

# EQUIPPED

## A STUDY OF THE ARMOR OF GOD

### WEEK 3: Shoes of the Gospel of Peace

#### The gospel prepares our feet to share God's peace.

*"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." Ephesians 6:14-15*

#### DAY ONE: SOLID FOOTING

**BIG IDEA:** Knowing the Prince of Peace gives us peace.

I have more shoes in my closet than I care to admit. Some are made for walking and some are made for style! On a recent hiking trip, I packed two pairs of shoes: one casual pair for wearing around the lodge and one awesome pair of sturdy hiking shoes for hitting the trails. While hiking, I needed a thick tread for traction, a heavy sole for stability and water resistant material to keep my feet dry. To traverse up and down rocky, hilly terrain the right footwear was essential. There would be no way to stand my ground in flip flops!

The Roman soldier's shoes were vitally important to his safety and success in battle. A soldier could have excellent weapons and protective armor but if he didn't keep his footing, he was going down. To give stability for better mobility, the Roman soldier wore sandals with "hobnails" in the soles. Like modern day cleats, the soldier's footwear had knobs and nails on the bottom of the sole.

After the belt and breastplate, Paul listed the shoes as the next piece of armor that we are to put on to prepare for the battles we face. In Ephesians 6:15, he writes that our readiness comes from the gospel of peace. Paul also speaks of peace in his letter to the Romans. **Read Romans 5:1-5 then summarize in the space below:**

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By faith in Jesus Christ, we have peace with God. This is the gospel - the good news we can celebrate every day even amidst the turmoil of this life. Whether we are facing a health crisis, divorce, sick kids, strained relationships or a broken washing machine, God offers his peace in the ups and downs of daily life.

Ephesians 6:15 also says the shoes of peace will prepare us, or make us ready. Readiness in this verse conveys two ideas: knowing the good news *and* being ready to share it with others. When we have good news, something that makes a significant difference in our lives, we want to share it! Sharing the gospel doesn't have to mean knocking on random doors or shouting on street corners. It's telling other the good news about what Jesus has done for you.

**List below some of the blessings you have experienced because of Jesus: (Has he comforted you when lonely, forgiven you for sins, given guidance or wisdom in difficult situations? The possibilities are endless - jot down a few that come to mind.**

Before ending our study time today, let's look into the Old Testament to see what the prophet Isaiah wrote about our Jesus, our Prince of Peace.

**Read Isaiah 52:7. How does verse 7 describe the good news?**

End today's study by taking time to pray. Ask God to help you embrace the peace he offers as you navigate the peace-stealing situations you face.

## DAY TWO: PRINCE OF PEACE

BIG IDEA: Shalom - God's complete and permanent peace!

*Shalom* is a common Hebrew greeting. It is used as hello and goodbye containing the underlying thought of whole-person, permanent peace. *Shalom* conveys health (physical), peace with God (spiritual), and peace with self and others (emotional, relational). I want *shalom*, don't you?

**As you think about your personal search for peace, what are some of the wrong places you have looked for short term peace in your life?**

Yesterday we looked at Isaiah 52 learning that Jesus is our Prince of Peace. Today, let's read other passages throughout the Bible that speak of the peace Jesus brings. These are sure to bring peace to your soul!

**Read the passages and write a one sentence summary of what the text says about the relationship between Jesus and peace.**

Isaiah 9:6-7

John 16:31-33

Romans 16:20

**Which one most resonates with you in your current situation? Write it on a notecard, post it or screen shot it to memorize.**

Spend time today in prayer thinking about *shalom*, the peace that Jesus gives. Confess areas where you have not trusted God resulting in lack of peace. Thank Him for the times you have experienced His peace. Ask Him to help you be a person characterized by *shalom*, whole-person peace.

## DAY THREE: READY TO SHARE

BIG IDEA: The good news is too good not to share!

God's beautiful gift of new life in Christ is almost too good to be true! Exchanging my brokenness, messiness and self-inflicted chaos for his abundant freedom and life is a precious gift beyond measure. At times I find it hard to express how much Jesus means to me. And, I confess, at times, I find it hard to share my good news story with others. How about you?  
**Put a check beside the reasons below that keep you from sharing the gospel.**

- ☐ I don't know the Bible well enough.
- ☐ My life is a mess so how can I presume to tell others how to follow Jesus.
- ☐ I don't know how to explain the gospel.
- ☐ I don't want to seem self-righteous or preachy telling them what to do.
- ☐ I think they've heard it before and won't want to hear it from me.
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

I've had all of these thoughts and many others. We are easily tempted to not speak or tell out of fear or insecurity if we do not keep in mind the risk of silence. Apart from embracing the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, people are headed to eternal separation from God and all that is good.

