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A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF AMAZING GRACE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
NUMBER 73
EPHESIANS 6:14

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EPHESIANS 6:14 "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;"

In this paper we will analyze the equipment which is available to us as we wage the warfare for living the Christian life. When Paul was imprisoned at Rome, he had a soldier guarding him all the time. No doubt Paul studied the equipment those soldiers wore and from that study derived the idea of our equipment as Christian soldiers. Those soldiers who guarded Paul wore belts, and attached to those belts were pockets and clamps. All of their equipment was carefully designed to meet their needs when they were in the thick of the battle. The Praetorian guard was indeed an amazing kind of soldier, and Paul saw his equipment and then thought of the equipment every Christian soldier ought to have.

EPHESIANS 6:14 "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;" The word "stand" is an aorist, active, imperative of "histemi." The aorist tense means that in any given point of time, the Christian should take his stand. The active voice means that positive volition is involved in taking the stand. The imperative mood means that it is a command and is not optional. Here in verses 13 through 17 we have a number of aorist participles, and the participle in a greek sentence always takes precedence over the main verb. The main verb is given here, to stand. In the thick of the battle, one is to stand and fight, but before one can fight effectively, there must be the right equipment available. Paul is here urging the Christian to give close attention to the right equipment. Thus he says "having your loins girt about" and this is an aorist, middle, participle. So this takes precedence over the main verb, which is "to stand." In other words, before you can stand, you have to have your loins girt about with truth.

Training Necessary

Before a soldier can go into combat and fight effectively, certain training is necessary. The words "girt about" come from "perizunummi" and it means to throw something around the waist. The Roman soldier wore a wide belt around his waist, and from this belt hung his sword and the other equipment he needed. This belt was his basic piece of equipment. The word for "truth" here is "alatheia" and it is a technical term and it means Bible doctrine in its categories. The belt of truth therefore refers to the whole doctrine of grace. Let us therefore look at this belt of truth the Christian is to wear as he wages the daily battle.

THE DOCTRINE FOR UNDERSTANDING AMAZING GRACE

No Roman soldier ever fought without wearing his belt. The belt for the Christian is the grace provision of God.

1. DISTINGUISH BETWEEN HUMAN I.Q. AND SPIRITUAL I.Q.

It is possible to have a very high personal I.Q. and be illiterate concerning spiritual things. Just because a person has a high I.Q., humanly speaking, it doesn't necessarily mean that he will be spiritual. The personal human I.Q. and the spiritual I.Q. are two different things entirely.

2. HUMAN I.Q. IS NOT THE MAIN FACTOR FOR UNDERSTANDING GOD'S GRACE.
1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man (means the soulish man) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." Here we see that the Bible makes a distinction between personal and spiritual I.Q.

3. APPLYING DOCTRINE TO LIFE IS A SPIRITUAL PROCESS.
We learn doctrine and it comes into the perceptice lobe of the mind. But we must transfer this doctrinal knowledge over into the human spirit before it can be applied to life.
JAMES 1:22-24 "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was."
The businessman, the doctor, or the teacher can learn something and apply it to the situation immediately. But it is different with the Christian. You cannot take doctrine from the mind and apply it. It must be transferred over into the human spirit, and from this reserve of doctrine in the spirit, we can apply spiritual truth to the situation.

4. GOD'S GREAT GRACE PROVISION FOR OUR LEARNING OF BIBLE DOCTRINE.
 - a. FORMATION AND PRESERVATION OF THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE.
Not one of us has ever earned the right to have something as wonderful as the Canon of Scripture. The Canon of Scripture is a gift to us from the hand and the mind of God. God the Holy Spirit took pertinent truth and gave it to men and they wrote it down. The writers of Scripture wrote down exactly what God wanted written down. The whole message of the Bible was "Theo neustos" and that means God Breathed.

