

DAY ELEVEN: SUIT UP!

"Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles [Satan's subtle tricks to defeat us in spiritual warfare] of the devil." (v. 11)

Why must we be strong and courageous? We have an enemy, and he is using everything he can stir up to take us down, and has been since the dawn of time. Satan is ever setting traps for us, trying to make us compromise, trying to disarm us, put us out of battle, trying to kill us. . . . this struggle, this war, and our part in it are very real. Satan is ever attacking our thoughts, tempting us, and trying to get us off the path.—BJ Higgins, from an e-mail to a friend, March 15, 2005

Unsheathe Your Sword: Ephesians 6:10-18

Raise a Revolution: Can you imagine a soldier heading into combat without protective gear or weapons? Being strong and courageous will only get him so far. When the battle erupts, he's going down—fast.

Whenever you carry out the ministry of Jesus Christ, you are painting a bright red target on your back. Christ's promise is to be with you, not to remove you from the strife.

The battle is real. The stakes are high. The armor is essential. How do you take a stand against enemy tactics? Suit up!

Which aspect of God's armor do you find yourself needing most?

Briefly describe a time when you were keenly aware of the battle.

List two ways that you can "put on" the whole armor and stand firm against the evil one.

Die for You: *God, You alone are my strength, my shield. Remind me to suit up in my armor daily. Guide me to walk in Your power and victory today.*

DAY TWELVE: HERE I AM TO WORSHIP

I was going to type out all the things I have neglected to record in Xangaland lately, but then I heard my sister playing "Here I am to Worship" and everything that once felt important to say fades. . . God rocks, and He loves us, despite the fact that we continually spit in His face. We lose faith when faced with only slightly difficult circumstances, and turn from Him on the drop of a hat, but He still loves us and will always be there for us. The LEAST we can do is just worship Him

And here I am, God, to worship you. Here I am to bow down at your feet. Here I am to announce, You are my God, the Master of my life, my Lord. You are altogether and completely beautiful. You are wholly worthy. And You are so wonderful to me despite my faults.—BJ Higgins, www.xanga.com/DeadSilence7, June 2, 2004

Unsheathe Your Sword: Psalm 95:1-7

Raise a Revolution: When you worship, you focus your *mind's attention* and your *heart's affection* on something or someone. Who or what has your focus?

True worship begins in relationship. The more we fall in love with our Lord, the more we come alive to His amazing works, and the more we end up in worship before Him. He is a great God and a great King above all gods!

What aspects of God's creation have you seen recently that have drawn you to worship Him?

Write a brief note to your heavenly Father telling Him of your love.

Die for You: *Father, You are high and lifted up. Here I am to worship, bowing humbly before You. I offer my life and myself to You and You alone.*

DAY THIRTEEN: TAKE HOLD OF CHRIST

"I have taken hold of Christ because He has taken hold of me," as Paul said, so take hold; He will never let go or fail. Delight in God. Have joy in God. That is praise. That is your purpose. That is all you have and all you'll ever need. Your responsibility as a Christian is to delight in the one and only delightful. Delight in His everything and your nothing. Does not that make you grateful to be alive? That your purpose in life is to delight. So then, what else can anyone say?

No action is greater than its motive. The only correct motive is to bring glory to God.—
BJ Higgins, Journal Entry, c. 2003

Unsheathe Your Sword: Philippians 3:12-21

Raise a Revolution: Taking hold of Christ is a choice. He has chosen us—but we must choose Him as well. Opportunities to take hold happen around us every day.

Enemies of the cross set their minds on the here and now. Because self is their god, sin becomes their delight. When we take hold of Him, we align our lives with the purposes He has planted deep within us. We see how great He is and how small we are. We fall down in worship before Him.

Are you a citizen of heaven? Take hold of Christ—and worship!

Philippians 3:19 presents a dark picture of the enemies of the cross. Rewrite it to paint a positive picture of a Christ-follower.

In what practical ways will you “take hold” of Christ today?

Die for You: Lord Jesus, Today I want to worship You and You alone. Help me to see you all around me today. As I press toward the goal, help me to keep taking hold of You.

DAY FOURTEEN: GOT SIN?

Our emptiness resounds in the darkness, echoing, revealed in the distant light, and we try to hide from it, ignore it, and consume ourselves with the garbage of evil, temporary pleasures: sins. We carry through our lives asking questions of why we are so empty, becoming all more aware of our emptiness and all the more empty.

Where is fulfillment? Where is escape from our darkness? In the last place that it would be looked [for], though often the most obvious. God. Christianity. Morals. The light.

There, with God, for God, you will find purpose and subsistence. There, in the light, you will be filled and your darkness will be driven out.—BJ Higgins, “All Sins Are Attempts to Fill Voids,” school composition, 2004?

Unsheathe Your Sword: Romans 7:14-25

Raise a Revolution: The spiraling progression of sin since Adam and Eve’s snack in the Garden is beyond discouraging. Read the news: greed and garbage smear the headlines. Watch the latest reality show: sin on parade—in high definition! And your own life? Don’t even go there!

