

Sword of the Spirit

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- [0 : 0 0] Now take your Bibles and open them to Ephesians chapter 6. We've been working our way through the armor of God that we have to use in our spiritual conflict.
- Let's just read through these verses again. Ephesians 6, 1 through 17. 10 through 17. Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.
- Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
- Therefore, take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm. Stand therefore having fastened on the belt of truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness and as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.
- In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one and take up and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.
- [1 : 3 9] The word of God. The word of God. And that's what we'll be studying this morning. The sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Taking it up. In fact, there, you've already been obedient to what God says in His word.
- So you're on your way now for the week ahead to do exactly what we're studying this morning. And as we do that regularly, we will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.
- But we do want to take a look at it a little bit more in depth. I'm not just going to end class right here thinking that you are already obedient to this passage. We want to consider it more.
- The sword has been used as a weapon of wars for years. Most contact that I've had with swords has been through books and television or movies.
- I can remember as a child watching Zorro on television. I think it was a weekly series back then. And, of course, Zorro knew how to use a sword.
- [2 : 4 5] I guess in his case it would have been a rapier. And he could wield it with precision. And the same was true of, I'm not sure how to pronounce his name, Inigo Montoya?
- Okay, you're familiar with that guy. And how he could wield a sword as well. Yeah, Prince's Bride movie. You see a couple of excellent sword fights in that movie.
- And I didn't bother looking up the phrase or the saying he always says when he comes across. The person he thinks is the one who killed his father. I'll let you do that.
- But don't go away from the lesson with just that on your mind. But we also, to come a little bit closer to where we're at this morning, Pilgrim, in Pilgrim's Progress, also used the sword in his fight against Apollyon.
- And Apollyon came in conflict against him. And he was quite the enemy that Pilgrim was to face.

- [3 : 57] And just wrote a little bit from the book of the conflict. And after their verbal confrontation, Apollyon, spying his opportunity, began to gather up close to Christian.
- And wrestling with him gave him a dreadful fall. And with that, Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said Apollyon, I am sure of thee now.
- And with that, he had almost pressed him to death. So the Christian began to despair of life. But as God would have it while Apollyon was fetching his last blow, thereby to make a full end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand for his sword and caught it saying, Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy.
- When I fall, I shall rise. So Christian gives us a good picture of how to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God when we come against our enemy, Satan and his forces.
- And so Paul uses this illustration of a sword to help us see the importance of taking up the Word of God in our conflict with Satan and the spiritual forces.
- [5 : 23] So let's consider this whole matter of the sword. They were familiar with swords back in those days and the days that Paul was writing this letter. At the time of writing, the people were familiar with probably more than two, but at least two types of swords the Roman soldier used.
- One was a broad sword, a heavy, long sword. Usually took two hands to wield that sword against the enemy, taking big swooping swings at the enemy.
- And the other was the makaira. That's the Greek word used here in Ephesians 6, a shorter, double-edged sword used in close-quarter fighting.
- From John MacArthur's research, he says, It was the common sword carried by Roman foot soldiers and was the principal weapon in hand-to-hand combat carried in a sheath or scabbard attached to their belts.
- It was always at hand and ready for use. And when used in combat, it was used both defensively and offensively. You can see that as you watch those sword fights on the movies or wherever, how it is used for defensive and offensive actions, sometimes to block or to deflect an enemy's thrust toward you or you to go on the offensive and thrust your sword toward the enemy.
- [6 : 53] So with Paul's use of this specific word in Ephesians 6, we have some clues already, if you're familiar with swords, as to just how we're to use the sword of the Spirit in our conflict.
- But let's look even a little bit more specifically at the sword of the Spirit that we use in our spiritual conflict. We want to take a look, first of all, at its reliability.
- It's reliable because of its origin. As it says in the Scriptures, this is the sword of the Spirit. There's a definite connection between the sword, the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit in regard to its origin.
- It's not a weapon that's been devised by man, and sometimes you'll hear this objection from people you're speaking to or witnessing to. They'll bring up the objection that, oh, it's just something written by man.
- Why are you so confident in that? Of course, they're not understanding the ultimate origin of the Word of God being the Spirit of God. There are effective swords that people have made over the years using in battles, etc.
- [8 : 10] But none would be effective in a battle that's ultimately not against flesh and blood. And so we need a sword from God that will be effective in spiritual conflict.
- And that's why we have our sword that comes from God, God the Holy Spirit. In Psalm 44, the writer declared the same message, importance of having something beyond just a human sword.

