

Unleashing the Transforming Power of God's Word into Your Life: Exemplified by Ezra

Ephesians 6:17

What does the Sword of the Spirit look like when used in the life of a believer?

The Scriptures give us many amazing examples to learn from.

Each one found the Scriptures profitable for doctrine (what's right), for reproof (what's wrong), for correction (how to get right with God), and for instruction in righteousness (how to stay right with God). Those four truths Paul says is the underlying purpose for God giving to us His Word.

Anywhere we look we can find doctrines, reproofs, corrections, and instructions in righteousness.

God's Word Protected Joseph's: Stress-Filled Life

Psalm 105:17-19 He sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave. 18 They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. 19 Until the time that his word came to pass, **the word of the Lord tested him.**

Hated by his brothers; Abused, enslaved, sold, and deported for the financial gain of family members; Unjustly accused, and imprisoned by his own employer; Chained, and forgotten in jail; Vindicated, elevated, and used, because his life passed the test of God's Word.

God's Word Protected Joseph's: Stress-Filled Life!

Are you allowing the Sword of the Spirit, God's Word to protect you from the stresses of life?

God's Word Protected David's: Danger-Filled Life

Psalm 16:11 **You will show me** the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

David was in dangerous situation from his boyhood. He became a man of fierce hand-to-hand warfare, constantly surrounded both by dangers and by the presence of God.

David's life protected by God's Word made him into the man after God's own heart.

God's Word Protected David's: Danger-Filled Life!

Are you allowing the Sword of the Spirit, God's Word to protect you from the dangers and fears of life?

God's Word Protected Paul's: Affliction-Filled Life

Romans 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the **patience and comfort of the Scriptures** might have hope.

Paul was stoned, ship wrecked, and sleepless; hunted, and heckled; imprisoned, and beaten, but he never stopped hoping in God's Word.

God's Word Protected Paul's: Affliction-Filled Life!

Are you allowing the Sword of the Spirit, God's Word to protect you from the struggles, persecutions and afflictions of life?

God's Word Protected Jeremiah's: Tragedy-Filled Life

Jeremiah 15:16 **Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word** was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.

Maybe one Biblical figure was the neediest. Known as the weeping prophet, partly for his compassion, and partly for his condition of sadness. Jeremiah's woes were unimaginable to our relatively peaceful lives.

He lived through the death throes of the final generation of the nation of Judah.

From an earthly perspective **Jeremiah's life was a failure**. During his lifetime **he watched the decay of God's chosen people**, He preached for 40 years and **saw no visible result** among those he served. He had **no one to find joy and comfort with** because **God never allowed him to marry**. He lived **under a constant threat of death**. He **lived with physical pain**. He **lived with emotional pain**. He was **consumed with sorrow**. His life **ended with no relief**.

Now look again at Jeremiah 15.16.

What is the only thing that kept Jeremiah going as he literally was thrown into the pits of life? The Word of God!

That was all he had, written on his heart, not carried around to casually look at now and then. In his most desperate moments the Word from God he had read, studied, memorized and mediated upon fed his soul and produced the joyful fruit of the Spirit of God.

Jeremiah 15:16 Your **words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart**; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.

God's Word Protected Jeremiah's: Tragedy-Filled Life!

Are you allowing the Sword of the Spirit, God's Word to protect you from the agonies, sorrows, tragedies, and unending painful struggles of life?

So Many Amazing Examples to Follow

Today, **Read the Word of God** like Jeremiah & Ezra (Jer. 15:16; Psalm 119)

Study the Word of God like Daniel (chapter 1,6,9)

Memorize the Word of God like Hannah & Mary

Meditate upon the Word of God like Joshua & Jeremiah (Josh. 1:8; Lamentations)

Use the Word of God like Jesus (Mt. 4 & Cross), David (Ps. 71), Paul (God who comforts, comforted me), Ezra (Psalm 119).

Perhaps the longest treatment on the power of reading the Word of God comes to us in Psalm 119

Please turn onward to one last chapter of God's Word, Psalm 119.

Who Wrote Psalm 119?

And who wrote this? We're not sure.

Many different men are considered possibilities: David, Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Malachi, or Daniel because there is no mention of the temple.

But in Jewish history, there is the clear candidate, as there is one who stands out above the others in his life and work, and that is Ezra.

To the Jews only Moses eclipses Ezra in their Jewish history. Why?

Ezra's life actually has touched every Jew and every Christian for the past 2500 years.

How? Ezra launched the Jewish Synagogues, and wrote the reading schedule Jews follow to this day.

Ezra launched the Scribes of the New Testament era, and personally copied all the Scriptures into the Hebrew form that we have today.

The order, structure, and book layout of entire Old Testament is the product of his careful work!

The result? Psalm 119 is Ezra's testimony and also probably the content of his teaching and preaching to the 50,000+ exiles that came home to seek the Lord in Jerusalem!

Ezra's Worldly Congregation

Ezra faced a worldly congregation, soaked in all the worldly ways of Babylon and Persia. What was his plan to bring about lasting change in those he served? He started with his own life. He learned to point his heart frequently toward doing God's Will.

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in God's Word.

God is mentioned 176 times in these 176 verses.

God's Word is mentioned in 173 of these verses.

Prayer requests are given 70 times.

Suffering is mentioned 66 times.

Ezra refers to himself 325 times.

We can actually examine the heart of Ezra through his teaching, by the words of this his testimony to the result of feeding his soul with God's Word.

Ezra's Personal Resolves for Godly Living

First Ezra shares in Psalm 119 a list of his personal resolves to obey God.

