

Learning and Doing

Ponder: Is part of your armor missing?

Scripture: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22 NKJV).

Soldiers in ages past wore armor to protect them on the battlefield. Every piece in the suit was important. Not wearing his full armor made a warrior vulnerable to the swords, spears, and arrows of the enemy.

Paul likened various aspects of Christianity to parts of a suit of armor in Ephesians 6:11-17. Some of those pieces relate directly to our knowledge of God’s word. For example, there is the girdle (belt) of truth. God’s word is truth (John 17:17). The warrior used his belt to keep everything else in place. A Christian must learn the truth and use it to keep himself and the rest of his “armor” under control.

Then there are the soldier’s shoes: “the preparation of the gospel of peace.” Unless the warrior for Christ has thoroughly learned the Lord’s gospel, he like a soldier walking around on the battlefield barefooted! That’s a recipe for disaster! How can he stand his ground in a conflict, or run in pursuit of the enemy, without the right footgear?

The shield of faith also pertains to learning the Scriptures, for God’s word is that which produces faith in our hearts (Romans 10:17). Pity the soldier who engages the foe without a shield! Satan’s flaming arrows may well take the life of the one who lacks faith.

These three examples certainly demonstrate that learning God’s word is vitally important. But James exhorts us to be not only hearers of the word, but doers of it. Think of the breastplate of righteousness. The warrior’s breastplate protects his vital organs. Important as the other pieces of armor may be, they are incomplete without the breastplate. Just so, the soldier of Christ may have abundant knowledge, yet not be actively doing the righteous deeds he knows he ought to do. Because his armor is incomplete, he remains vulnerable to the assaults of our adversary.

Hearing/learning the word . . . doing the word. It isn’t “either/or,” it’s “both/and.” Is part of your armor missing?