

## Lesson Ten – The Sword of the Spirit

*Day One – Knowing the Word of God*

*Day Two – Epignosis*

*Day Three – Using the Word of God*

*Day Four – On the Defense*

*Day Five – No Greater Weapon*

So here we are! We have come to the last piece of our spiritual armor of God and the last lesson in our study. We have spent weeks looking at the nature of our warfare against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places, and the defensive tactics that God expects us to use if we are to stand firm when attacked. We have seen and studied what is at stake for Christians in that coming day and why our enemy will stop at nothing to see us disqualified from receiving our inheritance, which is reserved for us in heaven. We now know and understand that the whole armor of God fits together interdependently and each piece cannot be seen individually exclusive of the other pieces.

The belt of truth, which symbolizes our wholehearted attitude to follow the Lord's will, must be put on first because we must settle within our hearts that we WILL follow God's truth regardless of the consequences. To that piece of armor, we attach the breastplate of righteousness, which symbolizes our choice to live righteously, being faithfully obedient to God's Word, His revealed plans and purposes. Our feet are to be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, which signifies not only our understanding of God's truth but an ability to share the message of the gospel (the whole gospel: the gospel of peace *with* God and the gospel of peace *of* God) with others. We must know the message in order to stand firm on the message. The shield of faith is our belief in God and His promises— the faith that we live by day to day, the faith that is useless without works, the faith that is necessary to save our souls. This piece of armor we are to take up above all, for with this faith we are able to extinguish *all* the flaming missiles of the evil one. Last week we studied the helmet of salvation, which is the living hope that sustains us as we persevere toward the goal of our faith, the salvation of our soul. All these elements are necessary to complete our current race of faith and stand unashamed at the judgment seat of Christ.

Let's put the last piece of armor in place. This week we will study the sword of the Spirit, which, as with all the other pieces of the armor, we will see is also a defensive weapon, not an offensive weapon.

Study well this week!

## Day One – Knowing the Word of God

This last piece of armor, the sword of the Spirit, completes the full armor of God. At first glance, we may think that the sword indicates our only piece of offensive gear, a weapon that would give us victory if we learn how to wield it while attacking our enemy. However, to understand its usage, we must stay within the context of the whole of our foundational passage, being careful to read out of the text that which was originally written *into* the text.

### **Ephesians 6:10-18**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this wickedness in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints...

This is an easy one, what is the sword of the Spirit?

Scripture makes this clear in other places as well. God's Word is His very Spirit; they are one and the same—

### **II Timothy 3:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

The Greek word for “inspired” is *theopneustos* (2315), which is the compilation of two words: *theo*, which means “God,” and *pneustos*, which means “breathed” (*pneustos* is the predicate adjective form of the word *pneo*, which means to breathe). Therefore, the literal translation of this word is “God-breathed.”

We have studied in past lessons that the word “spirit” and the word “breath” are the same words in both the original languages of Hebrew and Greek.

According to v. 16, how much of Scripture is God breathed?

Therefore, how much of Scripture is God's Spirit?

Let's see this full circle—

- All Scripture is the Word of God—II Timothy 3:16
- All Scripture is God's Spirit—II Timothy 3:16

- All Scripture is about Jesus—Luke 24:27
- Jesus is the Word made flesh—John 1:14
- Jesus is God—John 10:38
- God is Spirit—John 4:24

Now back to our armor, and what you have learned so far—

Can someone put on the belt of truth without possessing knowledge of God's Word?

Can someone wear the breastplate of righteousness without possessing knowledge of God's Word?

Can someone shod their feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace without knowledge of God's Word?

Can someone take up the shield of faith without knowledge of God's Word?

Can someone take, and wear the helmet of salvation without knowledge of God's Word?

So, can someone take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, without possessing knowledge of God's Word?

Now think about that. One must be in possession of knowledge of God's Word to put on and use all pieces of the armor. Therefore, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" must be referring to something beyond simply possessing knowledge of God's Word, for Paul is telling us that we must KNOW the Word of God to USE the Word of God. Knowing and using are two separate things. We'll explore this in more detail, but first, let's look again at what is meant by possessing knowledge of God's Word.

