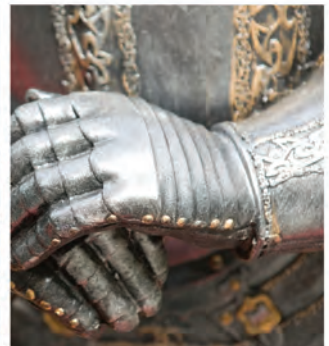




JUNIOR HIGH GROUP STUDY

# THE ARMOR OF GOD

KARA POWELL  
General Editor



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# How to Use the Uncommon Junior High Group Studies

Each *Uncommon* junior high group study contains 12 sessions, which are divided into 2 stand-alone units of 6 sessions each. You may choose to teach all 12 sessions consecutively, or to use just one unit, or to present each session separately. You know your group, so do what works best for you and your students.

This is your leader's guidebook for teaching your group. Electronic files (in PDF format) for each session's student handouts are available online at [www.gospellight.com/uncommon/](http://www.gospellight.com/uncommon/). The handouts include the "Reflect" section of each study, formatted for easy printing, in addition to any student worksheets for the session. You may print as many copies as you need for your group.

Each individual session begins with a brief overview of the "big idea" of the lesson, the aims of the session, the primary Bible verse and additional verses that tie in to the topic being discussed. Each of the 12 sessions is geared to be 45 to 90 minutes in length and is comprised of two options that you can choose from, based on the type of group that you have. Option 1 tends to be a more active learning experience, while Option 2 tends to be a more discussion-oriented exercise.

The sections in each session are as follows:

## **Starter**

Young people will stay in your youth group longer if they feel comfortable and make friends. This first section helps students get to know each other better and focus on the theme of the lesson in a fun and engaging way.

## **Message**

The Message section enables students to look up to God by relating the words of Scripture to the session topic.

## Dig

Unfortunately, many young people are biblically illiterate. In this section, students look inward and discover how God's Word connects with their own world.

## Apply

Young people need the opportunity to think through the issues at hand. The apply section leads students out into their world with specific challenges to apply at school, at home and with their friends.

## Reflect

This concluding section of the study allows students to reflect on the material presented in the session. You can print these pages from the PDF found at [www.gospellight.com/uncommon/jh\\_the\\_armor\\_of\\_god.zip](http://www.gospellight.com/uncommon/jh_the_armor_of_god.zip) and give them to your students as a handout for them to work on throughout the week.

### Want More Options?

An additional option for each section, along with accompanying worksheets, is available in PDF format at [www.gospellight.com/uncommon/jh\\_the\\_armor\\_of\\_god.zip](http://www.gospellight.com/uncommon/jh_the_armor_of_god.zip).

# UNIT I

## The Defensive Armor

As we prepare to teach the next six sessions on the defensive armor of God, we would be wise to pay attention to not just the armor but also to where it falls in Paul's writings. The crux of Paul's description of the armor of God is found in Ephesians 6:10-20.

Note that this description appears not in the early chapters of Ephesians, but toward the end of Paul's letter. In fact, in the English translation of the original Greek that we use today, there are only four verses between the end of Paul's armor of God description and the end of his epistle.

Why is this important? Because it reflects an important Pauline theological paradigm. In the early chapters of Paul's letters, he tends to focus on God's love for us and how our sin has separated us from that love. God couldn't stand that, so He sent Jesus so we might have real life in the present and eternal life in the future. One of the most often quoted passages in the epistle is Ephesians 2:8-9: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

After Paul establishes that firm foundation of salvation by grace through Jesus, he proceeds in his letters to describe the commands that God intends for us to follow. Note that these commands—including those revolving around the armor of God—come *after* the explanation of who we are in Christ.

In churches and youth ministries today, we love jumping to the commands toward the end of Paul's letters. They seem so practical and so juicy. We teach those commands as stand-alone ideas, without the sense that they flow out of the salvation we experience through Jesus Christ. As a result, students (and adults, for that matter) end up walking around thinking that Christianity is all about behaviors—some sort of cosmic "do" and "don't" list that they have to follow. They don't realize that Christianity is first and foremost a love story—of God's love for us, and our subsequent love for God and for each other.

