

## **Armour – the word of God:**

*Ephesians 6:17 ESV*

*(17) And take ....the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,*

### **Introduction:**

Here we are in Ephesians 6 these last months and we have been looking at the armor of God.

Now this armor to many has become an ethereal thing, a thing that has been come strange, detached and not applicable to their daily lives because of how it has been represented.

The letter to the Ephesians, like all of the books of the Bible, are immensely practical.

Acts is a practical biographical story of the accounts of the new church.

Romans is a very practical account of salvation theology.

Hebrews teaches us about how Christ is greater than the Old Testament, greater than any priest or institution...a tremendous read full of answers for today's religious situation.

And we have Ephesians it is immensely practical in how we are to live our Christian life, and how to walk daily worthy of this name Christian.

## **Recap:**

Now Paul is very clear, this is no cakewalk, this Christian life.

To win at this thing called Victorious Christian Living, we are going to have to fight.

We are going to have to realize that we are in a battle.

He is very clearly outlining here the character traits that we are going to need to develop in order to preserve and be victorious as Christians.

He starts off by pointing out that we can't do this on our own; we are going to have to be strong in the Lord.

He tells us in order to living victoriously we are going to have to be alert.

We are going to have to ensure that we are on guard all times.

That our entire body needs to be 'covered' as it were, with the protective armour provided by God.

These weapons, these tools of our trade are not powerless like physical weapons are but they are mighty and effective.

They are not external to us like the armour of a Roman soldier, but they are character traits that we develop and adorn ourselves with as it were.

The most liberating revelation you can ever get about spiritual warfare is that it is not something that you do, but someone that you are day after day.

It is not a prayer that you pray, but a life that you live.

It is not a conference that you attend, a book that you buy, but it is the man and women that you are becoming.

Our struggle isn't against flesh and blood, but against demonic beings that influence rulers and powers and are a very real force in the world.

Friend, I have seen demons manifest.

I have actively seen people transformed through deliverance from demonic oppression.

I have seen demon forms take shape, but that is not where my daily battle lies, that is not where my spiritual warfare takes place.

My daily battle is a personal struggle against a demonically inspired system that comes against me and my sinful tendencies.

A system that is inspired by satan, and designed to hurt God's creation hinder God's people.

It is not that we as believers have demons running around in us, we are new creations; we have been transformed and changed.

But we are assaulted by the system around us and we have a tendency to fall and buckle under that assault because of our fallen nature.

So Paul tells us what we need to wrestle against this system and the evil forces that drive it.

He tells us to be people of truth.

Doctrinal truth,

Biblical truth.

Not to be church-wise in our conduct, but authentic and real in our faith.

He talks about putting on a breastplate of practical and personal holiness a breastplate of right-doing.

Having our feet shod with peace.

Peace in every situation.

Peace and faith in God to deliver us from the world and the attacks of the enemy, a faith that is unmovable in daily battle.

Then we are to take up a shield that will protect us because it is made of the most solid stuff in the universe...trust in the fact that Jesus is who He says he is and can do what he says he can do.

And we put on our helmet of salvation.  
A salvation that is an anchor to our soul.  
A hope that is unmovable.  
A hope that is sure and secure.

Now we come to look at the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God.

## **The Sword:**

Let's start looking at this sword of the spirit.

### **General differences:**

The first thing we notice is that the sword differs from every other piece of armour that we have.

Every other piece of armour looks at protecting a certain piece of the body, it covers a certain aspect of our lives, but this is not true of the sword of the spirit.

The sword is defensive but in a different way.

It doesn't counteract just a specific attack from a specific weapon to a specific region of our life but it helps us hold the enemy back altogether, it keeps the enemy back as a whole.

The second difference is that it is offensive.

Now this constitutes its uniqueness.

The sword given to us by God serve the dual purpose of being both defensive and offensive.

It is something that we can use to not only repel the enemy. But also attack him.

## **When the enemy attacks:**

A trouble faced by many Christians is that the devil tends to terrorize us and frighten us.

We become overwhelmed with a sense of hopelessness.

