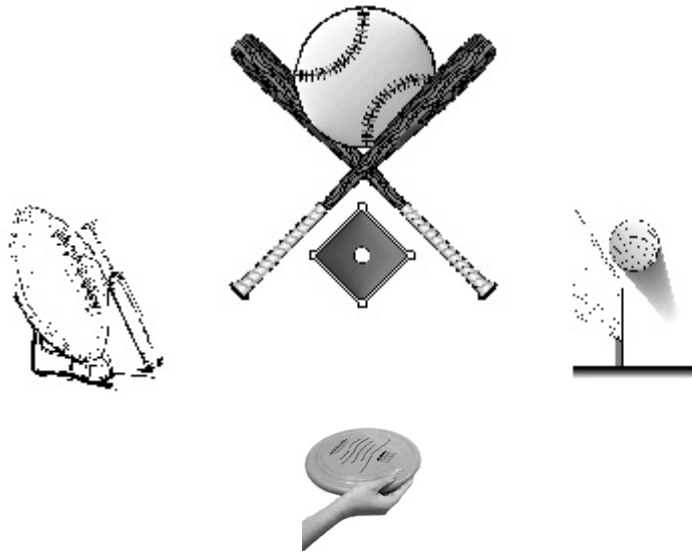


2008

## Victory Sports Outreach ~Spring Season~

### Weekly Devotion Guide



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## Victory Sports Outreach Spring Season Weekly Devotions Overview

**Season Theme:** Dress for Success /  
Put on the Full Armor of God

*Season Theme Verse: Ephesians 6:13- "Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."*

Once again, we begin our weekly devotions with a fictional story written in weekly chapters to give the kids an example of how we can apply the Bible to our daily lives. During the basketball season, we saw how our main characters, David, Frank, and Jared, learned Biblical values such as listening, encouragement, patience, and being content. When Frank entered a shootout contest and doesn't win, he learns how to deal with disappointment as well.

In *Orange County Warriors*, our spring season now finds the kids of Orange County playing sports together again, but this time, they are about to meet a retired history and theology professor who has brought his own mascot to the team- a model of a Roman soldier's armor! The team is about to be surprised at how an old suit of armor can be so applicable to their twenty-first century life! The story and devotions are just a starting point. If you have a personal experience or can think of other verses that also fit the topic, please share from your heart.

The devotions are based on the "Full Armor of God." The Bible tells us that, as believers, we should take advantage of all that God has provided for us to stand against the ways of the devil. Yes, these "pieces of armor" are for believers, but we pray that when non-believers become exposed to these principles, their hearts will

become softened to the gospel message. We pray this would be a way that Christ will draw folks to Himself.

There is even a drawing of a Roman soldier on the back of the book so the kids can see what one looks like while the story is read (instead of putting it in the text and having to flip over the book so they could see it).

We hope you will enjoy the lessons just as much as the kids will enjoy hearing them! Here are the weekly devotional topics:

- Week 1- The Belt of Truth
- Week 2- The Breastplate of Righteousness
- Week 3- The Gospel of Peace
- Week 4- The Shield of Faith
- Week 5- The Helmet of Salvation
- Week 6- The Sword of the Spirit
- Week 7- Pray on all occasions
- Week 8- Summary

If you would like more information about the Full Armor of God, check out the series from John MacArthur entitled, “The Believer’s Armor.” You can download transcripts of the messages for free or download the audio versions or the entire series online. The website is [gty.org](http://gty.org). There are also many other excellent resources on this website.

Week #1:  
“Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist.”  
Ephesians 6:14a

### *Orange County Warriors: Chapter 1*

The thermometer read 83 degrees- much too warm for April. March Madness had come and gone, and Jared, Frank, and David were all sweating as they made their way to the first baseball practice of the season. For the first time, they would all be playing on the Warriors together. To the boys, it was a really cool name for a team!

Even with all their excitement, they weren’t prepared for what awaited them on the ball field. There stood Coach Mitchell with another man in a crazy plaid suit and something tall covered with an equally crazy checkered tablecloth.

“What in the world is *that*?” asked Frank.

“You’ll get to see it in just a minute,” the coach responded, “Let’s just wait until everyone gets here.”

“I bet it’s a high-tech pitching machine,” David put in.

“I bet it’s just a baseball packed in fifty boxes.” said a girl named Jessie.

A few minutes later, the coach called out, “OK, gather round, kids, I have someone I’d like you to meet. This is Professor Dixon. He’s a retired professor of ancient Roman history and Biblical Theology and he’s going to be helping with the team this season.”

At this point, most of the kids were rolling their eyes or had a puzzled look on their faces.

“Does this mean we’re gonna have to learn about history too? We already do that in school.” Jessie said.

“Well, it means that you *get* to learn about *THIS!*” the professor said as he pulled off the tablecloth.