He says, For not by their own strength did they win the land, these people, the nation of Israel, nor did their own arm save them, but your right hand and your arm.

For not in my bow do I trust, nor can my sword save me, but you have saved us from our foes. So we're looking beyond our human strength, beyond our human ability, beyond anything that we could devise or come up with.

We rest in and trust in the sword of the Spirit which has its origin from God. That is the weapon that will be effective in our spiritual conflict.

[9 : 24] God the Holy Spirit has provided us with the sword. You're familiar with 2 Peter 1, 20 and 21. Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. So God the Holy Spirit worked through men to record what he wanted people to know about God himself, about us and our need for rescue, God's plan of salvation to rescue repentant sinners out of Satan's domain, bring them into the kingdom of the Son he loves, even Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 3, 16. We're familiar with that verse as well. Just the first phrase that shows us again the origin of the sword of the Spirit. All Scripture is breathed out by God using the instrumentation of human authors, but originating from God.

The Word of God, the source of the Word of God is God himself. And as a result, it's reliable resource resource to turn in our spiritual conflict to turn to.

So the origin is the Spirit of God. But it's reliable too because of the supernatural character is again out of God, the Holy Spirit. That connection between the sword and God of the Holy Spirit in regard to its character, because it's the sword of the Spirit, it has its origin in God, the Holy Spirit, its characteristics are supernatural.

[11 : 13] Here's a quote that brings out that same idea. Our doctrine of Scripture should be grounded in the doctrine of God. If God is Scripture's author, then we should not divorce the character of the divine author from the character of his divine speech.

After all, this is God's Word we are describing. Scripture has many human authors, but it ultimately originates from one divine author.

While God and the text are distinct, nevertheless, the text is his speech act. It should not surprise us that it reflects his character.

So a man-made sword could have many defects in it. The slightest defect will make it susceptible for breakage during a time of conflict and as a result your injury.

But the Word of God being the sword of the Spirit doesn't have defects. It's described as having these supernatural qualities. So let's take a look at some of these supernatural qualities that hopefully will give you greater confidence in this sword that you have to use in your spiritual conflict.

[12 : 35] first, it's alive and active as the Holy Spirit is alive and active. Hebrews 4.12 For the Word of God is alive 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. As these saints were contemplating turning back from following Christ, the writer is challenging them and exhorting them to not turn away but to continue to follow Christ.

He was using, he was speaking the Word of God to them and God's Word was and is living and active and was able to expose really what was going on in their inner being and was able to convict them of their thoughts, their hidden thoughts of contemplating turning from Christ and going back to that which was less than Christ and insufficient for one's full soul salvation.

They needed to continue following Christ and the writer is speaking God's Word to them. A quote from Barnes Commentary, the idea here is that what God had said is suited to detect hypocrisy and to lay open the true nature of the feelings of the soul so that there can be no escape for the guilty.

His truth is adapted to bring out the real feelings and to show man exactly what he is. Another quote, and as God is the God who acts with power, his Word cannot fail to be active and powerful.

[14 : 32] Its effectiveness derives from its source, which is God himself, and from its purpose, which is the will of God. And neither God nor his will is ever subject to frustration and defeat.

It is able to accomplish his purposes, which is our next point, the next characteristic of the sword of the Spirit that we have. It is effectual in accomplishing its God-intended purpose.

Isaiah 55, 10-11, For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth.