Actually, that’s just where you need to go. Scripture encourages us to “examine ourselves” (2 Cor. 13:5). Just don’t stay there! Romans 7:25 proclaims the *person* and *plan* for hope. Jesus is the only way—in this case, the way out. The plan? Setting your mind so strongly on Him that you become a literal slave to His ways.

Name one area of your life that God has restored, and another that still needs His restoring touch.

List two ways you can make Jesus your first choice the next time you face temptation.

Die for You: *Too often, I have filled my emptiness with sin. Lord, fill me so full of You that darkness has no room to grow.*

DAY FIFTEEN: ON GUARD!

Galatians 6:1 talks about what to do if someone is spiritually “overtaken” by sin. The Greek word used for “overtaken” there literally means, “to be caught off guard,” and could also mean the person was at a vulnerable point. This is a clear description of what happened to me. I let my guard down at some point, and Satan attacked and attacked and attacked. Prayerfully, I learned my lesson, and am trying in every way possible to stay on guard.—BJ Higgins, www.xanga.com/DeadSilence7, May 12, 2005

Unsheathe Your Sword: Galatians 6:1-10

Raise a Revolution: We each take responsibility for our own sin. God holds no one but you accountable for your choices—whether good or bad. Excuses? He’s heard them all. Only one plea counts: the blood of Jesus.

What about other people? Christians are known for shooting their wounded—the opposite of what we see in this passage.

Here, as everywhere, attitude influences actions. When a brother is caught in sin, focus your mind and heart on *restoration*—bringing back to a former state. Picture a doctor setting a dislocated arm or leg, carefully putting it back into place so that full health and motion return.

When a fellow believer is overtaken by sin, do you whisper or point fingers? Attitude check! Could you be the one “overtaken”? Stay on guard, on task—and lose the excuses.

On the following scale (1 low, 10 high) rate how “overtaken” you were by sin six months ago.

Mark below (1 low, 10 high) how “overtaken” you are today.

Have you given and/or received biblical restoration from a low point of sin? Write a brief description of that process here.

Die for You: Lord, keep me in Your name and on my guard. When my brothers and sisters fall, let me be the one who restores them with Your spirit of gentleness.

DAY SIXTEEN: STAND UP AND FIGHT

*We are the Pacifists/We know nothing of fighting/For what we believe in/
Keep clenched fists in our pockets/Too quick to give in /Heaven forbid /We might rise
up/In righteous anger /Take a stand/ With atrophied spirits/And weak, broken hands
We are the Pacifists/Step back/Leave the tyranny just the way it is /Give up/Please no
fighting /Let the wrong remain as it is/Because we are the Pacifists (pacifists)/We are the
Pacifists (pacifists)/. . . We are warriors/In a battle unseen/We are fighting/With these
demons/That would pacify us/God fight through us/FIGHT/FIGHT/WIN/(God will) WIN
FIGHT!—BJ Higgins, song for “Ice to Fire,” posted www.xanga.com/DeadSilence7,
March 16, 2004*

Unsheathe Your Sword: 1 Peter 5:8

Raise a Revolution: To fail to fight is to fail to understand both the dangers of the battle and the power of the enemy.

Peter got it—he really got it. Even his command to “be self-controlled” uses a Greek tense of urgency. The word for “alert” takes things even farther, calling believers to wake up—right away!

Why did Peter sound this 911 call? He understood the enemy all too well. The sword-swinging, triple-denying disciple knew exactly how low we can go. Three terrible terms describe our antagonist: “your enemy” (an actively hostile opponent), “the devil” (“one who separates by throwing”—a starkly accurate portrayal of his divisive lies) and “a roaring lion” (a powerful, persistent foe).

Peter got it—he really got it. Do you?

Briefly describe the last time you were directly aware of the enemy’s powerful attack.

Take time now to pray through your Ephesians 5 armor.

How else will you place yourself on urgent alert today?

Die for You: God, I acknowledge your power over sin, death and hell. Thank You for Your victory on the cross and for going before and behind me in the battle.

DAY SEVENTEEN: A SWORD UNSHEATHED

I will not be satisfied. I will not let my passion be held in a bottle. I will not let my light be hidden. I will stand up. I will let my voice be heard. I will lead. I will serve. I will fight. I will tell people about Christ. I will unsheathe my sword. It's time to raise a revolution. God will give me the strength.—BJ Higgins, retreat journal, 10/23/04; adopted by Awe Star Ministries as its Global Passage Creed, 2005

Unsheathe Your Sword: 2 Kings 23:1-25

Raise a Revolution: King Josiah understood revolution. He was young (eight years old when he took the throne). He had a rough home life (his dad was King Amon, one of Judah's most corrupt). But when he made a connection with God, it showed.

At age fifteen, Josiah “began to seek after the God of David.” (2 Chron. 34:3), charging his men with restoring the broken-down temple. During the renovation, they found a lost scroll and, by Josiah's order, read it aloud.

Picture it: the rugged walls of the partly-constructed temple. The muddy, sun-streaked faces. A ruler, fresh at the edge of manhood, so overcome by the text that he tears his clothes in grief and terror.