One way I like to explain this to students is that as we grow in Christ, we obey out of gratitude. Our life becomes a great big thank-you note back to God for all He has done for us.

Given Paul's own argument, I invite you to teach about the armor of God in the context of God's grace and our salvation. Standing every day in the armor is indeed part of how we live as thank-you notes back to God.

Kara Powell  
Executive Director of the Fuller Youth Institute  
Assistant Professor of Youth, Family and Culture  
Fuller Theological Seminary



## SESSION I

# THE BELT OF TRUTH

### THE BIG IDEA

Our best defense against spiritual darkness is a clear, undiluted understanding of what God says about Himself, Jesus, salvation and life.

### SESSION AIMS

In this session you will guide students to (1) learn that there is one infallible, unalterable truth revealed to us by the one, true, unchanging God; (2) understand that this truth was revealed to us in His Son, Jesus; and (3) know that this truth brings us freedom and gives us a way to take a stand against the forces of evil.

### THE BIGGEST VERSES

“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. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist” (Ephesians 6:13-14).

### OTHER IMPORTANT VERSES

2 Samuel 22:31; Psalm 145:18; Proverbs 3:3; Isaiah 55:7; John 8:31-32; 17:15-17; Ephesians 6:10-14; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 5:19-20; Revelation 7:17

**Note:** Additional options and worksheets in 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" x 11" format for this session are available for download at [www.gospellight.com/uncommon/jh\\_the\\_armor\\_of\\_god.zip](http://www.gospellight.com/uncommon/jh_the_armor_of_god.zip).



## STARTER

**Option 1: Two Truths and a Lie.** For this option, you will need a bunch of kids. This is a time-tested youth game that students always enjoy because it involves trying to deceive others.

Welcome students and ask them to come up with two true statements about themselves and one false statement about themselves. For example, a student might make these statements, “I’ve swum with sharks. I am related to Abraham Lincoln. I can eat two dozen donuts in one sitting.” Choose several volunteers to stand up and share their statements. Once all three statements have been shared, ask the listeners to vote on which one they think is the lie. The volunteer will then say whether or not the statement is true or false. (You may want to start this off yourself. Students love to hear crazy things about their youth workers’ lives.)

Once everyone has had a turn, point out that sometimes it is the truth that seems far-fetched and the lie that seems believable (hopefully you have an example or two of this from the activity). Life is confusing when we don’t know what to believe. We want to know what is the truth and what is the lie.

Explain that today we will be focusing on truth as part of a series of lessons that center on the armor of God. Truth is not a “whatever you think is right” expression. God revealed the ultimate truth to us through His Son, Jesus. Knowing this truth brings freedom and gives us a way to take a stand against the forces of evil that rage against us. God wants us to live in a way that glorifies Him. It all begins with knowing the truth.

**Option 2: Calvinball.** For this option, you will need the rulebooks for several different ball games, such as baseball, football, tennis, water polo, golf, basketball and volleyball (you can get basic rules from the individual sports’ websites if that’s easier than books), the balls for each game you choose and a container.

Ahead of time, photocopy or print a page of each rulebook. Then cut apart the rules so that each rule is on its own paper strip. Fold the paper strips and place them in a container. The idea is to have a container with a dozen or so mixed rules. Students will draw the rules out during the activity.

Welcome students and explain that today they will be starting the session with a ball game. Hold up the container of rules and say that the game will be a combination of all the best sports games around. Ask a volunteer to draw out a paper strip with one rule on it and read it aloud. This will be the first rule of the game. Get three or four more volunteers to draw out a rule and read it. Then hand out whatever balls are needed and play the game according to the

rules they have drawn. You will get a weird mesh of things that don't work well together, but encourage the students to play anyway the best that they can.

