

The Armour Series: Week 7 Devotions

In week 7 of the Armour Series we explored the Sword of the Spirit.

Day One

You have learnt a lot over the past few weeks about the armour of God. This week we will be digging deeper into the Sword of the Spirit. Hopefully by the end of this week you will know what it is and how to use it in your every day life. Now I am not talking about a physical sword, y'all don't get it twisted! I'm talking about a spiritual sword.

What is a warrior without a sword? I'm sure you all have seen pictures of warriors from back in the day. Most of them had a sword in hand of some sort, right? The sword is the most important weapons a warrior has. Sure there are other sorts of weapons, like chains and things but the sword was the most common. Without his or her weapon for attack, a warrior would just be a person with a whole lot of armour on. Not cool, right? But the sword is a tool used to advance in battle, towards the promise of victory.

A sword is a weapon used in warfare to attack the enemy. It is also often used to symbolise honour and authority. It is something that is used to attack, to move forward in battle. It is something that is held in hand that must be carried. God created us with two hands and the sword is usually held with your most dominate hand, this is your strongest hand.

This is what the Sword of the Spirit (in Ephesians 6: 17) is. It is a weapon we use to advance in battle, to attack the enemy and draw us closer to victory.

Prayer:

Lord, we thank You for not leaving us defenceless. You loved us enough to leave us with the Sword of the Spirit. I pray that you would help us to understand how to use it in this coming week. Thank you for your love and grace today. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Day Two

Read:

We humans live in a very interesting world. Life is full of surprises, adventure, trials, lessons, beauty and wonder. We are the only species on this planet that is self aware, as in we are able to think about ourselves. Birds don't do that, fish don't do that, trees don't do that. Not only that but if you study the way the body works alone, it will blow your mind. The way our body functions is fascinating. The way we experience life is so different. We react to similar situations differently. We express ourselves differently. But the underlying fact is that we live in the same world. And that world is two fold: the physical and the spiritual.

Why? Because we are spirit is contained within the flesh.

God created us in His image. The Bible says that God is spirit (John 4:24; 2 Cor 3: 17). And since He is Spirit and we are made in His image, we also have a spirit. For this reason, we often see the physical and the spiritual colliding. We see this when Jesus casted out evil spirits (Mark 5: 8) or times when people have seen visions of heavenly beings or events (Daniel 10, Exodus 18, etc).

Although we can't always see what's happening in the spiritual realm, we know that it can affect the physical. But does it work the other way too?

The short answer is YES.

The physical realm can affect the spiritual realm by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is what prayer does. This is what speaking the Word of God does. We have the ability to change the spiritual atmosphere in the places around us; our schools, our homes, our work spaces, our communities, our countries. All it takes is the Sword of the Spirit.

Prayer:

Lord, we thank You that you are so great, so awesome. We thank You that you have made us so wonderfully and marvellously complex. We pray, Lord, that You would teach us to be more aware of Your Holy Spirit when He moves. Open our spiritual eyes and ears to see and hear what You are wanting to do in the spaces around us and how You are wanting to use us in these spaces. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Day Three

Explore:

In Genesis 1:1, it says "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Then it continues to describe to us how God created the heavens and the earth. Normally when we make something, it requires us to use our hands to make it. But in Genesis 1, it reads "And God said...". That is how He created the heavens and the earth. He spoke nine times and there was light, water and sky, land and ocean, plants and animals, etc. (Also read Psalm 33: 6 -9).

The universe was not only created by the words God spoke but it is still held together by the words He spoke. In astronomy, there is something called 'dark matter'. These are places in space where no light shines and there is nothing. But the fascinating part is that in these places, there is still a gravitational pull. If they didn't, the universe would fall apart. Look it up for yourself. This has puzzled astronomers. Those of us who know the Word understand that this because of God's spoken Word that holds the universe together. The point is when God wants to do something, He sends His word (Psalm 107: 20). And His Word will do what He sent it out to do, it will not return to Him until it has done what He sent it to (Isaiah 55:11). I really love that song by Bryan and Katie Torwalt called "Let there be light", because "when You speak darkness has to bow, confusion has it's final hour..." It has no choice but to obey when He speaks.