It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

How confident can we be with this sword of the Spirit that we have in our time of conflict or our time of ministering the Word of God to those around us, maybe to each other in our home as husbands and wives or parents to our children or to one another in our fellowship as believers here.

[15 : 55] We have the sword of the Spirit that's effectual in accomplishing its God intended purpose. We can be confident in that. We can be confident also because it is truth.

Jesus prayed to the Father in John 17, sanctify them in the truth. Your Word is truth. In a world that we live in today when there is no absolute truth, truth is what you want it to be or what someone else wants it to be.

No, we have the sword of the Spirit that is absolute truth. And being the sword of the Spirit, we can be confident that what we read and that we are speaking to others and are discipling, making disciples of all nations, unbelievers, but also in discipling one another with the Word of God, we can be confident that I'm giving you that which is true and not just man's opinion.

Another quality, it's sufficient to mature and equip for service the man of God, the teacher of the Word, and those he teaches. 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17 as Paul was writing to Timothy and encouraging him, letting him know all Scripture is breathed out by God.

it's profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

[17 : 24] So the man of God, the teacher, the pastor, has the most effective tool necessary to carry on his ministry. And as he interacts with the Word of God, as he uses the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, he and those who sit under his teaching are brought to maturity.

They're equipped for works of service. So, ask Pastor John, Pastor Colin, ask me, any of you that are teachers and teaching the Word of God, what's the confidence?

Certainly not my eloquence and not some ideas that I might come up with on my own, but the fact that I'm dispensing and giving to you the Word of God that is effective and is sufficient to mature and bring you to maturity.

And equip you for works of service. Understanding that, we can understand and need to understand as well that the Word of God is authoritative.

Taken from 2 Timothy 3.16. All Scripture is breathed out by God, not breathed out by me as far as its final authority, but by God himself.

[18 : 35] And so when we hear the Word of God, we're looking beyond the person who is speaking the Word of God to God himself and receive it as not the Word of man, but the Word of God.

Quote from John Frame, divine authorship is the ultimate reason why Scripture is authoritative, not because it might work in a situation that I'm in, but because it is from God.

Its authority is absolute because God's authority is absolute, and Scripture is his personal word to us. So is that how you view the Word of God?

It is authoritative in those times of struggle, temptation, when your mind is going through those gymnastics of whether you should or should not do a certain thing. The authority of the Word comes into play at that time.

This is the Word of God. This is authoritative. This is what I need to do. No matter how I feel, or whatever someone else might be telling me that might sound good, if it's contrary to the Word of God, then I turn away from it and follow that which is the ultimate authority, God's personal Word to me.

[19 : 54] In fact, that's how the believers in Thessalonica received the Word of God. 1 Thessalonians 2.13 We also thank God constantly for this, that when you receive the Word of God, which you heard from us, there's the process, we're speaking the Word of God as his ministers of the Word of God.

That's what Paul and others were doing it. When the people in Thessalonica heard it, they received the Word of God that they heard from them, you accepted it not as the Word of men, understanding and recognizing this is something beyond these men, they accepted it for what it really is, the Word of God, which is at work in you that believe.

So our confidence, again, built up in the authority of the Word of God, but it's also this sword of the Spirit is that which provides life to those who hear, to those who are dead in trespasses and sins.

James 1.18 Of his own will, he brought us forth by the Word of Truth. that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

So when again, dealing with those who don't know the truth, we're not just trying to convince them with some worldly thoughts and benefits that might come to them.

[21 : 23] We're using the Word of God because it's the Word of God, the Gospel, that good news from God, it's that which is the power to bring life and grant life to those who are dead in sin.

Well, these are just some of the qualities of the sword of the Spirit that we have to our use, that the Spirit of God has given us. And I could go on and on and on listing additional characteristics of the sword of the Spirit.

Just to list a couple without the verses written out. It provides wisdom and knowledge for life. You need wisdom and knowledge for life? There it is.