Psalm 119:1-8 (NKJV) **Ⲗ Aleph**

Blessed *are* the undefiled in **the way**, (the path God wants us to follow)

Who walk in the **law of the Lord!** (the teachings of Divine teacher)

² Blessed *are* those who keep His **testimonies**, (God's witness about truth)

Who seek Him with the whole heart!

³ They also do no iniquity; They walk in **His ways**. (the path God wants us to follow)

⁴ You have commanded *us*

To keep Your **precepts** diligently. (God's directions for our lives)

⁵ Oh, that my ways were directed

To keep Your **statutes!** (God's plans for our lives)

⁶ Then I would not be ashamed,

When I look into all Your **commandments**. (God's absolutes for life)

⁷ I will praise You with uprightness of heart,

When I learn Your righteous **judgments**. (God's decisions, written in stone)

⁸ I will keep Your **statutes**; (God's plans for our lives)

Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

Ezra Using the Word to Transform His Life

He chooses to turn his life toward God.

Psalm 119:59 I thought about my ways, and turned my feet **to Your testimonies**.

Like a person who hears something, or sees something that stops them, and they turn to go in that direction. Ezra examines his life, looks at the Word and goes the way of the Lord.

He chooses to hate evil in any form, and to avoid those ways.

Psalm 119:101 **I have restrained** my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

What do you restrain yourself from?

He chooses to lean God's Way by obedience.

Psalm 119:112 **I have inclined** my heart to perform Your statutes Forever, to the very end.

What do you lean towards?

He chooses to set his hopes in the Lord.

Psalm 119:114 You are my hiding place and my shield; **I hope in Your word**.

Just like Paul asked the Roman believers to do in Romans 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

What do you have your hopes set upon?

He chooses to cultivate spiritual appetites.

Psalm 119:131 **I opened my mouth** and panted, For **I longed for** Your commandments.

What do you pant for?

He chooses to cultivate spiritual disciplines.

Psalm 119:147 **I rise** before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; **I hope** in Your word.

He chooses to live a life of praise.

Psalm 119:164 Seven times a day I praise You, Because of Your righteous judgments.

As we turn back in our Old Testaments to the Book of Joshua, let me ask you again:
Are you operating as you were designed by God to operate?
Did you operate the way God designed you this week?
God said His Word is the guide to the care and protection of our new lives.
How are you doing at taking the Word as your sword?
Turn to Joshua 1:8-9 with me please.

The Care & Protection of Christian Living

3,500 years ago a former slave, now promoted to the General stood, looking across the river Jordan. His name was Joshua. His task was to conquer the land before him and resettle it with the three million men, women, and children behind him.

In the distance, on the other side of that river stood massive walled cities, guarded by fierce giants that had ruled this land for hundreds of years.

Behind him were families of former slaves that only knew how to make bricks and survive by caring for their animals and collecting manna. For a moment a wave of fear, hopelessness, and dread probably swept over him.

Then God spoke.

Joshua 1:8-9 is one of the most precious and powerful summaries of the power of God's Word. As you turn there with me we are focusing our hearts and minds on this singular theme of the power of the Scriptures. God's Word is amazing.

Please join me as we stand, and while we are reading these words, invite God to amaze your heart again at the power of His Word.

Joshua 1:8-9 (NKJV) This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. ⁹ Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God *is* with you wherever you go."

Pray

The key for Joshua to face the dangerous challenges ahead of him was hearing, believing, holding onto and acting upon God's Word. Joshua was to be armed with the ultimate weapon as he waded into the battles: God's Word.

As we turn now to the New Testament, we have come to Ephesians 6:17.

We are looking at the sixth and final piece of our gear God says we need.

The final piece reveals that God says we need to be armed with the ultimate weapon, which is God's Word.

Armed by the Ultimate Weapon of God's Word (Eph. 6:17b)

The up close war tool of the Roman soldier was not the 3-4 foot long battle sword called the rhomphaia, it was the lethal, hand-to-hand sword called in Greek, machaira. Just 16-18 inches long, and always at his side, the sword of the Legionnaire was his supreme battle tool. He could deflect an attacker thrusts, and inflict precise mortal wounds. Romans were unmatched in their skills in hand-to-hand combat.

For us as believers our sword is "of the Spirit", a weapon originated and energized by the Spirit of God, for us to wield in spiritual warfare. No enemy can stand against the Word of God; and God's Word is the sword. When we hold firm to what God says, He cuts down all our enemies.

Like the Roman sword, this sword of the Spirit is both defensive and offensive.

In deflecting an attack it is used in a precise manner, directly meeting the attack with a specific and appropriate Word from God. Our shield of faith makes a wall of protection, but the sword goes directly at the specific attack and defeats it on the spot.

Like Jesus demonstrated in His sword thrust Scriptural responses to each of the Devil's three attacks (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10), we must know and use the Word. Believers who do not know how to deflect a direct attack with Scripture, are far more likely to be wounded, and devoured by our adversary the devil.

Our sword of the Spirit is also our chief offensive weapon against both the enemy without and the enemy within. The Word of God that defends us also transforms us from the inside out. God's Word of truth can change us from liar-hearted to truth-tellers, from greedy-hearted to givers, from bitter-hearted to tender forgivers, and from fearful-hearted to emboldened soldiers

of God.

God's Word in the hands of a skilled Christian soldier can be used by the Spirit of God to turn many captives in Satan's dark prison from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of all their guilty sins, and go from eternal paupers to the riches of the inheritance of Christ.