“WOW!” said David.

“COOL!” said Frank.

Professor Dixon spoke, “Team, this is a model of an ancient Roman soldier’s armor. I brought it today for a couple of reasons. First, I thought it was just a really cool mascot for your team. The *Warriors*- get it?” He laughed to himself. “And second, there are a

lot of cool things about Max that we can apply to our team and to life.

“It has a name?” Frank asked, a little suspiciously.

“Yep. Just like me and you. It’s Remus Maximilian. But I just call him Max for short.” the professor smiled.

“Why is he wearing a skirt?” Jessie asked.

“Well, Jessie, even though it looks like a skirt, Max was dressed for success. The skirt, or kilt allowed him to move quickly. It had a belt at the top that held long strips of thick leather plated with metal for protection. If he had a cloak on, he might also fold it up and tuck it in the belt so he could move even *more* quickly. Belts are really helpful for us, aren’t they? Some of us would have big problems if we didn’t wear them. At the end of practice, we’ll talk more about a special belt in the Bible and how that applies to our lives, but right now, everyone up! Just like a Roman soldier trained long and hard for battle, let’s start our first practice with training of our own. Three laps around the field, please.”



Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was the name of the baseball team?
2. What did Professor Dixon bring to show the team?
3. How did a Roman soldier get around quickly?

Bible Truth~

Just as in any sport, being prepared is foundational. That’s why we practice each week before our games. That’s how we learn the sport. We need to be prepared in our spiritual life as well.

The Bible also speaks of some spiritual armor that we can wear to be prepared. In Ephesians chapter 6 we are encouraged to be strong in the Lord by putting on the “full armor of God” so we can stand against sin in the world. It is an invisible armor because our battle is waged against the unseen forces of evil.

In verse 13 Paul tells us about a “belt of truth.” It’s a symbol that means more than just *telling* the truth. It is being truthful or having

good character. Only God can help us do that if we are willing.

In our lives we need a good foundation of truthfulness or integrity or good character. And as a team, having good character will help us to be able to trust one another so we can play better.

What is integrity? *Integrity* is when what you believe and how you act match up. It’s doing the right thing even when no one is watching.

Also in that day and time, our emotions were thought to be in the abdomen. Having a “belt of truth” around our waist is like protecting our emotions from lies. Believing God’s truth, in fact, is the best method to prevent and deal with unhealthy, immoral, and out-of-control emotions.

In a nutshell, the belt of truth means for us:

- \*we are committed to the truth in world-view, thoughts, actions
- \*we are committed to fight spiritual battles with God’s truth
- \*we are to live with the expectation of winning the battle
- \*we are to use the truth to deal with unhealthy emotions

God’s Word is the best place to find out more about truth and good character. Let’s think about our character this week as we practice and begin to play together as a team.☺

Pray to close the session.

**Season Theme Verse:** Ephesians 6:13- “Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Week #2:

“...with the breastplate of righteousness in place.” Ephesians 6:14b

### *Orange County Warriors: Chapter 2*

Frank, Jared, David, and Jessie knew this would be no ordinary baseball season. Professor Dixon was a little strange, but kind of cool in a weird sort of way. He even brought Max today to spur the team onto a good practice. After Coach Mitchell got everyone together, he had the team go to the outfield to practice catching some pop flies. Professor Dixon began pitching him ball after ball. Coach Mitchell was a really good hitter. Things were going great until one went foul and hit Max’s armor. Clunk! “Whoops! Sorry Professor! At least it didn’t get dented. ‘Good thing it’s just a model!’” said the coach.

The professor just nodded with a smile and waved.

The very next ball flew way out into deep center where Frank and Jared were standing. It came right toward them. Neither of them saw the other running and they collided just as they were both reaching up to catch the ball. Frank and Jared fell to the ground with the wind knocked out of them. Coach Mitchell got to the two of them just as they were getting their breath back.

“Are you two alright? Do you need me to call your parents? Maybe you should sit down for a while,” he said nervously.

As they walked to the bench, Jared said, “I wish I had been wearing Max’s armor just now.”

“You can say that again,” Jessie agreed, still a bit dizzy.

“I wish I had been wearing Max’s armor just now.”

“Very funny.”

Professor Dixon met them at home plate and sat down with them while they rested.

“Wow, kids, you two took a beating on that one. I’m sure Max’s armor *would’ve* helped you out there. In battle, Max’s breastplate was pieces of metal mounted on leather or linen and protected the vital organs like the heart, lungs, and other organs in the chest cavity. But he still had to be careful and watch where he was going. It’s a lot like the breastplate described in Ephesians chapter 6.”

he got a faraway look in his eyes, then continued, “That would be a good thing to tell everyone when we’re done with this drill. Thanks guys!”

