

**Living In Resurrection Power**  
**(Week 17)**  
**Ephesians 6:10-17**  
**“The Armor of God” (Part 4)**  
**The Sword of The Spirit**

**Introduction**

**“For The Word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”** **Hebrews 4:12**

So far in our study of “The Armor of God”, all the pieces of the armor have been defensive in nature. When we come to the last piece, it is an offensive weapon. Paul calls this powerful component, which is vital for our spiritual survival, “The Sword of The Spirit” (**Ephesians 6:17**). It is simply, The Word of God. And without it, the soldier of the cross has nothing with which to fight against the enemy.

There were many different varieties of swords used in combat in Paul’s day. Many were heavy and cumbersome, but others were made for close combat. All Roman soldiers were issued a small short-bladed sword called a “*Machaira*” to be worn in a scabbard attached to the belt. This sword was useful to engage in close proximity struggles against the enemy. Because of its small size, it was both easy to extract quickly from the soldiers belt, as well as, easy to wield in hand-to-hand combat. Without his machaira, the soldier would have no chance overcoming his enemies upon the battlefield.

It is this short bladed sword that Paul uses to illustrate the Christians need for the practical use of scripture, when engaged in spiritual warfare. Generally speaking, the Word of God in the Greek language is called the “*Logos*”, meaning God’s infinite wisdom or logic. For example, in the Gospel of John, we see Christ introduced as the “logos” of God in human form.

**“In the beginning was the Word (logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created.”** **John 1:1-3**

And later in the same chapter John goes on to say:

**“The Word (logos) became flesh and dwelt among us.”** **John 1:14**

But in **Ephesians 6:17**, Paul does not use the word “logos”, when he speaks of the “Sword of The Spirit” being the “word” of God. He uses the word *Rhema* (pronounced hray’-mah), which means “the sayings of”. What Paul is referring to here could be best described as “verses”. Now get the picture. As Believers, we are wrapped in the truth of God (the Word) as our belt. And in that belt are the “sayings of God” (*rhema*) that we are instructed to “pull out” from our belt, when we need them for combat against the enemy. Simply put, we are to memorize scripture in order to know exactly which verses to apply to any given temptation from the devil.

You see, when Satan attacks us, that is not the time to go thumbing through our *Bible*’s in order to find the correct response. No, the soldier of Christ must be armed and ready for battle at all times. He must know the Word of God, so he can pull from the Word exactly what he needs to overcome the enemy. He is to take the shield of faith in one hand that says “I believe God’s Word is TRUTH, and with the other hand he is to use the appropriate verse taken from God’s Word in order to put Satan to flight. This is why it is so very important for the child of God to know the Scriptures inside and out. Think of your *Bible* as an armory, and inside are the swords needed to fight. You won’t be protected just by caring a huge *Bible* under your arm. **You need to know where the swords are inside of it!**

Now personally, I would rather see a sermon than to hear one any day. So, for today’s study on using the *rhema*, or the “sayings of God”, in spiritual warfare, we will study a perfect Biblical illustration of just how it is done. We will look to the example set for us by Christ Himself, when he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness of Jordan (**Luke 4:1-13**). Satan used the same tactics on Jesus that he uses on us; The Lust of The Flesh, The Lust of The Eyes, and The Pride of Life. Jesus countered each of his attacks with scripture. The LORD quoted three verses from *Deuteronomy* (of all places) to put Satan on the run! Let us observe today... and learn, just how we are to wield the “Sword of The Spirit”, when the enemy attacks us.

### **The Lust of The Flesh**

Jesus began His earthly ministry immediately following His baptism in The Jordan River. As soon as God publicly pronounced Him to be His Beloved Son (**Mark 1:11**), Jesus was led by The Holy Spirit into the wilderness of Jordan to be tested. For those of you who might be unaware, the Judaeian dessert located east of Jerusalem is a forbidding place. It is desolate and filled with wild animals. God led Jesus there to be tested at the onset of His ministry, just as He led the children of Israel into the wilderness to test them, before they were allowed to enter the promised land.

God uses trials in this life to shape us into what He longs for us to become. Apart from testing, none will ever “graduate” from the “School of God”. Lesson? Don’t quit in the wilderness, or you just might never reap the rewards of the promised land. God allows us to be tested for a reason. Even Jesus had to face trials and temptations. God led Him into the most desolate of places in order that He might be able to prove to us just exactly Who He was! He was The Word of God (the logos) made flesh, and He fasted for forty days in the dessert to prepare Himself to face the Tempter head on.

