

# ARMOR



**GROUP STUDY**



ARMOR: Group Study

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# Week 8: The Shield of Faith

*16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith,  
with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;*

## PRAY

The beginning of this verse opens up with Paul saying in ALL CIRCUMSTANCES take up the shield of faith. Let's open up our time together in prayer asking God to reveal circumstances where we have not taken up the shield of faith. Let's ask Him to reveal to us areas in our lives that require more faith to overcome and walk boldly in. Finally, let us ask God for more faith to trust him in all the areas of our lives, to know that he is working all things together for good.

Romans 8:28

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to His purpose.

## SHARE

Have more faith! This sounds like a generic easy christian answer to all life's problems. When I think about those words it is easy to picture the smiling christian that looks put together, in an ivory tower, telling someone that seems to be falling apart. This word faith has been so used and is so familiar to us that we can easily lose sight of it's value. In studying the armor of God we find that faith is for action, in the midst of battle! It is learned and applied when we are under attack, and when we are taking ground for the kingdom of God!

*How has faith gotten you through life's battles?*

*How has your faith been made stronger as a result of those battles?*

## STUDY

Context is key when studying scripture. If we are talking about the shoes of peace but can only picture our fancy shoes that are built for looks, then we can easily miss the power in the language Paul is using. The same is true about the

Shield of Faith. This is not a tiny shield. This is not a simple circular wooden shield used by the vikings or other warriors that you may be picturing. In the context of Rome this “scutum” was rectangular and large enough to completely hide behind. It was fastened with metal and curved. As pastor Rob shared this weekend there were many important purposes for this shield. Like this shield, faith not only secures and protects our present against the advances of the enemy, but it also pushes us forward into the future! This shield is for taking ground for the kingdom and driving back the enemy! Even the gates of hell can’t stand against the church! (Matthew 16:18)

Let’s read Ephesians 6:16 again.

*16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith,  
with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;*

How would you define faith?

The dictionary defines faith as complete trust in something or someone. People put their faith in a lot of things. Drive right now down the street in any neighborhood and you will see many people declaring their faith in a political candidate. Let’s dive a little deeper into a biblical definition of Faith.

Read Hebrews 11:1

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Like we talked about this sunday, if you could have total assurance of victory, what would your life look like? Would you be willing to face opposition? Would you stand firm in the midst of attack?

Let’s picture the great battle scenes of a lot of war movies where the trusted general tells the army to wait and be steady, as there is an opposing army coming towards the front line full speed (think Lord Of The Rings, 300, Braveheart, etc). In Christ we have a trusted general. One who sees what we cannot, and who’s ways are not our ways. A general that is undefeated. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

**Discuss:** Has there been a time in your life where you trusted God and waited/ stood firm, even when everything or everyone else was telling you to run?

As we learned from the definitions of faith, faith is trust! The goal of the enemy is to get believers to lose trust in Jesus by focusing on the circumstances around us. The flaming darts of the enemy are great distractions. Fear and distraction can cause us to lean on our own understanding and make the wrong moves. Let's think back to those movie scenes in relation to our faith.

*If you attack too soon and go out on your own you get trampled.*

*If you retreat and fear get's the best of you get discouraged*

*But If you wait and stand firm you get victory!*

**Discuss:** What are some distractions that are causing you to get out of formation in your walk with Jesus?

The enemy also loves isolation over community. He loves a rogue soldier over a unified army. Jesus knew this when he prayed for the church to be united! (John 17:21)

Roman soldiers would lock their shields together in a tortoise formation covering all parts of their bodies. The second row would put their shields over the top and each row would lock in forming a shell protecting the unit from arrows. They moved as a unit. The soldiers had no weak spots when they were together, but isolation would leave the soldier exposed.

**Discuss:** Do you struggle more with isolation from prideful advances, or isolation caused by insecure retreats?

Hebrews 11 is a hall of fame of faith. In your own time this week take some time to study the chapter. Let's read about a few of these hall of famers together and what they did by faith.

## Read Hebrews 11:29-40

Here are a few highlights:

- The people of Israel crossed the Red Sea
- The walls of Jericho fell down
- Rahab the prostitute was safe when everyone else perished.
- Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah of David, Samuel and the prophets conquered Kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises:
- shut the mouths of lions,
- quenched the power of fire
- escaped the sword
- became mighty in war
- put armies to flight
- Women received back their dead from resurrection
- Some were tortured refusing release!
- They experienced mocking, flogging, chains, imprisonment, stoning, sawed in two, killed, afflicted, and were mistreated.

## ALL BECAUSE OF FAITH!

All of these great people of faith did extraordinary things and should be commended as the Bible tells us in vs 39 however, they did not receive the promise that we have in Jesus.

## Read Hebrews 10:23

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful!

How much more should we, who have had Jesus revealed to us, be going after extraordinary things full of faith!!!

## **RESPOND**

This week we have learned that faith is both offensive and defensive. We also learned that we can protect ourselves and take ground for the kingdom better together! Lastly, we learned that by faith ordinary people have done extraordinary things!

As Pastor Rob shared this weekend he realized the hopes and dreams he had were too small as he was preparing for his message. He was challenged by the Holy Spirit to think God sized goals that would require much faith! Are you dreaming too small? Are you relying on your own ability or are you trusting in God's ability through faith? Is fear keeping you from what faith has for you?

- Make a list of Godly goals (salvation for your kids, starting a vGroup, speaking to a coworker)
- Pray and talk to those close to you. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you His list for your life
- If needed relist your God sized goals (Praying for your kids kids and their impact, Starting a new ministry etc.)
- Enlist people to come alongside of you to walk in faith to accomplish those goals