

Hope for the Heart : **The Whole Armor of God** *Ephesians 6:11-18a *2 Timothy 2:4

Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus while he was chained to a Roman soldier during his imprisonment in Rome. He had ample opportunity to observe the pieces which comprised a soldier's armor. God supplies us with spiritual armor to defend conquered territory against Satan who was defeated at the Cross. However, we still strive with the one who roams the earth, seeking to devour believers until his final demise. We are to 'stand firm' against the schemes of the devil. The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh. We wage a spiritual battle against unseen rulers, authorities, cosmic powers over this present darkness, spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realm. We use six pieces of military armor with spiritual adaptations: Underneath is the girdle or belt which holds all the other pieces together- Biblical Truth. The breastplate covering the chest was protection from attacks, even as Christ's Righteousness shields us from accusations. Sturdy shoes provided being ready to share the Gospel of Peace with anyone, anywhere. The shield deflected fiery arrows much like our Shield of Faith thwarts the flaming darts of our enemy. The helmet covered the head which was vulnerable; our Helmet of Salvation gives us hope now & forever. The sword was the only offensive weapon as is the Word of God-the Sword of the Spirit used to cut the strategy of evil apart. Finally, to Pray at all times as we seek to put on the whole armor of God!

Help for the Home: **Strawberry-Rhubarb Muffins & Rhubarb Cheesecake Smoothies**

STRAWBERRY-RHUBARB MUFFINS —makes 24 *Bake at 400 for 20-25 minutes!

*5 cups flour *2 cups brown sugar *5 t.baking Powder *1 t.baking soda *1 t.cinnamon *1/2t.salt
*2 eggs *2 cups Buttermilk *4 t.vanilla extract *2 c.sliced strawberries *2 c. frozen rhubarb
Topping: 1 c.chopped pecans *2/3c.brown sugar *1 t.cinnamon *2-3 T.cold butter

*In large bowl, mix first 6 ingredients. In another bowl, whisk eggs, buttermilk & vanilla. Stir into dry ingredients until moist. Fold in strawberries & rhubarb. Fill muffin cups.Mix pecans brown sugar & cinnamon. Cut in butter to make coarse crumbs. Sprinkle over batter. BAKE!

RHUBARB CHEESECAKE SMOOTHIES *6 SERVINGS

*2 c.fresh or frozen Rhubarb *1/4c.water *4 T.honey *1-1/2c.vanilla ice cream *1 cup milk
*1 c.sliced strawberries *8oz.cream cheese, cubed *1/2 c.vanilla yogurt *1/4 c.powdered sugar
*5 ice cubes *In large saucepan, bring rhubarb, water & 2 T.honey to boil-Simmer 5-10 min.
Remove/Cool to room temp. In blender, mix ice cream, milk, rhubarb mixture, strawberries,
cream cheese, yogurt, powdered sugar, ice cubes & 2 T.honey. Process until smooth. Serve!