

34. The Sword of Spirit

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How would you like to go into battle without your weapon while your enemy is pointing his weapon directly at you? Even if you have the best body armor in the market, you'd become pretty much a sitting duck to get shot at.

An ancient average Roman soldier carried a two feet long double edged sword that was known as "Gladius" as well as a double edged dagger called "Pugio". They were the main offensive weapons.

So far, we learned about "the Belt of Truth," "the Breastplate of Righteousness," "the Footwear for the Preparation of the Gospel of peace," "the Shield of Faith," and "the Helmet of Salvation." All of these armor pieces are mainly for defense. It is about time for us to know our spiritual offensive weapons.

A. THE SWORD OF SPIRIT

Ephesians 6:17b and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God
Many Christian believers have all of their spiritual armors in place but they never use their sword. They leave it in the sheath. Oh yes, they talk about it, study it or even compare swords with each other, but they never actually utilize the sword in spiritual battle.

If you play chess or practice martial arts or have been in actual combats, I am sure you know this fact. If you are only in defense mode, the odd is that you will lose eventually. Haven't you heard, "The best defense is a good offense"? Generally the idea is that offensive action preoccupies the opposition and ultimately its ability to directly harm.

We need to find out how and why we can use the Word of God as the Sword of the Spirit:

1) God's Word is EFFECTIVE

Whether we know the value of our Sword of the Spirit or not, Satan does. He will do everything he can to see that either we keep our swords sheathed or that we don't put them on in the first place.

Satan often directs his attacks toward the Word of God in the lives of believers, because he knows its effectiveness in battle. He will seek to interrupt your study of the Word. He will try to keep you from memorization of it; or stop you from doing daily devotion on Scripture. He knows the powerful effect these activities can have.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Isaiah 55:11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

2) God's Word is ACCURATE

The Word of God has proved its accuracy in history, in prophecy, in science, and in archaeology like no other books in human history. As a matter of fact, the first book the archaeologists who want to excavate Middle Eastern culture refer to is the Bible.

So many self-appointed liberal biblical scholars tried to discredit what Bible says. Since they couldn't change the facts in history regarding what the Bible prophesied, they started to eliminate those historical facts from the next generation's school textbooks so that those younger generations can grow up without Jesus in their hearts. This is what is happening right here in America as well.

Proverbs 30:5-6 Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. 6 Do not add to His words, L est He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

3) God's Word is ALIVE and POWERFUL

The Sword of the Spirit, God's Word is not just another word on a book. It is the Word of God by the Holy Spirit and it is activated and interpreted by one of the Triune God. Only the Holy Spirit can give us the understanding of the Scriptures, enabling us to use the Sword of the Spirit properly. You can be a profound scholar or even a genius, and yet be unable to understand the words of Scripture if you don't believe in Jesus as your Savior and Lord.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

British physicist Stephen Hawking is a case in point. Though he is a world renowned expert in Quantum Gravity physics, he is completely ignorant in Scripture, because he is a self-declared atheist.

God can reveal things to you from Scripture that a person who is not a believer could never see. A child with simple faith sometimes has a better spiritual understanding than a highly educated self-relying person.

Let me ask you this: Would you go into a battle with a rusted and dull-edged sword that cannot even cut a block of butter? You wouldn't. You want that baby to be so sharp that you can split a hair in length. If you have the Word of God in your heart, the Holy Spirit will make that happen.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

For example, the devil will come to us after we have sinned and say, "You failed. There is no forgiveness for you from God."

So we pull our Sword of the Spirit out of its sheath and say, "It is written in 1 John 1:9: 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'"

The devil says, "You are wrong. God condemns you."

So you strike back with your Sword of the Spirit and say, "No, you are wrong, because Romans 8:1 says, 'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.'"

Then the devil says, "Ha, you are going to fall again. I am going to take you all the way down to hell."

You can reply, "No. You are wrong again, satan. In John 10:28, Jesus said, ' And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.'" And you thrust your Sword of the Spirit again.

This is why it is important for us to commit Scripture to memory and to keep our Sword of the Spirit sharp.

