

The belt of the Roman soldier added support and strength to his core. But it also **secured** other pieces of his armor necessary for his success in battle. Items such as:

- the breastplate that protected his heart and vital organs of his body.
- the knife and sword, leaving his hands free to hold the shield or fist fight.

The belt of *truth* is the **stabilizer** of our pieces of spiritual armor. It also adds support and strength to our spiritual core in daily living and in daily spiritual warfare. How does that happen? Let's look at the other pieces of armor and their spiritual description so we can see how *truth* stabilizes all of them. Eph. 6: 14-18

- **RIGHTEOUSNESS** (v14) means right living. The way we apply truth in our lives and live in a way honoring and pleasing to God.
- **PEACE** (v15) is the deep, inner, eternal stability the believer has because of her relationship with Jesus. Stability not influenced by outside circumstances. It makes it possible for us to live in **harmony** with others.
- **FAITH** (v16) is to apply what we believe, putting feet to God's truth and living in the light of His truth each day in our decisions, attitude and actions.
- **SALVATION** (v17) is our eternal security with Christ and the full inheritance we've been given through relationship with Him: blessings, status, and identity—all we've received to live in victory for Him.
- **THE WORD OF GOD** (v17) His present, **relevant** and personal Word to us for today, made fresh, new and alive for us each day.
- **PRAYER** (v18) the way we communicate with God, and the divine method we use to gain access to His promises, power, and victory.

The soldier's belt was also barring some of the weight of the protective breastplate which was quite heavy, wearing down his energy and making him ineffective to fight in battle. Without the belt of truth, we would be left carrying the full weight of our own "righteousness." Instead, God made us acceptable in His sight through the sacrifice of His Son, taking that burden off of us, freeing us from living with the weight of all that sin on our shoulders. *But, to advance against the enemy you must be willing to submit to God's truth.* Write John 8:32 below.

Without truth—without an absolute standard—there's no real liberty. Guidelines are central and authoritative to our experience, otherwise everyone is governed by their own self-regulated principles, which could be unfair or dangerous to others.

For example if you live in America and you are a citizen of this country you have certain rights just because you are a citizen of America. However, just because this nation is “free” does not mean you are free to do whatever you want. There are boundaries and laws, within which everyone must limit their own personal freedom of choices. Without these boundaries, *everyone's personal definition of freedom could **infringe** on others' personal freedoms.* Laws do restrict us, yes, but they free us to live peaceable, comfortably, and at ease with one another.

Give an example of a time when your commitment to the truth of God—which perhaps felt restrictive at first—actually helped you experience more freedom.

How can young people be taught to think of truth as liberating and positive instead of restrictive and joyless? I used to tell the little people in my school “Your rights end where his/her nose begins.” What do you think that meant?

Let's look at 2 Corinthians 11:14 Masquerades is another word for disguises. Also deception, fraud and illusion are all ways to describe something that is only a version of the truth. It looks like one thing but is really a lie covered in a tweaked version of the truth. A wolf in sheep's clothing. Making **discernment** of what is true difficult.

Dr. Charles Spurgeon said it this way. “Discernment is not a matter of simply telling the difference between what is right and wrong, rather it is the difference between right and almost right.”

What activities or events have you recently seen in the news or on social media that seemed right but, when compared with Scripture, fell short of the truth test? Look at Ephesians 5:13-14a. What word is similar to truth in these verses? What are some similarities between the results of truth and light? The light is what separates facts from fiction. Or truth from almost truth. Turn to Ephesians 5:8-9. The deceiver operates in the darkness. As long as we stumble around in darkness—not sure of what's true and not—we'll never be able to see him for who he really is.

We will not be able to detect the underlying intentions of his plans. We need a spotlight that pierces the darkness and lays bare all his evil schemes, systems, and illusions. The truth of God and God's Word is that light! Why?

- Satan causes us to think happiness exists where it doesn't
- that security is offered where it isn't.
- makes evil appealing and righteousness boring
- seduces us down a path that leaves us addicted, joyless, and empty
- a spouse feeling justified in having an affair
- a young adult thinking she won't be harmed by playing with morally questionable fire
- a businessperson can feel excused for making a less-than-honorable deal

The enemy creates the illusion in their minds they are the exception to the truth! Name some of the most misleading cultural images and perceptions that adults and children tend to believe: _____

How can you see the enemy's strategy behind these philosophies or trends? Why then do we need light and truth? Because nothing else is steady enough to do what only light and truth can.

- But, what about feelings? Feelings change and emotions are unstable. They are based on external happenings. Sometimes moment to moment.
- How about intelligence? Minds change with more or different information or a changed or new perspective. Sometimes day to day.
- What about our gut? Every human being has a conscience that steers you morally. Our conscience is influenced by sin, shaped by our parents, teachers, life circumstances, our environment. This makes it unreliable as a source of truth. It can change in the heat of the moment and easily over time.

How much do you tend to depend on these factors in making a life decision 1-10?

A) feelings____ B) intelligence____ C) Instinct____ D) Past experiences____

The enemy touches our feelings, excites our instincts and brings to mind our past experiences taking us outside God's will and off course. Freedom comes to those who follow the truth that we discover in Him and in His Word. That's the difference!

