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## "Shield of Faith"

Review: Series to help us recognize the devil's schemes and stand firm using the armor of \God.

Ephesians 6:16 (ESV) In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;

- The shield of faith is the first line of defense against the devil's fiery darts.

### What is the shield of faith?

The Roman shield was heavy, made of multiple layers of wood, covered in hide, reinforced with metal. They were large, usually around 4' tall by 2 ½' wide. Large enough to cover the whole body if positioned correctly.

Hebrews 11:1 (ESV) Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

- Faith is conviction, belief, reliance, trust, and obedience in God and His truth.
- Faith gives protection because faith says 'I'm relying on God and not on myself' to quench the fiery darts of the evil one.
- Faith is being sure that something will happen even when we can't see how it will happen.

Two parts to faith:

- *Believing that something is true.*
- *Committing to that which has been promised by God.*

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV) And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

- Faith is believing that God is here with us, and that He reveals Himself to the seeking heart.
- Faith is called a shield because *through remaining in Christ*, we recognize the devil's schemes and lift up truth against his deception and lies.

### What are his tactics?

The spiritual attack of flaming darts that Paul describes is intended to shift our focus *from God* on to something or someone else.

*The first dart is most often doubt.*

Matthew 4:3 (NIV) The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

- Satan gets us to doubt who God says He is and believe He is not sufficient for all our needs.

*The other darts that follow are often some form of deception, fear, anxiety, temptation, culminating in lies.*

The fiery darts come when and where we least expect them, *when we are alone*, discouraged and vulnerable.

### How do we use the shield of faith?

1. Take up the shield of faith - possess it.
- Take hold of the faith given you and develop it, apply it to life.

James 2:17 (ESV) So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

- True faith is always active.

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NIV) Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

- Remember we are not alone in this war. We need each other!
  - Lay aside - It implies a deliberate action of removing or discarding something that distracts.
  - Run the race with endurance - remaining faithful and patient under pressure.
  - Looking to Jesus - looking away from all distractions and attacks, focusing on Jesus.
2. Make growing in faith a priority.

Jude 20 (ESV) But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,

- Like an athlete who has a single focus in training, in faith, we have a single focus.

Matthew 6:33 (ESV) But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

- Align your priorities and lifestyle with God while trusting He will meet all your needs.

Matthew 5:43-44 (NIV) "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

- if you want to grow your faith muscles....*Love your enemies and pray for them.*

Proverbs 11:25 (NIV) A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

- Practice generosity and service. When we are others centered, we grow our faith.

3. The protection faith offers

- Jesus used the specific word of God to refute the temptations of Satan.
- There is great protection when we live in a faith community.

Hebrews 3:12-13 (NIV) See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

**Small Group Discussion Questions:**

**Application: Matthew 7:24-27, Galatians 5:16-17, Romans 12:1-2**

- What do you use as a shield in your life?
- What do you need to do to build your faith?
- When you experience an attack from Satan, what or who do you turn to?
- How does your small group help strengthen your faith?



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