

ARMOR OF LIGHT

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INTRODUCTION

As I prepared to speak on the topic of “Lust and Anger” at a men’s seminar, I was surprised to notice that many Bible passages on lust are often accompanied by teaching on God’s grace and power.

God longs to be in relationship with humankind. God’s relationship with us includes our physical bodies because each of us is made up of body, soul, and spirit in one. “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 6:15). This is further clarified by statements about the Judgment, where God “will render to every man according to his deeds” (Romans 2:6). And, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Most of an unbeliever’s deeds are prompted by lustful desires, but lust may also be a factor in decisions believers make. Lust is not limited to sexual actions. Lust is any ungodly desire that determines our responses, affects our relationships, or controls us. Biblical synonyms include *carnal nature*, *walking after the flesh*, and *the love of the world* or worldliness.

This book sheds truth on the human condition caused by lusts and shows how to escape that condition through the truth and power of God’s salvation in daily living. In most places where the Bible teaches about lust, it is in the context of

God's mercy, God's grace, or God's promises. God wants to bring an end to our lusts through His saving and sanctifying work of grace in Christ Jesus. When we are saved, God's light of love, mercy, and grace shines in our dark hearts, dispelling our blindness, confusion, and addictions. God's Word becomes a lamp for our feet and a light on our path.

You may be reading this book because you have been hurt by others' lusts. Those lusts may have destroyed your purity, broken up your home, or destroyed friendships, straining your mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Or you may be reading this to find help in dealing with your own ungodly desires. Whatever the case, I pray that God will use this discussion of His Word to heal your hurts and help you on your journey.

Armor of Light is divided into three parts. Using the Scriptures, Part 1 introduces the concept of the armor of light, and Part 2 exposes the impact of lust on the created world, on our relationships, on ourselves, and on our relationship to God. Part 3 revisits these same Scriptures, this time looking at the wonderful resources God has provided to help us overcome our sin nature.

I have labeled the different truths presented in Part 3 as pieces of the armor of light even though Scripture does not group them under that term. Paul uses the term in the context of living in readiness to meet the Lord (Romans 13:12).

The Scriptures at the beginning of each chapter are integral to the book. The words in bold within the Scripture selections are the focus of that chapter's thoughts. So please read and meditate on the Word of God a moment before reading the chapter. Thank you.

PART 1



Introducing the Armor of Light

If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light. Luke 11:36



The Armor of Light

THE NIGHT IS far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Romans 13:12

Driving east on a country road as the sun rose above the trees one morning, I almost collided with Amish schoolchildren on bikes. Even though I was wearing sunglasses, the glare of the sun obscured the children from my sight.

But there was another aspect to the bright sunlight. Though it had hidden the children, its brilliance made the idyllic rural landscape around me glow as it chased the darkness of the night away from the well-kept Amish homesteads along the road.

While in this case it was dangerous for the children to be hidden by the light, perhaps this illustrates how God's light works in our lives. Spiritually, God's light exposes the reality and ugliness of sin hidden in darkness while also becoming a protecting glare around the life of the saint.

We hear a lot more about armor and security than we used to. Shootings at schools, workplaces, and public events cause

people to be concerned for their safety. Terrorist groups and suicide bombers regularly make the news. Police departments use military-style equipment and armored vehicles, while celebrities and politicians sometimes wear concealed body armor.

In the spiritual realm, Christians face security threats too. When we are born again, we begin a journey of sanctification, learning to live in a way that pleases God. As a result, a war ensues. The law of sin and death, the carnal nature, and the lusts of the flesh fight against God's regenerating power, seeking to regain control of our hearts and minds, and by extension, our bodies.

To bring in another analogy, consider the security lighting that protects the premises at most businesses. The armor of light is like a security lighting system for our spiritual lives, keeping at bay the darkness of our lusts.

The cloud that protected the Israelites at the Red Sea is a type of this armor of light. Having orchestrated His people's escape from Egypt, God led them to the shores of the Red Sea. The Egyptian army closed in, bent on destroying them. As God opened the water for the Israelites to pass through, He moved a shield of light into place behind them. One side of the cloud was a bright light that enabled the people to navigate the path through the water. The other side was darkness that forced the Egyptian army to a standstill.

Think of worldly lusts and fleshly desires as the Egyptian army. Just as the army was still present, so worldly lusts are lurking all around us, but the armor of light protects us from their advances. The light of life empowers us to move forward spiritually, free in the power of Jesus Christ.

Paul introduces the concept of an armor of light in Romans 13:11-14, where he commands us to wake up, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light. Like a soldier's uniform protects and identifies him, so others should be able to identify the armor of light that is protecting us.

The word *armor* is translated "instruments" in Romans 6:13 ("Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin") and "weapons" in 2 Corinthians 10:4 ("For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal"). It is used for any item associated with warfare.

In each of the passages that use this word, the Christian has choices to make. He must cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, making no provision for the flesh. He must yield his body to righteousness and not unrighteousness. And though he walks in the flesh, he may not fight after the flesh.

The larger context of Paul's instruction to put on the armor is a discussion of social relationships. The lusts of the flesh lurking within us reveal themselves in our relationships with others through sexual passions, materialistic greed, violence, idolatry, manipulation, control, and abuse.

When we stand protected from lust by the armor of light, others are also safe around us. Instead of being on the receiving end of our lusts, they are treated in loving and kind ways. This change is the result of the Holy Spirit, who keeps our hearts pure, our relationships godly, and our salvation sure. When we are driven by the Spirit instead of by sinful lusts, we bring the witness of Jesus Christ to the world.