God's Word exhorts us repeatedly to desire knowledge, and He in fact rebukes His people for *not* having knowledge. But knowledge is presented in different ways in Scripture and we need to understand its different meanings if we are to grasp the big picture.

There are essentially two different Greek words used to convey the thought of "knowledge." There is *gnosis* and *epignosis*.

*Gnosis* (1108) means simply "knowledge" in the sense of knowing something experientially. It is more of a present and fragmentary knowledge that remains topical and one-dimensional.

In addition to the word *gnosis*, the Greeks used the word *epignosis* (1922). *Epignosis* is the compilation of two words: *epi*, which means "upon," denotes an intensification of the word to which it is attached, and the word *gnosis*, which we've just looked at. *Epignosis* is defined as clear and exact knowledge, in that it expresses a more thorough participation in the object of knowledge on the part of the subject. We can translate this as being a *mature* knowledge.

God differentiates between the two types of knowledge, and so must we.

# Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

## Lesson Ten The Sword of the Spirit

For the rest of your study time today we will be learning about basic knowledge, *gnosis*. Tomorrow we'll concentrate on *epignosis*.

The following verses from the Old Testament (drawing from the Septuagint) use the Greek word, *gnosis*—

### **Proverbs 18:15**

**The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.**

### **Proverbs 12:1**

**Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.**

How are those who seek and acquire knowledge described?

To what is the love of knowledge equated?

Having knowledge is spoken of as a positive thing—

**Luke 1:77** (speaking of the message of John the Baptist)

**To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins...**

### **II Corinthians 4:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” <sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure...

What is “this treasure”?

And from Peter—

### **II Peter 1:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; <sup>6</sup> and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness...

Do you think God wants us to acquire knowledge?

In particular, notice one aspect of what we are to know—

### **Ephesians 3:17-19**

<sup>17</sup> ...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know [this is the verb form of “gnosis”] the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Knowing the love of Christ *surpasses* knowledge, it does not make all other knowledge void. The knowledge of the love of Christ is superior to other knowledge, for it leads to our being “filled up” to all the fullness of God. Now that is something that I want to know!

Paul mentions love, as it relates to knowledge, in his first letter to the Church at Corinth. Here he warns about the potential danger of knowledge—

**I Corinthians 8:1-11**

<sup>1</sup> Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. <sup>2</sup> If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; <sup>3</sup> but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him. <sup>4</sup> Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrifice to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. <sup>5</sup> For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, <sup>6</sup> yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. <sup>7</sup> However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. <sup>8</sup> But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. <sup>9</sup> But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

<sup>10</sup> For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup> For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. <sup>12</sup> And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble.

What knowledge is Paul talking about (v. 1)?

He explains a bit more about what they “know” in v. 4-6. Write it below.

Paul states that “not all men have this knowledge” in v. 7. What knowledge is he referring to?

What men, saved or unsaved? (Refer to v. 13)

Sum up the danger of knowledge, in principle, as Paul has stated in vv. 10-12.

Knowledge—*gnosis*—must exist internally within a personal framework of the outworking of the fruits of the Spirit in order to benefit us in our current race of faith. From this, the Lord begins to bring us into an understanding of *epignosis*, or a *mature* knowledge.

Now another warning regarding *gnosis*, from Paul to Timothy—

**I Timothy 6:20-21**

<sup>20</sup> **O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called “knowledge”—<sup>21</sup> which some have professed and thus gone astray from [Lit., miss the mark concerning] the faith.**

Think deeply on this one. What does Paul mean by the *false* knowledge of “opposing arguments” to “what has been entrusted” to Timothy, concerning the faith? Let’s break it down a bit by looking at another verse from the same letter—

**I Timothy 1:11**

**...according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God [Lit., the gospel of the glory of the blessed God] , with which I have been entrusted.**

And more—

**II Timothy 2:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> **You therefore [Timothy], my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.**

What was Paul entrusted with?

What did he entrust to Timothy?

Paul tells Timothy to guard it (that which is *true* knowledge, context says), and avoid what?

Note what Paul is saying. Timothy is being opposed by arguments concerning knowledge that Paul calls *false*. The arguments are concerning that which has been entrusted to Timothy.

From what you’ve learned so far, what would this false knowledge consist of that would cause some to miss the mark concerning THE faith?