Sword of the Spirit. Psalm 119, 130, Proverbs 2, 6, there's other verses. It gives us understanding for our daily walk. Psalm 119, 105, it's that light to our path that we need.

It provides comfort, Psalm 119, 50, it provides protection from evil. Psalm 119, 9, following a theme here, seeing a theme here, Psalm 119.

[22 : 34] It keeps one from sinning, Psalm 119, verse 11. It enables us to grow in Christ, 1 Peter 2, 2. So in the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, God has provided us, His people, with just what we need to effectively stand against the schemes of the devil.

So confidence in God's Word. Well, what are we supposed to do with this now? In the verse that we're in, Ephesians, it says, take, take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

A weapon is of no use in battle unless we receive it. We take it and actually put it to use. So the first means or first exercise we need to do in taking it is, I would say, become familiar with it.

A soldier has to become familiar with his weapon. My twin brother was in the Marine Corps and had to spend eight weeks in boot camp at Parris Island.

So I called him yesterday and asked him, I mean, he's 73 like me, thankfully he still can remember, but it does show how distinct this training was because all I had to ask him, what did they do to help you become familiar with your weapon?

[24 : 09] He just went on and jumped right in. He said, well, they had to, let's see, what all did he say here? Oh yeah, first the cleaning and the handling of the weapon.

I mean, he said, that had to be cleaned constantly. And during inspection, he said, if there was a speck of dust on that rifle, you were in trouble.

And so cleaning it. And then he said, taking it apart. You had to become familiar with taking it apart. So familiar with it, taking it apart, and become so familiar with it that you could take it apart and put it back together, blindfolded.

And you had to do it in less than a minute. And so in order to do that, he said, by constantly taking that thing apart and putting it back together, you become so familiar with it that you understand the various parts and where they go using that rifle.

them. And of course, then they would take them out to the shooting range for two weeks. The first week, you didn't shoot the gun at all. You just became familiar with how to use it in different positions, laying down, standing up, sitting down, and just dry firing it.

[25 : 39] So you weren't even firing it. The second week, you got to fire it. at distances, he mentioned a couple hundred yards, and over again, handling that weapon and becoming so familiar with it that you could use it with effectiveness.

And this all happened before deployment into combat, thankfully. That was just so that you could become effective in using it and handling the weapon.

And as you became familiar with it, then you could go out into combat and to use the weapon properly. Well, as Christians, we don't have the luxury of determining when we're going to enter spiritual conflict.

1 Peter 5.8, Peter told the believers there, you need to be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Resist him. firm in the faith. And part of resisting Satan, again, is becoming familiar with the sword of the Spirit, the weapon that God has given us, which is the Word of God.

[26 : 53] And not just the broad, general themes of Scripture. It's important that we become familiar with the specifics of the Word of God.

Just as my brother had to become familiar with the various parts of it and where each part came into play in putting the rifle together. A quote from Martin Lloyd Jones, when Paul says the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, he's referring to our detailed knowledge of that Word.

He means our knowledge of particular Scriptures and our ability to select and use the appropriate word or passage at any given point. The sword, I repeat, in this context does not refer to the general knowledge of the way of salvation, but rather to the ability to use the Scriptures and to give the appropriate answer at any particular point as our Lord did in His temptation.

You think, well, I'm not there. We've all been there at times. In fact, yesterday in men's discipleship meeting, someone brought up the situation situation where somebody asked me questions, you know, I don't know the answer.

Well, we've all been there when we've not known the answer, but the matter is, at that time, okay, I'm not familiar enough with this sword of the Spirit to provide an answer, a specific answer at this time.

[28 : 26] So we might have to say, I'm going to have to get back with you on that. And then we go back and become more familiar with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God so that we can go back and give the appropriate answer, the particular truth from Scripture that applies to this situation.

It's important for us to become familiar with the sword of the Spirit. So what are some of the steps that we can take to become familiar with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God?