“You’re welcome...I think,” said Frank.

“Uh...anytime,” Jared said slowly.

The professor’s thoughts returned to earth, “And remember, when you guys go back out on the field, try to pay more attention to where the other players are.”



### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What happened to Jared and Frank in the outfield?
2. Were they paying attention to where each other were?
3. What kind of positions in sports can you think of that require padding or protective gear?

### Bible Truth~

In Ephesians 6:14, the Bible talks about the “breastplate of righteousness.” In our spiritual lives, this piece is a symbol of righteous character and conduct. When Paul talks about the breastplate of righteousness, it reminds us that our first priority should be of having that right relationship with God. That will lead to right character and conduct that we talked about last week.

A Roman soldier’s breastplate would cover the area that was fatal to his being. No breastplate meant a sure death.

Two areas that were protected were the heart and the stomach (literally the bowels). In the Hebrew, the heart signified the mind, and the stomach (bowels) signified the emotions or feelings. These two areas- the mind and the feelings are two places where Satan tempts us to sin. He wants us to base our thoughts on listening to fleshly feelings instead of what the Word of God says.

The Bible also says that where our hearts are, that’s where our treasure is (Luke 12:34). In a spiritual sense, we are tempted to go

after the things of the world- money, possessions, or being popular. We must pay attention and guard our hearts against those things because while they may make us happy for a while, they will not bring us true joy. God's Word is the best defense against worldly temptations.

This week, let's think about our hearts.

- \*Do we want to have a relationship with God?
- \*Do we desire right conduct and character?
- \*How often do we show right conduct and character?
- \*Do we guard our hearts against evil desires?
- \*Do we read our Bibles to help us with temptations?

God can help us with any of these areas if we will just ask.

Pray to close the session.

**Season Theme Verse:** Ephesians 6:13- "Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

Week #3:

"and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." Ephesians 6:15

*Orange County Warriors: Chapter 3*

At least the day was cooler this week. Everyone was at practice except Jessie, who came late. As she got out of the car, everyone stopped to look. In fact, they couldn't *stop* looking. It even caught the attention of the professor and Coach Mitchell.

"What's Jessie wearing on her feet?" David asked.

"I have no idea, but it looks alive." Frank answered.

"*Nothing* alive is that color." Jared announced.

Jessie walked up to the team wearing sandals in the brightest shade of orange, complete with ostrich feathers and sparkly sequins.

Coach Mitchell tried very hard to keep a straight face as he said, "Jessie, I'm glad you made it. Your sandals are very, ... um, ...interesting.

"Thank you," she replied, "I thought they might give me, ...you know, ...that *extra* edge."

"I think she just fell off that *extra* edge," Jared said under his breath.

At this point, Professor Dixon cleared his throat, "I'm curious, Jessie. What made you decide to wear those today?"

"Well, I was looking at Max's outfit last week, and I noticed that he had on sandals, so I thought if I wore some too, it might make me, you know, ... play better."

"Ahhh. I see," he said, scratching his chin. "Kids, come sit over here. I want to show you the caligae." The professor led them to sit down beside Max.

"The cala....what?" someone asked.

The professor bent over and began taking off Max's shoes, "You're right about one thing, Jessie. Max does have on sandals. *Caligae*- that was their word for sandals. I want you to see them up close. They were well ventilated with strong leather straps. The soles had iron nails sticking out from the bottom for extra grip and more durability."

“Oh,” Jessie sounded disappointed, “So, I guess my sandals really wouldn’t help me like Max’s helped him, huh?”

“No, not really... but they *are* pretty!” replied Professor Dixon, smiling.

Coach Mitchell continued, “Today, the shoes that would be most like Max’s would be cleats. They have points that stick out just like Max’s for better traction. Now in our league, we’re not quite as competitive as some, so it’s OK if you aren’t wearing cleats, but tennis shoes will cover your feet better and really are safer than sandals. Next week, come with tennis shoes! I’ll even allow orange ones.”

“Deal,” said Jessie as she and the coach shook hands.



Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was Jessie wearing on her feet to practice?
2. Why did she think that was OK?
3. Why wasn’t that a good idea?
4. What do we wear today that are like Max’s sandals?

Bible Truth~

Back in the Roman’s day, you could do some really serious damage to a soldier just by hurting his feet. A soldier is no good if he can’t move, right?

You might think that the nails on the sandals only allowed him to run fast. But the real meaning was to allow him to keep steady and stand fast so he could help win the battle. Remember, a soldier is committed to winning the battle.

And so it is with us. We need to stand firm on God’s truth. No slipping. No running away from it. Our commitment to the truth needs to be firm.

This is not a verse dealing with taking the Gospel to the masses. It is about standing firm and defending ourselves because we have Jesus’

power inside us. The Gospel of peace that is mentioned here is that we and God are on the same side. We are linked with Him and therefore are able to defeat temptation. We can have absolute confidence of this.