As they play, draw out a new rule every 15 seconds or so and read it aloud. Have students add that rule to their game. You can also start taking away the rules that were drawn earlier. Do what you can to make the game confusing.

After a few minutes, stop the game and ask students to regroup. Share that in the comic strip *Calvin and Hobbes*, the cartoon character Calvin invents a game called "Calvinball." His game is guided by rules that constantly change according to whether or not he's got the advantage. In other words, he changes the rules in order to keep winning. While this is humorous in a cartoon game, it is actually a frustrating experience in real life. We can't live a peaceful, faithful life when we aren't certain what the rules are.

As Christians, we believe that God who created the world gave us a means to know how to live well in it: His Word. The truth revealed in His Word is the foundation for our lives because it teaches us how to live in a way that pleases Him and glorifies His name.

Explain to the students that today we will be focusing on truth as part of a series of lessons that center on the armor of God. Truth is not a "whatever you think is right" expression. God revealed truth to us in the form of His Son, Jesus. Knowing this truth brings freedom and gives us a way to take a stand against the forces of evil that rage against us. God wants us to live in a way that glorifies Him. It all begins with knowing the truth.

## MESSAGE

**Option 1: Tell the Truth.** For this option, you will need a sandbox with sand in it, a walking stick or cane, Bibles, a wide leather belt, a whiteboard, a whiteboard marker, a device to film people, time before the session to edit the film, and a way to show it to your group.

Film interviews with people in your community so that you can share them with your group later. Ask the people you interview the following three questions: (1) Is there such a thing as truth? (2) How do you know what the truth is? (3) Does the truth ever change? Try to get a good cross-section of people—Christians, non-Christians, young, old, men, women, adults and children. Also place the sandbox at the front of the room where your group meets so that the students can see it. Before the session, prepare to show the film to the group.

Welcome the group members and ask one volunteer to stand in the sandbox. With the walking stick, slowly draw a line in the sand around that student

as you explain that thousands of years ago an old Roman consul named Popilius was sent by the Roman Senate to stop a potential war between two powerful rulers, Antiochus IV Epiphanes of the Seleucid Empire in Syria and Ptolemy VIII Euergetes of Egypt. Antiochus was on his way to invade Alexandria when Popilius stopped him and delivered a message from the Senate telling him to withdraw his armies or consider himself at war with the whole Roman Republic. Antiochus stalled for time, probably hoping to find a way around the problem, because he really wanted to invade Egypt. He already had captured many of the cities and only needed the capital, Alexandria.

As Antiochus hemmed and hawed around, Popilius did something that would become famous even to our day. He drew a line in the sand and said, “Before you cross this circle I want you to give me a reply for the Roman Senate,” meaning that Rome would declare war if he stepped out of the circle without giving up his war with Egypt. Incredibly, Antiochus chose not to fight and took his armies and went home. Since that time, the expression “draw a line in the sand” has meant to make an irreversible decision about something—to choose something and then bear the consequences of that choice.<sup>1</sup>

Have the volunteer sit down, and then ask students if they have ever had to draw a line in the sand about something. Have they ever had to make a firm “go no further” decision about something that really affected their future? Be ready to share something from your own experience.

Next, transition to the main point of the lesson by stating that the Bible makes it clear that if we are followers of Jesus, we will have to draw a line in the sand about some of the things in our lives. One of them is the idea that there is a God who revealed truth to us through His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. People often don’t accept this idea today. They assert that truth is relative to a given situation and that as long as a person doesn’t hurt anyone else, he or she can believe whatever truth he or she wants to believe. For us, this attitude leads to a draw-a-line-in-the-sand decision (draw a line across the sand in the sand box). We will either stand on one side of the line or the other. Either we will



### Youth Leader Tip

The idea of satanic powers will make some students feel afraid. Keep the focus on the Bible and assure your group members that while Satan is real, there is also real and powerful protection for those in Christ.

stand on the side of the one unchanging truth or we will stand on the side of whatever-you-think-is-true-is-okay. Where we stand will make a huge difference in our future.