That is the amazing evangelistic power of our sword the Spirit gives us. May we use it to quell Satan's attacks, and release many captives by the power of the Gospel unto salvation for all those who believe.

Jesus the Word wants to be our defender with His powerful Word our personal protective sword, empowered by the Spirit.

Jesus said that the words He spoke are Spirit powered. Jn 6:63

This morning we arrive at the last half of Ephesians 6:17. As we look at these words from God for us as believers our minds immediately begin the process of seeking to understand by formulating questions:

What is the "sword of the Spirit"?

Why does God call the "Word of God" a part of our armor?

How do we "take up" this final part of our war gear?

That is what we are going to see from God's Word today.

What is the "sword of the Spirit"?

The Bible is called by many different terms to reflect what God does with His Word: a lamp for life's pathway, a fire and hammer to destroy error, food for the soul, and here a sword that defends.

Here God says that His Word can operate as a weapon of defense against the evil one's attacks.

Hebrews 4:12 shows the sword at work in helping us to live lives responsive to God and transformed by His Word.

Rev. 19 shows the sword as a weapon of judgment

Why does God call the "Word of God" a part of our armor?

Just as the shield broadly defends us, so the sword works close up as we face direct attacks.

Each piece of the armor reflects a need we have because of an element of how Satan seeks our ruin.

Each piece of armor reflects a need that God says we have. If God says we have this need we should trust Him, and respond to His offer to protect us.

Belt of Truth because Satan is a liar.

Shoes of Peace because Satan is a Destroyer.

Breastplate of Righteousness because Satan is evil, defiling, and filthy.

Shield of Faith because Satan shoots arrows of temptations.

Helmet of Salvation because Satan causes doubts & deceptions.

Sword of the Spirit because Satan is a prowling lion seeking to devour us.

How do we “take up” this final part of our war gear?

God explains how we use His sword.

We read His Word

We eat His Word Jeremiah words found eat them

We memorize & meditate upon His Word.

John 6:63

Heb 4:12

Rev 1,2, 19

Mt 4

THE WORD OF GOD

Jesus the Word: Feeds & Protects My Life

Jesus is called the Word of God (Jn. 1:1).

The Logos, or the Word, is who He is (Rev. 19:13).

When I learn God's Word and take that same Word that saved me, and hold onto it by faith, it becomes the **Sword of the Spirit**.

The Word that feeds me (1 Pet. 2:2), saves me (1 Pet. 1:23), guides me (Ps. 119:105), fills me (Col. 3:16): also protects me.

By meditating upon that Word my life is purged, pruned, and sharpened (Josh. 1:8-9).

The holding onto the Word as a sword (Eph. 6:17), I am able to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6:12).

The Word is the sword that the Spirit can use in my life to defend me against the Evil One.

It is also the sword than can cut away layers of callousness.

It is the sword that can defend me, and refine me.

Take up Your Sword

When I want to be healthy and safe, I hold the **Sword of the Spirit**.

When I choose to use the truth of God's Word, I am using the **Sword of the Spirit**.

When I do Jesus the Word: Feeds & Protects My Life.

He feed my new life (Mt. 4:4), nourishes and cleanses my soul (Jn. 17:17).

Holding the Word as a scalpel can cut away layers of callousness and coldness towards God (Heb. 4:12).

Holding the Word as a sword can make the Evil One retreat before the voice of God that I cling to and hold.

Holding Onto the Truths of My Salvation

Each facet of salvation defined by those seven great doctrines of salvation, are the keys to walking through life confidently.

The summary of the Helmet could be stated as a series of declarations of why we can't really ever feel guilty, condemned, hopeless, useless, lonely, fearful, or frustrated again.

But this is only ours if we wear our Helmet of Salvation.

1. Jesus **Forgives**, I never again have any reason: **to feel Guilty**.
2. Jesus **Justifies**, I will never again have any reason: **to feel Condemned**.
3. Jesus **Regenerates**, I will never again have any reason **to feel Hopeless**.
4. Because **I am Redeemed**, I will never again have any reason: **to feel Useless**.
5. Because **I am Adopted**, I will never again have any reason: **to feel Lonely**.
6. Because **I am Reconciled**, I will never again have any reason: **to feel Fearful**.
7. Because **I am Sanctified**, I will never again have any reason: **to feel Frustrated**.

Take Up Your Helmet Daily

If you have never tried this, I'd encourage you to start a new dimension of your spiritual life by starting one of the more wonderful spiritual exercises you can ever do.

As you begin each day, one of our greatest privileges is to take up the helmet of the salvation God has given to us.

By faith we please God when we believe what He's said about us.

We need to not live by what others say or have said about us all our life.

Satan is the Accuser and wants us to only remember all the many times we have fallen;

Satan delights in the days, weeks, or months he can keep us condemning ourselves for what we've done.

That is his plan, so don't fall for it.

Resist Satan as you believe the truth; speak the truth; and preach the Gospel to yourself.

And whenever we fall down, God says to just turn back to Him and repent, confessing our sin immediately—and believe that what God has promised in His salvation.

We are forgiven, justified, regenerated, reconciled, adopted, redeemed, and sanctified.

That makes us precious in His sight, special in His plan.

One of the most powerful habits you could develop is to take these truths about the gift of salvation and rejoice by faith in what God has done and wants to do in you!

Keep this list of what God did in salvation for you in your Bible, at home, on your computer, put one on your mirror where you start your day, and in your car.

Put this truth into your mind as a reminder of what great things God has promised and done through Christ's death for us!