Here are three questions we can ask ourselves this week~

1. Do I have on the shoes of peace?
2. Do I seek to live a holy (set apart) life?
3. Am I bold in battle?
4. Is my first reaction to run from the battle?
5. Are my feet firmly rooted in Christ?

This week, let’s think about whether or not we are even in a battle.

There is a way to win the battle-  
Have Jesus not only *on your side*,  
but *inside of you!*

Let Him be the leader of not only your life,  
but the *entire battle*.

Put on the shoes of peace,  
with those nails in the bottom so you *won’t slip*,  
Lace them up with the truth of *God’s Word*.

Be *confident* that you have a choice not to sin,  
and that the ultimate battle has already been won!

It’s *even better* than having the biggest kid at school  
on your side when the bullies come around!

Pray to close the session.

**Season Theme Verse:** Ephesians 6:13- “Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Week #4:

“In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” Ephesians 6:16

#### *Orange County Warriors: Chapter 4*

The Warriors gathered for battle. Their opponent? The Foxes. Both had their game faces on. Both had trained hard; both were confident. The Warriors were up to bat first. As if in slow-motion, Jared stepped up to the plate. He tapped his feet with the bat. In came the pitch- strike one.

Jared stepped back for a second and came back to the plate with determination written all over his face. He squinted his eyes, dug in his feet, and adjusted his grip. In came the second pitch-strike two.

As Jared was concentrating and digging his heels in further, a voice from the Fox dugout shouted, “What’d’ya waitin’ for- a subway?” As he was listening, he missed the third pitch and struck out. He heard the others in the dugout laugh.

He thought about lashing out and saying something just as ugly, but he just sat down. Maybe their coach would make them stop. But during the inning they only talked more trash to the Warriors. Wasn’t their coach going to say anything to them?

Coach Mitchell spoke to the team quickly before they went out onto the field to finish the inning. He just asked them one question, “Are the Foxes telling the truth to us?” The team gave him a definite “NO!” Coach Mitchell went on, “Then don’t believe it. Don’t let them tempt us to believe their lies.” And that was all he needed to say.

The Foxes continued to say things like, “I’ve seen slugs move faster than you,” and, “My grandma can play better than that,” to nearly every player that got up to bat. But despite all of the taunting of the Foxes, the Warriors pulled out a win.

Coach Mitchell sat them down after the game and told them how proud he was of the them and how well they handled the pressure. Professor Dixon also had a few things to say to the team.

“Guys, I didn’t bring Max today, but do you remember his

shield? A real one would have been 2 ½ feet wide and 4 ½ feet long. In those days people were somewhat smaller and they could crouch behind one of those and be nearly totally protected. The shield was made of wood and overlaid with leather or metal. It also had an oil covering to extinguish flaming arrows! Yes, folks, it’s true, there really were flaming arrows that were shot in battle.”

“Wow, I get it~ the trash talking of the other team is just like the flaming arrows of the enemies a long time ago, isn’t it?” Jessie asked.

“You’re right, Jessie,” Coach Mitchell responded, “and I’m convinced that we won today because we did not listen to the lies of the Foxes. You didn’t let it get to you. Way to go, team!”



#### Follow-Up Questions:

1. What were the Foxes doing to try to ruin the Warriors’ game?
2. Was what the Foxes were saying true?
3. What did Coach Mitchell tell the team to do about it?
4. What was the trash talk compared to in the battles long ago?

#### Bible Truth~

Ephesians 6:16 reads, “In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” Who is the evil one? The devil. He wants to get us off course by believing his lies. In fact, that’s what he did to Eve in the Garden of Eden. He lied to her (or tempted her to believe a half-truth) and she believed him and gave into the temptation.

John MacArthur gives a great baseball illustration:

A baseball player suits up before the game with his uniform and shoes, etc., but when he gets up to bat, he puts on his helmet, gloves, and grabs his bat.

Likewise, a soldier would keep his belt, shoes, and breastplate on the whole time- in long range preparation, but he would raise his shield when he needed it the most- for immediate readiness.

Our faith is what sustains us in the heat of the battle. We have on God's righteousness, we are ready for battle, we expect to win, we have on the shoes of peace to stand firm, but our faith is what enables us to really defend ourselves.

When others are calling us names or bullying us or we face temptation...

Jesus, the *Author* of Our Faith, tells us.....

† to believe and act the way the Bible tells us to.

† that Jesus is on our side because He lives inside our hearts.

† that one day it will all pay off because we will live with Jesus in heaven.

† that even though the temptation looks good now, it will only lead to destruction later.

† to love those who hurt us because Jesus first loved us.

