

We are looking at areas of growth and maturity for a Jesus Follower.

Today, look at this piece of the puzzle:

### **A growing and maturing lifestyle of worship, prayer, and spiritual warfare**

We will face many challenges in life. Some challenges are with other people and circumstances, while others have more “spiritual” roots. The Bible teaches us that the devil is on a constant mission to destroy God’s work on this planet. (**John 10:10** *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy...*) Because we are a big part of God's plan and purpose, the devil wants to do all he can to distract us and cause us to be ineffective in our lives as Christians. To some, this may seem like a sad situation, but God has provided a strategy for us to be victorious in the battles that arise. We need to understand that living a victorious Christian life is only possible by putting into practice spiritual principles taught by God's word. If we try to live according to our own intellect, wisdom, and understanding, we will not be able to win the spiritual battles because human weapons are no good in spiritual battles. Biblical discipleship teaches people the importance of spiritual warfare, the components of spiritual warfare and how to walk in proper balance as they engage in spiritual warfare.

To be victorious in the spiritual battles of life, we must be consistent in our relationship with God. We must always look to Him and His strength and always seek His answers.

**1 Chronicles 16:11** *Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.*

Most Christians want to do the right things, but our flesh is weak. We can try all kinds of “tricks” to combat the flesh, exercise all the self-control and self-discipline we can muster, but the best place to start is with prayer.

**Matthew 26:41** *Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.*

Living life in obedience to God's word is a form of worship to Him.

**Romans 12:1,2** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Our worship is not to be tied to a form, tradition, style, etc. Worship is a spiritual experience, conducted in a Spirit-led fashion

**John 4:24** *God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*

As we endeavor to live a life of spiritual worship, we will face spiritual resistance. It is important how we deal with this opposition. The weapons of this world consist of those things that man can do on his own and with his own ability. The weapons that we need to use to fight the spiritual battles of life find their place in God. They not only help us walk victoriously, but they literally demolish the strongholds that wage war in our lives.

**2 Corinthians 10:4,5** *The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

The battles we fight, regardless of their origin or combatants, are not against other people but ultimately against spiritual forces. This is why we need to fight our battles with spiritual weapons, in a spiritual context. We can't rely on our armor. Our armor consists of man's answers, man's intellect, and man's wisdom. God's armor is all about His wisdom, power, and glory.

**Ephesians 6:10-18** *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 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. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*

Paul tells us that one way to fight the battles of temptation is to clothe ourselves with Christ.

**Romans 13:14** *Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

When we put on the armor of God, we are putting on Jesus:

**Belt of truth – Jesus is the truth:**

**John 14:6** *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

**Breastplate of righteousness – Jesus is our righteousness:**

**Romans 3:22** *This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*

**2 Corinthians 5:21** *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**Feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace – Jesus is the Gospel and Peace**

**2 Timothy 2:8** *Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel,*

**Isaiah 9:6** *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

### **Shield of faith – Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith**

**Hebrews 12:2** *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

### **Helmet of salvation – Jesus is our salvation**

**Acts 4:12** *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.*

### **Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God – Jesus is the Word of God**

**John 1:1** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

**John 1:14** *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

**And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.**

There are many reasons to be anxious in life. Inevitably things happen that can cause stress. God has given us a way to deal with the stress and anxiety of life —prayer.

**Philippians 4:6** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*

We need to be purposeful about prayer. We need to be strategic in our prayers. We need to make prayer a priority.

**Colossians 4:2** *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

Praying should become a part of the fabric of our lives, not a ceremony or ritual that is disconnected with the rest of our existence.

**1 Thessalonians 5:17** *pray continually*

### **Hale Pule Question:**

**Think about each piece of the armor of God. Think about the practical application of how each one is intended, by the Father, to incorporate into daily lives. Consider intentional steps you can take to “put on the whole armor of God” and thereby “clothe yourself with Jesus.”**

**Write your thoughts under each piece of armor:**

**Belt of truth**

**Breastplate of righteousness**

**Feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace**

**Shield of faith**

**Helmet of Salvation**

**Sword of the Spirit**

**Prayer in the Spirit**