Psalm 119:11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

I've been providing you guys the Weekly Scripture Memory cards for over 5 years now. If you've faithfully memorized those verses, I praise the Lord for you and your diligence. Now you are more equipped with the Word of God than before. Some of you would say, "I forget them." Then, memorize them again. I forget them, too. After all, we live near Green Valley, don't we?

4) God's Word is ESSENTIAL and REVEALING

Whenever we buy new products from internet or WalMart or that French boutique Target, those products most often come with a manual. If we are really going to know about it, we should read the manual. But how many of us actually read it? Not many.

A friend of mine has a very analytical grown-up son. Whenever he opens the box of the new product he just purchased, first he actually reads the manual from cover to cover. Then, he corrects all the typos and wrong grammar in the manual. I don't want him in our congregation. Can you imagine how many grammar corrections he would make after my Sunday morning sermon?

The Bible, the Word of God is our Life Manual to guide us and teach us the way we should walk with the Lord in this vile world.

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

When people do not know the Word of God, they don't know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. They make up their own god as they go along and justify their sinful lifestyle. The ancient Israel people were that way and lost their kingdom to the pagan neighbors; many modern day Christians also get swayed to cults because they do not know God's Word.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

Psalm 119:9 How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your Word.

5) God's Word is HOLY

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Psalms 138:2 I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.

The fact that Scripture is inspired by God – literally God-breathed – breathed out by God's own words. Even though the Lord used 40 human authors, He is the One who put His thoughts into their heads to write down as He dictated to them. If heav-

en opens now and makes His Word known to us, it would not be any different than what the Bible already has said. In other words, the human authors were nothing more than scribes who were used to record what the Lord spoke to them.

There are many people – some highly educated yet completely ignorant in God’s way – who insist that some portions of the Bible might be inspired by God, but not all of it. This is an extremely dangerous concept. As a matter of fact, it is a down right demonic one. Because it tries to take the total and final authority away from Scripture. Then it would become a spiritual anarchy. Whatever people want, it flies. So if I tell you that some scriptures are not really inspired of God, then I become the authority, not the Bible anymore.

Don’t try to ignore certain portions of the Bible because it doesn’t fit your opinions and ideas. The Bible is not here to cater to your wants and desires, but your lives must cater to God’s Word.

Grant that, there are many verses in the Bible that we have no understanding or don’t make sense to us all. That doesn’t mean that the Bible is wrong, but it only proves that we are ignorant and lack understanding.

There are many facts and truths in the Bible that are too much for our finite minds to understand. So, what do we need to do? Just file them away. If the Lord chooses to give us wisdom to understand, He will; if He doesn’t, it is His choice. But I will still believe in Him and His Word completely.

B. THE WORD OF GOD AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD

If a person only focuses on the experience from the Holy Spirit, without the balance of the Word, he lacks a good foundation in what God has said and becomes susceptible to false teaching. Some charismatic churches which my wife and I have visited, barely crack open their Bibles, but they were high on something. They sang endlessly, jumped up and down, fell over side ways, hooping and hollering. I wasn’t sure whether we were in the middle of a lunatic asylum or a church.

On the other side of the spectrum, and equally as wrong, are those that look to the Word but don’t allow the Spirit to do His work. I’ve been in a church where doctrinally, the teachings are right on. These are orthodox believers. They believe the right things yet their churches are dead as dead could be. There is no life or vibrancy in the worship service. You would think it was a morticians’ convention or a collection of “frozen people” instead of “chosen people.” Still, they believe in the Word and they believe the right doctrine. What’s wrong? Often, it’s because the door is closed to the working of the Spirit.

One extreme is as wrong as the other. We need to keep both the Word of God and the Spirit of God. I’ve heard it put in a rather simplistic but insightful way: “Too much Word and you dry up; too much Spirit and you blow up; enough of both and you grow up.”

C. APPLICATIONS

1) God’s written Word is the most important evidence a person can examine.

2) God’s written Word is the most compelling information to prepare us for life after death.

People may prepare for death by writing wills or increasing their life insurance for those who will be left behind, but that won't help themselves after their own death.

3) The person who ignores the Word of God in life will not be ignored by the God of the Word in eternity.

Death is sure and hell is real. God will judge. And there will not be anyone who can remain neutral from heaven and hell.