place. The old dictator, however, still has some of his agents who are active in the country and working for him. They try to persuade the people to rebel against the new ruler and to obey the will of the old ruler. They say to the people that if they obey the old ruler then they will have a lot of benefits like good jobs and lots of money. So there is tension in the country because the people are under a new ruler but are being persuaded to obey the old ruler. It is the same in the saved person. Sin no longer rules the Christian but the remains of the sinful nature are still in man and it tries to persuade man to obey it and live a life of sin. This is the conflict that is in man, and it

is a conflict that continues throughout his life, it only ends when his life here on earth ends.

2. We need to walk with the Spirit in our Christian lives.

Paul says in this passage, “So I say, live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature...But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law...keep in step with the Spirit” (vs. 16,18,25). These phrases, live by the Spirit, be led by the Spirit and keep in step with the Spirit all mean the same thing. It means to live a life that is directed by the Holy Spirit who lives in us. The Holy Spirit comes to live in the person when He gets saved, and the Holy Spirit guides the person and leads him to live a holy life. This is what God has promised His people: “I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws” (Ezekiel 36:27). How does the Holy Spirit direct the Christian to live a godly life? The answer is found in Phil. 2:12-13: “Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” The Holy Spirit does two things in a person to direct him to live a godly life.

(i) The Holy Spirit gives a person godly desires: “For it is God who works in you to will...” Before we were saved we were slaves of sin, so our desires were sinful desires. The unsaved person looks for the pleasures and possessions of this world, he does not have any godly desires, he only has sinful desires. But the saved person has godly desires. He no longer desires the pleasures and treasures of this world, but instead desires to live a holy life that pleases God.

(ii) The Holy Spirit gives the saved person the power to live a godly life: “For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good pleasure.” The person who is not saved does not have the power to live a life pleasing to God because he is a slave of sin. Sometimes he may desire to give up his sins and live a better life because he has a conscience about his sins. He may even give up some of his sins and live a better life for a short time, but he will soon go back to his sins because he is a slave of sin. But the saved person is given power by the Holy Spirit to live a godly life. He is no longer a slave of sin, he has been set free to serve God and he is given godly desires. Everything that he needs in order to live a holy life has been given to him: “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3).

It is important to notice in all these verses that the responsibility to live a godly life is upon us. The commands of God in these passages are clear: it is we who are to live by the Spirit and to keep in step with the Spirit and to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. The Holy Spirit does not pick us up and carry us into heaven, he expects us to walk, He expects us to obey the word of God and to fight sin. God gives us the power to live a godly life and He gives us the desire to live a godly life, it is now our responsibility to live that holy life.

3. When we live by the Spirit then we produce the fruit of the Spirit.

In this passage, Paul speaks about the acts of the sinful nature and about the fruit of the Spirit (vs. 19-23). In vs. 19-21 he describes the sinful acts of the sinful nature. He says that they are obvious, and that “those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Then in vs. 22-23, he describes the fruit of the Spirit. There are two important things we need to notice about this.

(i) Paul speaks about the “fruit” of the Spirit, not the “fruits” of the Spirit, i.e. the word is singular and not plural. The fruit of the Spirit is like an orange, it is one fruit but it has nine segments. It is important to notice this because unsaved people may show some of these segments but only the saved person will have all nine. There are unsaved people who have love and peace and patience, but they will not have all nine segments. Also, in the saved person the fruit develops and ripens over time. He will become more loving and more joyful and more at peace and more patient and so on. The unsaved person may have love and patience and kindness but he will not become more loving and patient and kind as he grows old because the Spirit of God is not at work in him.

(ii) The fruit of the Spirit is more about our character than our actions. When the Holy Spirit comes to live in a person, He begins to change that person’s character so that he becomes more and more like Christ. The person becomes a more loving person, a more joyful person, a more peaceful person, a patient person, a kind person and so on. His character will change so that these things are seen in him at all times. The unsaved person is usually very selfish, but he is able to show kindness at certain times. He may see a woman begging on the street with her young children and may be moved to help her, but that does not mean that his character is now different, he is still a selfish person who has done an act of kindness.

