

Are you wearing sunscreen?

For those of you I did not see this past Sunday, I was, well, pretty much a lobster. I was absolutely fried on one side of my body, but the other side was not even red. I'm sure it will be real funny once it turns to tan. Basically what happened was that while on a youth trip to Wet N Wild, I decided to use some sunscreen that came in a spray bottle and not the typical rub on lotion. (I have since learned that this is not a good idea) Well, apparently only one side of me got any spray on it. The other side was left wide open for the sun to attack. And boy did it ever. I guess you could say that I fought the sun and the sun won.

How could I have prevented the sunburn? Well, I could have stayed inside and never gone out in the sun. Staying indoors would eliminate the threat of a sunburn. But then I would miss out on all the outdoor fun. I could have decided to wear a t-shirt and that would have at least protected my upper arms and chest from being sunburn. But a t-shirt would prevent me from tanning or it would leave an awkward tan line. My best bet is to wear sunscreen and to make sure that I apply it properly. Sunscreen allows me to be outdoors and to enjoy the outdoors in freedom. It provides protection and armors me against the sun.

In the same way that I like to be outside and to be free, as a Christian I am out in the world and need to be free. As a Christian, I need to wear spiritual protection, a spiritual sunscreen, and I need to put it on properly. So what exactly is spiritual sunscreen you ask? And how do I put it on? Well, Ephesians 6:11 tells us that we should: "Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."

So how do we put on the 'armor of God?' It takes discipline. It takes spiritual discipline. It takes spending time with God on a daily basis. Putting on God's armor is as easy as reading scripture and praying and doing it everyday.

Before you ask the question: "Why is it so hard to resist temptation?" You should ask yourself this question: "Do I take time to put on the 'armor of God' everyday?"

Read the following passage and questions and think of what you need to do to put on the armor of GOD.

Ephesians 6:10-18

10Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12For 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.

13Therefore 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. 14Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Questions for thought:

1. Do you wear the belt of truth? Are you a person of honesty and integrity? Are you a person that is known for being truthful or deceitful? Do you stray from gossip or are you the host of the daily gossip show?
2. Do you wear the breastplate of righteousness? Are you living and making the decisions that God would choose for you or are you selfishly living life your own way?
3. Are your feet fitted with the gospel of peace? Are you daily seeking a peaceful resolution to all of life's situations? Do you pray for others, your enemies, your friends?
4. Do you carry the shield of faith? **Romans 10:17** "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." Do you have time in your day that you dedicate to spending reading God's word?
5. Do you wear the helmet of salvation? Do you carry the sword of the Spirit? Are you listening for God's voice?

These are not easy questions. Do not be discouraged. God loves you and tells us that if we seek Him and draw close to Him, that He will draw even closer to us!