Slowly as you understand and lay hold on these truths a life-changing transformation take place in our minds, and then in our emotions, and finally throughout our entire life as we live each day based on God's eternal truth.

Wearing the Helmet of Salvation's FORGIVENESS component:

Means I behave like I really believe my debts are paid,
so I never again have a reason to feel Guilty.

God has removed all my debts.

Jesus said to the woman who anointed Him, "Your sins are forgiven" (Lk. 7:48).

Have you **experienced the relief of knowing that all your sins, all of them—past, present, and future, are GONE?** Your sins are paid for, and your eternal life is purchased—by the very blood of the One who paid the price.

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's JUSTIFICATION component:

Means I behave like I know God has erased the record of all my sins,
so I never again have to feel Condemned.

God has promised we will never be condemned.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, **having been justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 8:1 There is now therefore **no condemnation to those who are in Christ**.

Because of our sin—we are all guilty convicts in God's sight; so we need justification.

So Christ died to take guilty convicts and destroy any record that that ever committed a crime and takes their place in the punishment—**that's justification!**

Have you **experienced the peace of justification**, all guilt removed, all punishment forever taken away from God's sight?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's REGENERATION component:

Means I behave like I know I have a fresh new start,
so I never again have to feel Hopeless.

God gave me a brand new heart.

God says I am a new creation in Christ (John 1:12; 2 Cor. 5:17).

So Christ died to take dead and rotting spiritual corpses and make them vibrant, full of endless life and brand new—**that's regeneration!**

Have you **experienced the power of an endless life**, and every day partaking of the powerful presence within of the very Lord God Almighty?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's REDEMPTION component means:

I behave like I know that God now owns my life,
so I never again have to feel Useless.

I Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy

Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20For you were **bought at a price**; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Because of our sin—we are all slaves to unrighteousness; so we need redemption. So Christ died to take slaves and make them freed forever—**that's redemption!**

Have you **experienced the thrill of being liberated**, set free, rescued by God forever?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's ADOPTION component means:

I behave like I know that God has really brought me into His family, so I never again have to feel Lonely.

Romans 8:14-15 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but **you received the Spirit of adoption** by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

Because of our sin—we are all strangers to God; so we need adoption. So Christ died to take strangers and make them part of the family—**that's adoption!** Have you experienced the joy of knowing you are adopted into Christ's family?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's RECONCILIATION component means:

I behave like I know that God has "Friendened" me, so I never again have to feel Fearful.

Romans 5:10-11 For if when we were enemies **we were reconciled** to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now **received the reconciliation**.

Because of our sin—we are all enemies of God; so we need reconciliation. So Christ died to take enemies and make them friends—**that's reconciliation!** Have you experienced the wonder of friendship with God?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's SANCTIFICATION component means:

I behave like I know God is using every event to change my behavior into Christlikeness, so I never again have to feel Frustrated.

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being

¹ In New Testament language, the word used by God for *adoption* means "placed into a family as an adult son." This denotes our *standing* in God's family of God: we enter God's family not as little children but we enter as adult sons with all the privileges. **Entrance** into God's family is by regeneration, but **enjoyment** of God's family is through adoption.

sanctified. Romans 8:28 (NKJV) And we know that **all things work together for good** to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose

Because of our sin—we are all defiled; so we need sanctification.

So Christ died to take our soiled and spotted lives that always get wasted and make them clean, focused and fruitful—**that's sanctification!**

Wearing the Helmet of Salvation means

1. Because **I am Forgiven**, I never again have any reason: **to feel Guilty**. I have been forever freed from every stain no matter how deep, and of every impurity no matter how defiled.
2. Because **I am Justified**, I will never again have any reason: **to feel Condemned**. Jesus took my place. Jesus was punished for me. There is no record of my sin.
3. Because **I am Regenerated**, I will never again have any reason **to feel Hopeless**. I have been born again to a Living Hope. I am serving the God of endless new beginnings.
4. Because **I am Redeemed**, I will never again have any reason: **to feel Useless**. I was bought at a price, by God, and I am owned by Him for an eternal purpose.
5. Because **I am Adopted**, I will never again have any reason: **to feel Lonely**.
6. Because **I am Reconciled**, I will never again have any reason: **to feel Fearful**. God is my friend. He will never leave me, nor forsake me.
7. Because **I am Sanctified**, I will never again have any reason: **to feel Frustrated**. God is shaping me more each day to be useful for His purposes.

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's FORGIVENESS component means:

I behave like I really believe my debts are paid.

God has removed all my debts.

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the **forgiveness of**

sins, according to the riches of His grace

Because of our sin—we are all debtors to God’s Righteousness; so we need forgiveness.

So Christmas is all about Jesus coming to live and then die the substitutionary death to take the hopeless debt we owe to God and pay with His own life our eternal death sin has caused us to be responsible to pay--**that’s forgiveness**. A Sinner stands before God as a debtor and that debt is forgotten by His payment.

Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity,

And in whose spirit there is no deceit. NKJV

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace NKJV

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. NKJV

Forgiveness means that we can offer people the “remission of sins” in Jesus’ name (Luke 24:47) which brings “life through His name” (John 20:31). We can then come asking our Father for help in Jesus’ name as we pray (John 14:13–14; 15:16; 16:23–26). Because we’ve been forgiven, when we ask the Father “in the name of Jesus Christ,” it is as though Jesus Himself were asking it. If we remember this, it will help to keep us from asking for things unworthy of His name.