† that Jesus is the only One that will bring us real satisfaction and joy- not worldly substitutes.

Back in the Romans' day, the soldiers would form a line sometimes miles long during a battle. They would put up their shields as they walked along so it looked like a giant wall. When we have Jesus in our hearts, it's like we are walking behind the giant wall of His protection. Once we are His, we can never be taken away.

Why would we want to be anywhere else?

Pray to close the session.

**Season Theme Verse:** Ephesians 6:13- "Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

Week #5:

"Take the helmet of salvation..." Ephesians 6:17a

*Orange County Warriors: Chapter 5*

Things were going great for the Warriors... until the fifth week. When the team got to the field to practice, only Professor Dixon was there to meet them.

Jessie asked the professor, "Where's Coach Mitchell? Is he coming today?"

"Well, kids, Coach Mitchell had a tree limb fall on the right side of his body yesterday evening while working in his yard. He has a fractured wrist and ankle, so He's not able to throw a ball or even walk very good right now. His doctor told him that he would have to stay off his leg for a few weeks until his bruises heal up," the professor told them.

Now the professor was a quick thinker but had already given some thought to how Max could help them that day. "Look up here for a minute," the professor began as he was adjusting Max's helmet, "Max wears this helmet not only for protection and defense, but also for identification. Today, let's think about what our ball cap says about us. Who are we? Are we *quitters* or are we the *Warriors*?"

The kids were silent for a few seconds and then David spoke up, "Hey team- we're the *Warriors*! We've been playing great. We just need to keep practicing. Everything is going to be fine."

"Yah!" said Jared, "We wear the red and gold of the mighty Warriors! We are committed. We have integrity. We don't back down. We *are* the mighty Warriors!"

By this time, it seemed that a pep rally had broken out. The team got up and began their practice. Not unexpectedly, it turned out to be a great one.

The morning of the game the Warriors were full of energy and excitement even though Coach Mitchell was still at home. They ran out onto the field proudly wearing the red and gold of the Warrior name.

As the game progressed, they played their best just like they did in practice, but they lost 6-5. After the game was over, they gathered together on the sidelines to discuss what happened.



“I don’t get it. What happened out there today?” asked Jared.

“I don’t know. We played great. We did everything just like we did in practice. Was the other team there watching us practice or something?” Frank asked.

“I bet they were hiding in the bushes with a really tiny video camera and then went home and studied all of our plays.” said Jessie.

David started to say something, but Professor Dixon stopped him. “Kids, you have to understand that sometimes you can do everything just like you practiced and still get outplayed. That’s part of life. The key thing is that you don’t get discouraged or give in to doubt. You guys did great out there today. You hit really great, got some runs, and even struck out some of their players. You played with integrity and character. You didn’t back down. Right now, we need to focus on the end of the season and even life after that. *The lessons you learn now will pay off one day if you follow through with them.*”

They thought about that for a moment before the professor asked with a great big smile, “Remember, what kind of hat do you have on?”

“The red and gold of the mighty Warriors!” they all shouted. They left that day knowing what team they were on and weren’t going to let one loss discourage them.



Follow-Up Questions:

1. Why wasn’t Coach Mitchell able to be at the practice or the game?
2. Did the Warriors play well?
3. Did they win?
4. What did the professor tell the team that they must not do?

Bible Truth~

Like Professor Dixon said, the helmet of the Roman soldier was for two purposes: protection and identification.

In regard to **protection**, it was mainly to guard against the enemy’s broadsword- a sword with big handle and a wide blade that was three

to four feet long.

In Ephesians 6:17a, the Bible speaks of a “helmet of salvation.” It’s not really talking about first coming to Christ, because the battle gear that we’ve been talking about is for people that are already believers. This helmet protects us from the two things the devil wants for us: *discouragement and doubt.*

Our salvation comes in three parts-

**The past-** When Christ died for us and took our punishment, then rose from the dead.

**The present-** When we come to faith, that begins the process of Christ making us more like himself.

**The future-** When Christ comes back and the final battle is fought and won by Christ.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:8-11 we read, “But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

The helmet of salvation is a reference to the final battle that is won by Christ. It is the knowledge of this that gives us hope to carry on in the battles of this world. One day there will be no more bullies, or crime, or greediness, or selfishness, or any sin at all. We should also encourage each other now in the battle so we will not give into doubt or discouragement.

In regard to **identification**, if we have Jesus in our hearts, we already know we are on the winning team. We still have to fight some battles here on earth, but we know that the final battle is won by Christ.

Sometimes we do get discouraged or doubt our salvation, but we don’t have to. When we feel like we can’t win, we can remember

Isaiah 40:30-31, “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.” There are also many more promises such as this in the Bible we can go to when we are feeling weak.