Think about this for a moment, Jesus starved Himself in a dessert for over a month and stood ready to be tested. Adam and Eve had full stomachs in a garden of paradise when they were tempted! Jesus triumphed, and they failed miserably. Now, do you understand why we must put on Christ the Armor of God in order to stand against the devil? Christ is the only One Who is able to stand!

After Jesus spent forty days of fasting and prayer, the devil shows up to take his best shot. Undoubtedly, Satan surmised that after not eating for over a month, Jesus would be frail and weak, and therefore, at his most vulnerable. The first “fiery dart” that he throws on the surface sounds quite reasonable. It was an attack made using the lust of the flesh.

**“If you are The Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”**

**Luke 4:3**

Now, there is nothing wrong with eating when you are hungry. People need to eat in order to live. In fact, I cannot begin to imagine just how hungry The LORD was after going so long without food. I am told that after such a long period of time, the body actually begins to feed off its own internal organs in order to survive! To say that Jesus was hungry was an understatement. Of course He needed to eat. And of course, He, being The Son of God, had the ability to make bread from a stone. After all, this is the same God-man, Who would later take five loaves and two fish and feed a multitude!

But, the fact is, that God had led Him into the wilderness to be tested. Jesus would need to rely on His Father to provide for Him. What Satan was saying in essence was, “Your Father has let You down Jesus. It is time to take matters into Your own hands. You cannot rely on God to provide. You need to take care of Yourself. Can’t You see that You are starving to death? What kind of Father would do this to His beloved Son? It appears to me like He has completely forgotten you out here in the wilderness.”

That is exactly the kind of thing that the devil will try and do to us as well. He wants us to think that God is really just withholding all the “good stuff” from us. He wants us to think that we would be happier just giving in to our fleshy appetites. “If it feels good, just do it”, is one of the devil’s most favorite catch phrases. He is a walking talking “Nike” commercial! He wants you to think that you would be so much happier, if you just took care of yourself and stop waiting on The LORD to meet your needs.

He used this very same tactic on Eve in the Garden of Eden. He appealed to her fleshy desires, showing her that the fruit on the forbidden Tree of Knowledge was actually good for food, and that God was withholding this simple pleasure from her, not for her own good, but because of some nefarious motive. Eve, standing there in a garden of paradise with every single one of her needs being met, fell for the lie of the devil. Jesus... did not. He pulled out a sword from His “Belt of Truth”:

**“It is written: Man must not live on bread alone.”**

**Luke 4:4**

Jesus knew The Word. He knew it like the back of His hand. In fact, He WAS the Word (**John 1:14**)! Christ knew that He must trust God in the wilderness, so He reached into His Belt of Truth and pulled out the perfect sword (*rhema*) to counter the devil’s attack. He pulled out a “sword” from Deuteronomy:

**“He humbled you by letting you go hungry; then he gave you manna to eat, which you and your fathers had not known, so that you might learn that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of The LORD.”**

**Deuteronomy 8:3**

Now, when is the last time that you quoted a verse from Deuteronomy?! But Jesus knew the perfect verse to use in the context. It was a verse that spoke of Israel's very own "wilderness experience". The children of Israel had failed to trust God in the wilderness, even though He fed them daily. Adam and Eve had failed to trust God's Word, even while living in a paradise, but The Son of God would not fail. He would wait upon God's provision. He would eat soon enough, when God would feed Him. After all, what good was bread, if He failed to trust in the very words of life? The rest of the verse that He quoted actually explains that it is far more important to obey God, than to eat! He would not abandon His trust in The Father's plan. He took up His Shield of Faith and used The Sword of The Spirit to shatter Satan's lies. He knew the perfect verse to use against the attack, and He did so without hesitation. *Jesus: 1, Satan: 0.* The temptation based on the lust of the flesh had failed.

### **The Lust of The Eyes**

After his first failed attempt, the devil took Jesus up on high and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world. It was then that the devil launched his second fiery dart.

**"I will give You their spender and all this authority, because it has been given over to me, and I can give it to anyone I want. If You, then, will worship me, all will be yours."** **Luke 4:6**

This second attack wasn't nearly as subtle as the first. Apparently, the devil was growing a bit more desperate. That's what happens when he encounters Someone, Who knows how to effectively use their Sword of Truth! He shows Jesus just what He came to die for... the world. Jesus, The Son of God, Who was predestined to become The King of King's and Lord of Lord's (**Revelation 19:16**), was offered a "shortcut", if you will, to being crowned King over all the earth. There was just this one tiny catch. The devil wanted Him to skip The Father's plan and worship him instead.