The Bible is the written Word of God (2 Tim 3: 16). The living Word of God is Jesus (John 1: 1).

Prayer:

Lord, You are amazing. Your word is alive and powerful, and we thank You for it. Lord, please help us to study your word with diligence. Give us a hunger for Your word for it feeds our souls. Teach us Your Word and teach us your ways. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day Four

Explore:

Have you ever said something bad and regretted saying it. Things like "yo, I'm going to fail this test." Why do you regret saying them? Because they actually end up happening. Sometimes the things you say aren't even about you, they are about another person, like your sister, your brother, your friend, someone that you know from school. You say something and it affects that person in a big way. I'm sure you have noticed this.

So why does this happen?

The tongue is a powerful thing. James 3: 4 – 9 explains the tongue as the rudder of a ship. This is a small part of the ship that controls where the ship goes. Our tongue is like that. It can take us to good places or bad places.

But why is it like this?

Yesterday we spoke about what happens when God speaks and how God uses His Word to get things done. We, as humans, were created in His image. So like Father, like child. However because of our brokenness, we can either speak good or bad things (James 3: 4-9). "...For whatever is in your heart determined what you say." (Matt 12: 34).

But we are the only species that can speak the written Word of God. So there is hope. For when we align our speech with what God says, it moves mountains, it splits seas, it heals the sick, it brings peace. You have a greater power in what you say than you think. Speaking the Word of God over your life makes an impossible situation possible, for "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37 NKJV). Sometimes God will reveal to us who we are but we struggle to believe it because it sounds too good to be true. But you can say it. For you are whatever God says you are! He wouldn't say it if you weren't. The same way that He sent His word out and waited until it was fulfilled is the same way He will wait for you to believe what He says about you. Because that word will not return to Him until it has done what He sent it to do.

Ask yourself: What am I saying about myself? What does God say about me?

Prayer:

Lord, please help us to be more careful about what we say about ourselves and about others. Teach us to see things as You see them. Holy Spirit makes us aware of when we are using our tongue in a way that is not pleasing to God. Help us and guide us towards the heart of God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day Five

Explore:

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me." You remember that little rhyme from your childhood? It's supposed to teach us that what people say to us doesn't matter. But in all my years on this earth, I have come to realise that it's not true. "Sticks and stone may break my bone and words will definitely harm me." And as you learnt yesterday about the power in what you say, you will know it's true too. Words may come easily out of your mouth but they can have a life long impact.

This is why God left us His Word. He left it that we may be transformed into new beings as we read it, let it get into us and place it in our own mouths. I mean think about it. Think of all the times when someone has said something to you (good or bad) and think about the impact it has had on your life. Now imagine the Creator of all things, the One who created words in the first place, the first person to speak. Imagine He has something to say and picture the impact it would have.

But that is what God's word is. "The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires." (Hebrews

4: 12). God's word speaks to what is inside us, it removes all the things that can get in the way of us understanding the heart of the Father and holds up the truth to us.

Not only that, but it becomes our weapon. This weapon is used to attack the enemy in battle, advance and take ground. The Word of God is like a sword that not only exposes who we truly are but also cuts down the lies of the enemy. When times are tough and you seem to have no way out, where do you go? "I look up to the mountains – does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121: 1). When situations in life seem to be asking you "who are you? And who is this God you serve?", the Word is there to use as a weapon against such attack (1 Peter 2: 9; Exodus 3: 13 – 15). The Word of God is the sword we use in war fare for our souls.

Prayer:

Father, we thank you that You loved us enough to speak. You loved us enough that you just couldn't leave us the same. Your agape (love in action) love moved You to send Your Word to save us. Teach us Holy Spirit, how to use this sword You have given us that we may win this war for Your eternal glory. I pray that you would reveal the truth of Your Word to us that we may understand it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day Six

Explore:

Skills don't come easily. We know that someone can't just pick up a musical instrument and just know how to play it. And no matter how many times you have watched the Fast and Furious movies, you can't just get behind the wheel of a car and drive like Dominic Torreto. It just doesn't happen. You need to train or practice this skill to use it properly.

