

## **“Spiritual Warfare 7: The Sword of the Spirit”**

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As we come to Ephesians 6:17b we find that the Bible is the final weapon. This book is the final piece of armor that is given to the Christian. It is an amazing book. This book is infallible (without error; faultless; flawless; without blemish). It is divinely inspired. The men were not writing as they pleased ... it came from God.

*Read:* Psalm 19:7

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple."

*Read:* II Peter 1:20,21

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

*Read:* Revelation 22:18,19

"I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book."

*Read:* II Timothy 3:16,17

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

*Read:* Isaiah 55:11

"... so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

### **The Bible Provides:**

1) **Truth** - life, death, heaven, hell, time, eternity, wrong, right, society (John 17:17)

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

2) **Growth** (I Peter 2:2)

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation ..."

3) **Guidance** - it will make you wise and show you the way (Ps. 119:105)

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

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4) Comfort (Rom. 15:4)

"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

5) Power (Heb. 4:12)

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

6) Victory - over the enemy (Eph. 6:17)

"Take the helmet of salvation and *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*"

I want you to notice two things about the sword of the Spirit tonight. First, the description of the sword and then we'll look at the dual. First ...

### **I. The Description Of The Sword**

There were several different kinds of swords and we discussed the broad sword last week in our discussion of the helmet of salvation. The broad sword was approximately 4 feet long and had a large handle. The broad sword was to try and cut off the opponent's head. But there was also a second kind of sword called a *machaira* or short two-edged cut-and-thrust sword wielded by the heavily armed legionary, as distinct from the *rhomphaja* or large Thracian broadsword. The machaira was approximately 12-18 inches long. This is the sword that Paul is referring to in Ephesians 6:17.

It was used in hand to hand combat and most soldiers carried this sword. The soldiers had to know their weapon well. They had to know how to block and be on the defensive as well as thrust and be on the offensive. Anyone could use the broad sword but only skilled soldiers could use the machaira.

*Question:* Why is it called the "Sword of the Spirit?"

Our sword is a sword that has been given to us by the Holy Spirit. He wanted you and I to have a weapon that would help us to stand firm.

*Question:* Do you know how to use the sword?

You learn how to use it by studying the Word of God. Systematic study will show you what it will do and how you can use it in the battle of life.

### **II. The Dual**

A) The Defensive Use - "It is written ..." (Precise & specific)

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*Read:* Matthew 4:4,7,10

Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” Matt. 4:4

Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” Matt. 4:7

Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” Matt. 4:10

There are two words in the Greek language for our English word “Word.” There are two Greek words that can be translated “Word.”

1) Logos – broad, general reference; not specific; the general body of Gospel truth.

*Read:* Mark 2:2

"So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the *word* to them."

*Read:* Matthew 13:18-23

“Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the *word* and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the *word*, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the *word* and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

2) Rhema – specific word; for a specific time and location.

*Read:* Luke 3:2

"... during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert."

*Read:* Mark 14:72

"Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: 'Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.' And he broke down and wept."

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*Note:* Ephesians 6:17 is talking about the Rhema word. What Paul is saying is that you don't take the whole big book, what you do is, when you're in a battle with the enemy you take a specific Scripture that applies to your situation and you use it in your battle. The sword of the Spirit is a specific statement of God regarding your situation. Obviously, if you don't know God's Word it will make it much more difficult to fight. It is crucial that we find out what the Scriptures say so that you can know the specifics!

*Read:* II Timothy 2:15

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth."

You and I must learn God's truth. It is critically important. It is important and essential to your victory. If you're going to win over the enemy then you must know the Word. You will overcome satan when you know the Word of God.

*Read:* Revelation 12:11

"They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the *word* of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death."

Now let's turn our attention to the offensive aspect of the Word of God. I don't know about you, but I'm glad that the Scriptures aren't just defensive in nature. I'm thankful for that because I get tired of playing defense all the time. (e.g. basketball, football)

### B) The Offensive Use

*Question:* When is the Word of God offensive?

Every time we share the Gospel with someone. When we preach the Word of God it is offensive. When the Word of God is proclaimed, no matter where it is and no matter with whom you share it, you are hacking your way into the enemy's territory and are taking it back.