And again, what does Paul tell Timothy to do about this false knowledge?

And for you personally, are you avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is *falsely* called knowledge?

Are you guarding what has been entrusted *to you*?

And just twelve verses later we read—

**II Timothy 2:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> **Remind them** [faithful men, who will be able to teach others (v. 2)] **of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless, and leads to the ruin of the hearers.** <sup>15</sup> **Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.**

Any thoughts?

See you tomorrow.

## Day Two – Epignosis

Make sure that you begin with prayer today. Set aside your concerns and your worries and ready yourself to receive teaching from the Lord. Meditate on the Scriptures and allow God’s Spirit to lead you into all truth.

There is an awesome passage about mature knowledge in the Book of Proverbs. This book contains the writings of King Solomon, to whom God gave “wisdom and very great discernment and breadth of mind, like the sand that is on the seashore” (I Kings 4:30). The Book of Proverbs, by its own admittance, was written to convey “instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity; to give prudence to the naïve, to the youth knowledge and discretion” (Prov. 1:2-4).

**Proverbs 2:1-10**

<sup>1</sup> **My son, if you will receive my sayings, and treasure my commandments within you,** <sup>2</sup> **make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding;** <sup>3</sup> **for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding;** <sup>4</sup> **if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures;** <sup>5</sup> **then you will discern the fear of the Lord, and discover [acquire or find] the knowledge [epignosis, LXX] of God.**

Verses 1 through 4 give direction on how to “discover knowledge.” What are they?

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Solomon wrote this particular Proverb to his son (v. 1). This, then, is the teaching of a father to his son on the particulars of gaining knowledge. We can translate this over to us personally, as a guidebook from our Father to us, His sons (if we allow the child-training [*cf.* Heb.12:7-8]), regarding the discovery of the knowledge of God.

What does this Proverb say to you, personally?

Do you honestly desire *epignosis*? Are you willing to work for it? It is what God wants for you!

**I Timothy 2:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> ...that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup> This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge [*epignosis*] of the truth.

What does God desire (v. 4)?

What is the *epignosis* of the truth? You may already know, but read on before answering—

**Hebrews 10:23-29**

<sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; <sup>24</sup> and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near. <sup>26</sup> For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup> How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

What is the “confession of our hope”?

In v. 25 the author says we are to do these things for a reason, as we see the day drawing near. What day?



Then he tells us why, because “if we go on sinning willfully” after receiving the *epignosis* of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. Did you catch that? *There no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*. All that remains is a terrifying expectation of judgment. This person, the one who goes on sinning willfully after receiving the *epignosis* of the truth, has trampled under foot the Son of God, *regarded the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified (this is a saved person he is talking about!) as unclean, and has insulted the Spirit of grace*. Wow, those are strong words. Do you see how the author connects v. 29 with what is said in v. 28? The person who does this is compared to the person who has set aside the Law of Moses.

*Epignosis* has to do with the Son of God, the blood of the sanctifying covenant, and the Spirit’s work. All things pertaining to the gospel of the glories of Christ, things surrounding His coming back as King.

Read what the prophet Hosea says about Israel, while it is in a state of harlotry regarding its covenantal relationship with God—

**Hosea 4:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> Listen to the word of the Lord, O sons of Israel, for the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land, because there is no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge (*epignosis*, LXX) of God in the land. <sup>2</sup> There is swearing, deception, murder, stealing, and adultery. They employ violence, so that bloodshed follows bloodshed. <sup>3</sup> Therefore the land mourns, and everyone who lives in it languishes along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky; and also the fish of the sea disappear. <sup>4</sup> Yet let no one find fault, and let none offer reproof; for your people are like those who contend with the priest. <sup>5</sup> So you will stumble by day, and the prophet also will tumble with you by night; and I will destroy your mother. <sup>6</sup> My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (*gnosis*, LXX). Because you have rejected knowledge (*epignosis*, LXX), I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children.

What is this passage saying? Does it have any present application?

We are not only exhorted to acquire mature knowledge, we are also told to take this *epignosis* and *apply it*. Again, we see *epignosis* in a relation to love—

**Philippians 1:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in real knowledge (*epignosis*) and all discernment, <sup>10</sup> so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ...