And if he can do that, we are already defeated!

Sun Tzu, the famous Chinese general said:

*If you know the enemy and know yourself you need not fear the results of a hundred battles.*

James puts it like this:

*James 4:7 ESV  
(7) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

I read this like....know your God...know the devil and he will flee from you.

Submit: That is obey God in every way because we trust Him.

Know the devil...Resist him...stand against him...know your enemy and how he works....and he will flee.

Again Sun Tzu said...

*If you are ignorant of both your enemy and yourself, you are certain to be in peril.*

When you resist satan, when you combat him with the evidence of a submitted life to God, he will not merely stop an attack, he will run from you.

So we are not merely using this sword to repel an attack of the evil one but we cause him to retreat.

He is discomforted, he is uneasy, he knows that we are under the control and protection of a higher power than he has and we drive him back with this submission.

We do so much more than just fend him off.

Now we are not to indulge in foolhardy carefree living.

*1 Corinthians 10:12 ESV*

*(12) Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.*

We must be vigilant, we must not be arrogant and think that we can not fail or fall into temptation, we must be prepared to stand and even to wrestle, but we need never be fearful, we need never be terrorized or brought down with a feeling of hopelessness.

## **What the sword is not:**

As we often do, let's look at what this scripture is not say here.

Now the scripture says:

*Ephesians 6:17 ESV*

*(17) And take ....the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,*

Sometimes you will hear people read it like this:

They will say:

*"Take the sword of the spirit which is, (comma) the word of God."*

In other words they are saying that the sword of Spirit is God's Word, they then go on and tie it into the following verses.

*"Praying at all times in the spirit..."*

They say things like and I quote:

*The Sword is the Holy Spirit in the mouth of a teacher filled with God. Being filled up with the spirit is what is needed. This (verse) doesn't mean that bible knowledge is powerful but the person with the most spirit is powerful.*

The problem with this is that is very simply wrong.

Nowhere in scripture is the Holy Ghost described as the Word of God.

That description is confined solely to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Spirit, the third member of the trinity is not the sword, is not the Word of God.

Let me paraphrase what I believe the Apostle is saying:

*Take up the sword, which the spirit Himself provides for you, that is to say, take up the Word of God, in other words the Scripture, the Bible.*

Being filled with the spirit is not the same as being filled with the Word.

When Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness just after he was filled with the Spirit.

He did not use His infilling as His defense, he used the word of God as His defense.

Spirit filled people hear...listen to me, hear me.

Walking around your bedroom speaking in other tongues...which I encourage you all to do daily...is not the same as knowing, reading, studying and using the Word of God as a weapon of your warfare.

You need spirit AND Truth.

You need worship and WORD.

Standing in a dark room with worship music playing in the background will do nothing for you compared to 30 minutes every day reading the word.

Paul talks about the role and place of prayer languages; some even believe he makes allusions to it in the next verse, verse 18. But that is NOT, I repeat NOT what this verse means here.

And personally I do not believe that speaking in tongues is apart of our Spiritual Armor.

I believe it is a part of our spiritual disciplines, but not of the armor Paul talks of here.

Now do not hear what I am not saying

I am baptized in the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

I believe and practice the gifts of the Spirit.

But friend...if that is not what Paul is saying here...then that is not what Paul is saying here.

## **The Sword which is the Word:**

So what have we said so far-

We have said that we possess the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

We have said that the Bible is that sword.

We see that this sword is something that we must pick up and use in order for it to be effective and impactful in our spiritual warfare.

Now when I say use it...I don't mean to make sure you have one in your breast pocket sitting close to your heart,  
I don't mean have one gather dust by your bed.

When I say we wield this sword I don't mean we wave it around in the air.

Have you ever seen a preacher do that...I mean they are into it...they wave it around, they pretend to use it like a fencing foil.

And people get all up and excited, cheer and don't change.  
Less cheering, more changing.

Now...you can use the Sword not because you own one, but because you know what's in it.

Being able to wield the sword is being able to use the truth of Scripture at any given point to address the devil, to address the need in the life of a believer.