Now play the film you made and ask students to comment on the responses of the people you interviewed in the film. Ask for their response to the same three questions: (1) Is there such a thing as truth? (2) How do you know what the truth is? (3) Does the truth ever change?

Explain that truth is a revelation from God, which means that it is absolute. It isn't something we create or piece together. In our culture, the idea that truth is absolute or fixed is often disregarded. What is considered "true" changes depending on the situation, biases or preferences. This is *not* truth in a biblical sense. Truth is the revealed nature of God—that which is right and good and eternal. It is the foundation of everything we are and believe both about ourselves and about God. God's truth is laid out for us in His Word.

Distribute Bibles and have a volunteer read aloud John 17:9,15-17. Make sure the students pick up the main ideas by asking them to respond to the following questions:

- For whom does Jesus pray?
- What does He ask the Father to do?
- How are we sanctified (set apart for God)?
- What is truth according to verse 17?

Have another volunteer read John 8:31-32 and ask these questions:

- How do we show we really are Jesus' followers?
- What is the connection between truth and freedom?

Sum up by stating that it is the Word of God that has the power to set us apart, to radically change our hearts and to make us the people God created us to be. It is the unchanging, enduring and infallible Word of God that guides our lives. God has declared what is true. Knowing this truth will bring us freedom and give us a way to take a stand against the forces of evil.

Expand this idea to the armor of God. Invite a volunteer to stand up, and then place the belt that you brought around his waist. Read aloud Ephesians 6:10-14 and explain that this armor refers to the armor of a Roman soldier. Roman soldiers (including good old Popilius) wore some specially designed pieces of armor as protection, and while this belt may not look all that amazing, it was

the foundational part of the whole armor. It was the centerpiece. The belt secured the other parts of the armor and held everything in place. During battle, soldiers would tuck their tunics into their belts so they could move around more freely.

Continue by explaining that in Ephesians 6:14, the belt is associated with truth. Truth is the fundamental weapon we possess, and it's not something we can create or make up. Truth is a revelation from God, and it is the center of faith and life. Connect the idea of truth and armor by driving home this point: Our best defense against spiritual darkness is a clear, undiluted understanding of what God says about Himself, Jesus, salvation and life.

Ask the volunteer to sit down, and then explain that God has provided "armor" for all of His followers that will enable them to face the challenges of the Christian life with endurance. This armor is more than metal and leather—it is an expression of God's character, which He works in us. And it starts with truth as He revealed it.

Continue by stating that there are a few truths that set the stage for everything else we believe. On the whiteboard, make a T-chart and place the heading "The Truth About People" on one side and "The Truth About God" on the other. Ask students to explain what they think the truth about humankind is. (This is a broad question, so you will get a variety of answers.) After a few minutes, ask volunteers to read aloud Genesis 1:27, Psalm 8:4-5, Romans 3:10-18,23 and Ephesians 2:1-5. Ask students what the truth is according to these passages in the Bible. Next, under "The Truth About People" column, list the group's responses based on the verses. Drive home the idea that humankind is a glorious reflection of God Himself, but that because of sin, people are far away from their original design. The truth is that we are all lost.

Explain that we must tell the truth about who we are. For some reason, people often try to tweak their image. They may do this in an attempt to impress others, or they may do it simply to stay out of trouble, but somewhere along the way they have put up a mask to get others to think about them in a different way. We could say these people are being duplicitous. The word "duplicity" comes from a Latin root meaning "double"; thus, a duplicitous person is someone who offers two different sides of himself or herself, usually in a way that is meant to deceive others. But God has given us a powerful weapon: truth.

Have volunteers read aloud Ephesians 2:4-7 and Titus 3:4-7. Ask students what the truth about God is according to the Bible. Under "The Truth About God," list their responses based on the verses. Drive home the idea that God is merciful. He reached out to save us because He loves us. He is the one true Re-

deemer of humankind who can bring us back to that original design. This is the truth that revolutionizes our lives and allows us to stand firm in our faith. We were lost, but He has saved us. We are His, and He loves us!