It is very interesting for us to notice that on the Day of Judgement the unsaved will speak about their works, whereas the Lord Jesus will be looking at their character. In Matthew 7:22-23 we read these words: “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” Notice carefully what is happening here. These people will stand before Jesus on the Day of Judgement and speak about all their great works: the demons they drove out and the miracles they did. But Jesus will say them, “I never knew you.” Jesus is here saying to them, “I know you claim to have done great works for the kingdom of God, but I am more interested in your character than in your works, and when I look at your character, I do not see myself in it, I do not see a character that I recognise as resembling my character, a character pleasing to God, therefore, “Away from me, you evildoers!”

This is a very important matter for us all, especially those who are pastors and preachers. Very often we think that God is only concerned about the work we do for the kingdom and that our character does not matter so much. We often think that as long as we work hard and are faithful in carrying out all our duties God is pleased with us and does not care what we are really like as people. But this is not true. The work of the Holy Spirit in a person is to make him like Jesus Christ, it is to change his character. God is interested in our works, but he is more interested in our character. He is pleased when we are being changed more and more into the character of Christ and as a result of the changed character, we do good works for His glory (Eph. 2:10).

Lesson Two, Eph. 4:-17, Living the Christian Life in the Local Church.

In Eph. chapters 4-6, Paul gives practical instructions on how we are to live the Christian life. He says, “I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (v. 1), and then gives specific teaching on how we are to do this. In vs. 1-17, he gives instructions on how we are to live the Christian life in the local church. He teaches three very important things.

1. We are to pursue unity and peace in the local church.

Paul writes, “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (vs. 2-3). The local church is the body of Christ (Eph. 5:29-30) and it is one united body under one head (1 Cor. 12:12-13). This means that the members of the church have to make sure that they are united to one another. To cause division in the church is a very great sin (Titus 3:10-11). How can members of a church make sure that they remain united? In v. 2 of this passage Paul gives us very practical instructions. Firstly, we are to be humble. The person who is proud and arrogant will always cause trouble and division in the church because he thinks he is the most important person there. We should think of others as better than ourselves and to consider the interests of others (Phil. 2:3-4). Secondly, we are to be gentle. A person who is gentle does not insist on having his own way, nor does he push others or force others to do what he wants. Rather, he is meek and is willing to allow others to have their way. Thirdly, we are to bear with one another in love. This means we are to be patient and considerate. The church has many different types of people in it, and some people are not easy to be with. But we are to be always patient with everyone. If we do this, we will promote unity and peace in the local church.

2. We are to use our God given gifts to serve others.

Paul says, “But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it” (v.7). By this Paul means that the Lord has given gifts to His people. There are four very important things about gifts in this passage.

(i) The gifts are given graciously. This is why Paul says, “grace has been given.” The reason a person has been given certain gifts is not because he has earned them or

deserved them, they are given by grace, which means they are given freely. A person may have been given many gifts by the Lord but that does not mean he is very godly and very important in the eyes of God, God gives gifts freely to all His children.

(ii) There are varieties of gifts. Paul says that the gifts or abilities are given, “as Christ apportioned it.” The people of God have all been given different gifts, the gifts are not all the same: “We have different gifts, according to the grace given us” (Rom. 12:6). It is a very sad thing when a member wishes for the gifts that someone else has been given rather than use the gifts he has been given.

(iii) Every member of the church has been given gifts. Paul says, “To each of us grace has been given,” he does not say, “To some of us grace has been given.” The members of the church must not think that only the pastor has been given gifts and that they themselves are to do nothing. Each person has been given gifts by God.

