



BATMAN'S UTILITY BELT

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I remember as a kid watching Batman on TV. It seemed that no matter whatever type of situation he got himself into, he could always get himself out of it. I recall one time that he was getting shot at by gunmen and he needed a bullet proof shield and all of a sudden he reaches into his utility belt and pulls out a piece of plastic about the size of a cassette tape and unfolds it into a full blown bullet proof shield. On another occasion, he was dressed as millionaire Bruce Wayne when he was away from the "bat cave" and needed his "batsuit." Once again, he reached into his utility belt and pulled out two capsules that just needed to add water and poof instant Batman and Robin suits. It seemed that he had everything he needed for any occasion, no matter how bizarre, or corny. His villains were very fiendish. There was the two faced villain who was unable to be in agreement with himself and Mr. Freeze whom you had to avoid or you'd die from extreme cold. The riddler liked to think he was always wiser than Bat-

man, and of course, the ever deadly cat-woman used seduction as a tool against him. The joker, Batman's worst enemy, would laugh his head off as Batman continually went into his supposed doom, that is, until he reached into his utility belt and pulled something out to save his neck. For all these enemies he seemed to have an endless array of equipment that made people think, "How could anybody possibly have thought of a way of escape for every type of possible life threatening situation, especially that far in advance?" But he was, a hero, and that's what heroes did, defeat enemies, until the next time. He was more than a conqueror. Only problem was that he was fictional and not real. For someone to live that type of life he would have to be a billionaire. However, one day as I was reflecting on the things that we have in Christ, I began to think of how God has given us a "utility belt", The Bible. It actually has a way of escape out of every difficult and dangerous situation. Not only that, we have all sorts of weapons that can get us out of trouble against two faced enemies, cold people,

clutches of the cat-woman, (strange women). We have wisdom far greater than the riddles that come against us, and deliverance from the joker who thinks he has set us up for the final doom. We don't reach into our belt, but for our Bible. It's a Book that has thought of every type of problem ahead of time and is able to help us in them all.

Unfortunately, our enemies aren't figments of someone's imagination but the real thing. Unfortunately, we have a cat woman that always wants to distract us with seduction while she plans our destruction and her escape; A Mr. Freeze that wants us to be cold for the Lord, or at least lukewarm. We most definitely have a two faced enemy that tries to get us to sin by describing all the delights of sin beforehand, and then when we do fall, he turns around and begins to condemn us. The same enemy that intices us is the same who one condemns us. We require a working knowledge of the Word of God to be able to face and overcome the enemies that are continually confronting us.

Although King David, in the Bible was ascribed as killing tens of thousands and Saul his thousands, David knew the source of his strength. "He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me; for they were too strong for me. They came upon me in the day of my calamity but the Lord was my support. He brought me into a roomy place; He was delivering me because He delighted in me." (Psalm 18:17-19).

Batman was always concerned for the common people as well. It seemed like he lived the life of endless sleep while he fought for the benefit of all the rest. He watched over the city while everybody else slept sound and secure. I suppose we could learn a lot from Batman. For sure he watched over his city for good. He fought for the good of the common people. He seemed to care. He'd make a good intercessor.

We recently had one of our birds die. Unfortunately, it died of hunger and thirst. It wasn't that we didn't have food or water to give it, but just that he was never high on the priority list for being taken care of. Everyday as I left for work I would tell the kids whose job it was, "Don't forget to feed the birds". Sometimes, I would come home and it would be the first question out of my

mouth, "Did you feed the birds?" Often times they had forgotten and then would go off and do it. Many times it seemed a drudgery. When we found him sick and weakly in his cage, he was too far gone and ready to die. Then the kids felt sad and irresponsible. As I was burying him, I felt I owed him an apology for not taking care of him, for neglect, and for not showing him the importance he deserved. Unfortunately, it did no good. I felt he had died, not for a lack of food on our part, for we were amply supplied, nor for water, yet for a lack of interest on our part to take care of his needs and to do what was entrusted to us. We all grieved when it was too late, it just didn't do any good.

I have come to learn that when we bury someone, it's God's last wake-up call. After thousands of years of burying people and loved ones, it still hasn't gotten any easier. Man has never been able to invent a way to not make death hurt. I think He might have left it that way as a wake-up call to us still living, to put things in order and remember that there is someone bigger with an appointment pending.

We may, like Batman have a utility belt (a Bible) for all occasions and

the understanding to be able to use it for everything. That's not really the issue; the issue is, if we have the interest to use it the way we were supposed to. Batman was a wealthy man and used his wealth for the welfare of others. When he got attacked by enemies for trying to defend the people, he didn't seem to cop an attitude and call it quits, yet seemed to be spent for others. Can we learn something from Batman's manner of overcoming? I wonder if the creator of Batman was looking for a certain type of person that reflected a true Christian; one who would tirelessly care for others. Many of us are we like my family was towards the bird, neglectful toward others? Of course, we'll help when it's convenient, but is that really what is asked of us? My family, took care of the bird when it was convenient; well he didn't make it. We were just too busy to attend to him. So much water and so much food, yet he died of starvation and dehydration.

