LESSON 2: THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Key Concept: God’s righteousness gives full coverage

If you don’t have righteousness, you deserve God’s eternal wrath (Romans 1:18). So it’s vital to know you are righteous in God’s eyes! This lesson teaches what righteousness is & how to get it—and how, like the Roman soldier’s breastplate, righteousness provides full coverage for the believer.

AT-A-GLANCE LESSON OUTLINE {LESSON 2}

1) The soldier’s breastplate.
   • The soldier’s #1 concern was to cover and protect his torso.
   • The soldier used a “breastplate” to cover his torso.

2) The breastplate of righteousness.
   • Righteousness means “being right in God’s eyes.”
   • Anyone who doesn’t have righteousness will experience God’s punishment.
   • To avoid eternal punishment, you must have righteousness.

3) How to get the breastplate of righteousness.
   • There is NONE righteous, because every person has sinned.
   • We can’t come up with righteousness ourselves.
   • But God offers His own righteousness for us in Jesus Christ!
   • God’s righteousness is a free gift.
   • God’s righteousness—the “breastplate of righteousness”—fully covers and protects you.

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Review & Introduction

Review of Lesson 1: The Belt of Truth.

• In the last lesson, we talked about the belt of truth.
  ◦ Anybody remember how the Roman soldier used his belt?
  ◦ How is the belt of truth like the soldier’s belt?

• So the belt of truth is the first piece of the Armor of God. It prepares us for action. And it’s the first piece of the Armor that’s put on.

The breastplate is a crucial piece of armor.

• The next piece of armor is crucial because it covers the most important parts of the body.

• What do you think are the most important parts of the body? (If you did the Introduction Activity, your kids should have a pretty good idea by now!)

• On a whiteboard, write the body parts that the kids suggest—or draw them, if you have that talent! If the kids are suggesting things like “hands” or “eyes,” try to guide them to thinking about the parts that are essential for life—the heart, the lungs, etc.

• So, based on where most of the important body parts are (the torso), what piece of armor do you think is next?

The breastplate of righteousness is the second piece of the Armor of God.

• The piece of armor that covers the torso is called a “breastplate.”

• And that’s the 2nd piece of armor that the Bible mentions—the breastplate of righteousness!

• Let’s look at the Roman soldier’s armor to learn what a breastplate is and how to use it.
1) The soldier’s breastplate

The soldier’s #1 concern was to cover and protect his torso.

• The soldier knew that if he got stabbed in the heart or if his lungs got punctured, he would die.

• He knew that the most crucial part to protect was his torso, because that’s where all his vital organs were.

• So his #1 concern was to make sure that his torso was protected!

The soldier used a “breastplate” to cover his torso.

• Show a picture of a Roman soldier in full armor. Point out the breastplate. If you have a laminated picture, use a dry-erase marker to circle or draw an arrow to the breastplate.

• The soldier used a piece of armor called a “breastplate” to cover and protect his torso.

• The breastplate fit the soldier from his shoulders to his waist (from “neck to navel”) and protected all those crucial organs in his torso!

• It was made of two pieces of protective metal, hinged together on the side, so the soldier was covered in both front and back.

• Demonstrate the hinged coverage of the breastplate—fold an index card in half, so the fold mimics a hinge, and then wrap the two sides around your finger (or around the torso of a small doll) like a soldier would put his breastplate around his torso.

2) The breastplate of righteousness

• The Bible talks about putting on a “breastplate of righteousness.”

• Read Ephesians 6:11-17 from the Bible.

Righteousness means “being right in God’s eyes.”

• “Righteousness” isn’t a word we use very often. What is righteousness?

• A very simple definition for “righteousness” is “being right in God’s eyes” or
“having a right relationship with God.”

- If you have righteousness, you are right with God.
- *Hold up a printout of the definition of righteousness and ask the kids to say or read the definition along with you.*

**Anyone who doesn't have righteousness will experience God’s punishment.**

- Having righteousness is crucial!
- *Read Romans 1:18.*
- The Bible says that God will punish anyone who doesn’t have righteousness. So righteousness is vital!

**To avoid eternal punishment, you must have righteousness.**

- To avoid God’s punishment—which is eternal separation from Him—you must be right with Him.
- In other words, to avoid punishment and spend eternity with God, you must have righteousness.

**3) How to get the breastplate of righteousness**

- There’s a problem, though. Not everyone has righteousness.

**There is NONE righteous, because every person has sinned.**

- In fact, the Bible says that there is NONE righteous, because every person has sinned.
- *Read Romans 3:10 & 23.*
- Sin is anything that is wrong, or anything against God and His ways.
- Sin is offensive to God. Sin ruins a person’s relationship with God. And so every person who sins doesn’t have righteousness (a right relationship with God).
- Sin results in eternal separation from God.
- So that’s why the Bible says there is NO ONE who has righteousness—because every single person has sinned.
• Every single person deserves God’s punishment—eternal separation from Him—because every single person has offended God. No one has a right relationship with God.

We can’t come up with righteousness ourselves.
• To make things even worse, we can’t fix our relationship with God. We can’t come up with righteousness ourselves.
• In fact, God says that our “righteousness” is like “filthy rags” to Him.
• *Read Isaiah 64:6.*
• Our efforts to fix our relationship with God are like nasty, dirty rags to God.
• *Show the kids a dirty, smudged, thin, hole-filled T-shirt.*
• Do you think that a shirt like this would make good armor? Would it protect your heart and your lungs and all the rest of your torso?
• No! Our efforts to fix our relationship with God will never be enough. We can never get righteousness on our own.

But God offers His own righteousness for us in Jesus Christ!
• Sounds pretty hopeless for us, doesn’t it? But there is still hope!
• *Read Romans 3:21-22 & 26.*
• We’ve sinned and done wrong things. And we’ve offended God and ruined our relationship with Him. We don’t have righteousness, and we can never get it.
• But even though we deserve to be cut off from God forever, He has done something incredible for us.
• God has made His own way for us to get righteousness. He’s made a way for our relationship with Him to be fixed. He’s made a way for us to be right in His eyes—even though we are sinners and we do deserve His punishment!
• God’s way for us to get right with Him is through Jesus Christ. Jesus took the punishment that we deserved for our sin. And God is totally happy with what Jesus has done.
God’s righteousness is a free gift.

- So when we quit trying to fix our relationship with God and trying to get righteousness ourselves, and instead we trust in what Jesus has done, God gives us His own righteousness.

- When we put our trust in Jesus, instead of ourselves, then God sees us as right. Trusting in Jesus makes us right with God!

- You don’t have to work to get God’s righteousness. It’s a free gift that you can get by putting your faith in Jesus alone!

God’s righteousness—the “breastplate of righteousness”—fully covers you and protects you.

- *Hold up the dirty, hole-filled T-shirt again.*

- Our own righteousness wouldn’t make good protection at all.

- *Show the Roman soldier and point out how his breastplate fully covers his torso.*

- But God’s righteousness is like the Roman soldier’s breastplate. It *completely* covers us. And it fully protects us.

- And that’s why the Bible tells us to put on God’s breastplate of righteousness.
WAIT! THERE’S MORE!!

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