First of all, pray for understanding. Pray for yourself and for one another, that the Spirit of God would guide us in understanding this sword that He has provided for us.

Psalms 86, 11, this personal prayer and request from David, teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth.

Ephesians 1, 16, now we see Paul praying for someone else, the believers in Ephesus. I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of Him.

[29 : 44] So yes, I need to understand the Word of God. As I read the Word of God, study the Word of God, I'm praying in the Spirit of God, please help me understand. And as we come to church this morning, pray, God help us as we come together.

And as we hear the Word of God, that we would receive it as your Word and offer to you sacrifices of praise. So we're praying for one another. Remember, we're in this battle not individually on our own, we're in this battle together.

We are a unit, a platoon, the Bremen platoon at GFC of the Church of Christ in this spiritual battle. And we've come together for this instruction from our commander through the captain, however you want to keep drawing this out, as we hear the Word of God from our pastors, and we receive it, and we're equipped more fully to fight effectively, and we pray for one another.

And we read it. We read it publicly. We'll read the Scriptures this morning and hear what God has to say, but privately as well. We read in the Old Testament how God's Word was read publicly.

Joshua standing before the people, and afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. Deuteronomy 17, 19, the king, he was supposed to personally read the law.

[31 : 18] If he was going to be an effective leader, kind of an example for us as men in our home, hey, if we're going to be effective leaders in the home, we need to be in the Word, reading the Word, and being reminded of what our God has said to us.

The king was to read it in all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God. So as you read the Word of God in the morning, take some time, write down a couple observations from what you read, so that you can carry those thoughts with you through the day.

So we're praying, we're reading the Word of God, and memorizing the Word of God. We're familiar with the verse on 119 and 11, I've stored up your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

I don't know about you, I mean, it's a little easier these days to carry the Word on your phone, but we don't always have that opportunity to bring it out, and so we hide it in our heart.

The Spirit of God then has that opportunity to bring it up into our minds when the flesh is in conflict against the Spirit, trying to, and is warring against our soul, endeavoring to get us to turn in a direction away from God and obedience to God, loving God and loving others rather than ourselves.

[32 : 39] The Word of God is there in our minds, specifically. Something that I've had to do through the years, and Carol was the example of me, first of all, getting me to start memorizing Scripture.

I recognized that there were certain areas that I was struggling in my life, and so I tried to find Scripture passages that fit that temptation, and thankfully I can remember, I don't remember the verses as easily as I used to, but remembering the Spirit of God, bringing that verse or verses up to mind, reminded me in that time of conflict and temptation of the way of life.

life. So memorize the Word of God, hide it in your heart, and then the next step, of course, memorizing it, or meditating on it. Bring it back up in your thinking as you move through the day, that verse, so you can start considering, okay, this is what the verse says, what are the implications of that in my life?

What are the kind of situations where that I might need that verse to become obedient to that verse, what God is telling me? And, okay, what would I do then?

This is what the Word of God says. If that situation comes up and I'm tempted to do this, then what practically should I do in response to the temptation? So that's the meditation on what God's Word says.

[34 : 01] And in the time of training, before the conflict comes, you're preparing yourself in how you're handling the Word of God. Study it. we know the Bereans.

Acts 17, 11, now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica. They received the Word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Many of them therefore believed. So as you study the Word of God, ask Pastor John, Pastor Colin, what are some reliable resources I might be able to use these days to study the Word of God?

Some of these passages are difficult to understand. There's lots of good resources that you can use, even online resources. You don't have to buy a whole set of commentaries hardly anymore these days, but there are some good teaching and tools, study tools, that you can get and use in your study of the Word of God.

And of course, listen to it taught by our pastors. Take the messages. When we're here on Sunday, we hear a message Sunday morning, Sunday school, Sunday morning service, Sunday evening service.

[35 : 14] And so now you can take those messages, maybe Monday. Discuss what you heard in Sunday school with your children. What were you taught in Sunday school?