Have you **experienced the relief of knowing that all your sins, everyone of them—past, present, and future, are GONE?** Your sins are paid for, and your eternal life is purchased—and you have the receipt in your hand, written in the very blood of the One who paid the price. Christ's record of that payment is forever settled in this book the Bible!

Wearing the helmet of Salvation’s JUSTIFICATION component means:

I behave like I know my status has changed.

God erased the record of all my sins.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because of our sin—we are all guilty convicts in God’s sight; so we need justification.

So Christ died to take guilty convicts and destroy any record that that ever committed a crime and takes their place in the punishment—**that’s justification!** A Sinner stands before God as accused and is declared righteous by His imputed righteousness.

But justification is only for those who confess their crimes (sins) to the judge (God) and ask for His pardon and forgiveness. All of those who refuse to believe they are a guilty, hopelessly sinful convict in Christ's eyes are denied any relief from the penalty of their sins—both now and forever.

Have you experienced the peace of justification, all guilt removed, all punishment forever taken away from God’s sight?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's REGENERATION

component means:

I behave like I know my heart is brand new.

God gave me a new Heart.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give **you a new heart** and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Because of our sin—we are all dead in our trespasses and sin; so we need regeneration.

So Christ died to take dead and rotting spiritual corpses and make them vibrant, full of endless life and brand new—**that's regeneration!**

Have you **experienced the power of an endless life**, and every day partaking of the powerful presence within of the very Lord God Almighty?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's RECONCILIATION

component means:

I behave like I know that God has “Friended” me.

God becomes my Friend.

Romans 5:10-11 For if when we were enemies **we were reconciled** to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Because of our sin—we are all enemies of God; so we need reconciliation.

So Christ died to take enemies and make them friends—**that's reconciliation!** A Sinner stands before God as an enemy and is made a friend by His peace.

Have you experienced the wonder of friendship with God?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation's ADOPTION component means:

I behave like I know that God has really brought me into His family.

Romans 8:14-15 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but **you received the Spirit of adoption** by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

Because of our sin—we are all strangers to God; so we need adoption.

So Christ died to take strangers and make them part of the family—**that's adoption!** A Sinner stands before God as a stranger and is called a Son by His choice.

Adoption is not our entrance into God's family, the way a homeless child would enter an adoptive family in our society. Rather, our only hope of getting into God's family is by *regeneration* or “the new birth” (John 3:3). In New Testament language, the word used by God for

adoption means “placed into a family as an adult son.” This denotes our *standing* in God’s family of God: we enter God’s family not as little children but we enter as adult sons with all the privileges. **Entrance** into God’s family is by regeneration, but **enjoyment** of God’s family is through adoption.

Have you experienced the joy of being adopted into Christ's family?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation’s REDEMPTION component means:

I behave like I know that God now owns my life.

I Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20For you were **bought at a price**; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Because of our sin—we are all slaves to unrighteousness; so we need redemption.

So Christ died to take slaves and make them freed forever—**that’s redemption!** A Sinner stands before God as a slave and is granted freedom by His ransom.

Have you experienced the thrill of being liberated, set free, rescued by God forever?

Wearing the helmet of Salvation’s SANCTIFICATION:

I behave like I know God is using every event in my life to changes my behavior into Christlikeness.

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

Because of our sin—we are all defiled; so we need sanctification.

So Christ died to take our soiled and spotted lives that always get wasted and make them clean, focused and fruitful—**that’s sanctification!**

To best understand what God has done, let me contrast and explain justification and sanctification. Because we are saved (justified) this is how we should live (sanctified).

Justification is what Christ did for me on the cross--**sanctification** is what Christ is doing in me because of the cross.

Justification is immediate and was completely finished in me the instant I was saved—**sanctification** is an ongoing process never completed on earth until I meet Jesus face to face at death or His coming.

Justification is activated the moment I trust in the Person of Christ Jesus and His finished sacrifice of the cross—**sanctification** grows with each obedient choice I make empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Justification is my position declared right in God’s sight—**sanctification** is my practice made right by becoming more conformed to His image.

START A NEW SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

If you have never tried this I'd encourage you to start a new dimension of your spiritual life by opening your gifts God gave you in salvation. Let me share with you one of the more wonderful spiritual exercises you can ever do.

As you begin each day, one of our greatest privileges is to open and enjoy the gift of salvation God has given to us. By faith we please God when we believe what He's said about us. We need to not live by what others say or have said about us all your life.

Satan is the Accuser and wants us to only remember all the many times we have fallen; Satan delights in the days, weeks, or months he can keep us condemning ourselves for what we've done. That is his plan, so don't fall for it. Resist Satan as you believe the truth; speak the truth; and preach the Gospel to yourself.

And when ever we fall down, God says to just turn back to Him and repent, confessing our sin immediately—and believe that what God has promised in His salvation. We are forgiven, justified, regenerated, reconciled, adopted, redeemed, and sanctified. That makes us precious in His sight, special in His plan.

One of the most powerful habits you could develop is to take these truths about the gift of salvation and rejoice by faith in what God has done and wants to do in you!

Keep this list of what God did in salvation for you in your Bible, at home, on your computer, put one on your mirror where you start your day, and in your car. Put this truth into your mind as a reminder of what great things God has promised and done through Christ's death for us!

Slowly as you understand and lay hold on these truths a life-changing transformation take place in our minds, and then in our emotions, and finally throughout our entire life as we live each day based on God's eternal truth.

Wearing Taking Surrounded by the Assuring Helmet of Salvation (Ephesians 6:17a):

Soldiers couldn't survive long in the dangers of war without that helmet. The waves of enemy missiles flying, and the long battle swords swinging, would soon wound or kill them. Roman helmets were made of metal to protect and leather to cushion. Often the sides extended down for face protection. A head wound took a soldier out of battle.