The Christian has so many wonderful provisions and so many promises, it's a wonder that so many around us go without. A lot of times, it's just plain neglect. Hebrews chapter 2:3 says, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" The word neglect simply means; to do nothing, to leave it alone. Neglect is leaving something un-

attended. God says, “How will you escape if you simply do nothing with your salvation; if you just leave it alone?”

Recently I asked the people of one of our home groups a question. (Many had just been coming to the convenient group that’s near their house but not to the church to be a part of the big picture). I asked, “Why would you want to call yourself a Christian and never pray, or want to pray; why call yourself a Christian and never want to open the Bible; why say, “I follow Christ,” and yet coming to church to worship Him is a struggle. Why bother to call yourself a Christian when Christ is such a stranger?” Amazingly enough, if someone were to ask them if they were a Christian, they would say, “yes”, in two seconds. Why not just get down to the nitty gritty, and if we say we’re a Christian, be a Christian. I had a lady come up to me recently after a service and ask for some counsel. When I asked if she was a Christian, she responded, “Of course, I come here all the time”. Then she proceeded to try to convince me of her loyalty to our church. I thought, “Why is this lady trying to convince me she comes here all the time, I know who comes and who doesn’t; our church isn’t that big to have someone escape my noticing them.”

When I was a youth, my mother gave me a plastic stone with a cross printed on it. It was called, “The cross in my pocket”. Basically, you kept the stone in your pocket and when you took

out your change to pay for something, there it was, a small reminder of what Jesus had done for us on the cross. It was a very simple, non-threatening reminder. The problem was, it stayed in my pocket, nice and hidden. One thing it couldn’t do was to help me against the temptation of sin. It was just a reminder. For many, salvation is a mere “cross in the pocket.” It’s non threatening and just a reminder for us. God says, “I’ve given you a whole Bible for you to live by, the application of it’s truths can defeat any enemy and free you from any situation, yet it’s carried around in your pocket and not truly in your heart.”

The story is told of a man who was a beggar in the time of the great depression. Everyday he would beg and search for food in garbage cans so he could eat. One day he died of malnutrition. When they examined him, they found a belt around his waist that had a zipper in the back of it. Upon opening the zipper a very large amount of money was discovered, more than enough to live an exuberant lifestyle for that time, yet he was ignorant of the provision that was around his own waist, and ended up dying of starvation. Sad but true, that describes many Christians as well. The provision abounds in God’s Word, yet being ignorant of how to use what’s in the belt (Bible), will leave us spiritually starving and thirsty.

David knew of this provision when he went up against Goliath. Everyone else said, “Impossible,” but David knew where his strength lay. When he went to the brook and got five stones, he was getting enough provision for any situation that might occur. Some say that David wasn’t getting five stones for Goliath, but one for him and four for his brothers that would later be taken care of by David or his men (II Sam 21:22). The point is that he had plenty of provision in his pouch, whether for one giant or five. Actually, in this passage, we see what a true hero is. II Sam. 21:20 says, “Once more there was war in Gath, this time involving a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, 24 in all...But when he taunted Israel, Jonathan, the son of David’s brother Shimei, struck him down.” Jonathan was probably just a little guy when his Uncle David slew Goliath. He probably didn’t play cowboys and Indians or cops and robbers; he probably played David and Goliath. I believe he wanted to be like his hero, Uncle David, when he grew up. Thus came his big opportunity; to take on the giant with six fingers and six toes. He gladly took the challenge that he’d been waiting for all his life, slaying his own giant. I think David was, (and still is), a hero for many. We read in II Sam. 23 the ac-

Support Address:
Household of Faith
c/o Greg & Suzanne Winslow
30 Merrimack Rd.
Amherst, NH 03031

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LLAMADOS PARA SERVIR
APARTADO 424
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Phone: 011-52-755-4-65-32

Fax: 011-52-755-4-65-32

Email: gwinslow@cdnet.com.mx

Web <http://www.cdnet.com.mx/zihua/winslow>

Website
www.cdnet.com.mx/zihua/winslow

counts of David's mighty men and we say, "Wow!" But David was a hero who begot heroes. Before any other mighty men came on to be with him, David himself, first, was a mighty man. David put fourth the example of a hero and to the date there has never been in Israel any like the army of David and his mighty men. Mighty men attract mighty men, but David didn't wait for one to come along before he was one. He was determined before hand, regardless of anyone else. "For by thee I can attack a troop, and by my God I can leap a wall." Psalm 18:29 David's strength, even super

strength was in the Lord.

Do you have your belt on? It's a belt of truth, and God's Word is truth. When we believe it more than our circumstances, more than our feelings, it goes to work for us and gets the job done. Use it against the cold character, use it for wisdom over puzzling riddles, use it against the strange woman (or man), use it against the two faced enemy and the enemy who laughs at you while you're in distress. Speak it with faith as a sword from your mouth. "So shall My word be, which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not come back to me uselessly, but it shall do what I purpose

and accomplish what I commissioned it" (Isa.55:11). "I am likewise awake over My word to fulfill it" (Jer.1:12). Use it in every situation you have and you'll always come out the victor, like Batman. ☺