Since salvation is all from God- we can’t do anything to *earn* it- it is also *not up to us to keep* it. God does that for us. Our faith is part of that confidence in His ability. The helmet of salvation is the confidence that we have that the battle over sin and evil will one day be over.

Do you want to be on the winning team?

(Be available after the session if folks want to talk about salvation in Christ. You can use the salvation colors at the back of this booklet.)

Pray to close the session.

**Season Theme Verse:** Ephesians 6:13- “Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.”

Week #6:

Ephesians 6:17b, “and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”

### *Orange County Warriors: Chapter 6*

Professor Dixon met the kids on the field the next week for practice. He surprised them by saying, “Guess what kids, we’re going on a field trip! Your parents have agreed to drive.”

Amidst shouts and hoorays, the kids finally got around to asking where they were going.

“Why the library, of course.” he replied.

“You mean the *school* library?” asked David.

“No, I mean the *public* library,” said the professor.

“Are we having our practice over there? I think they’ve re-seeded the lawn.” said Jessie confidently.

“No, it’s nothing like that. We’re going to find some books on technique.” Professor Dixon said with a big grin.

The kids weren’t so sure this was going to be a fun field trip, but they piled into the cars anyway. Once they arrived, they looked up baseball on the computer and went to the correct section. They each pulled out a book and went to the table to begin reading. After a few minutes, each was growing more and more excited because of the valuable information they were finding.

“Wow, I never knew I could hold my hands like this to get a better grip on the ball!” cried Frank.

“If I hold my glove this way, I can get those pop flies better.” said Jared.

David found a new way to hold his bat for maximum swing speed.

Jessie had a pouty look on her face, then finally said, “I double checked mine and it says *nothing* about orange sandals.” At that the whole team busted out in laughter, which made the librarian look over her glasses at them.

“OK, kids. Let’s take these back to the field and try some of the techniques out.” the professor said *quietly*.

They checked out and headed back toward the field. The practice went a bit long but they really learned some specific things

to help them with their hitting, catching, and throwing. They also learned when to use these techniques in certain situations. And it paid off. When it was time for the next game, the players from the other team were asking each other, “Is this the same Warriors team that we played a few weeks ago?”

Their 6-4 victory meant a lot to them after last week’s defeat. Professor Dixon came running up to the team afterward. They had never seen the professor run before- it was quite a sight! He was so excited that he could barely get the words out, “Wow team! You all wielded your bats and gloves out there today like Max would wield his sword! You really knew what to do and when to do it! I can’t wait to see how we play next week!” Then he gave a great whoop and jumped up in the air. The team just giggled with him and jumped around with excitement as they enjoyed their moment.



Follow-Up Questions:

1. Where did the professor take the team?
2. What were they going to do there?
3. Did their work pay off?

Bible Truth~

In ancient Rome, the soldier would have two swords-

\*the big long one we spoke of two weeks ago when we talked about the shield of faith, and

\*a small dagger which would have been only about 18" long.

The smaller dagger is the one that is used in this context. It would have been used in close combat. It’s not made for making big broad sweeping motions from a distance like the bigger sword. One would have to know exactly where to place the small dagger to fend off the enemy. It is with this in mind that we come to the spiritual reference.

Ephesians 6:17b also urges us to use “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” The Greek word for *Word* is *hrema*. It means specific statements given by the Holy Spirit. It is not talking here

about Jesus being our *logos*. The implication here is that there are specific Bible passages to help us in certain situations. Not every passage can be applied to every situation. That would be taking some passages out of context.

But what happens when we don’t know the Word of God? That’s right! We don’t know which part to use when. It’s like having the baseball book but not reading it to know what techniques it holds inside. Or like holding the dagger and not knowing how to use it in combat. We’d be toast for sure!

The Bible is our special letter from God to us. It is filled with countless things we can use in our everyday lives to make us more like Jesus.

The Bible is...

- \* totally true
- \* complete
- \* inspired by the Holy Spirit/ divine
- \* sufficient for our every need
- \* effective
- \* alive and active in individual lives
- \* our source for a personal relationship with Jesus
- \* our source for joy
- \* our source for victory over the enemy’s deceptions/temptations

The devil wants to stop us from reading the Bible, praying, and witnessing. He also wants us to believe we are defeated, doubt our salvation, and get discouraged with our circumstances.

We can use our Bible (sword) as an offensive weapon as well as a defensive one:

**Offensively**- to build up our knowledge of truth so we have a correct understanding of our salvation and who we are in Christ (promises that we can stand on, and how to deal with difficult situations)

**Defensively**-to use specific passages to defeat the claims or temptations of the enemy as each situation arises.

Let's make a commitment this week to see what's written in the Bible. Maybe you could start with the book of John in the New Testament and find out more about Jesus when He was here on earth.

Pray to close the session.

