

TWO

STAY TRUE: THE
BELT OF TRUTH

Ephesians 6:13-17; 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Fitness gyms have sprouted throughout my community. Many of them are open twenty-four hours a day. At any time, from early in the morning until late at night, I see men and women trudging in and out, working to strengthen their bodies or to shed a few pounds or to keep their heart and lungs functioning well.

Most personal trainers or fitness gurus want their clients to focus on strengthening their *core*—the area of the abdomen, back, and pelvis that provides a solid foundation for any other kind of physical workout. A strong core contributes to good balance and stability and keeps a person in control of their entire body.

Group Discussion. What do you like (or dislike) about exercise? What do most people hope to gain from fitness training?

Personal Reflection. What is your spiritual core like? What are some places where you are experiencing stability or shakiness, strength or weakness, balance or imbalance in your life?

Paul bases his imagery of our spiritual armor on the uniform worn by a Roman soldier. The first readers of Paul's letters would have seen Roman soldiers every day, like police officers in our culture.

The first piece of armor stabilized the soldier's core—the seat of his strength and agility. He had his "loins girded" (ASV) with a wide leather belt that buckled snugly around his midsection. Think about the wide belt an Olympic weight lifter wears to provide support for heavy lifting. The Ephesians 6 belt serves the same purpose. It provides essential support for the demanding tasks of work and warfare. *Read Ephesians 6:13-17.*

1. The pieces of armor are listed in Ephesians 6 in the same order that a soldier would put them on to prepare for battle (vv. 14-17). Make a list of the pieces in order. Think about how each would look. Do an internet search for each piece of the armor or try to draw the armor. (Don't worry, it's for your eyes only!)

2. The belt in our spiritual armor is truth. How does truth act in our lives like the belt in the Roman soldier's life?

3. How would you describe the world's view of truth that's dominant in your context?

4. What is your view of truth as a follower of Christ?
5. If truth is the essential foundation of our protection in the spiritual battle, what does this tell you about how the enemy may seek to attack you?
6. What steps can you take to be more grounded in God's truth and to live that truth more faithfully?

Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17.

7. What does Paul say about knowing and believing God's truth?
8. What does he say about living out that truth?
9. What is the truth of Scripture useful for (vv. 16-17)?
10. Describe how you are passing the truth along to others, or explain what may be holding you back.

10. Armor Assessment. The belt helped the Roman soldier stand straighter and carry a heavy load more comfortably. (A soldier's armor and supplies could weigh about sixty pounds!) The belt of truth has the same function for us spiritually. By buckling on the belt of truth, we are enabled to stand more firmly in our faith and to carry the burdens of life more comfortably. What resources for discovering God's truth do you most often draw on?

11. What can you begin to do today to prompt yourself to turn more quickly to God's truth in time of attack or need?



Praise God that he is true and that we can trust who he is and what he says. Pray that you can be faithful to build your life on the truth.

NOW OR LATER

Psalm 119 is a long meditation on the power of God's Word. Read it slowly and reflectively. Maybe read it out loud. Mark the verses that speak most directly to you of the importance of God's truth in your life. Copy some of the verses into a journal or on small cards. Use the cards to help you memorize a few of the passages.