

*Come Holy Spirit  
Use me to Your glory*

*Precious Pilgrim,*

*“Put on the whole armor of God.” Ephesians 6:11a.*

*Yesterday morning I didn't and, boy, am I sorry. It was one of those days when everything seemed to be a little out of kilter. Nothing was really a big deal, just little irritations, but those little irritations have a tendency to mount up.*

*I arose and rushed and didn't put on my “armor.” What does that mean? Well, I think it means the same thing to all Christians, but we all have different methods of carrying it out. Paul is very specific in his directions. (Ephesians 6:11-17)*

*“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

*Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

*Stand therefore, having your loins girded with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.*

*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*

*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked.*

*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*

*For me putting on the armor means to start my day in prayer and in seeking the Lord God's face before anything else. But yesterday I didn't and, boy, am I ever sorry. It was a major mistake and the consequences were evident. First, my daughter and I went shopping for her engagement party dress. The saleslady at our first stop could not have been more attentive - as a matter of fact, too attentive. The harder she pushed, the harder I rejected. It was awful. I had a real opportunity to be gracious. I could easily have taken control of the situation. I could have said, "Thank you so much for your assistance. My daughter and I really do better on our own. If you won't mind, we'd like to browse on our own and if we have questions, we'll ask you. Could I have one of your cards, please?"*

*But this is not the scenario. She pushed and I was about to scream, the main problem being that I hadn't put on my armor and thus missed an opportunity to represent the Kingdom well. Lord, forgive.*

*The next opportunity to show my Christian colors came about twenty minutes later. Stuart and I drove to another shopping area. The streets were crowded and there were no parking places available. We circled the block numerous times,*

*getting more and more irritated with each revolution. Finally, a car started pulling out and we put on our blinker to indicate our desire to turn in. We waited patiently, as patiently as possible, which at this point wasn't very patient. We had things to do and places to go: bridesmaids' dresses, bridal shoes, trousseau.*

*Well, the car finally pulled out and around the corner zipped a little car coming from nowhere and stopped right in front of "our" place. He rolled down his window and said he was taking the parking spot because he'd been circling the block for a long time.*

*I scratched off. I was inappropriately livid, reason being that I didn't have on my armor!*

*Soon it was time for Stuart to drop me off at a political meeting where I was to represent my husband. I didn't want to go. I had a real attitude problem. I was carrying around a "TUDE," as Patsy Clairmont calls it. I had just heard this incredible Christian writer and speaker. Her powerful messages were laced with hilarious humor. TUDEs are short for bad attitudes. She made us vividly visualize these unattractive behavior patterns and caused my stomach muscles to ache for two days from my laughter. The TUDE I was carrying around was growing larger and larger with each passing moment.*

*I did not want to go to this dumb old meeting. If I could have picketed or pouted instead of attending, I would have.*

*I rushed into that building already twenty minutes late and demanded directions from the receptionist. She sweetly said that the meeting had been cancelled over three weeks ago. What?*

*"Where's the phone? I'm stranded! I have no car. I'm not being picked up for two and a half hours. I must call and share some of this misery with the campaign headquarters.*

*I called. Obviously a mistake had been made. The meeting was at another building. I was picked up and redeposited at the right location. I was now an hour late for the meeting that I didn't want to attend. Everyone involved with the mix-up was apologetic. I never lost my cool because I really didn't care. I had no anger, but that blasted old TUDE was still hanging on.*

*I sat, listened, then left, only to wait another thirty minutes to be picked up.*

*Brant arrived in a tither. He informed me that we had a change of plans. Instead of the day being over, instead of me getting to go to my Mama's and being pampered and fluffed up by this special lady, I was told that in forty minutes I had to go speak to a meeting in north Birmingham. They were expecting my husband, but it had been decided that he needed to go on to Mobile to get ready for another function, and I was to take his place. I was informed that this group was a pretty tough one and that I should expect a lot of questions.*

*My first inward response was, "NO! I can't go! I can't do this! I don't want to do this! They'll just have to cancel. I'm going to Mama's. I'm going to put on my bathrobe and sit and eat and drink and talk with Mama. This has been an awful day. I'm drained. I cannot, will not, won't go. They can't make me! I don't have the strength, energy, or desire to go speak to a tough audience." With the TUDE and the armorless outfit I'd been carrying all day, there was no way I could be helpful to the campaign. "I can't do this!"*

*Bingo! That sentence now always acts as a red light in my psyche. I've learned over the years, when that sentence forms in my brain, to stop and come to a screeching halt and evaluate. "Warning - I'm trying to be in charge!" "Warning - I'm trying to take over!" "Warning - I'm out on a limb, depending on my own strength, and it's getting ready to break!" I'd been inching out on that limb farther and farther all day long, armorless and TUDE-full. I realized this was my last chance of the day to become properly attired.*

*I rushed into Mama's and told her of our new plans. She said, "Oh, no!" I could sense her disappointment. I rebathed and remade up and redressed, but this time I added my armor. In prayer, I asked the Lord for His forgiveness, and I asked for Him to be with me and equip me and use me at this function, that He knew the people that were coming and their needs and concerns and wants and to please give me the words to speak.*

*Brant picked me up. I could sense his surprise at how rejuvenated I looked. We made the fifteen-minute drive to our destination. After parking the van, for the first time, I told Brant that if he wouldn't mind, I'd like to pray together before we went in. Usually I go to the restroom and pray privately right before I talk, but this time I wanted to pray out loud in community with this young man. I didn't know what his reaction would be. I knew his faith was strong, but a personal one. He said, "Great! After the day we've had, I need to pray, too!" So, we bowed our heads, and once again, I asked the Lord to use us and equip us for this meeting.*

*Then we walked into the restaurant. The president of the club came forward, and I introduced myself and said I was their substitute speaker, for my husband regrettably was unable to attend. I sensed, of course, disappointment.*

*The time came to talk. I spoke for about twenty minutes.*

*As is customary, I asked for questions and the questions came - an hour's worth. An hour's worth! Usually three is about the norm. Here they went on and on and on. Some were political and others were personal.*

*Finally the questions ceased and a man, who had asked the toughest of all questions, stood up and started clapping. Then everyone else in the room followed his lead. It was my first standing ovation ever. He walked forward, handed me a volunteer card, and said we had his vote!*

*Wow! What an awesome experience. There is no doubt in my mind that the Lord had held me up. I had brought nothing to this function, except finally I had put on His armor.*

*Precious One, may I encourage you also to dress appropriately - daily. It will afford the best fashion show this side of heaven. Such a fashion plate of Christians can even receive standing ovations for the Designer. I know. I've experienced such, and boy, was it exciting and humbling. Thank you, Lord, to You be all the praise and the glory!*

*Your TUDE-less fashion plate,  
Lucy . . . God Bless*