Japanese samurai were trained from the age of five. This means that from childhood they were trained to hold a Japanese sword or "katana" and how to use it. By the time they needed to use these skills, they knew exactly what to do. Roman soldiers would train to using wooden swords that were heavier than the swords they would use in battle. This means that they trained their muscles to carry the weight of their weapon so that when the time came to use it, they could easily carry and use their weapon.

It is the same with using the Sword of the Spirit. You need to spend time in the Word to know it. You need to train your spirit to use the sword. God told Joshua, when he lead the Israelites into the promised land, to study the Word continually, that he should meditate on it night and day that he would be careful to do what was written in it (Joshua 1: 8).

This is how you train your spirit to use the Sword of the Spirit. Read the Word, study the Word like you have just been studying for your exams. Don't just read it but diligently study it.

Psalm 119: 9 – 16 illustrates how we are to train our spirits in using the Sword of the Spirit. We first must go back to God and ask Him to help us see and understand the Word, ask Him to teach us for He is humble and gentle at heart. We need God's grace to allow the Word to enter our hearts until it is hidden there (Psalm 119: 11). Then when the Word goes from being head knowledge (something you just recite) to heart knowledge (something we know and understand completely), we can use the Sword of the Spirit with both knowledge and understanding in the spiritual battle around us.

Prayer:

Lord, we thank You that You gave us the written Word. Thank You, Father, for every single person who had a hand in the preservation and translation of Your Word. We don't know them but You do. I pray that you would bless their families for generations to come. Help us Holy Spirit to read the Word with understanding. May You give us grace to

understand the truths that you have placed within it. May You help us to train our tongue to wield the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Day Six

Explore:

Now that you know a bit more about the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, do you feel like you can take on the world? You should be. If you aren't, that's ok. It will hit you in 3... 2... 1...!

I won't lie, studying the Word was difficult for me once upon a time. I would try to read a chapter then fall asleep before I finished... I'm not proud of it but it use to happen. You are probably wondering why this would happen if the Word of God is alive and powerful as it says in Hebrews 4 : 12. You and my younger self are wondering the same thing. It's not because the Word is not alive and powerful. But because my heart was in the wrong place and my picture of what the Word is, was wrong. I pictured the Bible as a book I had to read, like doing a house chore.

But it isn't.

"All scripture is inspired by God..." 2 Timothy 3: 16 (NLT). The Amplified version of this verse says "Every Scripture is God-breathed (given by His inspiration)..." Think about what happened the last time God breathed into something. "The Lord God form the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils and the man became a living person." Genesis 2: 7. The last time God breathed on something was when He created man. The first time (that we know of) God was inspired, He created the entire universe by speaking it into existence!

So yes! The Word is alive and powerful!

Well, when you look at the Bible like that, it changes a few things. The very fact that it has made it through thousands of years on this earth and has not disappeared, is amazing. Kingdoms have come and gone, kings have come and gone, whole nations have come and gone. But the Word of God has remained, it has stood the test of time!

Then "the Word became human and made His home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen His glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son." (John 1: 14). Jesus came to this earth to reconcile us with the Father. Your believe in Jesus means yes the world will be against you but also that He has fought for you. And guess what? He has already won! That knowledge of the victory of Christ is your weapon. So stand in victory for Jesus has won and raise your weapon!

Prayer:

Lord, You are awesome. Thank You that you have won the battle for us, Jesus. Thank You that we stand victorious with you. Give us the grace to feast on the Word even in the face of our enemy as it say in Psalms 23. Holy Spirit, please help us as we live out God's purpose for us on this earth. Guide us and lead us into the heart of the Father. I pray for a fresh release of understanding of Your Word over everyone reading this. Fill the with more of You, God. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen