

# Chapter One

**October 3, 1993 Mogadishu, Somalia**

Darkness enfolded the soldiers. They remembered with chagrin the equipment left behind at their base. This mission should have taken less than an hour. There had been no difficulty with the six previous missions. Why had this one disintegrated into a nightmare of slaughter?

Since this was expected to be a fast daylight raid, at the signal to move out the Rangers left behind night vision goggles, bayonets, extra ammo and canteens.

Unforeseen circumstances had turned the quick attack into a protracted engagement. After several hours of fighting, the soldiers were blind in the darkness without the aid of NODS (night vision devices). They were exhausted and thirsty. Even the ammo was running low.

It had begun as a humanitarian aid mission to the Somalis. Famine had ravaged the East African country, leaving its populace starving. The United Nations had intervened by sending food and water. There were several warlords in Somalia who ruled the separate clans. One of them, Mohammed Farrah Aidid, saw the U.N. as a threat to his power. After he had ambushed and mutilated 24 Pakistanis, the U.S. Army was called in to bring him to justice.

Twenty-four-year-old Sergeant Jeff Struecker, a squad leader in charge of nine men in two Humvees, led a ten-vehicle ground convoy into Mogadishu. Rangers and Special Operations Forces had been dropped by helicopter to capture the Aidid conspirators. The convoy was to retrieve them with their captives.

The operation went exactly as planned with one exception. Ranger Todd Blackburn missed the slide rope and fell 70 feet from the chopper to the ground. If he were to survive, immediate evacuation was imperative. Sergeant Struecker's men loaded Blackburn into their Humvee and began to make their way back to the airfield.

One and a half million people from all over Somalia had gathered to be fed in Mogadishu's 14-mile area. When Struecker's two vehicles turned the corner to head back to the airfield, it seemed all 1.5 million Somalis were shooting at them from every rooftop, doorway and window.

The U.S. military is the best equipped fighting force in the world and its soldiers are trained for virtually any situation. But in this encounter they were ill-equipped for the unforeseen battle ahead. The technology and supplies were at their disposal, but the soldiers left base without them.

# The Military Belt

The military belt, LCE (Load Carrying Equipment), is the equivalent of suspenders with a belt attached. Traditionally, it was called the pistol belt because it was used by officers to hang their handgun. In modern warfare, however, it has a greater significance.

The LCE is an essential part of a soldier's gear. It is the first piece of equipment he puts on and the last he takes off.

In combat every soldier would feel absolutely naked without his LCE because the equipment it holds is vital to his survival. The LCE contains these items:

Two Canteens - Staying hydrated in combat situations is essential, thus the need for two canteens. Each contains one quart of lifesaving water.

Field Dressing - A sterile bandage to be used on the person carrying it. If a soldier on the field of battle comes upon a wounded comrade, he immediately reaches for the man's own first-aid dressing. It is used to treat the wound and may possibly save his life.

Ammo pouches - These hold the minimum amount of rounds a soldier will carry into battle. It is called a basic load of ammunition.

Compass - A trustworthy source of direction. It is easy to become disoriented in battle on unfamiliar terrain. The compass never lies. That arrow always points northward making the direction clearly understood.

Suspenders - Do not only hold up pants. If infantry and special operation soldiers come upon a wounded man on the battlefield, they grab the suspenders

of the LCE and drag the soldier toward safety.

The belt is absolutely vital in the field. No soldier would think of walking through the woods without a compass or leaving base without water. He would be crazy to go on a battlefield without a field dressing because of the possibility of being wounded.

"I have spent up to 14 days in the field and have never taken off my LCE," explains Sergeant Struecker. "Every other piece of equipment I might take off, but never the belt."

"After seeing so much blood and death in Somalia I knew the field dressings and gear on the belt would never be enough to help the injured. Only the truth of the Lord Jesus could bind up the mental and emotional wounds that leave deep lasting scars on the soldiers souls."

# Belt of Truth

**Ephesians 6:20**

**But do this, you will need the strong belt of truth.**

It's not an accident that truth is the first piece listed in the armor of God. Truth not only illumines right from wrong, It also deciphers and exposes the empty philosophies and lies our enemy constantly throw at us. Jesus said, "You can know the truth and it will set you free."

However, we live in a unique time in history. A massive assault has been launched upon us to reshape our understanding of what is true.

The media, more than any other single force, stands as an influential agent to mold our character, values and beliefs. Magazines, movies and television capture our imagination, bypassing our reason. Millions are idiotized night after night in front of their televisions by the image makers of our time.

Our culture has convinced many people that truth is relative. The emotional response, however passionately felt, must be set aside. It has no validity in defending what truth really is.

(Ravi Zacharius, [Can Man Live Without God](#))

On a flight from Eugene Oregon, Christian writer and speaker, Dusty Davis, sat next to a young man clad in a white shirt and navy pants. After a brief conversation it became apparent that the young man was a Mormon missionary. Mr. Davis asked, "How can you have faith in something that has been proven false in many ways? There is no archeological evidence or any other type of

proof to back up any of the Book of Mormon."

The young man quickly replied, "I don't care what truth is. I only know it makes me feel good."

Faith is not a feeling. Emotion is not a reliable source of what is true. That is why it is important to spend time in God's Word, so we can know and understand real truth. When we speak the truth, and think what is true, feelings will eventually follow.

To many, truth has lost its meaning by becoming whatever anyone decides to make it. Hence the term, "No absolute truth," was coined by our generation.

Is there an ultimate truth? If so what is it?

These questions are not new. In 33 AD Jesus stood before Pilate who asked Him if He was the king of the Jews. Jesus told him, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." (John 18:37-38 NAS).

In the book of John Jesus states 77 times that He is telling us what is truth.

Jesus is the truth. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me" (John 14:6 NAS).

The Bible is the truth. Jesus said, "Thy Word is truth." (John 17:17 NAS). When our minds are saturated with the Word, we make correct judgments about what we see and hear.

We can trust what the Bible says and mentally wrap it around us as if we

were soldiers putting on our LCE. It not only holds ammunition for offense, but also our defense.

The Belt of Truth in Ephesians Six is much like the LCE which holds:

Canteens- Like the canteens filled with water, the truth satisfies our deepest spiritual thirst. Jesus said He would give us living water so we would never thirst again. (John 4:10) We think money, food, pleasure, television or people will make us happy. Those things may bring short lived pleasure, but do not have the ability to satisfy so that we'll never thirst again. Only a relationship with God through Christ can fill the hole in our life. That God shaped vacuum in which God alone fits.

Field Dressing - Like a field dressing, Jesus heals our sorrows and binds the wounds on our soul. (Isaiah 61:1b) The Bible tells us we will have trouble in this world. There is no getting away from the fact. However, God has provided deep healing. Only through Him can we experience the mending of our hearts.

Compass - The Bible is the compass that guides and points us in the right direction. (Psalm 119:105) Sometimes it's difficult to determine truth from fiction. But God's Word is clear on what is right and wrong.

Ammo- The truth in the Word of God is the ammunition Jesus used when tempted by Satan in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1-11) God's truth reveals the lies of our enemy and reminds us of what is real and important.

Suspenders - The truth of the Word rescues people from eternal separation from God and pulls them to safety. When we share the good news of God's salvation with others, God pulls them from darkness into light. No one comes to me, Jesus, unless the Father draws him. (John 6:44)

## How to Put On the Belt of Truth

Don't say it! Don't let negative words even come out of your mouth.  
(Ephesians 4:29) Our minds latch on to what we say and eventually we believe it.

Don't allow the thought to stay in your mind. We often want to dwell on the negative. We may receive five complements and one insult. What does our mind dwell on? The insult. We must not allow our minds to dwell on what is not from God.

How do we know when a thought is not from the Lord? Look at Phillipians 4:8. "Is this thought true? Is it honorable? Is it excellent or worthy of praise?" If it is not, kick it out and replace it with truth. If we don't replace it with what is true the thought will continue to plague our mind.

As I was studying the Bible one day a question came into my mind-- *How do you know that's true?* As soon as the thought entered my mind, I said, "I've heard that one before. In the Garden of Eden Satan asked Eve a similar question: *Is that really what God said?*"

I spoke aloud - "I will not be deceived. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, 'All scripture in inspired by God.' If God said it, I believe it. That settles it."

When you are angered by someone and want to malign them say instead, "God be with that person. I pray they will walk in a manner worthy of you, Jesus. Please save them, Lord." (Luke 6:27-28)

To accuse someone or speak badly about them is doing Satan's job. The Bible says Satan stands before God night and day and accuses us of the bad things we do. Don't be an agent of the devil by speaking evil of people. Rather than saying ugly things about them, bless them.

The thought *I'm a failure* is a lie from Satan. Say aloud, "It's true that I am



not sufficient in myself ... my adequacy is from God. He has made me completely competent..." (2 Cor. 3:5-6b). This prayer also applies when feeling self righteous or proud.

When we have problems or feel distressed we find comfort in the truth. Say aloud, "God works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called for His purpose." (Romans 8:28).

Instead of sinking under fear and worry, use truth. Say aloud, "I will not be anxious about anything, but will pray about everything. With thanksgiving I will let my requests be made known to God." (Philippians 4:6-7)

It is important to speak aloud God's truth instead of speaking or thinking what we feel. The Bible says, "Confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart..." (Romans 10:9 NAS). Confessing, or speaking the truth aloud, confirms in our hearts what *is* true. Even though we may *feel* differently, saying the truth establishes our thoughts and feelings.

To know the truth we must know the Word. "The people who know their God will display strength and take action" (Daniel 11:32 NAS).

God has given us an amazing Book that teaches clearly what is true. He desires that we hunger and thirst after His Word, like a person starving for food. He promises "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

The truth of Christ operates on sound reasoning and provides solutions for the questions and pain in our lives. How are we to know truth from fiction when we are bombarded daily with redefined words and corrupted ideas if we don't study and learn what is in the Bible? Read it daily. Store it in your mind. Love it and pray for understanding and the discipline to apply it.

Wrap the belt of truth around your waist. Webster's Unabridged Dictionary defines the waist as "... the part of the body between the hip and lower ribs... considered to be the seat of physical strength and generative power." Truth will be an anchor that holds firm through the battles of life.

## Prayer for Putting on Belt of Truth

Lord, thank You for giving me the Belt of Truth. You have promised that I can know the Truth and it will set me free. You are the truth, Lord Jesus. I embrace You as my strength and protection from the deceptions that try to ensnare me. Help me to recognize what is true from what is false.

Take away all desires for unrighteous things I watch or read. I reject all the enemy's accusations, temptations, and suggestions.

I want to drink from Your spring of living water, Jesus my Lord. Show me any way in which I am being deceived. Let it be my heart's delight to study and learn truth. Help me to understand what I read and show me how to apply it to my life. May it refresh and revitalize me like cool water when I thirst. Point out anything I do, or have done, that is displeasing to You so by Your power, I can stop.

As I pray on the Belt of Truth, I say aloud what is true in spite of how I feel. I choose to believe Your Word rather than rely on my feelings. I know faith is not a feeling. Bind up the wounds of my heart with Your "field dressing" that never fails. Help me never to forget Your truth and remember to wrap it around everything I think and do. Give me strength and power through it.

Psalm 51:6, John 8:32,36; 14:6, 16:13