Now if you are going to use this weapon...you had better trust this weapon.

If I am going to pick it up, I want to know that it is God's Word, just not a nice tale.

## **So How do we know that this bible IS God's Word and it can do what we say it can do?**

If you are unclear on whether God wrote the Scripture, you're not going to be able to wield that.

If you, for example, question the inerrancy of Scripture, if you question the accuracy of Scripture, if you question the clarity of Scripture, if you question the integrity of Scripture, you're going to be reluctant to use it.

It is vitally important that every believer settles in their heart of heart that this Book is God's Book, not just a good book.

I spent many weeks looking at this in-depth and if you need more information, please see Mel or Heather and the media team will be able to help you locate the teachings.

**First of all, the Bible claims to be infallible.**

That is without error.

Perfect

Reliable

Watertight

Foolproof

Flawless

And it claims it again and again and again.

*Psalms 19:7 ESV*

*(7) The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*

*John 10:35 ESV*

*(35) And Scripture cannot be broken*

You can trust this sword....because it is infallible.

## **Second, it is inerrant:**

When we say infallible, we mean that everything it affirms is true.  
When we say it is inerrant, we mean every word in it is true.

Inerrant, incapable of error.  
Incapable of making a mistake  
Correct.

*Proverbs 30:5-6 ESV*

*(5) Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.*

*(6) Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.*

It is true in all that it affirms, that's infallibility.

It is true in every single thing it says, that's inerrancy.

### **Third, the Word is pure:**

So the Bible is without error in all that it affirms, all it teaches.  
It is inerrant in every word.

Every word of God is pure.

It is not mixed.  
It is free from contamination.

*Psalms 19:7-8 ESV*

*(7) The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*

*(8) The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;*

**Fourth, it is complete:**

*Revelation 22:18 ESV*

*(18) I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,*

You can't add to it or take away from it.

It is not a lose left binder where you remove the bits you don't like.

It is one book, one revelation delivered once for all. There is no further divine revelation once the canon of Scripture is closed.

There is no Gnostic gospel.

There is no book of Thomas.

There is not extra revelation...there is THE WORD OF GOD.

### **Fifth, it is authoritative:**

It is precisely what God wanted to say.

*Isaiah 1:2 ESV*

*(2) Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken:*

Because in all that it affirms it is without error, because in every single thing it says it is without error, because it is complete and there is no more to be added to it, nor is there anything to be taken away from it, it is therefore, the authoritative Word of God.

That is it is back by an authority.

It shows confidence with the expectation of being obeyed.

### **Sixth, it is sufficient:**

Since this is the infallible, inerrant complete authoritative Word of God, it is sufficient. We don't need anything else. We do not need anything else.

Paul sums it up for us in his letter to Timothy:

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 ESV*

*(16) All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,*

*(17) That the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*

### **Seventh, it is effective:**

*Isaiah 55:11 ESV*

*(11) so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

Not only is it sufficient in the life of those that minister it, it is effective in its power to impact the lives of others.

So it is infallible.

Inerrant

Pure

Complete

Authoritative

Effective

### **Eighth, the Word of God is Eternal:**

*Isaiah 40:8 ESV*

*(8) The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.*

That is why we only need one weapon...we only need the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

John MacArthur says:

*Old Testament writers refer to what they wrote as the Word of God about 3,800 times.*

*New Testament writers refer to the Old Testament as the Word of God about 320 times.*

*And they refer to the Old Testament about a thousand times.*

*New Testament writers also claim that they are writing for God, that both Old and New are His words.*

## **Why is our view of Scripture and the bible so important?**

Our view of scripture and our view through scripture form the basis of our personal theology.

And it is our personal theology that flavors our worship, our prayer, our preaching and our daily life.

If you do not believe that the Word of God is the Word of God then you will live your life like it is a suggestion, not a commandment.

There is a world of difference between a literal, doctrinal, authoritative use of the Bible and an illustrative, moral capricious use of the Bible.

If you rarely hear people preach the cross, if you rarely hear them talk of sin and the need for repentance, if you rarely hear them talk of the supremacy of Christ over all others, of a Savior who shed blood for your sins and gives grace to the wicked, then those people do not believe the same things that you believe.

