

The **core** of something is the center or central part of the object. The core of an apple is the center that contains the seeds. The seeds are how the apple reproduces. Without seeds the DNA of the apples cannot be passed on so, no new apple trees.

Our physical core: is that area around your trunk and pelvis, made up of the abdominal muscle groups. 1) It connects the lower and upper parts of your body so that the limbs and movements work together efficiently. So that motions of sweeping, swinging, running, etc. are made smoothly. A strong physical core helps 2) your balance, stability, resistance to injury and keeps up your stamina over time and under pressure. As you grow older it can mean the difference between 3) walking upright or being in a chair, not able to stand alone.

4) The condition of your core affects everything.

We also have a spiritual core that has many of the same **attributes**. Write them below with the same scripture that has a similar theme.

- 1) Ephesians 2:13-17: _____
- 2) Ephesians 4:14: _____
- 3) Ephesians 6:13-14a : _____
- 4) James 1:2-4 _____

Why are these attributes of the spiritual core so important to our spiritual health?

In what ways have you noticed these attributes missing in the Christian community?

The pieces of armor listed in Ephesians 6:10-18 are in the same order in which a Roman soldier would've put them on to prepare for battle. Which is first? _____

Why do you think this is so important for the soldier?

What attribute does Paul connect to this piece of equipment? _____

Why must this be first in any successful spiritual warfare against the enemy?

Truth is your core support when you are in spiritual warfare.

What is truth? _____

The enemy's weapons are deception: 1) he **seduces** us away from our principles.

2) he makes up fantasies to make things appear valuable and favorable. 3) he hides consequences 4) he is so clever unless we know what is really true we fall **prey**.

How can we become women strengthened and well-supported by the belt of truth?

- The stronger your core, the less likely you'll be to buckle under pressure when carrying heavy loads.

Choose one Old Testament and one New Testament passage from the ones below. Write the side effects of a life not girded in truth from the verses you choose.

Old Testament

Genesis 3:6, 16-19 _____

Numbers 20:7-8, 11-12 _____

Psalm 106:13-15 _____

New Testament

Romans 1:21, 24-32 _____

Romans 2:6-9 _____

Ephesians 4:14, 18-19 _____

- According to Ephesians 4:26-27, what does the enemy often use to gain opportunity to insert "his foot" into a person's life? _____
- Sensitivity to taking offense is one of the key ways Satan traps believers. When we are easily wounded and hurt by the words and actions of other people, we give the enemy opportunity to plant a *root of bitterness in our hearts*. Which is sure to bear rotten fruit for years to come!
- The fruit of offense can be staggering: jealousy, outrage, hatred, anger...it can easily take over our lives and control us.
- Anger is often based on a **misrepresentation** of facts about the details of whatever situation started it.
- When you are standing firmly on the truth of God as shown to us in His Word—when His truth is at the core of your existence—strength flows to every other area of your life; work, school, ministry, relationships, etc. All your activities bear witness to the power of God at work in you.

Strengthen your core and you will find renewed desire over time as you start to:

1) walk uprightly for longer periods of time; 2) stay strong, even when under pressure and strain; 3) become able to absorb criticism without taking offense; 4) feel less uncomfortable and awkward with your convictions; 5) be spiritually renewed, refreshed, girded with power and strength.

You will no longer be one of those "weak women...led on by various impulses" (2 Timothy 3:6) but be held steady and strong in the belt of God's truth.

THE DIVINE WARRIOR

New Testament exegesis commonly leans on Old Testament passages as the foundation of authority. The apostle Paul's description of the armor most certainly does. It reverberates with deliberately chosen language to connect it with the Book of Isaiah. Ephesians 6 alludes to the image of Yahweh depicted as a Divine Warrior.

"Truth is missing, and whoever turns from evil is plundered. The LORD saw that there was no justice, and He was offended. He saw that there was no man—He was amazed that there was no one interceding; so His own arm brought salvation, and His own righteousness supported Him. He put on righteousness like a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and He wrapped Himself in zeal as in a cloak. So He will repay according to their deeds: fury to His enemies, retribution to His foes, and He will repay the coastlands. They will fear the name of Yahweh in the west and His glory in the east; for He will come like a rushing stream driven by the wind of the LORD" (Isa. 59:15-19, HCSB).

The context of warfare was clearly evident in the Isaianic passage. The nation of Israel—God's people as a whole—was corrupt and its leaders debased. The pure worship of Yahweh had been replaced by unapologetic idolatry and perverted cultic practices like sorcery, prostitution, and child sacrifice. In response to this demoralization, God Himself responds by donning His armor, in essence His own character and virtues, to bring judgment and justice. And, sadly, the enemy is not some other pagan nation. In this case, it is the children of God themselves.

This warfare tone provides the backdrop for Ephesians. Except now, the good news of the gospel severely changes the dynamics. Under the new covenant established in Christ, the hostility and enmity between the Father and humanity has been dissolved. Now, that which Yahweh was once compelled to use against His people, He freely gives as a gift to them—to exact against the devil and the domain of darkness. With Christ as the cornerstone, the church is fitted together and equipped to advance as one body. One unit. A divine warrior. The church is the presence of God on earth through which He continues to wage warfare and claim the victory that has already been secured in His beloved Son.

Please do not miss the beautiful and stunning implications: your armor is Yahweh's own armor—given as a gift and empowered by His Spirit to ensure victory.

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 3:6 “They are the kind that worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires.”

IS THERE A PRIORITY TO CHANGE? God’s truth must undergird our views, decisions, attitudes and actions, guiding our lives under pressure and over time.

What did God show us today?

- 1) The condition of our spiritual core affects everything. It undergirds and reinforces our ability to live and thrive in a spiritually healthy way.
- 2) Sensitivity to taking offense is one of the key ways Satan traps believers.
- 3) When His truth is at the core of your life—strength flows to every other area of your life; work, ministry, family, relationships.

How can you keep the fruit of offense, such as anger, from taking over your life?

Word Study:

attributes: something considered qualities or characteristics of the person, thing, or group as indicated; something attributed as belonging to someone or something. The family members all seem to have attributes of being happy and loving people.

illusion: something that deceives by producing a false or misleading impression of reality. Satan twists and turns God’s Word to make an illusion that is false in reality

misrepresentation: to represent incorrectly, improperly or falsely. The serpent’s misrepresentation as to what God really meant, influenced Eve to eat the apple.

persevering: steadfast, persistent in what’s undertaken in spite of difficulty, obstacles or discouragement; to sustain or uphold. We are to be persevering in seeking the truth of God’s Word.

prey: a person or thing that is the victim of an enemy; a harmful or destructive influence. We can easily fall prey to Satan’s lies if we are not sure of God’s truth.

seduces: to lead astray or corrupt away from principles or faith; to entice away.