Why are we to apply *epignosis* in love (v. 10b)?

More about mature knowledge from Paul—

**Ephesians 1:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> ...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him. <sup>18</sup> I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling,

what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,<sup>19</sup> and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

**Colossians 1:8-10**

<sup>8</sup> ...and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge (*epignosis*) of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,<sup>10</sup> so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all aspects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge (*epignosis*) of God...

Paul is praying for those to whom he has written these letters. What is he praying for? (Eph. 1:17 and Col. 1:9)

The “knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him” is elaborated on in Ephesians 1:18-19. What is it?

Why does Paul want them to have this knowledge (Col. 1:10)?

What should they “increase” in (Col. 1:10)?

We can read exactly where *epignosis* is found—

**Colossians 2:2-3**

<sup>2</sup> ...that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is, Christ Himself,<sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (*epignosis*).

Where is *epignosis* found?

Let’s tie together this whole thought concerning knowledge, both *gnosis* and *epignosis*—

**II Peter 1:2-10**

<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge (*epignosis*) of God and of Jesus our Lord;<sup>3</sup> seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge (*epignosis*) of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence.<sup>4</sup> For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.<sup>5</sup> Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge (*gnosis*);<sup>6</sup> and in your knowledge (*gnosis*), self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in

your perseverance, godliness; <sup>7</sup> and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. <sup>8</sup> For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge (*epignosis*) of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; <sup>11</sup> for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

How are we to be fruitful in the mature knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 5 –8)?

What will we receive if we practice these things (v. 11)?

I hope you've gained a better grasp of and appreciation for the term *knowledge*, and I most sincerely hope that you desire to acquire it! But most importantly, I hope that you desire to live it. Your seeking should never end, for there can never be an end to the knowledge, *gnosis and epignosis*, of God.

## Day Three – Using the Word of God

Pray first.

We've seen how important it is to have knowledge of God's Word. But simply knowing it and quoting it is not enough. Static knowledge—*knowledge by itself*—profits nothing. Concerning that, Scripture is clear—

**James 4:17**

**Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.**

**James 1:15b**

**...and when sin is accomplished [Lit., completed entirely], it brings forth death.**

If we are to use the sword in the manner that Paul suggests, we must wield it and move it appropriately. We must accurately handle it to thwart the blows of our enemy (much like the shield of faith). We are in danger of being overcome if we do not learn how to use the sword of the Spirit.

**II Timothy 2:15**

**Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth (Lit. the word of the truth).**

What is the word of *the* truth? Paul had already commented on it in his letter to Ephesus—

**Ephesians 1:13**

**In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth (Lit., the word of the truth), the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...**

The word of truth is the gospel of our salvation! Isn't it great that Scripture interprets itself? And as we know, the Word of God is all about Jesus Christ, who is Himself Salvation.

So how do *handle accurately* the Word? Jesus is our Perfect Example, specifically in the incident that follows—

**Matthew 4:1-11**

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. <sup>3</sup> And the tempter came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." <sup>4</sup> But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" <sup>5</sup> Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give His angels charge concerning you'; and 'On their hands they will bear You up, lest You strike Your foot against a stone.'" <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; <sup>9</sup> and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

Jesus responds to the temptations in the same manner each time. What does He use?

Jesus did more than just quote Scripture. He spoke the words He lived and He lived the words He spoke. This is our weapon and this is how we are to use it. When the enemy advances on us and attempts to shake us from our steadfastness, we reestablish our focus with the Word of God. When the world around us appears desirable and we are in danger of conforming to it, we use the Word of God to transform us. When our flesh gains a stronghold, we use the Word of God counteract it. We stay focused, we stand firm, *we overcome*.

Read again the passage from Matthew. Notice Satan's tactics. Jesus is hungry, and Satan offers Him a remedy. Jesus thwarts the attack with the Word of God. Satan then quotes Scripture (inaccurately) to Jesus in order to sway Him, but Jesus rebukes him with more of God's Word (and an *accurate* rendering of God's Word). Finally, Satan shows Him all the glory of the world, and offers it to Him. Jesus refuses with a firm "It is written..." It is the *written* word spoken that has the power here, did you notice that?