*Question:* How do we make a dent in satan's kingdom?

We use the Word of God! (The following passages indicate to us how Paul took a city ...)

*Read:* Acts 13:5,32

"When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the *word* of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper ... We *tell* you the good news: What God promised our fathers ..."

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*Read:* Acts 14:1-3,6-10,12,21

"At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went *as usual* into the Jewish synagogue. There they *spoke* so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, *speaking boldly* for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders."

"But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to *preach* the good news. In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, 'Stand up on your feet!' At that, the man jumped up and began to walk."

"Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the *chief speaker*. They *preached* the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch ..."

*Read:* Acts 17:2,3,12-13,16,22

"As his *custom* was, Paul went into the *synagogue*, and on three Sabbath days he *reasoned* with them from the Scriptures, *explaining* and *proving* that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. 'This Jesus I am *proclaiming* to you is the Christ,' he said."

*Many* of the Jews *believed*, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was *preaching* the *word* of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. Acts 17:13

While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was *greatly distressed* to see that the city was full of idols. Acts 17:16 (What did he do?)

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and *said*: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. Acts 17:22 (He preached the Word!)

*Read:* Acts 18:8-11

"Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized. One night the **Lord** spoke to Paul in a vision: 'Do not be afraid; keep on *speaking*, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.' So Paul stayed for a year and a half, *teaching* them the *word* of God." (If Jesus came to speak to him personally, it must have been important!)

*Question:* How do dispel darkness?

Turn on the light. God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path!

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Sometimes we can get the idea when we read all of these passages about the apostle Paul that he was a great orator and communicator. We get the idea that he must have really known how to put a sermon together because he had converts left and right. But that’s not the case ...

*Read:* II Corinthians 10:10

"For some say, 'His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.'"

*Read:* I Corinthians 2:1-5

"When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power."

We must remember that the power is not in the gospler, it’s in the gospel. It’s not in the messenger, it’s in the message. This Word is powerful so it doesn’t matter how fluent or eloquent you are. If you’ll open the Word to people it will do the work for you. It’s an offensive weapon.

### **Conclusion:**

*Question:* How well do you know the Word of God?

- a) Like the back of your hand
- b) Like your next door neighbor
- c) Like your cousin Fred (once removed)
- d) The what?

*Question:* How often do you study it?

- a) Daily
- b) Frequently
- c) Occasionally
- d) Rarely
- e) Never

*Question:* Do you have a reading plan to familiarize yourself with it?

Devotional book, devotional/study Bible, yearly goals, readable version

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*Read:* John 16:13-14

"But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you."

*Read:* I John 2:26-27

"I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him."

The late H.B. Barker was a master of illustration and he described three things he saw in his garden one day as he was working. He was looking at his plants and flowers. The first thing he saw was a butterfly. The butterfly would light on one flower and then would spring to another one and then to another one and after a second or two it was gone.

Then he saw a botanist out there in the garden and the botanist spent some time over each flower and he made a few notes. But when he was finished his knowledge was shut away in his notebook and he went on his way.

Finally he saw a bee and that bee was diligently investigating and studying each and every flower down to the last detail. He was actively searching for every piece of food and information he could gather about the territory he was covering. He took his time and didn't rush through the process of becoming intimately ingrained with the flowers.

Now tonight there are butterflies and botanists and bees in this room. The butterflies spend very little time in the Word and move around without ever diving deep into its truth. Butterflies float from this class to that class and from this study to that study and from this seminar to that seminar and maybe even from this church to that church and you can flap your pretty wings and never change.

Or, you can be a botanist who spends more time in the Word but all they have is head knowledge and the Word is never translated into heart knowledge. You have enough notebooks to fill a huge library. You take detailed notes and you're writing all the time but the problem is that it never makes it from your head to your heart to your faith and action.

Finally, there are those who are like the bee and spend time with the Word of God and they read and reread and mark it up and they ingest it and their minds are filled with its wisdom and their life radiates its sweetness. You can mingle with the Word and be full of the strength and energy of this book.

The question tonight is “which one are you?” Are you willing to use it to win the battle?

**Next Week:** Praying In The Spirit