

The Sword of the Spirit

(Ephesians 6:17b)

Introduction

[Teacher, begin your lesson by discussing the following:]

- If you were going hiking in a new place would it be important to take a guidebook with you that had some good maps in it? (Yes!)
- What other sorts of guidebooks do you need in life? [Teacher, help the children discuss different types of guides, such as road maps, travel brochures, auto repair manual, cook books, etc.]
- Can a guidebook ever be wrong? (Yes!)
- What if the guidebook told you to take the wrong hiking trail or a cookbook forgot to mention that you need to put eggs in a cake mix? Would you ever use that book again? Would you ever recommend it to others?

There is a guidebook that you can always trust. It gives you all the information you will ever need for living a truly good life. Can you guess what guidebook I'm talking about? (The Bible.)

Today we are going to discover that the Bible is the only guide that never fails.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we want to thank You for giving us the Bible. We call it the Word of God, because You, by the power of the Holy Spirit, inspired men to write down Your thoughts about how we should live our lives, holy and set apart for You. Give us a desire in our hearts to read and study Your word and to memorize it so that we might be able to use it out on the battlefield with Satan and his demons. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen

Memory Verse

Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to all who come to him for protection. (Proverbs 30:5 NLT)

And take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:17b NLT)

Lesson

The past few weeks we've been studying the pieces of a Roman soldier's armor and how they relate to our spiritual walk with Jesus.

For review, read Ephesians 6:10-17

In battle, it was important for a Roman soldier to be properly dressed. He needed armor as a suit of protection. And, in the same way, God has given us spiritual armor to protect us from our enemy, Satan.

Let's review the pieces of the spiritual armor that we've learned about so far and how we put them on.

[Teacher, refer to the previous lessons in this series for details for this review.]

Verse	Piece of Armor	How You Put It On
14	Belt of Truth	By knowing The Truth (Jesus) and believing everything He says, the Word of God.
14	Breastplate of Righteousness	By confessing your sins and asking God to forgive you. He declared you righteous the moment you put your faith in what Jesus did on the cross.
15	Gospel of Peace Shoes	By receiving God's forgiveness, you made peace with God. When we have the peace that comes from knowing we are forgiven of our sins, we are ready, or "fully prepared" to tell how they can also have peace with God.

Verse	Piece of Armor	How You Put It On
16	Shield of Faith	By believing and trusting in God's promises.
17a	Helmet of Salvation	By asking God to be your Lord and savior. Nothing can take your salvation away from you.

So far we have only learned about our “defensive” weapons—Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Faith, and Salvation are the weapons that ward off the fiery darts of our invisible enemy.

Now we're going to learn about one of our “offensive” weapons that we can use to attack the enemy.

Let's look at the rest of verse 17.

Ephesians 6:17b

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

Ask: What sorts of weapons do soldiers use in war now in modern times?

Bombs, missiles, grenades, machine guns, cannons, etc.

No soldier, even when he has his protective armor on, is ready for battle until he has his weapon.

Ask: What sort of weapons did the Roman soldier use?

Their battles were fought hand-to-hand with javelins, swords, and daggers.

Swords

A Roman soldier's sword was intentionally small in size so that he could grasp the shield in the one hand and easily fight the enemy with the other. A Roman sword was made out of carbon steel, giving them

a very sharp and strong blade, like a good kitchen knife.

With our spiritual armor on, we're ready to pick up our swords and go into battle. Our sword isn't made out of sharp steel because we're not fighting against flesh and blood. We're fighting a spiritual battle — one that can only be won in God's power.

Our sword is the Word of God, the Bible. This is not a piece of armor we put on and wear, but one we must keep sharp and use daily. We must be expert swordsmen!

The sword of the spirit is different from metal swords. The more you use a steel sword, the duller it gets. But the more you use God's word in the battle of life, the sharper and more effective it becomes.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

[The Living Bible may help the children understand this verse:]

For whatever God says to us is full of living power: it is sharper than the sharpest dagger cutting swift and deep into our innermost thoughts and desires..., exposing us for what we really are. (Hebrews 4:12 TLB)

A sharp sword can cut through just about anything. When we use the Bible as a sword, we are able to “cut through” the things the enemy tells us and get to the truth, like doing heart surgery.

Sometimes TV shows, music, and people can tell us things that may sound really good, but when we compare it with what the Bible says, we find out that what they are telling us is not the truth.

For example, the enemy will tell you that when someone hurts your feelings, you should stick up for yourself and get back at them.

The Bible tells us to love our enemies:

Matthew 5:44

But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!

When someone is mean to you, Satan tries to get you to be mean back, but when you use God's word like a sword, you can say, "No, Satan! God does not want me to get back; He wants me to be kind."

Ephesians 4:32

Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

Just like the soldier's sword was the perfect weapon for battling the enemy up close and in very small spaces, the sword of the spirit is the perfect weapon to fight against and cut through the lies Satan tries to make us believe.

2 Timothy 3:16

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

Ask: What does it mean when it says scripture is "breathed out" and "profitable"?

It is saying that every word in the Bible is inspired by God and is useful to us.

Ask: Have you or your parents ever used GPS (Global Positioning System)?

[Teacher, you might demonstrate using Google Maps on your phone or iPad.]

Let's look at 2 Timothy 3:16 more carefully to see how God's Word acts like a spiritual GPS.

2 Timothy 3:16 tells us that all scripture is inspired by God and is useful for:

[Teacher, write the following words on the Board.]