How will Satan tempt you? He will because that's what he does. Will he offer to meet one of your physical needs? Maybe he will use Scripture to entice you to succumb your position? Maybe he will offer you power and false glory? Will you recognize the deception? Will you have the sword of the Spirit ready to fend him off? What are your thoughts?

# Understanding Spiritual Warfare— Standing Firm in the Battle

## Lesson Ten The Sword of the Spirit

Remember the example of Amalek from Lesson Three?

**Exodus 17:8**

**Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim.**

Who came against whom?

**Exodus 17:13**

**So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.**

How did Joshua overwhelm (which means *he was victorious against*) Amalak?

Amalek, a type of the flesh, is overcome with the sword, a type of the Word of God. The Word of God, God's Spirit, will keep us from being overcome, *if we use it*.

Note from our Ephesians passage what Paul says immediately after mentioning “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”—

**Ephesians 6:17-18**

**<sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints...**

BE ON THE ALERT! With all prayer and petition, praying at all times in the Spirit.

Being *in* the Spirit means being *filled* with the Spirit. It means walking by the Spirit and not the flesh—

**Ephesians 5:17-18**

**<sup>17</sup> So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled [Lit., continually filled] with the Spirit...**

What does Paul call someone who doesn't understand what the will of the Lord is?

What does Paul tell that person to do?

This idea of being *filled* takes us right back to a passage we looked at concerning knowledge—

**Ephesians 3:17-19**

**<sup>17</sup> ...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.**

We must not forget that walking by the Spirit, being filled continually with the Spirit, is an *action*, not just a state of being. It is more than just knowing something, it is doing what you know. James says it best—

**James 1:18, 21-25**

<sup>18</sup> In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures. <sup>21</sup> Therefore putting aside all filthiness and wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup> for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. <sup>25</sup> But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.

What are we to put aside (v. 21)?

How are we to receive the Word (v. 21)?

Specifically, what Word (v. 18)?

Where is the Word when we receive it (v. 21)?

That implies that we need to know it before we use it, doesn't it?

What can the Word do (v. 21)?

Rewrite v. 22.

What does James say about the person who merely hears the Word and doesn't do it (vv. 23-24)?

What happens to the one who looks at the "law of liberty" and "abides by it" (v. 25)?

What does James call him (v. 25)?

And again, what can this Word do if we are "effectual doers" (v. 21)?

What is the goal of our faith (I Pet. 1:9)?

To sum it up:

- Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 8:17).
- Faith without works is dead (Jam. 2:17).
- Be doers of the Word, not hearers only (Jam. 1:22).
- The implanted Word is able to save your soul (Jam. 1:21).
- The outcome and goal of our faith is the salvation of our soul (I Pet. 1:9).

Think on these things and have a great day.

## Day Four – On the Defense

We touched a bit about the sword of the Spirit being a defensive weapon, and not an offensive one. By just the context of its usage we can determine that—

### **Ephesians 6:10-18**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of this wickedness in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, <sup>15</sup> and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup> in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup> With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints...

Why do we put on the full armor of God (v. 11)?

Does it say anywhere about rushing forward and attacking?

Why do we take up the full armor of God (v. 13)?

And after having done everything, what do we do (v. 13)?

Is this ambiguous in any way?

And elsewhere in Scripture—

**James 4:7-8**

<sup>7</sup> **Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.** <sup>8</sup> **Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.**

The word “resist” in v. 7 is the Greek word *anthistemi* (436), which means to stand against. It is the same word used in Ephesians 6:13.

What will happen when we resist the devil?

But we are told to do something before that. What is it?

We are told to do something after we resist the devil. What is it?

What happened to Jesus when he successfully thwarted Satan’s temptations with the word of God? Read it below—

**Matthew 4:11**

**Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.**

We should desire the company of these angels, not the company of the enemy! But remember that we are in Satan’s domain; he is the ruler of this world. So resist him, and he will flee from you. Our victory rests in overcoming our adversary. Our victory in this battle *today* determines our final victory in that Coming Day. So stand firm, be steadfast, and *keep your armor on*.