For us as believers, Paul explains that again Satan's goal is to attack the secure reality of our eternal life. Our assurance of salvation, when shaken, debilitates our trust in God and sidelines us from battle. Much like the 36-48 inch long, double edged battle sword called in Greek the rhomphaia (that word is found in Rev. 1:16, 2:12, 6:8), Satan's realm is swinging the razor sharp doubled edged sword of doubt and discouragement.

Doubting God's goodness often comes when we look at our struggles with our health, finances, and relationships, and question why God isn't doing a better job at helping us. That opens the way for a flood of further doubts leading to discouragement and despair about how we could even be saved as we think of all our sins, failures, weaknesses, and struggles. As the words to that 1863 hymn entitled, In Christ Alone, reminds us:

When Satan tempts me to despair
And tells me of the guilt within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.
Because the sinless Savior died
My sinful soul is counted free.
For God the just is satisfied
To look on Him and pardon me.

The helmet of salvation is a firm confidence in our Heavenly Father's character and power. This helmet is not getting saved, because Paul is telling believers to put it on. The first element of salvation is defined by doctrine of justification, which is trusting in the finished work of Christ, already accomplished on the cross for us (2 Cor. 5:21). Justification ignites the second element of salvation, which is sanctification.

God wants to make each of His children useful for His plan and uses His Word and trials, under the guidance of Spirit of God to shape us more and more into likeness to Christ (1 Th. 5:23). The final element of salvation is yet future, our conformity to Christ forever is finally accomplished when we are glorified fully like Him forever as 1 John 3:2 reminds us.

So secure assurance is based on a **past event we trust** called justification, a **present work in our lives we see** called sanctification, and a **future completion we hope for** called glorification. Salvation's helmet has three aspects: past, present, and future. We know our sins are forever gone, we see our sinful ways presently being sanctified away, and we await the end of the struggles as we become like Him when we see Him as He is. We know the ultimate victory is ours.

Shield of Faith	Believing God's Word extinguishes flaming arrows
Helmet of Salvation	Clinging to God's Securing Promises
Sword of the Spirit	Using God's Word to attack unbelief & sin in my life

Each piece of this spiritual armor must be responded to.
 Just like we had to call on the Name of the Lord to be saved.
 So we must respond to God's call to take & wear each piece.

Salvation's Mighty Work

Through seven divine works of God, guilty sinners are made ready for dwelling in the Presence of God forever; and their bodies formerly slaves to sin instantly become the very dwelling place, and temple of God.

How does God do all that? He does it through the seven elements that make up the Gift of Salvation. Remember with me what God does in each of us who believe:

1. In FORGIVENESS: **God removes my debts.** Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the **forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of His grace
2. In JUSTIFICATION: **God changes my State.** [Romans 5:1](#) Therefore, *having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
3. In REGENERATION: **God transforms my Heart.** [Ezekiel 36:26-27](#) *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*
4. In RECONCILIATION: **God becomes my Friend.** *Romans 5:10-11 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*
5. In ADOPTION: **God Changes my Family.** [Romans 8:14-15](#) *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."*
6. In REDEMPTION: **God changes my ownership.** *I Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20For you were bought*

at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

7. In SANCTIFICATION: **God Changes my Behavior.** [Hebrews 10:14](#) *For by one offering He has perfected forever those **who are being sanctified.***

The Gift of Salvation

Have you received the one and only gift that you (and everyone else) really needs?

THE GIFT OF FORGIVENESS—CRITICAL NEED #1

Because of our sin—we are all debtors to God's Righteousness; so we need forgiveness.

So Christmas is all about Jesus coming to live and then die the substitutionary death to take the hopeless debt we owe to God and pay with His own life our eternal death sin has caused us to be responsible to pay--**that's forgiveness.** A Sinner stands before God as a debtor and that debt is forgotten by His payment.

Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. 2

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity,

And in whose spirit there is no deceit. NKJV

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace NKJV

Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. NKJV

Forgiveness means that we can offer people the “remission of sins” in Jesus’ name (Luke 24:47) which brings “life through His name” (John 20:31). We can then come asking our Father for help in Jesus’ name as we pray (John 14:13–14; 15:16; 16:23–26). Because we’ve been forgiven, when we ask the Father “in the name of Jesus Christ,” it is as though Jesus Himself were asking it. If we remember this, it will help to keep us from asking for things unworthy of His name.

Have you **experienced the relief of knowing that all your sins, everyone of them—past, present, and future, are GONE?** Your sins are paid for, and your eternal life is purchased—and you have the receipt in your hand, written in the very blood of the One who paid the price. Christ's record of that payment is forever settled in this book the Bible!

That is the first part of the only gift everyone really needs this Christmas.

THE GIFT OF JUSTIFICATION—CRITICAL NEED #2

Because of our sin—we are all guilty convicts in God's sight; so we need justification.

So Christ died to take guilty convicts and destroy any record that that ever committed a crime and takes their place in the punishment—**that's justification!** A Sinner stands

before God as accused and is declared righteous by His imputed righteousness.

*Psalm 51:3-4 For **I** acknowledge **my** transgressions, And **my sin** is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, **have I sinned**, And done this evil in Your sight— That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge. NKJV*

*Isaiah 53:6 **All we** like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, **every one**, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. NKJV*

*Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ, NKJV*

But justification is only for those who confess their crimes (sins) to the judge (God) and ask for His pardon and forgiveness. All of those who refuse to believe they are a guilty, hopelessly sinful convict in Christ's eyes are denied any relief from the penalty of their sins—both now and forever.