If week after week they talk about a God who will not judge you, A God who will not hold you accountable, a God who wants to give you stuff and asks nothing in return.

If they talk of a God of no standards and no expectations, then that is their view of scripture and how they live their life.

It is faulty humanistic theology that has caused the decline of Christianity in the western church.

The fact is that nearly every household in America owns a bible and the majority own more than one.

In a survey entitled Exploring Religious America, it reported that over 84% consider the bible 'very' or 'somewhat' important.

- \* <sup>1</sup>About 92 percent of American own at least one copy of the Bible.
- \* The average household has 3 copies.
- \* About 67 percent of Americans say that the Bible holds the answers to the basic questions of life.

Yet in a recent Gallup poll, it tells us that only half can name even one of the four gospels, only a third are able to identify who delivered the sermon on the mount, and most are not able to identify Genesis as the bibles opening book.

The bible seems to be America's favorite unopened text.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://sciencepolitics.blogspot.com/2005/05/why-have-book-if-you-never-read-it.html>

## **So what is this weapon that we do have?**

The only thing that smashes what is raised up against the knowledge of God is the true knowledge of God.

The only way to bring down lies and deceptions, these ideologies, these anti-God concepts and bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ as Paul says in Corinthians is to confront them with the truth.

And that truth is found in the Word of God.

Your defense is going to be to know the truth.

Your weapon of attack is going to be to know the Word of God.

It doesn't do you any good to own a Bible if you don't know what is in it.

If you're going to go forward into the kingdom of darkness and penetrate that darkness, you better know the truths of the Word of God so that you can defend yourself adequately against the deceptiveness of Satan.

Paul tells us at the beginning of this passage that the evil one is subtle.

He's wily.

He has very clever schemes.

Satan doesn't want you to know everything you need to know about the Word of God, about what God expects.

Satan doesn't want you to understand all that Scripture teaches because he doesn't want you to be able to defend yourself against his deceptions.

## **So how do you grow in the Word of God?**

### **1. Establish a pattern, establish a habit**

Bible before breakfast / Bible with breakfast.

Read the Word with your kids...even if it is once a week  
Pray with your wife before you go to sleep, read a devotional book together

### **2. Set some goals**

- A bible reading plan
- We have 3 on the church website

### **3. Read the Bible with a journal**

S.O.A.P.

### **4. Read biographies**

Martin Luther

Smith Wigglesworth

George Muller

William Wilberforce

The life and diary of David Brainerd by Jonathon Edwards.

Anything on Wesley or Whitfield.

Lloyd Jones biography...I am about to read them for the second time.

### **5. Read a devotional**

- Oswald Chambers, my utmost for HIS highest
- Knowing God
- Pilgrims progress by Bunyan

Read doctrine

- JI Packer – Concise Theology
- The Christian in Complete Armour by Gurnell.
- Great Doctrines of the Bible by Lloyd Jones.

## 6. Listen to teaching

Download the podcast of the video cast.

Be careful and aware of the voices that you listen to.

Not all voices are the same.

Not all teaching is sound.

Not all doctrine is without error.

The flashier the website, the bigger the TV ministry does not mean that they are teaching the truth.

One man, Martin Luther stood against the most popular, most powerful religious voice, the most recognized religious voice ever in the history of the world and said....YOU are WRONG.

Why?

Because he was arrogant, proud...no...because he loved the Word and he was right and they were wrong.

Some of you are not mature enough in your faith or secure enough in your doctrine to be listen to some of the dribble that is our there.

If I have not taught it, then I can suggest to you who you might want to consider listen to and who you might want to consider staying away from...simple rule...if they are not dead, don't bother.

Don't be spiritual butterflies.

Don't run around all over the place trying to find some new spiritual high or fix. You will end up in error and flaky.

If you need to talk any of this through please see Joni, Scott, Tamara, Michael, Mel or Kevin.

We want to help you.

You don't have to spend the years wrestling and detoxing from error the way we all have.