

## Threads of Hope Sewing Devotion 8

Here we are once again to discuss some Bible verses about clothing and fabric. Do you think we are exhausting the possibilities? I always find it interesting that we have an idea that people in the Bible were somehow vastly different than we are today. Certainly, the time period was different, so that they were not dealing with the same conveniences, the technology, or even the same amount of knowledge that modern people possess, but to a certain extent, people are people. The things that consume our time and interests, like food, clothing, work and family, are the things that were important to them as well. When we look at fabrics, sewing, and clothing, these were fundamental components of life and it shouldn't be strange that the Bible uses these basics for illustration and instruction.

Today we are going to look at a specific instruction that the Scripture gives us and how it uses clothing to give us an illustration of that instruction. You have probably heard this instruction before and you may think it's rather strange. We're going to examine the Biblical phrase "gird up your loins."

Let's talk about the words used. We'll start with LOINS. This is a word that we don't use too much anymore, and when we do use it, we probably use it incorrectly. People have the idea that loins have something to do with your genitals. You may have heard children being referred to as "the fruit of your loins" and while that isn't incorrect, it isn't a complete picture of what loins are either. The real definition of loins on the human body is the area from the ribs through the abdomen to the hips and it includes the back as well. Today we call this our core. It is the seat of your strength and vigor as well as the source of life.

Some of you know that I fell this summer and fractured my pelvis in a few places. Part of my recovery process is going to physical therapy, and one of the things I am doing during that PT is strengthening my core. It is no fun. It is hard work strengthening my "loins" that got weak while I was not bearing weight on my legs for a few months. The core, the loins, are what holds the rest of the body upright and makes it move correctly. A weak core makes a weak body and conversely, a strong core makes a strong body.

Now, how about the meaning of GIRD UP? This isn't too hard to imagine. Think about the clothing that would be worn in Bible times. Men and women would both wear the long, flowing robes that are common to Middle Eastern cultures. This type of garment

offered lots of protection but would also get in the way of certain activities—running, kicking, riding an animal or hard labor. A long tunic is restrictive to the legs. It's why we sew in a pleat or a slit in our dresses for bigger girls. It's hard to run in a maxi dress. To gird up means to tie up those long robes in such a way that your legs would be free to move. It wasn't an indecent action, it was a dis-entangling. A similar modern phrase would be "roll up your sleeves".

Girding your loins while wearing a long robe basically involved gathering up the long skirt of your tunic, tucking it through your legs and then securing it around your waist, either with a belt or simply by tying the ends together. Not only would this allow for freedom of movement, but it would also give you added protection and strength for your waist area—your core. It's where we get the concept of a girdle. It can be a support. Girding up your garment around your loins was a preparation for hard work or for battle. Telling someone to "gird your loins" was a way of saying, "get ready!"

So why does the Bible use the phrase "gird up your loins"? It is always used as an instruction to be prepared. Let's look at a few instances of this phrase in the Scripture. Remember, in different Bible versions, the phrase "gird up your loins" may be translated with other more modern words. "Gird up your loins" is primarily used in the King James Version.

In Exodus 12:11, God gives the Israelites the instruction to eat the Passover meal with "YOUR LOINS GIRDED, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand." They were to be ready to move and quickly!

1 Kings 18:46 mentions that the prophet Elijah "GIRDED UP HIS LOINS" and ran ahead of Ahab's chariot after his show-down with the prophets of Baal. The very manner in which he was dressed showed he was ready to deliver God's message and God allowed him to out-run a chariot.

In Job chapter 38, Job complains to God about the way God does things. God challenges Job with these words: "GIRD UP YOUR LOINS like a man; for I will question you and you shall answer Me." God is telling Job, if you want to second-guess what I'm doing, then get ready, BRACE YOURSELF, because I'm going to ask you a whole bunch of things you don't have a clue about and you'll see that it's best to let Me run things.

Isaiah 11:5 tells us that we should GIRD UP OUR LOINS with righteousness. There's the idea of having a belt around us to strengthen and support our spiritual self.

Luke 12 also lets us know how our LOINS SHOULD BE GIRDED--“like men who are waiting for their master to come.” We need to be prepared, ready and looking for the return of the Lord.

The Ephesians 6 passage on the Armor of God tells us to stand with our “LOINS GIRDED ABOUT with truth.” That Belt of Truth would be all that God tells us in the Scripture, again to strengthen us in the fight against the Enemy.

1 Peter 1:13 gives a different twist by telling us to GIRD UP THE LOINS of your mind, preparing ourselves by getting serious about the grace and truth put forward in God’s Word.

Even women GIRDED UP THEIR LOINS. Proverbs 31:17 gives us an example of a woman GIRDING HER LOINS with strength. This virtuous woman was prepared to do good works. A girded woman wouldn’t be fashionable or stylish. She would be sweaty, dirty, running around up to her armpits in hard work. This figurative woman picks up her skirts, secures them with truth and righteousness and gets the important things done.

So, are you ready to GIRD YOUR LOINS? There’s spiritual work to be done. We are still in the battle. We are still running the race. This month as you sew, think about your own readiness. Are you prepared to do God’s Work, to do battle with evil, and to finish strong in the race of life? Are you wearing the Belt of Truth—having the knowledge of God’s Word to secure your very being in righteous living? Get ready! It’s time to do the work of building up your spiritual core. It is the very strength of your life. GIRD YOUR LOINS!