Have you experienced **the peace of justification, all guilt removed, all punishment forever taken away from God's sight?**

That is the second part of the only gift everyone really needs this Christmas.

THE GIFT OF REGENERATION—CRITICAL NEED #3

Because of our sin—we are all dead in our trespasses and sin; so we need regeneration.

So Christ died to take dead and rotting spiritual corpses and make them vibrant, full of endless life and brand new—**that's regeneration!**

Ephesians 2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, NKJV

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. NKJV

Hebrews 7:16b ...but according to the power of an endless life. NKJV;

Have you **experienced the power of an endless life**, and every day partaking of the powerful presence within of the very Lord God Almighty?

That is the third part of the only gift everyone really needs this Christmas.

THE GIFT OF RECONCILIATION—CRITICAL NEED #4

Because of our sin—we are all enemies of God; so we need reconciliation.

So Christ died to take enemies and make them friends—**that's reconciliation!** A Sinner stands before God as an enemy and is made a friend by His peace.

Romans 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. NKJV

*Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, **having been reconciled**, we shall be saved by His life. NKJV; John 15:14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. NKJV*

Have you experienced **the wonder of friendship with God?**

That is the fourth part of the only gift everyone really needs this Christmas.

THE GIFT OF ADOPTION—CRITICAL NEED #5

Because of our sin—we are all strangers to God; so we need adoption.

So Christ died to take strangers and make them part of the family—**that's adoption!** A Sinner stands before God as a stranger and is called a Son by His choice.

Ephesians 2:12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. NASB

*Galatians 4:4-6 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, **that we might receive the adoption as sons**. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" NKJV*

Adoption is not our entrance into God's family, the way a homeless child would enter an adoptive family in our society. Rather, our only hope of getting into God's family is by *regeneration* or "the new birth" (John 3:3). In New Testament language, the word used by God for *adoption* means "placed into a family as an adult son." This denotes our *standing* in God's family of God: we enter God's family not as little children but we enter as adult sons with all the privileges. **Entrance** into God's family is by regeneration, but **enjoyment** of God's family is through adoption.

Have you experienced **the joy of being adopted into Christ's family?**

That is the fifth part of the only gift everyone really needs this Christmas.

THE GIFT OF REDEMPTION—CRITICAL NEED #6

Because of our sin—we are all slaves to unrighteousness; so we need redemption.

So Christ died to take slaves and make them freed forever—**that's redemption!** A Sinner stands before God as a slave and is granted freedom by His ransom.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. NASB

*John 8:36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, **you shall be free indeed.** NKJV*

Have you experienced **the thrill of being liberated, set free, rescued by God forever?**

That is the sixth part of the only gift everyone really needs this Christmas.

THE GIFT OF SANCTIFICATION—CRITICAL NEED #7

Because of our sin—we are all defiled; so we need sanctification.

So Christ died to take our soiled and spotted lives that always get wasted and make them clean, focused and fruitful—**that's sanctification!**

Just before we read Romans 6:13b, may I again remind you of the two sides of the coin of salvation. To best understand what God has done, let me contrast and explain justification and sanctification. Because we are saved (justified) this is how we should live (sanctified).

- **Justification** is what Christ did for me on the cross--**sanctification** is what Christ is doing in me because of the cross.
- **Justification** is immediate and was completely finished in me the instant I was saved—**sanctification** is an ongoing process never completed on earth until I meet Jesus face to face at death or His coming.
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DO YOU SEE YOUR CRITICAL NEEDS?

All sinners (so that means all humans that have ever lived on planet earth except Jesus Christ) have seven basic Biblically described critical and soul threatening needs.

God's Word describes all humans are hopelessly lost, sitting in the dark and awaiting destruction unless we have the elements of the gift of salvation. The Bible defines our greatest needs as:

1. **Forgiveness;** God takes away the guilt of every sin, and the stain of every sin, and the debt of every sin and sends them forever away.
2. **justification;** God treats Jesus like He committed all my sins, erases my record of ever sinning; and treats me like I've lived Christ's perfect life.
3. **regeneration;** God transplants a new heart into my decaying and lifeless body breathing the power of an endless life into me by His Spirit.
4. **reconciliation;** God takes down the wanted poster and my looming death penalty, and makes me His friend.

5. **adoption**; God welcomes me into His family with open arms and a never to run out, secure inheritance of endless pleasures.
6. **redemption**; God bought me at the highest possible cost, and now owns me completely and forever as His dwelling place. I have become the most expensive house in the world as God's residence.
7. **sanctification**. God promises to use every event in my life as part of His good plans to trim me, sharpen me, and polish me into the most useful tool possible for His Hands.

