



Ephesians
6:17

We have now come to the last piece of armour in our series on living a consistent Christian life. What is interesting to see is that in reality we have come full circle.

We started with the belt of truth, which is really another expression for the Word of God. We recognised that the truth of God's Word is absolutely fundamental for our growth as a Christian.

We also are aware that the reading, studying and memorizing of God's Word are an essential part of the sanctifying work that God does in our lives.

However, this part of the armour is different in that it has an attacking element to it, nonetheless, it is again another expression for the Word of God. It just seems we cannot get away from it and the importance of it to our Christian growth, consistent Christian living and to our protection from the attacks of Satan.

The SWORD OF THE SPIRIT is Paul's way of expressing our need to be able to stand against the temptations and the attacks of Satan. A Roman sword had the purpose of being used in a defensive as well as an attacking role. Paul is giving us a picture that conveys to us that we are daily involved in a spiritual battle that can only be fought and won with the right spiritual weapons,



which in this case is the Word of God. Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:4-6 says this; "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."

Dare I sound like a broken record, but it is necessary. Doesn't this underline the vital importance of reading and studying the Word of God for ourselves on a daily basis, rather than the hotch potch, spasmodic, superficial occasional reading of the scriptures that the majority of Christians seem to be doing these days.

PRAISE the Lord for:

- The many wonderful people who continue to cover this ministry before the Lord in prayer
- The 138,988 Challenge newspapers given out (2020) around city of Durban, South Africa, from four paper stands
- For the first Portuguese Military edition being produced and sent out

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The Roman short sword was a revolutionary weapon in its day, with its size approximately 50 centimetres in length, and thus allowed for much greater mobility, and its trademark double edge that made it such a lethal weapon. Hebrews 4v12 says this; "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"

The Roman short sword or Machaira Sword was designed for close, almost hand to hand combat and was responsible for the incredible expansion of the Roman Empire, at least in part. A Roman soldier was well trained in how to use his sword because it wouldn't achieve much remaining in its holder. If we as Christians are going to be able to count for the Lord Jesus then we need to know what we believe and why. We need to have a good working knowledge of our Bibles. That certainly will not happen if our Bibles are left to gather dust on our bookshelves.

Another important aspect of this analogy is that having such a sword infers an immediate readiness for battle. Those of us who have been Christians any length of time will acknowledge that Satan can come at any time of the day or night with his temptations and attacks.

PRAYER needed for:

- Testimonies for the various editions of Challenge. We are always looking for people willing to share their conversion story
- This Challenge edition as it goes out across Australia and the world. Pray that each story and article will convince the reader of their need of Jesus as their Saviour and Lord
- Overseas editions being sent out – South Africa (main + prison + Botswana), USA (main, prison, Spanish), Zimbabwe

We need to be ready for such times: to be memorising the Word of God and then being able to pray it, to use it to keep our minds pure, and to bolster our faith in standing against Satan. David in Psalm 119:11 referred to it this way; "Your word I have hidden in my heart that I might not sin against You."

Remember how Paul started out emphasising that the armour of God was most effective only if we had on the whole armour. Putting on bits here and there will not do if we are going to stand in this world, if we are going to live consistently for God.

{ CARL CARMODY
EDITOR CHALLENGE }

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