- **Teaching** — like GPS, God's Word tells us the right way to go to get to our destination, eternal life with God.
- **Reproof** (make us realize what is wrong) — GPS alerts us when we make a wrong turn just like God's Word warns us about our sins.
- **Correction** — the GPS will then say "rerouting" and tell us the right way to get back on the correct road.
- **Training in righteousness** — Just like GPS continues to tell us the correct way to go until we reach our destination, God's Word continues to encourage us to do what is right!

GPS only works though if we turn it on and use it. Ephesians 6:17 tells us to "*take up the sword of the spirit*"; it does no good if we leave our swords laying on the ground. We must take them up; we need to know the Word of God and allow the Spirit to use it in our lives.

Each verse that you put into practice is a powerful weapon that God can use to attack Satan and put him on the run. But we need to be trained to use our swords.

Without training we won't be ready to use the sword of the spirit. If we don't have God's Word hidden in our hearts, we won't be able to combat the lies of the enemy when we are out and about. That's why we should be learning verses from God's word so the Holy Spirit can bring them back to our memory when we are tempted to do wrong.

Just as a Roman soldier would not venture into battle without his sword, so we ought not go anywhere without our "swords" so we're prepared to talk to others about Jesus. But just having a Bible along isn't enough. You need to learn how to use it and where to find things you might want to know.

A good swordsman spends time practicing with his sword every day. He takes care to be sure his sword is always sharp.

Ask: How do we keep our sword of the spirit sharp?

By reading the Bible every day, and memorizing Scripture. With the help of Jesus, we can become expert swordsmen and we can WIN AGAINST SIN!

Ask: How do we take up the sword of the spirit?

By knowing the Word of God and allowing the Spirit to use it in our lives to extinguish the lies of the enemy.

Closing Prayer

Lord, it's great that You've given us all the pieces of the armor to protect our heads, our hearts, and our whole body. But, we want to especially thank You for also giving us Your word. You knew that we needed it so that we would know how to live a truly good life. Give us a desire in our hearts to read and study Your word and to memorize it so that we might be able to use it out on the battlefield with Satan and his demons. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Let the children make swords using the pattern or send it home as a "take home" paper.

[You can find the Sword Pattern on my web site.]

Game Center

Sword of the Spirit Word Search

Let the children work on the *Sword of the Spirit* word search, or send it home as a "take home" paper.

Sword Drills

A sword drill is a race to see who can find the Bible verse first. The purpose of this game is for the students to learn that they can use God's Word to "cut through" the lies of the enemy with the Truth.

Everybody, close your Bible and hold it in one hand above your head. When I say "go", start looking for the verse. Give me a thumbs up when you find it.

[Teacher, wait for all the children to find the verse. Then, have a volunteer read the verse and explain the meaning, and when this verse would help you extinguish the fiery darts of the enemy.

[Teacher, tips:

- You might need to show the class how to use the Table of Contents in the Bible and explain the chapter/verse numbering system before you start the "sword drills."
- Write the verse references on plastic knives that look like swords. Pull a "sword" from a cup to see what the next verse is to find.
- Alternately, rather than racing to find the verse, give each child a verse to find in their bibles, then one-by-one, have each child read their verse and explain its meaning.
- Award the first one to find the verse a piece of candy.]

1. Ephesians 4:25 (Do not lie.)

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. (Eph 4:25)

2. Hebrews 13:6 (Don't be afraid.)

So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" (Heb 13:6)

3. Ephesians 6:1 (Obey your parents.)

*Children, **obey your parents** in the Lord, for this is right. (Eph 6:1)*

4. Romans 12:17 (Don't repay evil for evil.)

***Repay no one evil for evil**, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. (Rom 12:17)*

5. Ephesians 4:29 (Do not say dirty things.)

***Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths**, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. (Eph 4:29)*

6. Psalm 46:1 (Call on God in time of trouble.)

***God is our refuge** and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psm 46:1)*

7. 1 John 1:9 (Confess your sins.)

*If we **confess our sins**, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1John 1:9)*

8. Ephesians 4:28 (Do not steal.)

*Let the thief **no longer steal**, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. (Eph 4:28)*

9. Hebrews 13:5 (Don't be greedy; don't feel lonely.)

*Keep your life free from love of money, and **be content** with what you have, for he has said, "**I will never leave you** nor forsake you." (Heb 13:5)*

10. Proverbs 30:5 (Trust God's word.)

***Every word of God proves true**; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. (Proverbs 30:5)*

11. Psalm 119:105 (Word's word shows the way to live.)

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a **light to my path**. (Psm 119:105)*

12. Isaiah 40:8 (God's word never goes out of style.)

*The grass withers, the flower fades, but **the word of our God will stand forever**. (Isa 40:8)*

13. Matthew 6:33 (The most important thing in the world is following God.)

*But **seek first the kingdom of God** and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Mat 6:33)*

14. John 17:17 (God's word is truth.)

*Sanctify them in the truth; **your word is truth**. (John 17:17)*

15. 2 Corinthians 10:4 (We don't fight against flesh and blood.)

*For the weapons of **our warfare are not of the flesh** but have divine power to destroy strongholds. (2Co 10:4)*

16. Colossians 3:16 (Fill your heart with the Word of God.)

***Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly**, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. (Col 3:16)*

See how helpful the word of God is? Make it a habit to take your "sword" along with you wherever you go. You're going to need it!

Or, use the following review questions in another game or discussion:

1. What is the sword of the spirit?
2. How does Hebrews 4:12 describe the Word of God?

3. What does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tell us about the Word of God?
4. How can you be ready to use the sword of the spirit?

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