Every Piece of Our Armor is Vital

1. **Belt of Truth** (v.14a) Vital to every soldier was this belt from which all tools of battle hung. This belt also held the soldier's robe together. To the Christian soldier a belt of truth means that we are surrounded by "honesty," "truthfulness," "integrity," and "sincerity" that every part of our life is governed by truth. **Dishonesty brings defeat!**
2. **Breastplate of Righteousness** (v.14b) The soldier's breastplate was a heavy piece of armor that completely surrounded the body. To the Christian soldier this means a pursuit of personal, daily righteousness. We learn confession and repentance of sin can only maintain this. **Impurity will bring defeat**, so say no to sin daily.
3. **Shoes of Peace** (v.15). The sandal soles of the soldier were impregnated with heavy, spike-like hobnails, which gave him a good footing, and also kept him safe from stepping on sharp objects. If you injure a soldier's feet he's out of commission. To the Christian soldier this piece of armor is a call to both "readiness" and "peace of mind." If our hearts are not kept in peace by Christ, then **anxiety will bring us defeat!**
4. **Shield of Faith** (v.16). To a Roman soldier, his shield was a portable metal-banded wall, which he hid behind in battle. It was 5 feet high, 3 feet wide and served as the deflector from the flaming darts of the enemy. Our Shield of faith extinguishes all the flaming missiles of the evil one. But **doubt will bring defeat!**
5. **Helmet of Salvation** (v.17a). A soldier never was far from his helmet. Nearly any object on the battlefield could immobilize a soldier if his head was unprotected. So to the Christian soldier the meaning of the helmet is assurance of salvation. A Christian who is not assured that he has salvation is just totally immobilized because he's unsure about everything. He's unsure about God's promises, His Word, His protection. He's unsure about his destiny, his purpose in life. **Lack of assurance brings defeat!**
6. **Sword of the SPIRIT** (v.17b). Quick and deadly was the sword of a soldier. Vital to any victory was the hand-to-hand combat, which ended in the defeat of the enemy. To the Christian soldier this victorious sword comes only through a personal command of the Scriptures. This is essential to effectiveness in battle. **Neglecting the Word breeds weakness and will bring defeat in our lives.**

The Five Key Truths of Spiritual Warfare

There are five key passages on spiritual warfare, and each of them has a very specific message for us to apply. As we turn to each one and read the verses, note the lesson and apply it, by the power of God's Spirit, in your life.

JESUS said to resist Satan we must—**Eat GOD'S WORD**. In Matthew 4:1-11 we saw that God's Word works, Jesus even used the Old Testament to defeat the Devil!

Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, **but by every word** that proceeds from the mouth of God.' "

PAUL said to resist Satan we must—**USE GOD'S WEAPONS**. In Ephesians 6.10-17 we see that our spiritual weapons are not human inventions or works, as Paul wrote:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 **For the weapons of our warfare are** not carnal but **mighty in God** for pulling down strongholds, 5 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,

JAMES said that to resist Satan we must—**LIVE SUBMISSIVELY in God's sight**. In James 4:7-10 we see submission to God precedes any resistance of the Devil.

James 4:7-10 Therefore **submit to God**. [is first and then, and only then can we] Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

PETER said to resist Satan we must—**LIVE HUMBLY in God's sight**. In I Peter 5.5-9 we see that God calls us to clothe ourselves with humility before we resist the prowling Devil.

1 Peter 5:5-9 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." 6 **Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God**, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. 8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 **Resist him, steadfast in the faith**, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

JOHN said to resist Satan we must—**LIVE Purely in God's sight**. In I John 3.7-9 we see how powerful a pure life can be, and how disabling impurity can be.

1 John 3:3, 8 And everyone who has this hope in Him **purifies himself**, just as He is pure. 8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might **destroy the works of the devil**.

As we've already seen, our spiritual immune system is laid out in Scripture as having three factors:

spiritual health (eating and drinking in God's Word, plus exercising each day by walking in the Spirit);

spiritual armor (understanding and uses the armor Paul commands us to use in Ephesians 6:10-18); and

spiritual warfare (resisting the devil and his demons). If you neglect any part of your spiritual immune system—Satan and his army have a point to step up their campaign.

In Ephesians 6:10-17, we see six clear articles we are actually commanded to wear.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 **Put on the whole armor of God**, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 **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.

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6. Armed by the Ultimate Weapon of God's Sword (Ephesians 6:17b):

The up close war tool of the Roman soldier was not the 3-4 foot battle sword called the rhomphaia, it was the lethal, hand-to-hand sword called in Greek, machaira. Just 16-18 inches long, and always at his side, the sword of the Legionnaire was his supreme battle tool. He could deflect an attacker thrusts, and inflict precise mortal wounds. Romans were unmatched in their skills in hand-to-hand combat.

For us as believers our sword is "of the Spirit", a weapon originated and energized by the Spirit of God, for us to wield in spiritual warfare. No enemy can stand against the Word of God; and God's Word is the sword. When we hold firm to what God says, He cuts down all our enemies.

Like the Roman sword, this sword of the Spirit is both defensive and offensive.

In deflecting an attack it is used in a precise manner, directly meeting the attack with a specific and appropriate Word from God. Our shield of faith makes a wall of protection, but the sword goes directly at the specific attack and defeats it on the spot. Like Jesus demonstrated in His sword thrust Scriptural responses to each of the Devil's three attacks (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10), we must know and use the Word. Believers who do not know how to deflect a direct attacks with Scripture, are far more likely to be wounded, and devoured by our adversary the devil.

Our sword of the Spirit is also our chief offensive weapon against both the enemy without and the enemy within. The Word of God that defends us also transforms us from the inside out. God's Word of truth can change us from liar-hearted to truth-tellers, from greedy-hearted to givers, from bitter-hearted to tender forgivers, and from fearful-hearted to emboldened soldiers of God.

God's Word in the hands of a skilled Christian soldier can be used by the Spirit of God to turn many captives in Satan's dark prison from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of all their guilty sins, and go from eternal paupers to the riches of the inheritance of Christ.

That is the amazing evangelistic power of our sword the Spirit gives us. May we use it to quell Satan's attacks, and release many captives by the power of the Gospel unto salvation for all those who believe.