I carry pasted in the back of my Bible this important paragraph.
"THE SCRIPTURE IN THE BIBLE DID NOT ORIGINATE IN THE MIND OF MAN. GOD SO DIRECTED THE WRITING OF SCRIPTURE THAT WITHOUT WAIVING THEIR HUMAN INTELLIGENCE, THEIR INDIVIDUALITY, THEIR LITERARY STYLE, THEIR PERSONAL FEELINGS, OR ANY OTHER FACTOR, HIS COMPLETE COHERENT MESSAGE TO MAN WAS RECORDED WITH PERFECT ACCURACY, THE VERY WORDS OF SCRIPTURE BEARING THE AUTHORITY OF DIVINE AUTHORSHIP."
God has preserved the Canon from many attacks. We didn't write the Bible, God did! He gave it and it is the mind of God. This is one of the amazing grace gifts of God.

 - b. THE GRACE GIFT OF THE CHURCH.
The Church is Christ's institution for the propogation of the truth of doctrine. The Jews originally had this job, but they turned selfish and failed and God raised up the church to take over this task.

 - c. THE GRACE GIFT OF A PASTOR-TEACHER.
God gives to some the grace gift of pastor-teacher. No man in history has ever earned the right to be a pastor-teacher. His teaching must be done with authority, and therefore, it is monologue and not dialogue. This doesn't mean that questions

cannot be asked and answered in a public teaching situation. But the pastor-teacher is to teach with authority. Teaching by monologue is God's divine plan for teaching the Bible in a public teaching situation. (Aristotle and Plato used dialogue but it is not God's plan for the communication of doctrine.)

d. THE PRIESTHOOD OF EVERY BELIEVER.

As a grace gift God has given every believer his right to privacy. That's the reason why we teach in a public situation and not one on one. In a public meeting the individual is free to take it or leave it. Your priesthood gives you the right to sit in a congregation and hear Bible doctrine and accept or reject it.

e. THE INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN THE BELIEVER.

In every single believer in the Church Age, the Holy Spirit dwells on the inside. This is why the song "Spirit Of The Living God, Fall Afresh On Me" is incorrect. The Holy Spirit falls on you once and never again. (I Cor. 2:9-16 and 1 John 2:27) However, to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit is not enough. The Holy Spirit must control the life and thereby eliminate carnality.

f. THE REBOUND TECHNIQUE THROUGH THE CONFESSION OF SIN.

This is one of God's grace gifts to every believer. 1 John 1:9 is the great gift package from God to you as a believer. The believer names his sin to God and instantly it is forgiven, forgotten and buried forever. It is a grace gift from God. Ephesians 3:19 and 4:10 compared with Ephesians 5:18.

g. THE GRACE GIFT OF OUR HUMAN SPIRIT.

The human spirit is a grace gift. We learn spiritual truth in the perceptive lobe of the mind, then we transfer it into our human spirit and we store it up there. From this residual doctrine in the human spirit, we can exhale faith toward God. Doctrine in the soul is very much like ammunition in the arsenal. For that ammunition to do any good in winning the battle you have to take it out and distribute it to the soldiers so they can put it on the launching pad. This is exactly what must happen in the soul. Faith transfers doctrine from the human soul over into the human spirit and all of this amazing process is a grace gift from the hand of God. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:12 "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

JOB 32:8 "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

h. GOD'S AMAZING GRACE GIFT IN THE WAY HE CONSTRUCTED THE HUMAN MIND.

The fact that a human can think for himself and say, "I do not believe in God" or "I do believe in God" is a grace gift. God didn't give this gift to lower creation, only to angels and man. (However salvation of angels and salvation of man is different. How angels are saved we do not know. The Bible doesn't say. But it does say angels are saved and lost.)

The function of man's mind is based on oxygen in the blood. We inhale air into the lungs and the oxygen is extracted and the carbon dioxide is exhaled. This oxygen enters the bloodstream and goes to the mind and makes it possible for man to think and make volitional decisions. This is a grace gift from God. The same thing happens in the eating of food. When you eat food, the passage to the lungs is closed off when you swallow and food goes through the esophagus into the stomach. In this way, food is turned into energy. This is another grace gift from God. Even the unbeliever may curse God to his face, but God in his grace lets the processes continue. Men like Lenin and Stalin were given these grace gifts from God, even though they distorted God's original plan for them.

