

THE BIBLE

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Finally, the soldier takes the sword of the Spirit – the only offensive weapon mentioned. This metaphor refers to the short sword used in close combat. The sharp, short sword was one of Rome's great military innovations. The Roman army was called the "short swords" because of its use of the short swords in winning the battles. The sword's double edges made it ideal for "cut and thrust" strategy.

The Word of God is the Spirit's sword. It is the sword The Holy Spirit uses to get people to stop lying to themselves and to stop receiving the lies of Satan. It exposes what is really on the inside. Listen to the way Paul describes the bible as a sword that opens up and exposes what is on the inside.

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 a tool of the Holy Spirit to expose the truth of what is going on in our thoughts and deeds.

For example, Matthew 18, tells us about God's plan for people to forgive one another and to go directly to one another if we have a problem with them. When the Holy Spirit supercharges the reading of the Bible I might read about forgiveness and The Holy Spirit reminds me when I have not forgiven someone like I should. And then if that is not enough, the Holy Spirit keeps bothering me and bringing the issue up in my mind so that I actually have to go and take care of the issue before I can have any peace.

Satan wants me to be a bitter unforgiving person but the Holy Spirit makes the Word of God sharp and penetrating in my life so that if need be I am moved to get rid of things in my life that Satan would use to create problems in my life and in the church.

The Holy Spirit makes the Word of God effective as we speak it and receive it. The Holy Spirit gives the Word its penetrating power and sharp edge.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

The Holy Spirit uses the word of God to expose and correct sin and He uses it to protect us from the things that the devil is trying to do to us. When Jesus was tempted by the devil he defended himself with the word of God.

Matthew 4

The Temptation of Jesus

³And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." ⁴But 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.'"

Satan tried to cast doubt on the love of the Father when he said; “if you are the Son of God.” If you don’t have the physical things in front of you when you think you need them do you could doubt the love of God and try to control things in your own power and with your own timing? Jesus answered the devil by quoting scripture.

⁵Then the devil ... said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written,

'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU';

***and 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP,
SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A
STONE.'"***

***⁷Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT
PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"***

Here the devil twisted the scriptures to tempt Jesus to show off His power. He tried to hook the pride of Jesus. Oh you are the Son of God, well prove it!

⁸Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" ¹¹Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.

When the enemy, the tempter tries to tempt us to do evil, we have the power to send him away with the word of God. The Spirit of God will bring the words to mind, for Jesus promised;

John 14:26 The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

The first two temptations were met by Jesus in a defensive way using the Word of God. The last temptation was defeated in an offensive way when Jesus used the word of God and then commanded Satan to leave him.

FROM PACING TO PROMISES

I don't know how it works for you, but when I am really freaked out about something I begin to pace back and forth. I remember one time almost ten years ago now that I was really stressed out. I planted a church and then

right after moving my family and getting settled in the mother church who was supposed to support us for a couple years to get us going pulled all their financial support away. They made up for an accounting error by dropping all our support only a couple months after we began.

I remember pacing back and forth and getting so worked up I am sure my blood pressure was higher than Einstein's IQ. I was so stressed out I could not pray, I could not think, and I was paralyzed with hopelessness. When I could not break out of my hopelessness, I took a bible and a hymnbook and drove over to a river. I sat next to the river and sang hymns and read from scripture for hours until my personal darkness lifted.

Suddenly God answered me in the pages of scripture through the stories of Joseph and Job. God lifted the darkness and convinced me that he would take care of everything. When I got home I was new person. I could go on because God defeated all the negative messages of hopelessness that came from my own human doubts and from Satan who was playing on my emotions. Man shall not live on bread alone but on every word that comes out of the mouth of the Father!

SUMMARY STATEMENT FOR SWORD OF SPIRIT

So remember that the bible has a sharp edge. The Holy Spirit is the sharp edge that makes the words of the bible powerful and effective to change our lives and defeat the work of the devil. If the bible is this powerful lets hide more of it in our hearts.

SPIRIT POWERED PRAYER

¹⁸With 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 passage continues the thought of verse 17. As we take the sword of the Spirit, God's Word, we must also pray in the Spirit on all occasions.

PRAY WITH LOTS OF PRAYER

Paul was not calling prayer a weapon; instead, he is telling us how to use the armor described in the previous verses. In other words, if we are walking in the power of the Holy Spirit we will know when to pray for more faith and when to quote scripture and when to prepare to share our testimony with another person. It is the Holy Spirit that makes all the armor of God work.

PRAY ALL THE TIME

The passage tells us to pray continuously. How can anyone pray on all occasions? One of the ways we can pray on all occasions is to use quick, brief prayers to every situation we meet throughout the day. By keeping connected with God our whole life becomes a prayer. We don't always have to isolate ourselves from other people in order to pray. We can make prayer our life and our life a prayer. It is good to get away and pray in silence so that we can really give our undivided attention to God. But we can keep the communication open with Him all day long. Our life can be a prayer.

PRAY IN THE SPIRIT

This passage also tells us to pray in the Spirit. Some people believe that praying in the Spirit is the same thing as speaking in tongues. That is not true. Let's talk about what it means to pray in the Spirit and how to pray in The Spirit.

PRAYER OUTSIDE OF THE SPIRIT

First let talk about what it means to pray outside of the Spirit. Praying apart from the Spirit is the same thing as vain repetitions. Praying outside of

the Holy Spirit is praying a list but doing it as an obligation even when we don't feel a thing in our heart when we are praying. Praying outside the Spirit could be praying for a meal but we are just going through the motions. Praying outside of the Spirit is the idea of praying but you are not talking to God and you are not praying for the things that God wants you to pray for you are just making up stuff in your own flesh so that you can meet the obligation to pray even if your heart is not in it.

Those who pray in the flesh and outside of the Spirit's guidance and power could pray a memorized prayer, or a prayer list, or say bla bla bla and get the same results. Praying outside of the Spirit of God is like when you talk to another person and you don't really think about what you are saying. You look past them and throw out a platitude but you don't really connect with them.

PRAISING IN THE SPIRIT

Praying in the Spirit means a person is filled with the Holy Spirit so that when you pray you are actually praying for the things that the Holy Spirit is telling you in your heart to pray for. Praying in the Spirit is praying with great power and confidence. Praying in the Spirit of God guarantees more answers to prayer. If we ask God first what he wants to do before we pray our prayers will simply be an announcement of God's will and God's power on display.

Praying in the Spirit can also mean that the Holy Spirit prays for us (Romans 8:27) so that our heart cries out to God but we can't sort out all our emotions and we don't even know what to ask for or how to ask or what God wants to do so we groan in our hearts to God and the Holy Spirit actually forms the prayer and we just hang on to God. Sometimes the best prayer is God Help! And sometimes the best prayer could be just thinking

about God and believing that he will do what is best. And sometimes that best prayer is waiting in God's presence until God puts something on your heart that He wants you to pray about. And then pray until you feel in your heart God is saying; "yes", "no", "wait" or "none of your business."

Most of all, praying in the Spirit means that you are connected with the heart of God when you pray. You are praying God's heart and God's will at the same time because that is what The Holy Spirit allows us to do. Ask God to fill you with The Holy Spirit before you begin praying.

¹⁹and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

TAKING IT HOME

1. Are you taking the time to get acquainted with the word of God so that God can defend you and drive away the devil through you?
2. Are your prayers best described as vein repetitions or do you pray with God's passion and power and guidance?

BENEDICTION

²³Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptible love.