Go back to the sandbox. Conclude by explaining that telling the truth about ourselves and about God is the first line of defense that we have in the spiritual battle we face. We must fearlessly draw a line in the sand and stay on the side of truth as God revealed it. When we do, we will have the power to stand against anything that comes our way.

**Option 2: The Purpose of the Belt.** For this option, you will need Bibles. Begin by explaining that the Bible clearly teaches there is a spiritual war going on in this world: The powers of darkness constantly oppose the power of God. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden, Satan and his cohorts have sought to destroy the work of God and keep humans from returning to Him. (If you did the starter section additional option called “Drop Off,” it might be effective at this point to place the unsuccessful packing shells in front of the students—or at least what remains of those attempts. Pointing out the broken eggs further illustrates why we so desperately need God’s protection.)

Continue by stating that the apostle Paul helps us understand who we are fighting and how we can take a stand. Read aloud Ephesians 6:10-18, and then lead students through the following questions:

- How are we to be strong? (*Verse 10 states “in the Lord” and “in his mighty power.” Our strength for this spiritual battle isn’t a matter of our own willpower or intellect or physical force. Our strength is found solely in the Lord.*)
- Whose armor do we put on? (*Verse 11 tells us it is God’s armor.*)
- What is this armor, and how do we put it on? (*The armor of God is a metaphor that Paul uses to help us to understand something abstract—it doesn’t represent an actual set of shiny armor descending from heaven. This protection comes to us in the form of truth, righteousness, peace, faith—all aspects of God’s nature that He causes to grow in us. So, when we talk about putting on God’s armor, what we mean is growing in our relationship with God so that His life is becoming greater and greater in us.*)
- Why do we put on God’s armor? (*According to verses 11 and 13, the reason for wearing the armor—for “putting on” Christ—is so we can take a*

*stand against the evil we inevitably will face. God's armor provides protection so that we can take a stand. We have a part to play in spiritual warfare: we are to oppose darkness by living out truth, peace, righteousness and faith. Living like this is what will defeat the enemies we face.)*

- Who are we fighting? (Verse 12 states that our enemies are never people—a hard truth to grasp, no matter what your age! Satan is all about deceit, slander, manipulation and oppression. He can incite people to act in ways that feel like a personal attack, but our true enemies are not the ones who act against us, but the devil and the powers of darkness.)

Have volunteers read aloud 2 Corinthians 4:4, Ephesians 2:2 and 1 John 5:19-20. Ask students to share what these verses add to their understanding of their enemy. As they offer ideas, draw them back to the overarching truth that there is a real spiritual battle that is taking place. Make sure they understand that standing against the enemy is an ongoing task. It's never a did-that-and-now-I'm-done type of deal. Once we have made our stand—that is, once we have committed to growing in Christ and living out His truth, peace and righteousness—we must keep standing.

Now transition the conversation to the first part of the armor of God—the belt of truth. By way of background, explain that the armor listed in Ephesians is not the medieval knight's armor that might spring into most people's minds. Many scholars believe that Paul wrote Ephesians while he was in prison under Roman guard. The armor to which Paul refers is a Roman soldier's armor, and the belt was the foundation of his entire protective gear. There are three things you need to know about it:

1. The belt was a thick leather band that went around the waist.
2. The belt had a place to secure other parts of the armor, the breastplate and the sword.
3. In addition to securing the other pieces of armor, soldiers would tuck their tunics into the belt so that they could move around more freely.

Explain that the belt is paired with the idea of truth. Ask students to consider why truth would be the first part of the armor and why Paul would use a Roman belt as a way to illustrate the role of truth in our lives. Some ideas they might come up with include:

1. The belt is worn around our center, or our core. It strengthens all the muscles that are essential for stability and strength. Truth is the center of our Christian life, of everything we are.
2. The belt holds the other pieces of the armor in place. As Christians, we cannot hope to fight against darkness or to live righteously without the securing power of truth. It holds everything else in place.
3. Soldiers would tuck their tunics into the belt for freedom of movement. As Christians, our freedom comes from truth. Jesus said, “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). Rather than constricting or binding our lives, the truth actually gives us room to move.

