

# A Family Clothed in Christ

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What is your family dressed like today? There are two very distinct Biblical commands that tell us how Christians should be clothed: *in armor*, and *with Christ*. This clothing serves three main purposes: it protects us against the enemy, it gives us the ability to fight the enemy, and it allows us to live the kind of lifestyle that reflects Jesus Christ before others. If there is any kind of clothing more important than this, it would be difficult to convince me.

In an age of spiritual slumbering, it is vital that families wake up and come alive in Jesus. Without such an awakening, revival will continue to simmer on a back burner rather than bursting forth in a brilliant display of the power and love of Christ in our midst! *"...The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light"* (Rom. 13:11b-12). We are living in a time when even Christians are apathetically living out lives of complacency. Most of our efforts for the Lord are too late, too feeble, or too ineffective to bring about any meaningful change in our culture. We look too much like what we are "wishing" would be different.

*"Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy"* (Rom. 13:13). There are many Christians engaging in these ungodly, worldly behaviors – some by choice, some by habit, and some by addiction. How can we

effectively put aside the *“deeds of darkness”* mentioned above, and instead *“put on the armor of light”*? As individuals and families, we simply must learn how to dress more appropriately for the circumstances of our day. The proper clothing will allow us to recognize our sinfulness, initiate our confession, and lead us to repentance. The proper clothing will remind us of the power of our salvation, guard our righteousness, keep us in the truth, and make us ready as we share the good news of Jesus Christ with a dying world.

The appropriate accessories will protect us from further assaults by the enemy, and will even allow us to fight against the kingdom of darkness. Most importantly, the proper clothing will draw us into the presence of our loving Father, who longs for our obedience so that He may do things in us and through us that are *“...immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us”* (Eph. 3:20).

### **The Importance of Choosing the Right Clothes**

Each morning, I look out the window to see what the weather looks like. Generally I listen to the weather report so that I will have a good idea of the day's expected temperatures before I choose what clothing to wear on a particular day. Although we would never consider sending our children outside in summer clothes and sandals when it is snowing, or dressed in a coat when it is going to be hot – we are not nearly so careful when it comes to their spiritual clothing. Our families go their separate ways each day...sometimes with no more than a hurried hug – and step outside the door into a war zone. It's no wonder that marriages are in trouble, or that there is conflict between parents and teenagers and bitter rivalry between siblings – and that is just within our own households. What happens outside of the home is totally out of our control once they leave our protective reach. Fortunately, we can be sure they are properly dressed and then confidently release them into the protective custody of God.

The enemy is prowling around looking for moms, dads, children and whole families to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). Unless we are spiritually dressed for victory, we literally leave ourselves exposed to the whims and schemes of the enemy, who would choose to destroy us all as he catches us without the proper attire!

How should Christian families be dressing each day? Let's examine the Word of God to see what our instructions are. As we do so, remember that simply reading the Word, studying the Word and knowing the Word is not enough. We must **obey** the Word. If we tell our children to wear a raincoat and they choose to disobey us – they may get wet. In the same way, if the Word of God tells us what to put on...and we choose to disobey, we will suffer the consequences of our disobedience. Revival will come only when God's people choose to clothe themselves as He has instructed us in His Word. So many things would be different in our homes, in our churches, in our nation and in the world, if Christians would simply obey the Word of God. Therefore, when you read what the Father wants you to do to be properly clothed, I pray you will be compelled to obey!

*“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”* (Eph. 6:11-13). Note that the Scripture is very clear that we are to put on the full armor of God. It is even commanded **twice** in this short passage. Why does the Lord want us clothed in this spiritual armor? So that we can take our stand against the schemes of the devil, and so that when the day of evil comes, we are able to stand our ground. Protective clothing is very important to Christians.

If we do not recognize that we are in a battle for our very lives, the lives of our children, and the lives of the lost, we will be badly damaged and even defeated. Temptation will come – are we prepared to stand our ground? Persecution will come – are we dressed to stand firm against it? Christian families are under attack! Without a time of daily putting on the armor, we will be shot at from every angle. How do you put on spiritual armor? I recommend that it be done prayerfully and as a family each morning before everyone goes his or her separate ways. Be diligent to pray for one another before you all walk out the door into the battle that is known as life.

In our fast-paced, busy culture, it is difficult to find time to spend as a family. Perhaps if we recognize what is at stake, we will make time to prayerfully clothe ourselves each day. Yes, God has a plan for our children's lives...but Satan does too! Therefore, it is critical that we not only obey the command to clothe ourselves with armor, but that we obey the call of Paul in 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."* Paul is exhorting Christians to show the outward results of what has happened inside of us when Jesus became Lord and Savior. Our lives should reflect Jesus in every way to our families, our friends, and to the world around us. The sinful nature is always lurking beneath the surface; however, if Jesus is our very clothing, we will more and more be like Him.

I enjoy doing more than one thing at a time. It makes me feel like I'm accomplishing more. So, when I realized that putting on the armor of God also allowed me to put on Christ at the same time, I was thrilled! Imagine! Fulfilling two commandments at the same time! For example, when I put on the belt of truth (Eph. 6:14), I am also putting on Jesus, who *is* the very personification of truth. When I put on the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:14), I am also being obedient to put on Jesus, who is my righteousness. He is the

gospel of peace (shoes), and He is our salvation (helmet).

