

The Battlefield of our Mind
Bible Study on the Helmet of Salvation (Ephesians 6:17)
By Major Beth Desplancke

Opening:

1. We have lots of funny sayings related to our head. What do these common head sayings mean?
 - I always keep my head (*Meaning: I never lose control of my emotions*)
 - It never entered my head (*Meaning: I never even thought about it*)
 - I brought matters to a head. (*Meaning: I made sure something had to be decided*)
 - My head is in the clouds (*Meaning: I am not a practically minded person*).
 - I can't make head nor tails of this (*Meaning: I don't understand it at all*).
 - I'm in way over my head (*Meaning: I'm involved so far that it's out of my control*)
 - I could do it standing on my head (*Meaning: I find it really easy*).
 - The fame has completely gone to my head (*Meaning: I have let my feelings get out of control*).
 - She likes to keep her head down (*Meaning: She avoids attracting attention*)
 - They're still scratching their heads (*Meaning: They're finding it hard to understand the results*).
 - That joke just went over my head (*Meaning: I didn't understand the joke*).

[\(https://englishwithatwist.com/2014/09/05/12-idioms-head/\)](https://englishwithatwist.com/2014/09/05/12-idioms-head/)
2. What other head sayings or idioms can you think of? (Examples: airhead, head start, to bang one's head against the wall, head over heels, keep a cool head, like a chicken with its head cut off).

Although they are funny sayings, we know that protecting the head is especially important to our health and well-being. A head injury can be dangerous and life threatening. That is why there are certain sports and activities where wearing a helmet is vitally important, such as playing football or riding a bicycle.

Getting into the Word:

In Ephesians 6, Paul writes about the fact we are in a spiritual battle, ***...not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*** (Ephesians 6:12). He then goes on to list a spiritual armor that Christians should be figuratively wearing so that we can stand up against the devil's schemes (v. 11).

Read Ephesians 6:10-20.

Although Paul does not start with the helmet first, we are going to start there, because we think a lot of thoughts all day long. According to a study from psychologists at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, the average human has 6,200 thoughts per day (<https://bigthink.com/neuropsych/how-many-thoughts-per-day/>). For Christians, the biggest battlefield is our minds. When the enemy attacks, he usually attacks our minds because he knows if he can influence the way we think, he will influence the way we act.

A Roman soldier's helmet, called a *galea*, was a skullcap made of iron, typically covered with bronze. Its primary function was to protect the soldier's skull and brain from the swing of the "broadsword" - a 3- to 4-foot-long sword with a massive handle that needed to be cradled by two hands to hit its target. One strategically aimed blow could completely crush the soldier's skull, incapacitating him in a split second.

Over time, the soldier's helmet was redesigned to be even more comprehensive in its coverage. Pieces were added, including a flared neck guard and hinged cheek guards. It protected not only the head but also the neck and shoulders. When the helmet was strapped in place, it exposed little besides the eyes, nose, and mouth.

3. How does Paul describe the helmet? Read also Isaiah 59:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8.
4. Why do you think he used that word connected to the helmet?
5. What does salvation mean?

According to Easton's Bible Diction, salvation is the word used for "the deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptians (Exodus 14:13), and of deliverance generally from evil or danger. In the New Testament it is specially used with reference to the great deliverance from the guilt and the pollution of sin wrought out by Jesus Christ, "the great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3)."

The salvation experience is often reduced to something that only affects a person's eternal destiny – heaven or hell. For some, salvation is just a "get out of hell free card." And to be clear, the fact that it does affect the outcome of eternity gives us incredible hope. In fact, part of what it means to wear the helmet of salvation is to live every day in light of eternity, and the promised future that we have. Doing so will, without a doubt, change the way we live in the present.

While the future implications of our salvation are critical and give us astounding hope, this is not the totality of what it offers. If salvation was only meant to give us a ticket to eternity, what good would it do us now while we're still on earth? Do we just sit around waiting, living out our days until some future moment when the Lord returns or when we go to heaven, whichever comes first?

No, salvation – yours and mine – was meant to come with more than future benefits. It was also supposed to exert a startlingly clear impact on our present, daily life. But this impact will only be experienced to the extent that we apply the benefits of salvation to our everyday lives.

Receiving salvation is not the same as applying salvation. The first redeems us; the second restores, protects, and shields us daily from the attacks of the enemy.

6. Read Romans 5:9-10. What does justification mean?

Justification is a legal term signifying acquittal. It means we're released from having to pay the debt we owe for our sin. But our salvation doesn't stop at the foot of the cross. If you're amazed at what His death accomplished, imagine how much more is accomplished through "His life." The fact that He lives means our salvation flows into the everyday experiences where we live.

