

# ***The Armor of God...***

An introduction to "*The Armor of God...*"

In 1994 The Long Island Church of Christ was exceedingly blessed with spiritual growth and maturity as we undertook a year-long study entitled *Look at the Man*. Put together by Tim Woodroof and Glenn Gray, then elders of the Lincoln Church of Christ in Nebraska, this series of studies deepened our relationship with our Lord Jesus and gave us a more mature perspective on our relationship with Him and our role as His Bride on Earth.

As we concluded the study in December of that year, the more mature members of the body desired to continue with a series of studies that would enable the congregation to put into practice all that it had learned the previous year by taking a close *look at the Man*. And so *The Armor of God...* began.

Originally titled *C2IT (See to it...)*, from various passages in Hebrews which denote our accountability to Jesus (namely *Heb 3:12* and *12:15,25*), the studies are designed to increase awareness of our accountability to our Lord Jesus and to put that accountability into practice by allowing the Holy Spirit of God to mold us and change us according to His will, not our own. The focus of this series is found in the following passages: *Eph 5:8-10; Col 1:10* and *1 Thes 4:1*.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and *find out what pleases the Lord*.

**Eph 5:8-10**

And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may *please him* in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God...

**Col 1:10**

Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to *please God*, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more.

**1 Th 4:1**

Echoing the words of Paul in this last passage, this series of studies encourages all of us to please the Lord by maturing and being sanctified more and more! Part of the realizations that hit you as you mature is the necessity to continue to be holy, as these passages teach us if you continue on reading the verses after the ones I quote here. How does one do this?

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

**Rom 12:1-2**

Our spiritual act of continuous worship is to offer our bodies as living, holy sacrifices - *pleasing to God* because it is a voluntary, eager worship according to the truth as well as with all your heart and soul (John 4:23). The *how to* in carrying out our spiritual act of worship according to the truth is in the renewing of our mind as we read the word of God and let His Spirit work in us. Discernment between the things that please God and the things that don't come with the maturity by which the Spirit is allowed to work.

At the risk of sounding *preachy* I suggest to you that the hardest thing for any Christian to give up is his/her own will. Yes, we get baptized and we attend church services and we do a whole lot of other *acts* of worship, but often we, or should I say more correctly, *I*, forget the *renewing of your mind* part. That's what this series of studies is all about. It boldly and candidly helps us to remember to listen to the Spirit, as opposed to ourselves, so that our worship may truly be pleasing to the Lord because of our sincerity and openness.

Well... that's enough of an intro. Now let's get ready to go over some meaty issues to help you understand where some of our material came from. We're all familiar with the Boston controversy, right? First I want to assure you that the Long Island Church of Christ is not affiliated with the Boston/Crossroads movement in any way. We do acknowledge that the truth is still being taught to the lost by them as of 1995. We believe they are brethren that need to be corrected in some areas. Unfortunately, they have given the devil a foothold by some of their practices and this has corrupted many.

In light of all this, however, there are many good things to be learned. As a matter of fact, if you decide to commit yourself to this course of study, you will notice that the material for the first thirteen lessons will have come from a book published by the Boston Church of Christ called *Shining Like Stars*. It is within this book that these thirteen lessons are collectively called the *C2IT series*. These lessons are biblically sound and form the foundation for the succeeding lessons. They deal with issues that need to be continuously taught to the young Christians that come into the fold.

Within these lessons you will also find *discipleship* being addressed. Although many congregations have looked *down* upon this concept, many in the Kingdom have realized that it is indeed a very biblically sound notion. Don't misunderstand me—the Boston movement has taken biblical accountability far beyond what Jesus taught us through *discipleship*, nonetheless, it is a very biblical and Christian and loving thing to hold each other accountable through our loving relationships that we should have with one another. This is being put into effect by what is called, among some brethren, *care groups*. These care groups are composed of brethren that work with each other to:

... *spur one another on* toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us *encourage one another*--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Heb 10:24-25

These *care groups* are not into extorting, coercing or lording it over the weak or young Christian. The brethren involved in these *love groups* are expressing and putting into practice the deep love Jesus wants us to have for each other, just like He did for us. If you have no experience with these *care groups* I suggest you talk about it with a brother or sister that knows about it more in detail or who has participated in such an activity. You can also call us or correspond with us at the Long Island Church of Christ.

We have been loving each other by forming these *voluntary* groups and the many testimonials that continue to surface are proof that they work. I won't get into the biblical support for these because the studies cover it in great detail throughout the year.

We are also indebted to our brother Rubel Shelly and Joe Beam. We have found encouragement, spiritual guidance and insight in their respective books *Written in Stone: Ethics for the Heart* and *Seeing the Unseen: A Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*. We want to thank them for being sincere and loving and for letting the Holy Spirit guide them in writing these books.

Well, if at this point you have any questions or concerns before you continue to pass these studies along to your congregation, feel free to e-mail, fax, or mail your questions, suggestions or concerns to us.

You will find that these studies will teach you, correct you, rebuke you and encourage you with all authority from the Word of God and through the Holy Spirit. My prayer is that your relationship with Jesus will develop into an exquisite intimacy that will speak for itself by your actions as the body of Jesus.

May God bless your efforts and your quest for love and knowledge.

In Christ,

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