5. TAKE A LOOK NOW AT THE MECHANICS OF GRACE.

a. THE COMMUNICATION OF TRUTH BY THE RIGHT PASTOR-TEACHER TO THE RIGHT CONGREGATION.

The pastor must have the gift and be willing to study. The Bible must be interpreted in the light of its setting. Categorical teaching takes Scripture and compares it with other Scripture and from this doctrinal truth emerges. No one verse ever contradicts another, only confirms it and adds additional light and truth. Also the language must be analyzed from grammar and etymology and syntax. We are interested in the exact meaning of words and language in the Bible.

b. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEARER.

The hearer must comprehend what is being said and this is "gnosis," which means comprehension. This is accomplished in the mind of the believer by the aid of the Holy Spirit. The pastor-teacher gives forth truth and the Holy Spirit takes it and conforms it in the mind of the believer. This also involves positive volition. It makes it possible for the hearer to ignore little personal characteristics of the pastor-teacher which may offend him and fasten his mind on the eternal truth of the doctrine he proclaims. Objectivity is necessary so one can learn. Don't get so involved in the non-essentials that you lose out on the deeper meaning of the truth.

Positive volition leads to concentration which leads to comprehension. This doesn't mean you agree or disagree. It simply means you learn little by little until you come to know truth. The Holy Spirit helps you right at this point and it becomes FAITH.

c. STAGE THREE IN THE MECHANICS OF GRACE IS THE STORING OF TRUTH IN THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

So many people, in giving their testimony, will say, "I invited Jesus to come into my heart." Now, this is incompatible with what the Bible says. Your effort in inviting Jesus into your heart is human works and we are not saved by our works, by what we do, but by what he did on the cross. Then remember this--before you were converted, your heart was a human sewer and you just don't invite Jesus into a sewer. In your heart resides the old sin nature and you don't invite Jesus into an old sin nature.

If this is not correct to say, "I invited Jesus into my heart," then what is correct? Look at it this way. The unbeliever hears the gospel, but his spirit is dead, blacked out by sin. So the Holy Spirit doubles for your dead inactivated human spirit, and makes it possible for you to believe. It is ALL HIS WORK and not your work at all. It is not your inviting Jesus into your heart that saves you, or your signing a card or your walking down an aisle or your being baptized. (And don't take Rev. 3:20 and quote it and say Jesus knocked at the door of your heart and you opened the door and let him in. That is not a salvation verse, but a fellowship verse. It means he comes in to sup with you, to have fellowship with you, to guide you and control you.) You were saved the moment you exhaled faith toward Christ and that was a non-meritorious process. You did nothing, and he did it all. So this is how you start putting on the belt of truth.

d. FROM THIS GREAT STORAGE TANK IN YOUR HUMAN SPIRIT, YOU NOW CAN DRAW ON DOCTRINAL TRUTH FOR DAILY LIVING.

This is what Ephesians 3:19 is talking about when it says, "Filled with the fullness of God."

You understand one doctrine and this helps you understand the next and the next and the next.

This provided you the norms and standards in your conscience. This gives you the divine viewpoint in life rather than the human viewpoint.

This means you can now pray intelligently and with assurance.

This means that you are now prepared for witnessing.

This will also make it possible for you to resolve all the problems that arise in the subconscious mind.

e. THE APPLICATION OF DOCTRINE.

This is stated beautifully in Ephesians 4:23 when Paul says, "And be renewed through the breathing of your mind."

Divine viewpoint now replaces human viewpoint.

You can now begin to deal with all your mental attitude sins.

You can now eliminate Satan's doctrine from your soul.

f. THE BUILDING OF THE EDIFICATION COMPLEX IS NOW BEING ACCOMPLISHED.

First floor--The Word of God.

Second floor--Living by grace and understanding grace.

Third floor--Inner happiness.

Fourth floor--A relaxed mental attitude.

Fifth floor--A capacity to love.

Sixth floor--Mastery of the details of life.