

'Stand firm then... with the breastplate of righteousness in place,' Ephesians 6:14

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In the week since I wrote of the belt of Truth, I have been in dire circumstances trying to learn about the Breastplate of Righteousness. The righteousness spoken of in Eph 6:14 is essentially having a good conscience. Before God - and before man. This comes by doing right. In *everything*. And this is where I ran into trouble.

If you have ever dealt with depression, you know how it affects the way we see things, especially problems. Even small things become too much to handle and my tendency is to run from the distress problems bring. So, God saw fit to teach me by experience the value of having a good conscience with Him.

I would rather learn by reading, or even hearing from others who experience hard lessons, and then nod wisely, 'Yeah, that's so true.' This method saves a lot of grief and pain and I feel better knowing about a certain topic having read or heard of it. But... have you noticed, when you need encouragement, when you need to know things will turn out ok, then let's hear it from one who's been there and back. And so, since I want to be an encouragement to others...

My week began well enough; Sunday I went to church and attended the men's class where I sometimes teach. Monday brought errands, Tuesday the same, and during it all, I worked on this next devotion. Wednesday, things began to slide downward, into that black region of my soul where depression dwells. The headache came on Thursday and the small irritations began to mount and grow with persistence.

By Friday the urge to run and hide, to ease the pressure and darkness became overwhelming. My temper caused murderous fury to rise up in traffic. I wanted to go back to one of my old habits. Habits I had vowed to forsake. They are habits I loathe, but in my weakened state, I craved relief from the distress boiling up inside. I wanted the headache to ease off. Just one 5th of wine will do it. View just one magazine to fuel the lust, for its power will ease the despair, I lied to myself.

As I spiraled down during the day, resisting the dark urges and feeling ashamed of them, God's voice came to me softly, 'Stand firm in the face of this. I brought this to teach you dependence on Me.' But I do depend on you, I argued. 'Utter dependence,' He replied.

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