



THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

- EMEKA NDUKWE

When the scripture talked about putting on the full Armour of God, it spoke about putting on the breastplate of righteousness (**Ephesians 6:14**).

There is something very unique about the breastplate of righteousness. It is the only part of the armour of God that protects the chest area. And why is the chest area so important? It is that area that houses the heart. The heart is where the issues of life flow from (**Proverbs 4:23**).

That you are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus (**2 Corinthians 5:12**) is never an excuse for you to be living an unrighteous life. God knows that you are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus and yet He instructs you to live righteous (**Titus 2:12**). You are also mandated to take on the breastplate of righteousness (**Ephesians 6:14**). The scripture says "... *with the breastplate of righteousness in place*" (**Ephesians 6:14, NIV**); meaning that the breastplate of righteousness can be out of place as a result of unrighteous living.

Being the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus simply means that you inherited the righteousness that Jesus offers you by His death and resurrection. Although the inherited righteousness is the basis or foundation for living a righteous life, it is quite

different from you now living in that righteousness. That you inherited a clean mansion from your father does not automatically mean that you are living clean inside of it. This is where the end-time church is missing it. If you value the righteousness of God that you inherited in Christ Jesus, you honour it by living righteously yourself.

A lot of Christians have their chest completely open in the spirit realm because their breastplate of righteousness is not in place. The implication of this is that their heart is open to spiritual arrows. The lady that God used me to raise back from the dead, after her spirit returned to her body, said she felt something like a knife piercing through her heart at about 2 am. That was all she could remember before she gave up the ghost. She said one of her friends died in the same manner.

What stops spiritual arrows from getting to your heart is your breastplate of righteousness. That is why you are instructed in the word of God to put it on. God didn't say so for the fun of just talking. God says what He means, and He means what He says.

The scripture says the righteous are as bold as lion (**Proverbs 28:1**), meaning that he is not afraid of arrows, just like the lion has nothing to fear in the jungle. There are some "back to sender" prayers you shouldn't be saying if your righteousness is in place. This is because the arrows would automatically be repelled back to their senders by the force of righteousness. Righteousness is a potent force in the spirit realm. That is why one of the names of Jesus Christ is "**The Righteous One**" (**1 John 2:1**); emanating from the Hebrew word "Jeshurun", which means "upright" or "righteous".

I was asking the Lord why it had to be Absalom's heart that was pierced by Joab on the day of battle, and not any other part of his body (**2 Samuel 18:14**). And the Lord said to me, "Absalom lost his breastplate of righteousness the day he slept with his father's concubines, leaving his chest area open in the spirit realm". It was because Absalom's chest area was open in the spirit realm that Joab's spear hit his heart. I told you earlier that the chest area is the covering for the heart. An open chest makes the heart vulnerable. Don't carry about a bare chest. Put on the breastplate of righteousness!

Beware of sexual sin. Why? The Bible says every other sin is outside the body, but the sin of sexual immorality involves the body (**1 Corinthians 6:18**). Nothing pulls off your breastplate of righteousness so speedily like sexual sin. If you see Samson, ask him. No prince of God should be messing up in between the thighs of a Delilah.

Don't give room to any form of sin until it captivates or enslaves you. That is why God teaches us in the scripture to "**flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness.**" (**2 Timothy 2:2**). In other words, don't even give it room to captivate you. You are not yet a slave to any form of sin that had not captivated you. And the only way to stop it from captivating you is to flee from it.

That is the difference between a Samson and a Joseph. Joseph knew when to flee from Potiphar's wife. He fled from her and left his garment with her. That is exactly what it meant to flee. It is to disappear from the scene. You cannot be acting in a scene that you are absent from. If Joseph had gone into that sin with her for once, it would have been very difficult for him to stop it. He would have been captivated by it. He would have made a Samson of himself.

Take a good look at Samson's story, and you will discover that, although he saw it coming, he could not help himself. He was a slave to the lustful pleasures that Delilah offered him. Samson's story was so pathetic because he actually knew that Delilah was after his life to hand him over to the Philistines and yet he could not distance himself from her. That is what it means for sin to have mastery over someone (**Romans 6: 12-14**).

Sin can be very costly. It can be as costly as life. It can cost you your life. The scripture points out its wages when it said the wages of sin is death (**Romans 6:23**). In other words, sin is a negative force that is trying to price your life even after Jesus had paid for it on the cross of Calvary. It is a downward pull to life. That was why Jesus was pulled down to hell after He carried the sin of the whole world on the cross of Calvary. He descended to hell (**Ephesians 4:9**) on account of the gravity of the sin of the world that was laid on Him (John 1:29). I love the way bishop David Oyedepo puts it. He said, "sin is a sinker". Sin can sink any life at any time.

RIGHTEOUSNESS/ HEALTHY LIVING

After Jesus healed the man that suffered blindness, He said to him "**Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.**" (**John 5:14**). It means that there was a direct link between the illness he suffered and his sinful life. No wonder the scripture says "**sin is a reproach...**" (**Proverbs 14:34**). One of the reproaches of sin is sickness. God said to the Israelites that if they obeyed and served Him, He would not afflict them with the disease with which He afflicted the Egyptians (**Exodus 15:26**).

whenever you see wasting diseases begin to descend on any nations of the earth, it could be a pointer that they are living in rebellion against God and His ways. Look through the scripture and you will discover that God never needed to strike the Egyptians with diseases until they sinned by not allowing the Israelites to leave as commanded by God. That was when they suffered different plagues including boils all over their bodies (**Exodus 9:8-11**). It was an affliction born out of the sin of disobedience.