(iv) Each member has a serious duty to use their gifts in the local church. In this passage, Paul says that the pastors and teachers of the church are there to “Prepare God’s people for works of service” (v. 12). Each member of the church has works of service that God has given them. The pastors and teachers are there to prepare the members for these works of service. This means that if the pastor does not prepare and encourage members of the church to use their gifts then he is doing wrong. Also if members of the church do not use their God given gifts but keep them hidden then they too are doing wrong (Matt. 25:14-30)

3. We are to seek to be mature in our Christian faith.

Paul tells us that the reason Christ has given gifts to His church is so that “we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ” (v. 13). When we are saved we are born again. This means that we are very immature in Christ when we are first saved. But we cannot remain immature, we must grow in Christ. It does not please God when His children do not grow in their faith (1 Cor. 3:1-2). This is why He has given gifts to the members of the church, so that as the members exercise their gifts, they themselves grow and others in the church also grow.

The best way to mature as a Christian is to make sure that you attend a church where the Bible is taught correctly and faithfully. Do not just attend a church because the singing is exciting, it is more important to be in a church where the Bible is taught. Also, make

sure that you read and study the Bible yourself everyday. Do not neglect the word of God, it is food for your soul and will help you to grow in your Christian life.

Lesson Three, Eph. 4:17-5:21, Living the Christian Life in the World.

In this passage of the Bible, Paul gives some teaching on how we are to live the Christian life in the world, which means in our places of work and amongst our neighbours and friends. Notice that this is a very important matter. Paul says, “So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord” (v. 17). Living a Christian life in a sinful world is a very important thing. In this passage Paul teaches us three things.

1. We are to remember who we are (4:17-21; 5:8).

In this passage, Paul says we should not live like those who are not saved: “You must no longer live as the Gentiles do” (4:17). In this verse the word Gentiles means those who are not saved. Paul reminds us what the unsaved are like: firstly, they are ignorant of the ways of God: “They are darkened in their understanding” (v. 18). Secondly, “they are separated from the life of God” (v. 18), and thirdly, “they have given themselves over to every kind of impurity” (v. 19).

Those who are saved, however, have been taught Christ. It is not some few facts about Christ that they were taught; they were taught who Christ is and what He has done for them and what He requires of them. We as Christians are not to live like the world because we are not like the world, we have been redeemed from the world and have been united to Christ. We are therefore to obey Christ and imitate Christ in all things.

2. We are to have a new way of life (4:22-24; 5:9-17).

Paul says in this passage that when God saved us, we were taught “to put off the old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” When we get saved, we are removed from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). So getting saved is like moving to a new country. Imagine that a person who was born and raised in a small village in the jungles of Brazil moves to America. He cannot continue to live as he used to in Brazil because he is now in a new country. The clothes he wears, the type of home he lives in, the food he eats and the language he speaks are all new. He leaves behind his jungle way of life and lives a new way of life. All the time that he does this, his mind is being transformed. He no longer thinks like he used to think when he was back home, he is now beginning to think in a completely different way because he is now in a new country.

This is how it is when we are saved. We put off the old lifestyle of sin and we put on a new way of life, the life of holiness. All the time that we are doing this, our minds are being renewed, so that more and more we think like Christians and not like the people of the world. This is why Paul says, “For you were once darkness, but now are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them” (Eph. 5:8-11).

3. We are given specific examples of what it means to live the Christian life in the world (4:25-5:21).

In this passage, Paul mentions a number of areas where those who are now saved live lives which are completely different from the kind of lives they used to live. They are to put off the kind of lives they had lived before, and to put on a new way of life. Paul specifically mentions the following things:

- (i) We are not to lie to one another because we belong to one another (4:25); also we are to make sure that our speech is not going to harm others but to build them up (4:29). Also our speech should not be careless and dirty (5:4). Instead of all this, we are to make sure that our speech is always full of praise and thanksgiving to God (5:19-20).
- (ii) We are not to allow sinful anger to remain in our hearts because this gives the devil a chance to come in and destroy our relationship with others (4:26-27).
- (iii) We are not to steal, but instead to work hard so that we can help others (4:28).
- (iv) Our attitude towards others should not be bitterness, rage and anger, and we should not be those who fight others. Rather we are to be kind, forgiving and loving, just as God is (4:31-5:2)
- (v) There should be no sexual immorality or impurity of any kind among God’s people (5:3; 18).
- (vi) We are to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (5:21).

Lesson Four, Eph. 5:22-6:9, Living the Christian Life in the Home.

