



- Read Ephesians 6:10-18
- Pray

Review

- v. 13 – The goal of our battle is to stand firm for Christ.
 - 1.) Put on truth as a guard against deception (v. 14a).
 - 2.) Put on righteousness to guard against condemnation (v. 14b).
 - 3.) Put on zeal as a guard against complacency (v. 15).
 - 4.) Put on faith as a guard against destructive thinking (v. 16).
 - 5.) Put on hope as a guard against discouragement (v. 17a).
- Notice that these first five elements of the armor are defensive in nature. They are given to us by God to defend us against Satan’s schemes.
- In the last half of v. 17 and v. 18, Paul teaches us how to go on offense against evil and darkness by describing one last piece of armor and by commanding a personal practice of paramount importance.
- **v. 17b – The Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God**
- For the most part, swords today are not thought to be much more than interesting relics in museums.
 - They remind us of a different age of swashbucklers or buccaneers—a time when combat was quite different than today.
 - However, in the actual military conflicts of today, swords are almost entirely useless in combat.
- Tragically, many people today feel the same way about the sword of the Spirit—God’s Word. They say, “The Bible is full of nice stories, and everyone likes what it says about Jesus, but it is really not of much use from day to day.”
 - O’Reilly Video

- Consider Mahr's anti-supernatural presuppositions.
 - Because he approaches the Bible with the presupposition that God does not exist and that supernatural activity is impossible, Noah's Ark seems ridiculous to him.)
 - If, however, we accept the overwhelming evidence of history and acknowledge that God's supernatural activity in the universe is not only possible, but undeniable, then Mahr's intellectual arrogance is entirely unwarranted.
- Consider O'Reilly's extremely unfortunate and unreasonable "defense" of Scripture.
 - While there are allegories and parables in Scripture, the baseline of Scripture is literally true history.
 - Reducing Scripture to quaint old stories with a moral leaves the sword of the Spirit dull, antiquated, and useless.
- **God's Word is entirely true and eternally powerful.**
 - Matthew 5:18 – *"I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."*
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – *"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."*
 - Scripture is authenticated by Christ. It always triumphs over the most intense scrutiny of history. It leads to undeniable transformation in those who trust it.

1.) **Wielding the Sword of the Spirit demands caution.**

- Video – Sword Accident
 - Like any sharp sword, the word of God must be wielded with great caution and care.
 - Anyone who wields the Sword of the Spirit recklessly will surely damage himself and others with it.
- **We can easily deceive ourselves about Scripture.**
 - James 1:22 – *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."*
 - Mark 7:6-8 – *"[Jesus] replied, 'Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but*

rules taught by men.” You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.”

-- Many use God’s Word to deceive others.

-- Not everyone who quotes God’s Word does so for God’s glory.

-- In the wilderness of Christ’s temptation, Satan repeatedly quoted Scripture in an attempt to deceive (Matthew 4, Luke 4).

-- Many use Scripture to suit their own desires.

-- 2 Timothy 4:2-4 – *“Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.”*

-- Most every cult makes appeals to the Bible to get people in the door (e.g. Mormon television ads).

-- For those who abuse it, the Sword of the Spirit will be the sword upon which they fall.

-- 2 Peter 3:16 – *“Some of [Paul’s] comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters around to mean something quite different from what he meant, just as they do the other parts of Scripture—and the result is disaster for them.”*

-- Galatians 1:7-8 – *“Some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!”*

2.) Wielding the sword of the Spirit demands training.

-- Consider how the diligently the master samurai practices with his sword to perfect his skill. Should not the Christian have the same attitude toward the Word of God?

-- 2 Timothy 2:15 – *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”*

-- Too many soldiers of Christ’s seem far too unconcerned about training ourselves to use the weapon of our warfare.

- The Christian who doesn't study and apply God's Word is like a soldier in combat with no weapon. Such a man cannot possibly hope for triumph, but only not to be too badly injured in the battle.
- However, the believer who sets his heart to know and apply God's Word will be a mighty warrior for Christ.
 - Psalm 119:97-100 – *“Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.”*
- Illustration from Finance
 - If you save a just dollar a day from birth at 9% interest, you will have well over \$1 million when you are 65.
 - How mighty a warrior would result is a man would store in his heart and mind one verse a day, for the return on God's Word is much greater than 9%
 - Matthew 13:23 – *“But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”*

3.) Wielding the sword of the Spirit defeats the darkness.

- 1 Corinthians 1:18 – *“The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*
- Romans 1:16 – *“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”*
- **God's Word has the power to defeat the darkness within us.**
 - Psalm 119:92-93 – *“If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have preserved my life.”*
 - Hebrews 4:12 – *“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”*
- **God's Word has the power to defeat the darkness all around us.**
 - As Christ demonstrated in the wilderness, God's Word can destroy every attack of the enemy.
 - Third verse of *“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”* – *“And though this world, with devils filled should threaten to undo us. We will not fear, for God hath*

willed His truth to triumph through us. The Prince of Darkness grim—we tremble not for him. His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure. *One little word shall fell him.*”

-- Isaiah 55:11 – *“It is the same with my word. I send it out, and it always produces fruit. It will accomplish all I want it to, and it will prosper everywhere I send it.”*

-- For every spiritual battle, there is a weapon in God’s Word.

-- However Satan attacks, we confidently respond with God’s Word...

-- Anger – Ephesians 4:26-27 – *“In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”*

-- Anxiety – Philippians 4:6-7 – *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

-- Bitterness – Matthew 6:14-15 – *“If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

-- Greed – 1 Timothy 6:10 – *“The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”*

-- Selfishness – Philippians 2:3-4 – *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*

-- Whining or Complaining – Philippians 2:14-15 – *“Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.”*

-- Evolution – Romans 1:22-23 – *“Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”*

-- When the world says, “Make much of yourself,” we say: Matthew 28:19-20 – *“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

- When the world says, “It will be o.k.; there are many ways to heaven,” we say: John 14:6 – “*Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’*”
- Whatever the spiritual battle, the Sword of the Spirit is mighty in battle.

Colonel Jeff Cooper, a combat pistol instructor, developed the Cooper Color Code system, which is used by most military and police organizations to differentiate different levels of readiness for battle. In each of his stages, there is an important spiritual parallel.

- Condition White: The soldier is relaxed and daydreaming, unaware and unconcerned about his surroundings. Our enemy delights to find Christians in this extremely vulnerable condition.
- Condition Yellow: The soldier is relaxed physically but alert mentally. A believer at this level may sense trouble coming, but he's not ready to confront it.
- Condition Orange: The soldier is physically prepared, mentally alert, and ready to fight. A believer at this stage has equipped himself with the armor of God.
- Condition Red: The soldier is ready to fight and engaged in the battle. This battle-seasoned Christian is effective in the contest knows because he knows God's Word and how to apply it to life.

-- *Which color code describes your spiritual condition?*

-- Spiritual victory comes only to those who are prepared to wield God's Word in battles