And just what was The Father's plan to enable King Jesus to inherit the earth? The cross, that's what. What the devil was really saying was, "You don't need to die to have all of this, I will give it to you now. Just worship me and forget about God's plan. My way is easier and far less painful. I'll make you a king right here and now, and You can skip the pain and humiliation of the cross."

So there it is, the lust of the eyes. The devil shows us something that he is sure that we want and tempts us to go after it, even if it means breaking the commandments of God. Adam and Eve fell for it, but Christ did not. We should all be very grateful that The LORD knew His *Bible* in that fateful moment. If He had accepted the devil's offer, then you and I would have had no hope of redemption from our sins! For it was the cross of Christ that delivered us, where nothing else ever could have. But thanks be to God, that The Christ knew just which sword to take from His belt of truth. Once again, He went straight for Deuteronomy.

**"It is written: Worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only"** **Luke 4:8 (Deuteronomy 6:13)**

*Jesus: 2, Satan: 0*

### **The Pride of Life**

The "pride of life" is quite possibly the most dangerous sin of them all. It is the one that causes us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. It is the reason we drive ourselves into bondage in an attempt to "keep up with the Joneses".

**"Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall."** **Proverbs 16:18**

You see, Satan will use our own foolish pride against us, in order to cause us to stumble and fall. He used this very tactic to overcome Eve, by convincing her that if she would simply eat of the forbidden fruit, she would be "like God", knowing the difference between good and evil. The pride of life says, "Everyone will look at me, and see just how special I am." And each of us is susceptible to this powerful and enticing drug of being admired. To be honest, it is the exact sin that caused Satan's own downfall.

For when we long for the admiration of others, what we are actually longing for is to be worshipped. It just a simple matter of semantics. Admiration, Adulation, and Adoration are all in fact worship words! Satan knows this truth full well, and we must learn it for ourselves.

**“...God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.”**

**James 4:6b**

Satan had hoped that he could convince Jesus to succumb to pride and the deepest of longings... that everyone might know just how special He is. He took the Savior to the Temple Mount and tempted Him to jump off, so that God would be “forced” to miraculously save Him and then everyone would see Him for just Who He truly was. Again the message, “Skip the cross and force God to reveal Who You are. You want to be worshipped, well, here’s Your chance. Just jump.” The devil even threw in a bit of Scripture to make his point.

**“For it is written: He will give His angels orders concerning You, to protect You, and they will support You with their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.”**

**Luke 4:10, (Psalm 91:11)**

Did you catch that? The devil tried to tempt Christ into using **Scripture** in order to force God to act on His behalf! In other words, to take a verse of scripture and “claim it” in order to get God to serve you, rather than the other way around. The televangelist “preach” this all the time. But be warned; to try and use God’s Word to force God to work for you... is SATANIC. End of story. God is God, and we are not. We were created to serve Him. He doesn’t work for us. We belong to Him! He is King, and we are His subjects. This is in fact the very definition of being **God**. We are told repeatedly in Scripture to ask God for what we need and He will graciously supply our needs. But to try and force God to do our bidding is sinful. Jesus wasn’t fooled for a minute. He saw Satan’s attempt to deceive Him with Scripture for exactly what it was. And once more, He responded with the proper sword.

**“Do not test the LORD your God.”**

**Luke 4:12 (Deuteronomy 6:16)**

The children of Israel had “tested” the LORD in the wilderness on ten separate occasions. It had cost them the land of promise. The LORD knows this all too well. God has promised that He will one day exalt the Name of Jesus above every other name (**Philippians 2:9-11**). But, this will be done in God’s time. Jesus would never allow pride to make Him try and rush His Father’s plan. This is why He was often quoted in the gospels saying, **“my time has not yet come” (John 2:4; 7:6; 7:30)**. Jesus trusted His Father’s timing. He accepted The Father’s will, and He obeyed, not just sometimes... but always. He knew just which verse to use when He was tempted, and the devil never stood a chance against Him.

*Jesus: 3, Satan: 0*

If we will wrap ourselves in Christ, Who is The Armor of God, then we too shall be secure. But like Christ, we must know where to find the swords that are stored within the armory of Scripture! Then taking in hand the Shield of Faith and The Sword of The Spirit, we can take our stand against the devil, just as Christ did that fateful day in the wilderness. He stood firm and was victorious. We can be as well, if we are wrapped up fully in the armor of God. Or, as James would say;

**“Therefore, submit to God! Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”**

**James 4:7**

Jesus showed us exactly how it is done. So put on your sword, learn how to use the Word of Truth. For the enemy is fast approaching.

And let ALL of God's Soldiers say... TRUTH!!!