"I'm saved" isn't just past tense; it also has past and future implications. As we live underneath its blessing, we enjoy a vibrant, living, daily reality in the present (sanctification). And this is not just a one-time occurrence. Sanctification is a process by which we are continually delivered from the wrath of God on earth, fortified against the enemy's attacks, and molded into the image of Christ as our minds are renewed. And Salvation includes glorification – One day we will be saved from the presence of sin – that's our eternity in heaven.

7. The enemy is a liar (John 8:44) and he wants us to doubt our salvation. What is the best way to combat the lies of the enemy (see Romans 12:2)?

Getting Practical:

Paul writes in Ephesians 6 that we are to put on or take up the helmet of salvation. How do we do this practically? How do we live out this passage, since it is not a literal helmet that we are putting on?

Using the word "hat" as an acrostic, we can remember how to take up the helmet of salvation.

H – Halt errant thoughts.

8. Read 2 Corinthians 10:5 What do you think taking our thoughts captive means?

When the enemy sends his lies to our mind, we need to immediately stop thinking about those lies. Just because the enemy puts a thought in our head, doesn't mean we have to think about it. We need to halt the errant thought, take every thought captive, and make it obedient to Christ. Remember, it is the helmet of salvation; the enemy is going to attack our position in Christ. He will get us to question whether we are saved or not, or doubt that the last sin

we committed is the one that God won't forgive, or he will try to get us to think that we are too bad for God to love or forgive us, or that we have failed God one too many times. Whenever those thoughts come to our mind, we need to halt thinking about them.

As the saying goes, "You can't keep birds from flying over your head, but you can sure keep them from building a nest in your hair!" Taking thoughts captive means controlling them instead of allowing them to control you. It means actively replacing the enemy's thinking with God's thinking at every opportunity.

A – Adjust your thoughts and accept your identity in Christ.

This means, instead of thinking about the garbary thoughts the enemy puts in your mind, think about who Christ says you are in Him. Focus on your identity in Christ.

9. Read 1 Corinthians 2:16. What does having the mind of Christ mean?

Since we have the mind of Christ, we need to think Christ-like thoughts.

Besides offering protection, soldiers wore helmets as a means of identification. Often the name of the soldier who wore the helmet was inscribed inside of it. Our salvation identifies us with Christ. The enemy loves to get us to doubt our salvation, as well as our identity. He tries to get us to focus on the things we do (or don't do) rather than who we are.

10. Read Ephesians 1:3-14 and 2:1-10. What do these verses say about our identity in Christ? (*We are chosen, loved, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, included, marked in Him and sealed by His Spirit, we have been made alive in Christ, and we are His handiwork*). What identity speaks most to you today?

T – Think the right thoughts.

11. Read Philippians 4:8. What kind of thoughts are we to be thinking? What do all those words mean?

If a thought doesn't fit into one of these categories, we need to stop thinking about it immediately. The lies of the enemy and the garbage he spews at you has no place in your life. Choose what fills your mind – if it fits with Paul's grid then it is worth thinking about. Fill your mind with God's Word and you will have no room for Satan's lies.

Having a helmet is a confidence builder. It provides the security of protection amid battle. The good news for us is that we never have a reason to be without it. The price for our helmet has been paid in full by our Savior. **Re-read Ephesians 2:8-9.**

What a shame if we ever go into battle again without taking full advantage of it – and the full benefit package that comes with it. Your identity is your weaponry. Taking up and putting on the helmet of your salvation is akin to knowing who you are in Christ, fortifying your thinking with it, and living in a way that is congruent with it. When you do this, you break the enemy's stronghold and tap into the power to deflect future attacks.

Personal Reflection to H.A.T.: *(these questions are for personal thought and meditation)*

- What recurring thoughts do I need to take captive?
- What lie about my identity does the enemy like to whisper in my head?
- What verse can I use to combat the specific lie of the enemy?

Closing Prayer:

In closing, read this prayer together as your commitment to put on the helmet of salvation.

*Lord of my life, I dedicate myself to You this day.
Today I will read the Word of God.
Today I will pursue godly thinking.*

*Thinking godly thoughts protects me from sin.
Thinking godly thoughts builds strength of character in me.
Thinking godly thoughts grows my integrity.
Thinking godly thoughts increases my love for others.*

*I realize that...
Thinking godly thoughts, reading the Word of God, putting on Your Armor,
And choosing godly actions and attitudes will make me a strong, victorious Christian.*

*I dedicate my mind to you today.
I will meditate on godly things
And reject ungodly thoughts this day.
Amen.*

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