In this passage, Paul writes about how we are to live the Christian life in the home. For many saved people in our country, life in the home does not seem as important as life in the church or in the world. This is particularly true of pastors who seem to spend very little time at home with their families. This is a great mistake. The home is so important that Paul spends all these verses in this passage speaking about it. Also, the most difficult place for a person to be Christ-like is in his own home. This is why this passage is so important.

1. Instructions to wives (5:22-24).

Paul tells wives to submit to their husbands “as to the Lord.” This means that she is to submit to her husband as she submits to the Lord. Saved people submit to the Lord willingly and joyfully, not because they are forced to, and that is how the wife is to submit. Notice that nowhere does Paul say, “Submit to your husband if he is worthy of your respect.” A wife is to submit to her husband because it is her duty under God to do so, not because her husband is worthy of her respect.

Paul also tells the wife why she is to submit to her husband. There are two reasons. Firstly, because the husband is the head of the house (v. 23). This is how God arranged the family in the Garden of Eden, Adam was the head of his wife, and that arrangement is still there today. Secondly, because the relationship between the husband and the wife is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the church (vs. 23-24). The wife who is submissive is an example to all church members of how they are to submit to the Lord.

2. Instructions to the husband (5:25-33).

In this passage Paul has one instruction to the husband: he must love his wife (vs. 25; 28). Paul then says that the way in which Christ loves the church is an example of how the husband must love his wife. When we look at the love of Christ for His church, we see four things in particular, and the husband is to imitate these four things.

(i) Christ loved the church with a sacrificial love: He “gave Himself up for her.” Christ died for the church in order to save her. In the same way, a husband must be willing to sacrifice his comforts and his needs for the sake of his wife. If his wife needs him at home to help her then he cannot stay with his friends and watch football. He must be willing to sacrifice that for his wife.

(ii) Christ loved the church with a special love. Christ loves everyone in the world and provides for them (Matt. 5:44-45), but He loves His church with a special love. He died specifically for the church. In the same way the husband’s love for his wife must be a special love. He can show care and concern for his parents and his friends, but his wife must be special above all others. Notice that throughout this passage Paul assumes a man will have only one wife: “he who loves his wife” (v. 28), not “he who loves his wives.” A man is not allowed in the Bible to have more than one wife.

(iii) Christ loved the church with a gracious love. We, His people, were filthy and sinful and in rebellion against Him when He died for us and saved us (Rom. 5:8). We did not deserve His love. In the same way the husband must be willing to love his wife at all times, even when she does not appear to be worthy of love. He cannot say, “She is no longer young and beautiful and able to have children so I want to take a second wife.”

(iv) Christ’s love for His church had a spiritual purpose: “to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word” (v. 26). Christ shows His love to us not just by providing for our physical needs, but especially by making us ready for heaven. In the same way a husband is not to just provide food and shelter for his wife, he must take a deep interest in her spiritual progress in the Lord. He must help her in her fight against sin, he must read and study the Scriptures with her, and he must pray for her that she will mature in her faith and will serve the Lord and honour Him.

3. Instructions to children (6:1-3).

Paul’s instructions to children is that they must obey their parents “in the Lord.” This means that they are to obey their parents in those things that please God. If their parents ask them to tell lies then they cannot obey as that is against the will of God. Paul also says that this command comes with a promise: they will have a long and happy life here on earth. Those children who obey their parents and follow their advice will avoid many harmful things which kill many young people and will instead have a healthy and happy life. This is especially true if the children get saved. Their lives in the home will then be a delight because the whole house will seek to honour God in all things and they will be united in this.

4. Instructions to fathers (6:4).

It is interesting that Paul does not give instructions to parents but to fathers in particular. This is because the father is the head of the house, and possibly also because fathers

often neglect their duties to their children. There are two instructions to fathers. Firstly, they must not exasperate their children. This means they must not make life difficult for their children. A father can make life difficult for his children by being too demanding. If he expects them always to work very hard at school and come top each time, the children have a difficult life. A father can also make life difficult for his children by sending them to a boarding school where the child is unhappy and receives no teaching from the Bible. Also a father can make life difficult for his children by making spiritual demands upon them, such as memorising verses from the Bible everyday.

