

Series: "You Can Be a Hero: Lessons on the Armor of God"

Lesson 5 – "The Breastplate of Righteousness – Wear it & Bear it!"

**Preparation:** Make a stained shirt to wear. Find a team jersey to bring. Bring enough suckers or wrapped candy for everyone to have a piece. Copy & print scriptures & situations to wrap around candy or suckers.

**Introductory Activity:** (10 min)

Draw a stick figure on a white board and see how many pieces of the armor students can remember and draw & label. Or have students each draw their own stick figures adding the pieces of armor.

**Review Lessons 4** (5 min)

- Ephesians 6:10-19 repeats we are to "stand firm" & "put on" the full armor of God
- The first piece we talked about was – the belt of Truth
- God's Truth strengthens our very core and keeps us from tripping over Satan's lies.

**Focal Scripture:** Ephesians 6:14

*"Stand, therefore, with truth like a belt around your waist, righteousness like armor on your chest,"*

**Key Take Away:** Being right with God protects our heart from getting dirty with sin.

## **Breastplate of Righteousness** – It protects our heart.

Look up & read Proverbs 4:23

*“Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life.”*

Discuss the importance of our physical heart (pumps blood; without it we are dead, etc.) Compare to spiritual heart (it is our very core of who we are, our spiritual center)

### **Wear it!** - Initial protection - Imputed righteousness

#### Object Lesson – God’s Team Jersey – “Put on Christ”:

Come in wearing a dirty, stained shirt. As you begin the lesson talk about the stains and how you couldn’t wash them out. Point out that this is a lot like sin. God offers us not only a way to wash away our sin, but to protect us from further permanent sin stains. Put on the jersey you brought & ask students why a jersey is important for a member of a team – it identifies you with the team. Comment that the jersey “covers up” the stained shirt and identifies you with a team. In the same way, in salvation, Jesus gives us His righteousness that covers our sin, but also identifies us as God’s child (born into His family) a part of God’s team, so that when God looks at us, He no longer sees our sin, but the righteousness of Jesus.

Look up & read aloud –

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”*

Romans 13:14 – *“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans to satisfy the fleshly desires”*

This is called “imputed righteousness”. This means Christ gives us His righteousness (He transfers His sinless account to us and our sinful account to Himself) which makes us a part of God’s family forever! Some call this “justification” – “just as if I never sinned.” This takes place at the moment of salvation when we invite Jesus into our lives and trust Him completely with our life now and forever & receive His forgiveness and righteousness.

Knowing we are on God’s team, in His family forever, brings confidence and security. This protects our heart from fear and doubt, but ultimately protects it from death because He gives us eternal life!

## **Bear it!** - Daily protection – Practical righteousness

We never lose Jesus' righteousness once we have received it; we'll always be a part of God's team. But in everyday life, it's our choice to wear and "bear" His righteousness so others see the difference in our life.

Think about what would happen if the quarterback of the football team ran out on the field to play in the game without his jersey! He would be clobbered by all because he wouldn't be showing whose team he is on!

### **Object Lesson: Wrapped Sucker or Candy –**

Hold up a sucker or piece of wrapped candy and ask what the purpose is of a sucker/candy. (to be enjoyed)

What purpose does the wrapper on the sucker/candy have? (protect it so it can fulfill its purpose)

Take the wrapper off your sucker and roll on the floor or in dirt, etc. Ask if anyone wants to enjoy the sucker now! (hopefully they say no)

Take another sucker with the wrapper still on and do the same. Ask if they'd like to enjoy this sucker. Then ask what was the difference. (the wrapper protected the sucker from getting dirty & nasty)

In the same way that the wrapper protects the sucker from picking up dirt and yuck, righteousness can protect our hearts from sin.

- Righteousness is doing what is right in God's sight.
- Righteousness is in part reflected by our attitude.
- We need to be upright in character as well as actions.
- Righteousness comes from the heart.

*"Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." – 2 Timothy 2:22*

- *Flee evil – go away from anything evil so the enemy doesn't knock you down!*
- *Pursue righteousness..., run towards God's goal & purpose!*
- *Along with...your own team! (Who you hang with matters!)*

If we choose each day to try to live like Jesus, we won't go to places or do those things we shouldn't where Satan can trip us up and cause us to fall into sin.

Also, others will see by our actions and attitudes that truly we are a part of God's team & His righteousness will protect our heart and be seen as we identify with His team.

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,  
23 gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law." - Galatians 5:22-23*

### Activity – Talking through Situations:

Have students discuss the following situations and how the right decision (righteousness) can protect their heart.

1. Jenny has been invited to stay over at a friend's house, but their parents won't be home part of the night. What should she do?
2. John offers Mike a cheat sheet to help him on a History test. What should Mike do?
3. Beth & Avery are talking bad about the new girl in their class. Rachel walks up. When she hears what they are talking about, what should she do?
4. Ben and James were best friends until James really hurt Ben's feelings. Ben got so angry at James. What should Ben do?
5. Betsy has been asked to go to a movie with the popular group of kids from school, but knows her parents wouldn't approve of the movie. What should she do?

### Our purpose –

1. Point others to Jesus. 2 Timothy 2:25 NLV

*"Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth."*

2. Glorify God – for God's pleasure – His glory. Philippians 1:11 NLV

*"May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God."*

## Prayer Time: 5 Finger Prayer

Have students trace their hand on a piece of paper. Have them label their thumb (which is closest to us) family & friends; their pointer finger (teachers & healers); the middle finger (which is tallest) leaders; the ring finger (which is weakest) needy & sick; and the pinkie (which is smallest) myself.

Then lead them to take time praying through others by using their fingers. The thumb represents those closest to us – family & friends; take a few moments praying for these in your life. The pointer finger makes us think of those that teach or heal; this may be a school teacher, Sunday school teacher, pastor, piano teacher, doctor, nurse, dentist, etc. Pray for these in your life. The middle finger is the tallest; pray for our leaders of our country, our state, our town, our church, your school, etc. The ring finger is weakest; pray for those who are in need or sick. Finally talk to God about yourself the pinky. We put ourselves last; praising God and praying for others first.

Matthew 20:16 (Parable of the Land owner)

*“So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last.”*

## Scriptures & Situations to wrap around suckers or candy:

Proverbs 4:23 “Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life.”

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”

Romans 13:14 – “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans to satisfy the fleshly desires”

Galatians 5:22-23 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

Philippians 1:11 “May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation—the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ—for this will bring much glory and praise to God.”

Jenny has been invited to stay over at a friend’s house, but their parents won’t be home part of the night. What should she do?

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Beth & Avery are talking bad about the new girl in their class. Rachel walks up. When she hears what they are talking about, what should she do?

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Betsy has been asked to go to a movie with the popular group of kids from school, but knows her parents wouldn’t approve of the movie. What should she do?