

STAND FIRM: FEET FITTED WITH READINESS

Ephesians 6:14-15; Romans 5:1-5

No Bible story is more exciting than the account of David in battle with Goliath. David was a young shepherd filled with zeal for the Lord God; Goliath is traditionally believed to have been a nine-and-a-half-foot thug, ready to fight anyone foolish enough to step from the ranks of the army of Israel. In addition to his size and strength, Goliath was sheathed in a full set of armor. Most people thought that if David was to have a fighting chance, he needed armor too.

David tried King Saul's armor, but it was too bulky and heavy. Instead, David chose a sling and five smooth stones—and put his confidence in the Lord God of Israel. The battle was quick and ended with a very surprised Philistine army! David won the victory that day because he chose the armor and the weapons suitable for his unique enemy.

Group Discussion. What are your favorite shoes, and when do you wear them?

Personal Reflection. What kind of spiritual shoes do you think you're wearing right now? High, clunky heels? Ratty tennis shoes? Expensive trail boots? Are you standing firm or are you slipping?

The third piece of armor followers of Jesus are called to put on are the war boots. For the Roman soldier, a war boot was a sturdy, open-toed leather sandal with a nail-studded sole. (Think of a cleated football shoe.) The sandal was tied to the ankle and lower leg with long leather straps. Those who are called to stand their ground need to have secure footing. *Read Ephesians 6:14-15.*

1. Once followers of Jesus are clothed with the belt of truth and the breastplate of righteousness, Paul admonishes us to stand firm. According to him, what allows us to do this?

2. This is the only place where Paul refers to the “gospel of peace.” What do you think the significance is in the context of these verses?

3. How can a Christian have peace in the middle of a battle?

4. In what ways or areas of life does the enemy rob you of peace?

5. How do you normally handle situations or feelings of disharmony or unrest, and what is the outcome?

6. The shoes were studded to help the Roman soldier move over difficult or slick terrain. What does that tell you about following Jesus into the spiritual battle?

7. Armor Assessment. Soldiers need to pay close attention to the quality of their footwear—their lives may depend on it. What are your war boots like: beat up and broken down, or prepared for whatever lies ahead? Are your feet prepared to stand firm in the battle and then to move ahead confidently? Check what you are wearing and ask God to help you be prepared and alert, ready for the terrain in front of you.

8. What motivates you to share the message of how to have peace with God, or what holds you back?

Read Romans 5:1-5.

9. What results are produced in our lives because we are justified by faith in Jesus?

10. What are the outcomes of suffering according to verses 3-4?

11. Suffering and facing battles usually feel like the most difficult ways to grow. What does it mean for us to “glory in our sufferings”?

12. We don’t usually think of our feet as beautiful, and yet the prophet Isaiah wrote, “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace” (Isaiah 52:7). Into what situation or relationship can you speak or bring peace this week?



Pray that you and the people close to you will know the peace of God and leave footprints of peace wherever you go.

NOW OR LATER

Sometimes attaching a spiritual discipline to an everyday responsibility helps us develop good spiritual habits. Why not try this: when you put on your shoes every morning, think about also tying on the shoes of the gospel of peace. Put on God’s armor as you put on your clothes! Do it for a week—intentionally, deliberately—and then tell a friend or your study group how it went.