Memory Verse: John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

IS THERE A LESSON TO LEARN? We must seek His light and truth in discerning what is truth and what is *almost truth*.

What did God show us today?

1) The Word of God provides us with the Truth that stabilizes us in *righteousness, peace, faith and salvation*. Ephesians 6:14-18

2) The test of truth must always be compared with Scripture, the absolute standard of truth in God's Word.

3) Neither opinions of others, nor our personal feelings, intelligence nor conscience are steady enough to do what only God's light and truth can.

The enemy creates illusions in our minds that lead us astray. How can we defend against that? _____

Word Study:

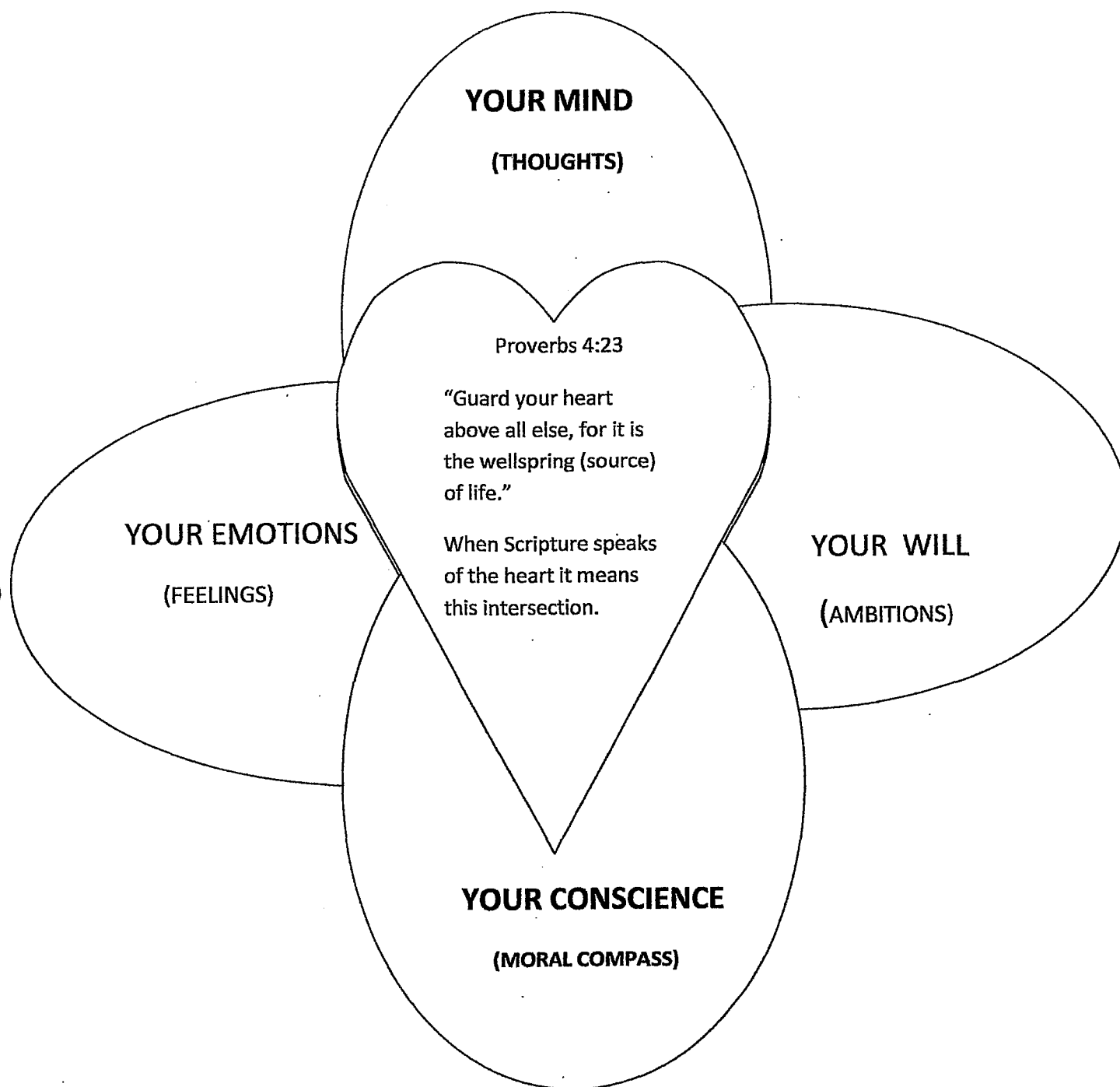
1) discernment: use judgment, perception, and insight for a keen understanding. She had great discernment concerning the needs of special children in learning.

2) harmony: harmonious relations, agreement, peace, unity, friendship. The community developed harmony, living in peace, unity and friendship.

3) infringe: to violate or transgress on others; to encroach or trespass others' rights. The rioters infringed on the rights of business owners by destroying their property and stealing their products.

4) relevant: suited to the purpose or occasion; applicable, fitting, appropriate. God's Word is relevant to all events and issues we experience today.

5) stabilizer: to make something stable or unchanging. God's truth is the stabilizer in our spiritual armor in the battle with the enemy.



Your soul is what makes you a unique individual. It's your personality and internal nature; it's made up of your mind, will, emotions, and conscience. The heart is the centerpiece of the soul.