Note that in the temptation account Jesus did not *strike* Satan with the Word of God. He defended Himself with it. Although we know that Jesus was capable of delivering a death blow to Satan at that time, He did not. Do you know why? The reason is stated in Hebrews—

**Hebrews 2:9**

**But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.**

According to this verse, was Jesus above or below the status of angels while on earth?

He was being entirely obedient to the Father when He humbly defended Himself against the devil. He was submitting to the order that God had set. And the same holds true for us. We are not to strike the Lord’s anointed ones, *no matter how wrong they may be*, because the Lord strictly forbids it.

**I Samuel 26:7-9**

<sup>7</sup> **So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and behold, Saul lay sleeping inside the circle of the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people were lying around him.** <sup>8</sup> **Then Abishai said to David, “Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time.”** <sup>9</sup> **But David said to Abishai, “Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be without guilt?”**



Saul had been anointed as the first king of Israel, but due to his disobedience to God, God took His Spirit from him. Saul continued to rule the nation, but was ruthless and evil. He had tried on many occasions to kill David because David had been anointed as king and was to succeed Saul. Saul did not want that to happen. Eventually Saul was killed, and the very man who killed Saul (*an Amalekite*) took his crown and brought it to David, expecting a reward. But David knew what God had said about touching His anointed. David killed the man who killed Saul.

Did David have cause to kill Saul?

Does he kill Saul?

Why doesn't David kill Saul (v. 9)?

Applying this to us today, do we ever have cause to strike Satan?

If we rail against him and strike at him, is it okay? Why or why not?

At the present time, Satan's is God's anointed one (Ezek. 28:14). We are *not* to move offensively toward him; but we are to defend ourselves. The battle is the Lord's and He will strike down His anointed one when it is time.

Let's end this day with an example of what *not to do* from one of Jesus' disciples—

**Matthew 26:48-53**

<sup>48</sup> Now he who was betraying Him gave them a sign, saying, "Whomever I shall kiss, He is the one; seize Him." <sup>49</sup> And immediately he went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. <sup>50</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you have come for." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. <sup>51</sup> And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew out his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear. <sup>52</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword. <sup>53</sup> Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

(In Luke's account of this same story, we read that Jesus touches the man's ear and heals him.)

Did Jesus approve of what this disciple did?

Why not?

Whose battle was it?

Do you think that the disciple had good intentions in aggressively taking up his sword like that?

But what does God think about that?

That's it for today.

## Day Five – No Greater Weapon

This is our last day together! Study well.

There is no greater weapon than the Word of God. Let me emphasize that—there is no greater weapon of defense than God's Word!

### **Psalm 138:2 A Psalm of David**

**I will bow down toward Thy holy temple, and give thanks to Thy name for Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth; for Thou hast magnified Thy word according to all Thy name.**

What does God say about His Word?

We read this concerning the Word of God—

### **Hebrews 4:12**

**For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**

- The Word of God is living.
- The Word of God is active.
- The Word of God is piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit.

God's Word is His Spirit, and His Spirit is life. There is *nothing* more powerful than that.

### **John 6:63**

[Jesus speaking] **“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”**

Who gives life?

What are Jesus' words?

Read a description of Jesus from the book of Hebrews—

**Hebrews 1:3**

**And he is the radiance of His [God's] glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.**

How does Jesus uphold all things?

Remember how man first became a living being? Read it again below—

**Genesis 2:7**

**Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.**

What did it take to give man life?

“Breath” and “spirit” are the same words, remember?

**Psalms 119:113-116**

**<sup>113</sup> I hate those who are double-minded, but I love Thy law. <sup>114</sup> Thou art my hiding place and my shield; I wait for Thy word. <sup>115</sup> Depart from me, evildoers, that I may observe the commandments of my God. <sup>116</sup> Sustain me according to Thy word, that I may live; and do not let me be ashamed of my hope.**

The power of God's Word will ultimately be the victor over all and God will accomplish it in His timing, in His way. We read about Israel's restoration in the Old Testament, in a vision that is seen and recorded by the Prophet Ezekiel—