Secondly, the father must bring his children up in the training and instruction of the Lord. This means he is to teach his children the Bible each day and he is to pray for them everyday that they will get saved and that they will honour God in their lives. This is the duty of the father and he must fulfil it. A father needs to remember that his children's spiritual lives are more important than how they perform at school.

5. Instructions to servants (6:5-8).

These words were originally written for slaves, but they apply to all who are in employment, whether in a big government office or as a house maid. Paul has one main instruction: that all workers are to obey their employers and serve them wholeheartedly. They are to obey just as they would obey Christ, and they are to be honest and diligent in their duties. This is because it is the will of God that they should do this (v. 6), and if they do this then God will reward them (v. 8).

6. Instructions to masters (6:9).

Paul says, "And masters, treat you slaves in the same way." Servants are to serve their masters as they would serve Christ, and masters were to treat their servants as Christ would want. Paul's instruction is, "Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favouritism with him." Masters are not to threaten servants because the Lord Jesus is in heaven and is watching. It is very common in our country for servants to be badly paid and badly treated. This is all against the will of God, and all masters who do this will one day be judged by God.

Lesson Five, Eph. 6:10-20, The Christian's War against Spiritual Forces.

In this passage, Paul continues his teaching on how we as Christians are to live our lives on a day to day basis. He has given us teaching on how we are to live as Christians in the local church, in the world and in the home. Now he gives instructions on how we are to fight against spiritual forces. There are three important things that he teaches us here.

1. We are to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power ((v. 10).

The Christian life is a war. When a person gets saved, he becomes a soldier in the army of God and he is at once face to face with the enemy. He cannot rest and relax and be lazy, he is required to fight at all times. His great enemy, the devil, uses two major weapons against him:

(i) The world now becomes his enemy. This means that the people who were his friends and with whom he spent much of his time are now his enemies. The people of the world are under the power and control of Satan and they will do all they can to tempt the Christian back into a worldly lifestyle. If a man gets saved his friends might laugh at him and tease him and will try to tempt him to leave the saved life and to join them again in the bar.

(ii) He has the remains of sin still in him. This is something we looked at in lesson one of this booklet. The remains of sin (called the sinful nature) will fight against him and tempt him to live a life of sin and not to follow and obey Christ.

The Lord Jesus taught that these two agents of the devil are very powerful and sometimes they are effective. In the parable of the sower and the seed, he spoke of the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. He gives the impression that he is truly saved. But then "when trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away" (Matt. 13:21). We all know this is true. A person comes to church and hears preaching from the Bible. He then says he is saved. But when his friends and colleagues at work find out, they laugh at him and tease him. He finds they are no longer his friends, they have isolated him. And so after a while he gives up and returns to the world. It shows he was never truly saved and it shows us how powerful the world is as our enemy.

Jesus also spoke about how powerful the sin that still remains in us is. He said “the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth” (Matt. 13:22) make some people go back to the world. Again this is something we all know about. A person who has been earning a lot of money from bribes says that he is now saved. Then he realises that he must not take bribes any more, and he knows that this will mean a big cut in his income. So he goes back to the world and starts taking bribes again.

We are to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power because of these enemies. Our strength does not come from us, for we are weak, but it comes from the Lord Himself, He is mighty and He enables us to stand. We need to pray for ourselves and for others every day that we will stand and fight and not give up.

2. We are to remember that our fight is not against flesh and blood but against rulers and authorities of this dark world (v. 12).

The devil is called “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Eph. 2:2) and “the god of this age” (2 Cor. 4:4). This does not mean that he is as powerful as God or that he is able to resist the will of God. God is the absolute and complete ruler of the universe and everything that happens here on earth happens only by His will and permission. However, God in His wisdom has allowed Satan to have control over the unsaved people of this world and to use them. This is why the Bible says, “The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Cor. 4:4).