There are two important accessories as we are clothing ourselves in armor and with Christ. The first is the shield of faith: *"In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one"* (Eph. 6:16). When we put on Jesus Christ, we certainly do so in faith! His power living in and through us can help us to be an outward representation of our inward decision to follow Jesus.

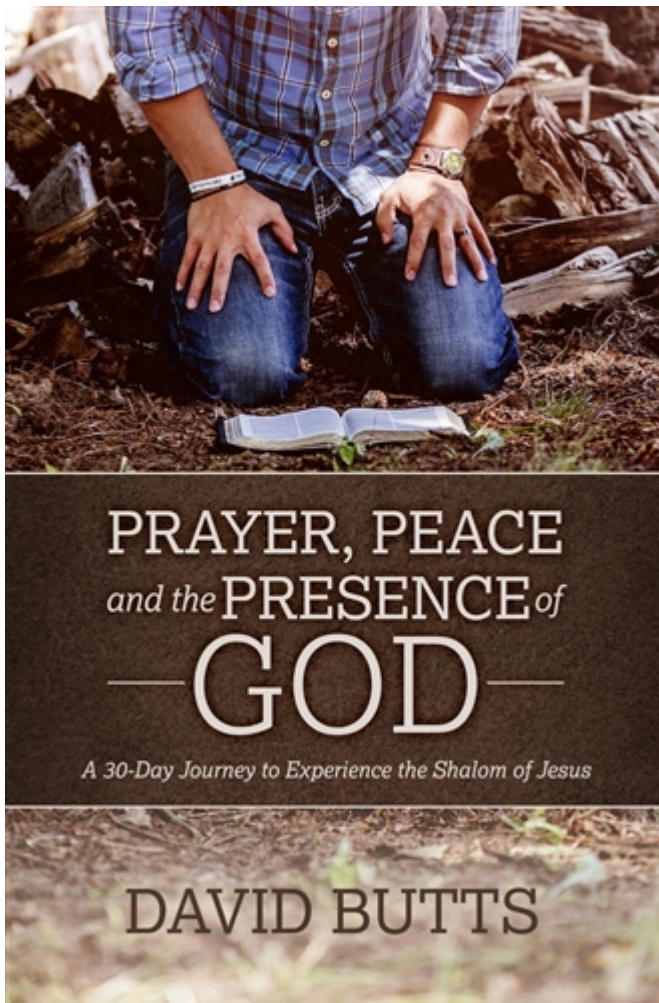
Notice that all of the pieces of armor mentioned above are defensive. Protective clothing is very important; however, Jesus very clearly went on the offensive when dealing with the enemy. So, the second "accessory" to our wardrobe is probably the most important: *"Take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God"* (Eph. 6:17). In John 1:1 we read, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* Since Jesus is God in the fullest sense, He is also the Word. When Scripture tells us to take up the sword that is the Word of God, we are putting on Jesus. How did Jesus deal with the enemy when He was being tempted by the devil in the desert? He used the Word of God to fight back – and so must we!

Families – are you protected by the armor of God? If not – put it on! How? In prayer. It can be a prayer as simple as this: "Lord, today we want to wear the same clothes that You are wearing so that we can stand firm against Satan and any temptation to sin that he might throw at us. We put on the helmet of salvation and the breastplate of righteousness because You are our salvation and righteousness. We fasten the belt of truth around our waists because You are the truth. Because You are the good news, we put on the shoes that will help us to be ready to share this truth with others. In faith, we take up our shields so that we are completely protected from the arrows of the enemy. We will carry the sword of Your Word so that we can give an answer to anyone (1 Pet. 3:15).

Most of all, Lord, help others to see that we are wearing the same clothes as Jesus today.”

Let’s summarize: If we have, in obedience, put on Jesus, what should we now look like? Him! It means that we should reflect His virtues. Because we have put on the armor of God, we are protected, and ready to do battle against the enemy. Jesus dealt with the enemy by quoting the Word of God to him in Matthew 4:1-11. Because every piece of the armor allows us to be clothed with Christ, we should also deal with the temptations of the enemy in this way.

If we will prayerfully put on the armor, and in so doing, put on Christ, we will look more and more like Him. We will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the enemy. When God sees that we are obediently following His Word, and desiring to be like His Son, Jesus, He will be pleased, we will be protected, the enemy can be beaten back and others will see Jesus in us. A spiritual awakening will take place in the midst of our family as our actions please God and win others to His Son. Won’t you consider putting on Jesus’ clothes today?



**PRAYER, PEACE, and the PRESENCE of GOD by David Butts**

As believers, we are supposed to walk in the peace of Christ, yet we all have stressful issues and circumstances that rob us of this peace. Subtitled “A 30-Day Journey to Experience the Shalom of Jesus,” *Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God* powerfully encourages the reader on how to hold onto that peace in any circumstance.

The author, David Butts (1953-2022), started writing this book and 10 days into it he got word that he was in stage 4 with a rare form of lymphoma. God allowed him to live in a greater way for five additional years of full-strength ministry. Dave has challenged readers in *Prayer, Peace and the Presence of God* to seek after His best life, no matter what it holds.

His 30-day devotional will encourage, inspire and challenge you that you, too, can experience and walk in the peace of Jesus no matter what circumstances you are walking through.

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