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## Kennedy's "Equipped: The armor of God for everyday struggles" (book review)

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# Book Review

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Kennedy, C. M. (2021). *Equipped: The Armor of God for Everyday Struggles*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House. 112 pp. \$10.99. ISBN 9780758669360

*Equipped: The armor of God for everyday struggles* outlines the chief tactics used by Satan to crush victorious living, plus it offers practical advice on wielding the sword of truth. Spiritual warfare is defined as the battle over your spirit. For example, what's vital for every believer is recognizing there's an ongoing fight between good and evil, and YOU are the prize. Knowing that human beings are God's most precious creation, Satan targets us. But the good news is that the Bible teaches us how to wear armor that can protect us, and this book, authored by the senior pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in San Antonio, Texas, provides an excellent overview of how to stand firm in faith during even the toughest spiritual warfare battle.

Five defensive pieces of armor are needed for standing firm in faith: the belt of truth, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the shoes of peace, and the breastplate of righteousness. But to actually DEFEAT the enemy, the sword of truth, or God's Word, must be used. This truth sword is our supreme weapon!

The reader will learn more about the major tactics used by Satan to crush believers, especially deception. Self-condemnation is a huge deception. It attacks self-worth, ignites guilt, shame, and despair. Doubt is deadly. A challenge many people face is self-forgiveness, or how to receive forgiveness from God. Satan uses this battle of feelings overtaking faith to defeat struggling hearts. The question to ask, says Kennedy on page 79, is: "who is in charge? Is it your faith or your feelings? It can't be both! Your faith says Jesus carried your sins on the cross. Your feelings say the burden is still yours to carry. Self-condemnation is a spiritual battle. The victory belongs to the Lord. See Romans 8:1 (NIV): 'Therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.'"

One strength of this book is its heavy reliance on Scripture, use of faith-affirming statements, and its continual focus on prayer. What is impressive is that the book is a practical tool for believers actually engaged in a specific battle. An outline of eleven warfare issues with specific tactics and strategies needed to be victorious is provided on pages 85 to 105: when the burden of your sin seems overwhelming; when you need faith affirmations; when you have doubts about your salvation; when you struggle with temptations; when you feel outmatched by the enemy; when your

spirit is exhausted; when you need spiritual protection; when you feel assaulted by lies; when you face bitterness and resentment; when your past torments you; and, when God seems distant.

A second strength is the way the author continually brings believers back to celebrating their identity in Jesus, as children of God. It is because believers truly believe by faith that they belong to God and are called children of God, that victory over Satan is assured!

Since the mind is the chief battleground for all of Satan's attack, the reader will discover something important about the helmet of salvation's amazing protection. See Psalm 86:11 (NIV): "Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name." Asking God for an undivided heart and mind is vital. Why? Kennedy answers this question on page 59:

The helmet of salvation gives hope. Jesus' death and resurrection is THE story of the Bible, not one of the stories! Every other story points to Jesus. All of Scripture points to Jesus. The cross defines God as our Saviour, and the cross casts its shadow and the empty tomb sheds its light backward and forward into every page of Scripture. In fact, knowing the God of Salvation renews, restores and gives life. Therefore, salvation is a helmet. The assurance that God is our Saviour guards our minds. Satan wants us to believe God has abandoned us. Not true. God, who delivers is by our side.

Kennedy identifies his target audience as people whose eyes are just opening to spiritual warfare for the first time and those who are weary from the fight. While this audience is served, I would recommend a wider audience. Leaders in churches would also greatly benefit, because this resource would be a great tool for both mentorship and as a curriculum topic for a small group ministry plan.

In conclusion, I recommend this book as a library purchase in biblical higher learning institutions.

### **Reviewer**

Nancy (Warwick) Kingdon