State that truth is absolute. It isn’t something we create or piece together. Of course, in our culture, this idea that truth is absolute or fixed is often disregarded. What is considered “true” changes based on a person’s situation, bias or personal preference. This is *not* truth in a biblical sense. Truth is the revealed nature of God—that which is right and good and eternal. It is the foundation of everything we are and believe about ourselves and about God.

Conclude by stating that God’s laid His truth out for us in His Word. Read aloud John 17:15-17 and draw attention to the fact that Jesus prays for protection for His people and then follows up by asking that they be set apart by truth. The Word of God has the power to set us apart, to radically change our hearts and to make us the people God created us to be. The unchanging, enduring, infallible Word of God girds our lives. God has declared what is true.

## DIG

**Option 1: Truth that Changes Us.** For this option, you will need Bibles, copies of “Truth that Changes Us” (found on the following page) and pens or pencils.

Give each student a pen or pencil, a Bible and a copy of the handout. Instruct the group members to work on their own. The students should read the Bible verses about truth that are listed on the handout and jot down ideas that occur to them as they read.

After 10 to 15 minutes, regroup and have volunteers take turns reading the verses aloud. Ask them to comment on what they learned about truth. As you wrap up, emphasize that as Christians, the truth revealed in Jesus Christ is the



# TRUTH THAT CHANGES US

Look up John 1:17 and 1 Timothy 2:7. Where is God's truth found?

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Look up Psalm 145:18 and 1 Peter 1:22. How does God's truth change your heart?

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Look up 1 Corinthians 13:6, Ephesians 4:25 and Philippians 4:8. How does God's truth change your life?

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It is God's truth that changes your heart and allows you to live in a way that honors Him. Why is it important to know where truth comes from?

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Based on what you've learned today, what is the truth about God?

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What is the truth about you?

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foundation of our lives. His truth changes our hearts, and those changes should find expression in how we live. Truth isn't only something we understand but also something that directs how we live our lives—it is His Word alive in us and living through us.

Conclude by stating that as we take the time to know this truth through Bible study and prayer, we will be putting on the belt of truth, which in turn will enable us to stand in faith against the many challenges that will come our way.

**Option 2: True or False?** For this option, you will just need room to move.

To help students understand the necessity of absolute truth in their daily lives, give them a true or false quiz to get them moving. Have everyone stand and come to the center of the room. Explain that after you read a statement, they should move to the right if they think the statement is true and to the left if they think it's false. Once you reveal the answer, have students move back to the center of the room for the next statement. The questions are as follows:

- When glass breaks, the cracks move faster than 1,000 miles per hour. (*False: Breaking glass moves at 3,000 MPH. Dropping your iPhone on a concrete floor will prove this.*)
- The flames from a forest fire will spread faster uphill than downhill. (*True: So always build your dream home at the base of a mountain.*)
- A lightning bolt generates temperatures three times hotter than those found on the sun's surface! (*False: It generates temperatures five times hotter. Your grandma was right: stay inside during a lightning storm.*)
- Porcupines float in water. (*True: Although you wouldn't want to use one as a floatation device.*)
- The longest recorded flight of a chicken was 13 seconds. (*True: This is probably why so many of them end up in someone's pot pie.*)
- The electric chair was invented by a plumber. (*False: It was invented by a dentist. Enough said.*)
- A mole can dig a 300-foot tunnel in just one night. (*True: So be sure to have one if you ever get snowed in at some mountain resort.*)
- More than 20,000 birds a year die from smashing into windows. (*False: Only 10,000 die from this. A tragedy nonetheless.*)
- In Natoma, Kansas, it's illegal to throw knives at men wearing striped suits. (*True: So stick with plain dark blue just in case.*)
- A person's heart beats more than 50,000 times a day. (*False: It beats over 100,000 times a day. Aren't you tired?*)

After you've tired the students out, gather everyone together and explain that while sometimes the truth can be really strange, it is the truth nonetheless. The truth can seem silly, outrageous or even illogical at times, but that doesn't lessen the fact that it is still the truth. This is because truth isn't based on personal opinions, biases or preferences. It doesn't change because of a person's circumstances or situations. At times we make errors in what we think is true and *we change* our thinking, but truth itself does not change. It is absolute.