**Season Theme Verse:** Ephesians 6:13- "Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

Week #7:

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep praying for the saints." Ephesians 6:18

*Orange County Warriors: Chapter 7*

The season was winding down. The Warriors were scheduled to play their last game on Saturday. At the last practice, Professor Dixon mentioned that the weather report indicated a possible severe thunderstorm coming into the area that weekend.

He gathered the team together and began to pray, "Lord, please watch over all who are in the path of the storm right now. I pray that, if it be Your will, the storm would miss us and that we'd be able to play our last game. But if it does storm here, Father, please keep us safe, especially Coach Mitchell, who still can't get around very well. Amen."

The Warriors' last practice went well. The team had come a long way since the beginning of the season. Hitting, throwing, and catching seemed second nature to them now. They had become a real team, but they missed seeing Coach Mitchell each week.

The morning of the last game started out cloudy, but not rainy, so the games went ahead as scheduled. The Warriors were supposed to begin at 12:00 noon. Professor Dixon had brought along his battery-powered weather radio in case they all had to leave quickly if the storm came.

Just before noon, the radio began to sound an alert. The team gathered around and listened: *At 11:50 a.m., the National Weather Service has spotted a severe thunderstorm heading west along route 52. People in the areas of Hopewell and Mill Creek should seek shelter as high winds have been associated with this storm. This alert remains in effect until 12:30 p.m.*

"Doesn't Coach Mitchell live near Mill Creek?" asked Frank.

Before anyone could answer, it began to sprinkle on the ball field and the game was called off.

Jessie said, "Let's all go check on Coach Mitchell." Now that the game was cancelled, everyone's parents agreed to drive over to see the coach.

*Ding, dong.* Coach Mitchell's wife answered the door with a very surprised look on her face. Then a big smile appeared as she said, "Well, come on in, kids... and parents! It's wet out there!"

Coach Mitchell was so happy to see everyone again. He enjoyed hearing all of the stories from the past few weeks and all of the lessons they had learned from Max. Coach Mitchell even had a time of prayer and thanksgiving with the team.

"I guess bringing Max this season was a good idea after all," said Coach Mitchell.

"What do you think, kids?" the professor asked.

The kids just started cheering and chanting, "Max, Max, Max, Max...."

"I guess you have your answer, then" the professor offered.

"I guess I do, Professor, I guess I do." said Coach Mitchell.

*The End*

☆☆☆

Follow-Up Questions:

1. What was the weather forecast for the last game day?
2. Who lived near Mill Creek?
3. What did the team decide to do?

Bible Truth~

The book of Ephesians tells us things like: who we are in Christ, what we've been given as a result of having Christ in our lives, and how to stand firm in battle using the Full Armor of God. The book ends with prayer, not because it is the least important, but because it is the overarching principle of our lives- how we fellowship with God.

Ephesians 6:18 reads, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep praying for the saints."

In the story, the professor prays for safety from the storm and for Coach Mitchell, who is still recuperating. The team misses the fellowship they had with him each week before his accident.

Prayer is simply talking to God. It is having fellowship with Him just like we do a human friend or family member with one exception: We can talk to God anytime about anything! That's pretty amazing.

Praying should be kind of like breathing- just being aware of God's presence all the time and sharing your life with Him- happy times, sad times, hopes, disappointments, hurts- you name it- He's always there with you.

You might be thinking, "*But the verse says to pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayers. How can I pray all the time?*" If you really think about it, with so many people and situations in the world, there is so much to pray about, you'd really never get it all covered. Good thing that Jesus already knows about the things you don't!

Your prayers can include:

- \* Telling God how great He is,
- \* Thanking Him for his many blessings to us,
- \* Telling Him when we've done something wrong and asking Him to forgive us, and
- \* Asking Him to help someone else in a certain situation.

Did you know that if you have Jesus in your heart, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us to God? (Romans 8:26-27) That means He is praying for us- even when we don't know what to pray! That's awesome!

Did you also know that praying for others is a *selfless* act? It takes the focus off of ourselves and puts it on others and how strong God is to take care of that person. When you are feeling down, pray for someone else, or go and do something for that person. You will feel better and God will be glorified. Let's think about that this week.

Take some prayer requests and pray to close the session.

**Season Theme Verse:** Ephesians 6:13- "Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand."

## Week #8: Summary

We've learned some AWESOME lessons this season, haven't we?  
Let's review what we've learned so far (as time allows):

### ★(Week 1)

The team meets Coach Mitchell, Professor Dixon, and "Max," a model of a Roman soldier. The spiritual armor of God begins with a **belt of truth** (Eph. 6:14a).

In a nutshell, the belt of truth means for us:

- \*we are committed to the truth in world-view, thoughts, actions
- \*we are committed to fight spiritual battles with God's truth
- \*we are to live with the expectation of winning the battle
- \*we are to use the truth to deal with unhealthy emotions
- \*God's Word is the best place to find out more about truth and good character.