God told me that some of the diseases ravaging the

world were contracted through men sleeping with animals. There is a direct link between righteousness and healthy living. My mentor, pastor David Ogbueli, once said that one of the ways to live a healthy life is by honouring God with your body. He said honouring God with your body means not yielding the members of your body to sin (**Romans 6:13**). He pointed out that it was one of the ways to covenant your body to divine health. Three practices that would help you live a righteous life are;

1. WATCH AND PRAY

Watching and praying are two different things. Some people pray without watching, while others tend to watch without really praying. To pray simply means to spend time with God in some deep communion, while to watch has to do with principles. A watchful man will not be alone in a hotel room with a half-naked woman that is not his wife. After praying, you must also be watchful. I know of pastors that would never counsel the opposite sex alone. It must be in the company of their wives. And by so doing, they are watchful against falling into sexual sins.

The Lord told me that some people that fall into sin, especially the sin of sexual immorality, were not habitually sinful in the first place. He said they are rather people that don't understand what it means to be watchful. And so, they are not always on their guard.

Gbile Akanni once told a story of how he warned one fervent brother to be careful the way a certain lady, who claimed to be a sister, was getting too close to him. And the brother in response said he knew what he was doing, and kept allowing the lady to keep getting close to him in an unhealthy manner. Brother Gbile said he was not surprised when the same brother sent for him one day to tell him that the same lady had eventually seduced him into committing fornication with her. They had just finished the act, with the lady still lying on the brother's bed with smiles all over her face, while the brother was rolling on the floor, weeping and asking God for mercy, as at the time Gbile Akanni walked in.

If you have ever seen a man that had lived a life of purity, don't try copying his life of purity without

finding out his principles as well as his prayer life. It is principles that make a man a principal. Those that are major principals in the spirit realm have some brutal principles by which they operate. And so, to your prayerfulness, you must also learn to be watchful, and that was why the scripture says "*watch and pray that you might not fall into temptation*" (**Matt 26:41**), Scripture did not only mention praying, it added watching to it.

2. FEED ON GOD`S WORD.

The scripture says, "*How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word*" (**Psalm 119:9, ESV**). Righteousness simply means right standing. So how do you put on the breastplate of righteousness? By living by the precepts of God. The precept of God is the Word of God. That is the manual, by which you should live. The life that you live is not yours, it was given to you by God. And so, you must live it by His precepts. That is called righteous living.

The Word of God that you cram for cramming sake is not the active Word of God in your life. Scripture says "*the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*" (**2Corinthians 3:6**). The letter is the logos of the word, that was all they had in the Old Testament and so could not keep the commandments of the Lord. They had the law without the spirit. But Jesus talking in the New Testament said, "*the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*" (**John 6:63**). Until the Word of God becomes spirit and life in you, it cannot fuel holiness in your life. The rhema of the Word brings you to the place of righteous living.

The difference between a Pharisee and a true Christian is that all the Pharisee has is the letter that killeth, while the true Christian has the spirit and life of the Word that giveth life. That was why there was not a pharisee that was righteous before God. And they also distracted others from being righteous. Look through the scripture and you will discover that they were the only set of people that Jesus outrightly cursed. He rained curses on them (**Matthew 23:13-17**).

Look at the way the scripture puts it, "*How can a young man guide his ways...?*" (**Psalm 119:9**). In another translation, it says, "*How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word*" (**Psalm 119:9**). The scripture wasn't

3. THE COMPANY OF THE RIGHTEOUS

mincing words here. It was particular about the youthful age range. That is why you will see the scripture say something like “...*youthful lust*” (**2 Timothy 2:22**). This is because the youthful age is the age range at which sexual desires are at their peak. It is also the age range at which people are strong enough to do all manner of evil if not properly guided. That is why the scripture says “*remember your Creator in the days of your youth,*” (**Eccl 12:1**). It is an age range that must be guarded and guided properly for one not to be given to all manner of unrighteousness.

In the whole of the scriptures, you will discover that David never repented of any sin twice. He repented of the sins of adultery, murder and even counting the number of the fighting men of Israel, and it was never recorded that he went back to any of those sins he repented of. What was it that made David achieve that? He was a man that valued the word of God more than his daily bread, just Job did (**Job 23:12**), He valued as well as lived by the word of the Lord (**Psalm 119:114**). He was the only one in the scripture that said “*Thy word have I hidden in my heart that I may not sin against thee...*” (**Ps 119:11**).

The word cannot enter your heart until it is rhema. That is why the scripture says it is the “entrance of the word that giveth light...” (**Ps 119:130**). Referring to the rhema of God's Word. This implies that the word of God will help you stay righteous,

The scripture calls them the company of the righteous (**Psalm 14:5**), meaning they were all righteous men that came together to maintain their righteousness. They had righteousness in common. One of the good things about keeping company with the righteous is that there will always be one righteous person around you that will help rebuke you either by words or acts, whenever you are, helping you to perpetually stay on the track of righteousness.

Billy Graham is celebrated today as one of the most righteous men of God that ever lived. He was so respected even by his home country, the United States of America. History has it that at the onset of ministry, he and some other young ministers, which included Bill Bright, came together and entered into a covenant with themselves and with God that they shall live a life of purity, never exaggerate whenever they shared testimonies of the Lord's doing in their ministries, among other agreements they entered with God. That is what is referred to as the company of the righteous. It is the company of righteous men helping themselves to stay righteous. There is no righteous man that keeps company with the unrighteous that can continue in righteousness. Watch your company. The lion that keeps company with dogs will end up eating faeces like dogs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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