**When someone shared the gospel with you, how did they explain or live it in a way that drew you to Jesus?**

**Looking back, how had God been preparing you to receive the good news?**

**Read Romans 10:14-15. What do you learn about sharing the good news? How does this encourage you?**

The Holy Spirit draws people to salvation by convicting of sin and stirring an interest in spiritual things. By praying for God's guidance and being sensitive to God's leading, we can comfortably and confidently share what God has done in our lives knowing that the Spirit Himself is with us as we share. We shouldn't be rude, insensitive or judgmental but gentle, respectful and humble as we share our story.

**Is the Holy Spirit bringing anyone to mind that you can share the gospel with this month? Write their name\_\_\_\_\_.**

Today, pray that God will give you opportunities to speak about Him naturally in conversations. Thank God for His gift of peace and for boldness to share His good news with those in your circle of influence.

## **DAY FOUR: ROUGH TERRAIN**

**BIG IDEA:** God's peace can hold us steady in any situation.

We began our week of study looking at the Roman soldier's footwear. The soldier's defense was only as good as his footing in battle making the shoes a very important piece of the armor. Paul equated the shoes to the Christian's peace when he wrote in verse 15 to "Stand firm.... with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace."

God wants us to be stable, standing firm in peace even when we encounter rough terrain. Sometimes life hits us hard. We reel from the blows of impossibly difficult news. Other times, it seems our strength is almost gone leaving us wondering if we can go on. Today let's look at Biblical principles to help us choose God's shoes of peace no matter what we run into.

**After each passage, write a practical way to live out the principle in your life today. I'll do the first one as an example.**

**Hebrews 12:1-2a** 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, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith...

When worry over my finances consumes me, I can fix my eyes on Jesus by thinking about what He did for me on the cross. I remember some of the promises He made to me in His Word and think about other people in Scripture who endured much worse hardships and God took care of them.

Now your turn:

**Isaiah 26:3** You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

**Philippians 4:6-7** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**Psalms 119:165** Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.

**1 Peter 5:7-8** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

We wonder why we live without peace yet often, we fail to follow God's prescriptive practices that help prepare us for the rough terrain of life. Following these principles are not our peace, but they lead us to the One who is our Prince of Peace.

Look back over the things you wrote. Summarize one principle you will put in practice today by writing in here:

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End today's lesson asking God to help you wear His shoes of peace in the rough terrain you encounter.

## DAY FIVE: BLESSED ARE THE PEACE MAKERS

BIG IDEA: .

The only way to avoid conflict with other people is to completely avoid other people and that's not an option! Sooner or later, we will experience tension in relationships or outright conflict with another person. Satan loves to plant landmines of conflict for us to stumble across.

**When has relational strain or conflict with another person robbed you of your peace (trouble sleeping, unrest in your thoughts or feelings)?**

Often, we fall into unhealthy responses to conflict that do not lead us to peace. Perhaps your thoughts have become consumed remembering the conflict in all of the smallest details. Maybe you have tried to numb away the feelings through television, food, shopping or other diversions. These distractions may help for a moment but do not solve the problem and often lead to greater despair in the long run.

God has provided two healthy postures as possibilities when someone hurts us.

**Summarize in your own words the *first godly option* according to Proverbs 29:11, Colossians 3:13-15 and 1 Peter 4:8.**

We can choose to overlook a wrong to allow "peace" to rule. Sometimes, God calls us to be silent while He fights our battles for us. **Can you think of a time God led you to overlook a wrong without addressing it with the person who hurt you?**

A *second godly option* to follow when we have been hurt is to prayerfully and calmly follow the steps of Matthew 18.

**What steps and results do verses 15-17 say to take when another believer sins against you:**

1st step: \_\_\_\_\_

If they listen, the result is \_\_\_\_\_

If it's unsuccessful, move to step 2

2nd step: \_\_\_\_\_

If it doesn't go well still, move to step 3

3rd step: \_\_\_\_\_

If the church decides against the offender, then \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever employed any of these steps toward reconciliation? What were the results?**

Our attempts at reconciliation don't always work. When we have attempted to solve conflict biblically and still experience a fractured relationship we can still find peace knowing we have done all we can do. We can rest in Romans 12:18. Write it here:

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As we finish this week's lesson, read these passages. Pray these prayers of Paul in your own words for your life and relationships.

*"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (Romans 15:5-6)

*"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you."* (2 Thessalonians 3:16)