### ★(Week 2)

Frank and Jared collide and get the wind knocked out of them when they both reach up to catch a pop fly. We talked about the protection of the **breastplate of righteousness** (Eph. 6:14b).

In a nutshell, the breastplate of righteousness:

- \*reminds us that our first priority should be of having that right relationship with God
- \*protects our minds from wrong thoughts
- \*protects us from listening to and acting on wrong feelings.

### ★(Week 3)

Jessie arrives late to practice wearing flashy orange sandals because she saw Max's sandals and thought they would help her play better. The spiritual reference was to the **shoes of peace** (Eph. 6:15)

In a nutshell, the shoes of peace mean we:

- \*can stand firm and be committed to God's truth. No slipping. No running.
- \*have the power of the Holy Spirit inside us so we're on the winning team.

### ★(Week 4)

The team does not believe the trash talking of the other team and

pulls out a win. We talked about the **shield of faith** (Eph. 6:26)

In a nutshell, the shield of faith allows us to:

- \*not get off course by believing the devil's lies.
- \*be sustained in the heat of the battle
- \*have a sufficient way to defend ourselves.

### ★(Week 5)

Coach Mitchell gets hurt and is unable to coach the team. They do everything right, but still end up losing. We talked about the **helmet of salvation** (Eph. 6:17a).

In a nutshell, the helmet of salvation is our:

- \*protection against discouragement and doubt
- \*hope that the final battle is already won by Christ
- \*identification that we belong to Christ

### ★(Week 6)

The team takes a field trip to the library to get specific information to use in different circumstances of the game. We spoke of the **sword of the Spirit** (Eph. 6:17b).

The sword of the Spirit is the Bible which we can use:

- \*Offensively- to build up our knowledge of truth so we have a correct understanding of our salvation and who we are in Christ (promises to stand on, and how to deal with difficult situations)
- \*Defensively-to use specific passages to defeat the claims or temptations of the enemy as each situation arises.

### ★(Week 7)

A thunderstorm rains out the game and the team decides to go to see Coach Mitchell. We spoke of **prayer** (Eph. 6:18).

Prayer:

- \*is constant communication & fellowship with God, like breathing
- \*can include: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and requests.
- \*prayer for others gets our focus off of ourselves and onto others and God's infinite power.

### ★CONCLUSION:

\*If we have asked Jesus into our hearts and to be the boss of our life, the armor is a **gift** to us from God.

\*He is the **source** of the armor.

\*We are able to use the armor properly when we yield ourselves to the **control** of the Holy Spirit (being filled with the Holy Spirit- Eph. 5:18).

\*We then have the **power** to be victorious (“But thanks be to God. He gives us the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 15:57- VSO theme verse).

\*The **battle** will still be difficult. But as we mature in Christ, we begin to win more than we lose.

\*Standing firm in the battle is how Christ makes us more like Himself.

\*Knowing the **Word of God** is the key to salvation, joy, and victory.

\*Proverbs 8:34 says, "Happy is the man who hears my word and keeps it."

\*Revelation 1:3 says, "Happy is the man who reads this and keeps it."

\*Prayer is the “breathing” of the Christian- the constant communion and fellowship with God.

Maybe you know that you have not begun to have a personal relationship with God yet and you’d like to do that today:

(Use the colors of the salvation bracelets to present the gospel)

**Gold-** God’s glory- He’s perfect and holy

**Black-** Man’s sin- we can’t do anything to earn salvation- we need a savior

**Red-** Jesus’ blood- He became our savior, dying on the cross to take **the punishment for our sins.**

**White-** Cleansing of sin- When Jesus died on the cross, the punishment for sin was taken away so God could look upon us. If we believe this and ask Jesus to be the boss of our lives, we begin to...

**Green-** GROW in Christ -become more like Him- we will now:

Go to God in prayer,

Read the Bible,

Obey God, and

Witness to others

(Sample prayer on the next page)

If you would like to ask Jesus to come into your life right now, you can pray something like this:

*Jesus, I admit that I cannot get to heaven on my own because I have sinned. But right now, I believe that You died for my sin so I could live with You in heaven when I die. I ask You to come into my heart and make me clean. Help me to live the way You want me to. I want to get to know You as my best friend. In Your name I pray, Amen.*

**Salvation Bracelet Colors:**

**Gold-** God's glory

**Black-** Man's sin

**Red-** Jesus' blood

**White-** Cleansing of sin

**Green-** Grow:

Go to God in prayer

Read the Bible

Obey God's Word

Witness

**Victory Sports Outreach**

**Mission Verse:**

*1 Corinthians 15:57*

*"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory  
through our Lord Jesus Christ."*