**Ezekiel 37:1-14**

**<sup>1</sup> The hand of the Lord was upon me, and He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of the valley; and it was full of bones. <sup>2</sup> And He caused me to pass among them round about, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley; and lo, they were very dry. <sup>3</sup> And He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” And I answered, “O Lord God, Thou knowest.” <sup>4</sup> Again He said to me, “Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.’ <sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord God to these bones, ‘Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. <sup>6</sup> And I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the Lord.’” <sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. <sup>8</sup> And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew, and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them. <sup>9</sup> Then He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.”’” <sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life, and stood on their feet, and exceedingly great army. <sup>11</sup> Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.’ <sup>12</sup> Therefore prophesy, and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I will open your grave, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. <sup>13</sup> Then you will know that I am the Lord, when I have opened**

**your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. <sup>14</sup> And I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and done it,” declares the Lord.”**

Go back through this passage and underline each use of the words “breath,” “Spirit,” and “wind.” Each one of these words is the same Hebrew word *ruach* (07307).

What is the first thing that the Lord tells Ezekiel to do (v. 4)?

What does the word of the Lord say (through Ezekiel) (vv. 4-5)?

What will bring the dry bones back to life (v. 5)?

In v. 8 we read that when the pieces of the body came together, “there was no breath in them.” What does the Lord tell Ezekiel to do (v. 9)?

What does the Lord say (v. 9)?

What causes them (the resurrected Jews from the Old Testament) to come to life?

We get an explanation of the whole vision recorded in vv 11-14. What does the Lord say will bring Israel back to life (v. 14)?

After they come to life, what will God do with them (v. 14)?

Then notice what God says about how He works this. He *speaks it* and then He *does it*. Awesome, isn’t it?

We can also read about the power of the sword in the Book of Revelation—

First at the judgment seat—

**Revelation 1:14-16**

**<sup>14</sup> And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup> and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. <sup>16</sup> And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.**

Why is Jesus described as having a “sharp two-edged sword” coming out of his mouth at the judgment seat?

Then at the end of Man’s Day, when Jesus comes down from heaven, to the earth, and casts the devil into the abyss for a thousand years—

**Revelation 19:13-20:2**

<sup>13</sup> And He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood; and His name is called The Word of God. <sup>14</sup> And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. <sup>15</sup> And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and he will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. <sup>16</sup> And on His robe and on his thigh He has a name written, “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” <sup>17</sup> And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, “Come, assemble for the great supper of God; <sup>18</sup> in order that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.” <sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, assembled to make war against Him who sat upon the horse, and against the army. <sup>20</sup> And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. <sup>21</sup> And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat upon the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh. <sup>1</sup> And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. <sup>2</sup> And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years...

What is Jesus called (v. 13)?

What will Jesus use the sharp sword that comes from His mouth for (v. 15)?

What else will the sword do (v. 21)?

The Word of God is powerful; the Word of God is just. It is trustworthy, it is true, and *it is life*.

**Psalms 12:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. <sup>7</sup> Thou, O Lord, wilt keep them...

Write down your thoughts.

We've gone forwards and backwards through the Bible, looking at most every book, tying thoughts together, and learning much in the process. There may have been times when you struggled with what you read or heard, and there may have been times when things were not quite clear. However, I trust that each one of you has learned *something* during the course of this study, and I praise God and give glory to Him for that. While we know that God's Word needs to be studied and it takes hard work from each individual, we must also know that *nothing* comes solely from our own efforts—God is the ultimate Teacher.

It is stated at the very beginning of God's Word how we are to partake of His Word and it is a truth that we cannot deny (no matter how much we may dislike it).

**Genesis 3:17-19**

<sup>17</sup> Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field; <sup>19</sup> by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

**John 6:31-35, 51**

<sup>31</sup> "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.'" <sup>32</sup> Jesus therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." <sup>34</sup> They said therefore to Him, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." <sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever (165): and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

Here's your encouragement. You have acquired knowledge. I hope that you have believed what God has said and put it into practice in some way. Maybe you just did it once, or maybe you've allowed God to change a part of yourself that you knew He wanted to change. *Each time you do that it is an act of righteousness, a good work, and that is pleasing to the Lord.*

So I would like to encourage you to examine and think on the things that you have learned, and persevere in acquiring yet more knowledge. And most importantly, continue to be a *doer* of the Word, and not a *hearer only*.

**Psalms 119:105**

**Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.**

Learn it and live it.

Believe it and do it.

And do not stop seeking, no matter what!