Josiah didn't stop there. Today's passage describes his revolution—one designed to bring his people back into relationship with the living God.

You may be young. You may have a rough background. You may not be a king. But you can make a difference. God will give you the strength.

Give an example of a young person who raised a revolution for Christ.

Do you know someone doing this today? Write five words describing their revolution.

What is God saying to you about this topic?

Die for You: My God, your love is radical. Teach me to seek after You and raise the revolution You direct.

DAY EIGHTEEN: DON'T WASTE YOUR LIFE

It's so easy, in the USA, to get comfortable with where we are and to get comfortable, even, with our small ministry or lack thereof, but God did not call us to a life of comfort, but to a life of suffering for Him, which brings us JOY and GLORY through Jesus Christ. Christ doesn't just call us to live for Him on Sundays and Wednesdays, or on camps and mission trips, or during Bible studies and SV or FCA meetings, but EVERY DAY, every moment of our lives. . . . it's time that we as Christians stop being lazy and just talking the talk, and get our hands and feet dirty actually following Him and serving Him diligently every day of our lives. We need to take His message to the people of every nation--including ours (for we all know how much our nation needs Christ). He went through the blood; the least we can do is go through the mud.—BJ Higgins, www.xanga.com/DeadSilence7, July 25, 2005

Unsheathe Your Sword: Philippians 2:1-11

Raise a Revolution: A king, giving up His throne. A wealthy man, living as a pauper. A powerful warrior, laying his weapons aside.

“What a waste!” most people would say. But each statement captures the ministry of Jesus Christ, who “emptied himself” of heaven’s glories to come to earth as a man. He did not cling to the equality He held with God from eternity past. He consistently put others’ needs ahead of His own—from manger to cross and beyond.

When have you considered sacrifice a “waste”?

What activities, interests or people draw you into wasting your life?

Die for You: *Lord, I don't want to waste my life. Please reveal to me anything that I hold too tightly. Allow me to give it up and cling even more closely to You.*

DAY NINETEEN: MORE AND BETTER

Our lives are for Christ, not ourselves, so as it instructs in Hebrews 12:1-3, we need to actively, forcefully, and even violently (spiritually speaking) THROW off EVERYthing that hinders glorifying Christ through our lives! Don't want to because you enjoy your life? But Christ says, "I have come to give them life and to give it to them abundantly," John 10:10. You see, because we were made to glorify God, it is the one thing that satisfies us most and that we can find the most enjoyment in. We spend our lives seeking satisfaction and enjoyment, but it's only to be found in Christ. So what better reason to turn to Him and let go and throw off everything that holds you back?—BJ Higgins, www.xanga.com/DeadSilence7, August 2, 2005

Unsheathe Your Sword: John 10:10

Raise a Revolution: Jesus tells us He came to bring “real and eternal life, more and better life than [you] ever dreamed of” (John 10:10, MSG). He created us to find our greatest satisfaction, our deepest joy and our highest hope in Him. He designed us with specific qualities that make the need for this relationship an integral part of our lives.

To settle for anything else is to settle for something much less. The counterfeit joys that the world, the flesh and the devil lay before us are just that—counterfeit. When the light intensifies, they vanish like mist.

Choose abundant life. Give Him your all. He will take everything—and give you even more.

Name something that you have had difficulty “throwing off” in your pursuit of a relationship with Christ.

Would you describe your Christian walk as “abundant”? Why or why not?

Die for You: Jesus, I know that You give a life that is more and better than I ever dreamed. Help me to throw off anything that keeps me from You.

DAY TWENTY: HEARTBEAT OF OBEDIENCE

God called me to go speak to these 4 policemen. I [was] kinda nervous cuz they could've easily laughed in my face or else whipped out their uzis and ordered us to get off the premises, but God is teaching me obedience so I went and talked to them. As I was speaking, 2 of the 4's eyes started to well up and you could tell they wanted Christ. Other 2 were also sincere. Just as I finished the card [English/Spanish card that shares the Gospel] Marco [their translator] walked up . . . All 4 accepted Christ. As we were handing out response cards, I turn around and am instructed to share with another man, so I begin and eventually a crowd gathers and I'm witnessing with Marco . . . most of this crowd sincerely (tears, nodding heads, etc.) accepted Christ and one lady thanked us over and over after.—BJ Higgins, Global Passage Journal; Cajamarca, Peru, July 2, 2005

Unsheathe Your Sword: Matthew 8:5-10 (13?)

Raise a Revolution: The centurion believed in the authority of Jesus Christ. He understand that a word from Him was all it took to turn situations completely around. Others scoffed, but Jesus honored him for his great faith—and instantly healed his servant.

When facing a difficult circumstance, do you stand ready to hear Jesus speak?

Do you have that heartbeat of obedience that can instantly move you from one place to another—in or out of your comfort zone?

Give an example of a time when God clearly spoke and you responded with a heartbeat of obedience.

Die for You: Father God, I know that a heartbeat of obedience is not something I can give myself. Please make my heart and my desires more and more like Yours. I give You all the praise and glory!