Guide students to the idea that unless we accept that there are absolute truths in this world (such as people shouldn't steal, or people should be honest), we will live in a world where everyone does just as he or she sees fit. Want something that belongs to someone else? If there are no absolutes, then nothing prevents you from just taking it. Didn't study and have to pass the math test? Without absolutes, it's perfectly fine to cheat. After all, who's to say whether or not something is wrong?

Conclude by stating that there is a truth outside of ourselves—a standard that exists that directs the code of right and wrong. This truth is revealed most clearly in the person of Jesus Christ. Hopefully, by this point your students will recognize that this truth comes from Christ. If they want to know the standard of right and wrong—that expression of God's own wisdom and nature—they must go to Jesus and learn from Him.

## APPLY

**Option 1: It's Black and White.** For this option, you will need Bibles, black matting paper or construction paper, white matting paper or construction paper, several bright lights (such as a desk lamp or reading light), masking tape, several white colored pencils, scissors, colored markers or glitter pens, chairs and glue. Ahead of time, acquire enough bright lights to set up multiple workstations. For each station, tape black paper to the wall with the masking tape. Place a chair about 4 to 5 feet from the wall, place a lamp on the chair, and then aim its light directly at the black paper.

Explain to the students that because truth is absolute, it is not a matter of us *understanding* it but rather *accepting* it. If we want to fight the enemy successfully, we have to come to grips with this unchanging "black and white" nature of truth. As a visual reminder of this fact, the students will be making silhouettes of themselves.

Begin by having one student at each station sit between the chair and the wall. (The group members will probably have to move the student a little un-

til his or her shadow hits the black paper clearly.) Once there is a clear profile of the student, have the other members use the white pencil to outline it. When this is complete, have them give the paper to the student, who will then carefully cut out the silhouette and glue it to a piece of white paper.

When all of the silhouettes are complete, have each student use a marker to write down one thing they learned during the session about truth (for example, that it is absolute, that it comes from God, that it forms the basis of what we consider right and wrong, that it sets us free). The students can write whatever they want, but encourage them to put down something meaningful. If a student is having trouble, suggest that he or she reads John 8:32. (Have a few Bibles handy just in case.)

End by recapping the main points of the lesson: There is one unchanging truth that is revealed to us by the one unchanging God, and knowing this truth brings freedom and gives us a way to take a stand against the forces of evil.

**Option 2: Wall Warriors 1.** For this option, you will need butcher paper, masking tape and markers. Ahead of time, cut the butcher paper into 5- to 6-foot pieces. (Note: This will be an ongoing activity for the next five sessions.)

For this option, the group members will be making a life-size “warrior” of themselves. Give each person a sheet of butcher paper, and have him or her draw *an outline* of a life-sized person. Note that there is no need for them to cut this out. Once the members are finished, tape the papers to the wall, and *voila!* You will have a wall of dedicated warriors. Feel free to have the members write their names on the papers, but ask them not to go overboard just yet with adding too many details.

Next, reread Ephesians 6:10-14 and recap the main idea of the lesson: There is one unchanging truth that has been revealed to us by the one unchanging God, and knowing this truth will bring us freedom and give us a way to take a stand against the forces of evil. Have students use the markers to draw the belt of truth on their warrior. Remind them that the belt of truth was a wide leather strap that went around the waist. It wasn’t a flashy piece of armor, but it was essential. The belt held everything else in place. On the belt have them write, “God’s Word is Truth; it holds everything in place.”