Get the lesson material from their teacher. Discuss it with your children. Their understanding, oh, the Word of God just isn't for discussing and listening to on Sunday.

And there are some further implications of what they heard on Sunday. Or yourself, take the morning message on Tuesday morning and discuss that.

What did pastors say? He took some notes on that message that you can be able to refresh your mind, talk it over with your spouse, your children. And what are the implications of this?

What did pastors say were the applications? Wednesday, take the Sunday evening service. Again, we're just trying to think of ways in which, well, I find it hard studying the Word of God.

[36 : 11] Here it's presented. They've done all the studying for you, hardly. And then you can take it and review that with your family, reinforcing it, becoming more familiar with the Sword of the Spirit so that you can move through your week with more confidence in the time of conflict.

That is coming and will come. So just some various steps that you can take to become familiar with the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. But there will come a time when we need to take it for use and use the Word of God.

You're not just becoming familiar with that. Training my brother went through was not just for the purpose of just become familiar with this. It's just something good to do and it's good knowledge to have.

That was in preparation for the conflict that was to come. You're going to have to take it up now and actually use it as if your life depended upon it.

So we need to consider is that the thought that rules in my mind? That my spiritual life depends on me becoming familiar with the Sword of the Spirit.

[37 : 29] How seriously do we really consider the spiritual conflict that's before us? That really will determine how much energy we use in becoming familiar with the Word of God.

And so consider that and think about that. But we need to put it to use. First of all, in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. Spirit, it came from Him.

He enables us to understand it, but He also empowers us in using it. Quote from Martin Lloyd-Jones, the Spirit and the Word must be kept together always.

The Spirit has provided for us the instruction found in the Word, but we cannot use it without Him either. when the desires of the deceitful flesh rise up against us.

It's the Holy Spirit that we're to keep in step with. As it says in Galatians 5.16, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

[38 : 37] We put it to use even as Jesus did in His times of temptation. When confronted by the devil, we understand, familiar, each temptation that was brought to Him.

He turned to the Scriptures. It wasn't like God was giving Him new thoughts at that time as to what to say to Satan. He turned to the Scriptures. He used the tool that is at our disposal.

And repeated to Satan, it is written. I've got to keep moving here. He used it when facing the treachery of man. In Luke 10, when a lawyer came before Him, stood up and put Him to the test saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said to Him, what is written in the law? Again, using that same tool that's at our disposal. How do you read it? And He answered, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

You have answered correctly. Do this. And you will live. Use it as Paul did. Acts 17. When he was in Thessalonica, he went to the synagogue of the Jews for three Sabbath days, it says.

[39 : 53] He reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead. Use it in daily life.

When tempted to lie, here in Ephesians, therefore having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth to his neighbor, with his neighbor.

When tempted to steal in any fashion, Ephesians 4.28, let no thief. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands.

Use it in daily life when you're tempted to respond with harsh, cursing words. Let no corrupt talk come out of your mouth, but only such as is good for building up as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Use it when tempted to sexual sin, the Scripture passage there. When struggling with the assurance of salvation, when someone asks you a reason for your hope of eternal life, on and on and on we go.

[40 : 56] Sword of the Spirit. What a resource we have in this time of spiritual conflict. Am I familiar with it? So that I can use it with precision in that specific time of temptation.

Well, how will you be called on this week to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and use it? Let's become familiar with it, even as we're here this morning and listen to this morning's message, and then take certain specific steps with becoming familiar with it so that we can take it up and stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

Let's pray. Father, how privileged we are to have such a weapon, the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Father, I have to admit even myself times that I take it for granted and don't take it up and become familiar with it as much as I need to be.

Oh, how I pray that you, by your Spirit, would quicken us and enliven us with a greater longing for your Word, and that we would take specific steps of becoming more familiar with it, that we could stand firm against the schemes of the devil, that we could help each other stand firm against the schemes of the devil, encouraging one another.

Help us, O Lord, our God, for we trust in you. In Jesus' name, amen. Thank you.