This means that our battle is not against the people of this world. We do not fight our unsaved neighbours and friends. We have to recognise that they are slaves of the devil without knowing it. When they trouble us because of our Christian faith, it is because the devil is using them. So we are not to fight and hate our fellow human beings, instead we are to love those who hate us and pray for those who persecute us (Matt. 5:44-45).

3. We are to put on the full armour of God (vs. 13-20)

Our war, as we have seen, is not with human beings but with the forces of evil. This means we need to put on spiritual armour in order to fight. Notice that in v. 12 Paul tells us whom we are fighting, and then begins v. 13 “therefore,” meaning, since you are fighting this sort of enemy, you need therefore to put on the full armour of God. In this passage, Paul describes what this armour is.

(i) The word of God. This is mentioned three times in this passage: “the belt of truth” (v. 15), “the gospel of peace” (v. 16), and “the word of God” (v. 17). The word of God is the most important weapon we have because it protects us when the devil accuses us, it encourages us when the world tries to discourage us and it enables us to win our enemies to our side by the preaching of the gospel. If we are to win our war against the devil, we must read and study the word of God every day and get to know it well, and we must use it in our fight against sin.

(ii) The breastplate of righteousness. The devil is called “the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10). The devil seeks to discourage Christians and so make them powerless in their Christian lives. This he does by reminding us of our sinfulness before God. But when we got saved, the righteousness of Christ was given to us so that we are justified in the sight of God. That is why we have been given the breastplate of righteousness in our war against Satan.

(iii) The shield of faith. Faith means to believe what God has said in His word. Faith is a great protection against the flaming arrows of the evil one because the word of God is full of promises for the people of God. If we take hold of the promises of God and apply them in our lives then we will be protected against these arrows.

(iv) The helmet of salvation. In 1 Thess. 5:8, Paul says we are to put on “the hope of salvation as a helmet.” The hope of heaven is a great weapon in our war against Satan because it keeps our minds focused on eternity. If we keep in mind that we will be with the Lord Jesus in eternity, then that thought will enable us to face all the trials of life: “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). We will not give up when “trouble or persecution comes because of the word” (Matt. 13:21) but will persevere. Also, if we keep in mind our eternal home in heaven, we will live holy lives here on earth: “We know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure” (1 Jn. 3:2-3).

(v) Prayer (18-20). This is mentioned last because it is the most important weapon that we have. Imagine that a soldier in a war is suddenly surrounded by enemies who are about to kill him. He is all on his own, with no one with him. But when he shouts for help, suddenly a large group of soldiers come to his help. That is what prayer is like. Whenever the devil tempts us to sin or tempts us to be discouraged or to be lazy in our service for the Lord, we need to pray to God for help. Prayer immediately changes the

situation. We are no longer alone, God is by our side helping us. Notice that Paul says two things about prayer in this passage.

Firstly, he tells us that we are to be prayerful people: “Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” We are not just to have a time of prayer each day (though that, of course, is important), but we are to be in an attitude of prayer through the day. Imagine that you ring a friend on your mobile phone and then never disconnect. You are connected to him all the time. Any time you need help, you just ask and he comes to your aid. That is the attitude we are to be in all day.

Secondly, Paul tells the Ephesians to pray for him in his ministry of preaching the gospel (vs. 19-20). We are to pray specifically for the gospel ministry of the church and especially for those who have the ministry of preaching the gospel. This is important in spiritual warfare because the best way to defeat the world is to win them to Christ! If all our friends and colleagues become disciples of Christ then our warfare against the world becomes much easier.

Some books which can help you in your Christian life.

As we have seen, it is very important for those who are saved to live a faithful Christian life in this world. God’s servants have written some very good books which help us to live the Christian life to the glory of God. We have mentioned two below which are available in both English and Swahili. If you are able to get these books then we would encourage you to do so and to read them diligently.

1. *Holiness* by J.C. Ryle, probably the best book ever written on the subject of how to live a holy life. The Swahili translation is called *Utakatifu*.
2. *Walking with God* by J.C. Ryle, another very good and very practical book on how to live the Christian life. The Swahili translation is called *Kutembea na Mungu*.