As previously mentioned, during the next five lessons, students will be adding armor to their warrior until they have a fully outfitted soldier. Cool, huh?

## REFLECT

The following short devotions are for the students to reflect on and answer during the week. You can make a copy of these pages and distribute them to your class or download and print them from [www.gospellight.com/uncommon/jh\\_the\\_armor\\_of\\_god.zip](http://www.gospellight.com/uncommon/jh_the_armor_of_god.zip).

### 1—THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

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So, how do you put on the belt of truth? You do this by knowing the truth about God—who He really is. When you know who God really is, you will also know when something is false. When you encounter something that says it's true but is really false, you will know. You will also know how to fight against it. Look up the verses that are listed below, read them, and write down any truth that you learn about God from them.

1 John 4:8: God is \_\_\_\_\_

Numbers 23:19: God is \_\_\_\_\_

Deuteronomy 4:31: God is a \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 7:11: God is a \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 46:1: God is our \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Which of these truths stands out to you the most?

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When you are having a bad day and everyone seems to be against you, remember the truth about who God is. When these truths surround you on every side, like a belt, you are much stronger. Write a prayer to God thanking Him for the truth of who He is. Mention a few of His characteristics in your prayer.

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### 2—THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS

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Another way to put on the belt of truth is to know the truth about Jesus. You can learn who Jesus is by studying the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and

John. Look up each of the verses listed below and write down what it reveals about Christ.

Matthew 1:23: Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_

John 1:23: Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_

John 8:12: Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_

John 10:11: Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_

John 14:6: Jesus is the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_

Which of these truths stands out to you the most? Why?

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Always remember the truth about who Jesus is. He loves you, He came to earth for you, and He saved you. Write a prayer to God thanking Him for His Son, Jesus. Use a few of Jesus' names in your prayer.

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### 3—THE TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION

In order to put on the belt of truth, you also need to know the truth about your salvation. There are many confusing messages in the world today about how we can be saved, but when you know the truth about your salvation, you will know when you hear something false and know how to fight against it. Look up the following verses and fill in the blanks.

Romans 3:23: "\_\_\_\_\_ have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is \_\_\_\_\_, but the free gift of God is \_\_\_\_\_ in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 10:9: "If you confess with your mouth, ' \_\_\_\_\_ , ' and believe in your heart that God \_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_, you will be saved."

Ephesians 2:8-9: "By \_\_\_\_\_ you have been saved, through \_\_\_\_\_— and this not from yourselves, it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God—not by works, so that no one may \_\_\_\_\_."

Spend some time thinking about the gift of salvation. Write a prayer confessing your sins and thank God for saving you from those sins.

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### 4—THE TRUTH ABOUT LIFE

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A final way to put on the belt of truth is to know the truth about the life God has given to you. When you think about your life, you might wonder why you are here or what your purpose is on this earth. Thankfully, God has given you His Word, where you can find true answers to your questions. Look up the verses below and think about why God created you.

Look up Psalm 86:9. What is the purpose of life?

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Look up Ephesians 2:10. Who created you, and why?

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Look up Matthew 28:19-20. What does this say about what we should be doing?

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Say a prayer thanking God for creating your life with so much purpose. Pray that He will give you the strength and wisdom to praise Him, do good works, share the gospel and bear good fruit.

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**KARA POWELL, Ph.D.**, is the executive director of the Fuller Youth Institute and a faculty member at Fuller Theological Seminary ([www.fulleryouthinstitute.org](http://www.fulleryouthinstitute.org)). As a 20-year youth ministry veteran, she speaks regularly at youth ministry conferences and is the author or co-author of a number of books, including *Sticky Faith*, *Deep Justice Journeys*, *Essential Leadership*, *Deep Justice in a Broken World*, *Deep Ministry in a Shallow World*, and the *Good Sex Youth Ministry Curriculum*. Kara lives in Pasadena, California, with her husband and three children.

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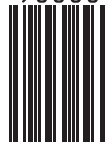
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