

## SEVEN

# BE COURAGEOUS: THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

*Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12-13*

**M**y grandchildren can make just about anything into a pretend weapon in their imaginary battles for world conquest. Couch pillows become bombs and flashlights become laser blasters. The latest battle was fought in our basement with long pieces of foam pipe insulation. Within seconds a massive sword fight broke out!

**Group Discussion.** What was your go-to pretend weapon as a child? Or what is your preferred video game weapon? How does it make you feel to be in the heat of the battle?

**Personal Reflection.** Have you ever had to carry a weapon for self-defense or as part of your job or in the military? How do you think you would respond to having a weapon so near all the time?

Paul's description of our spiritual armor takes a dramatic turn as he talks about the sixth piece. Up until now, the armor has been primarily defensive; it was designed to protect us from the enemy's attacks. But now Paul puts an offensive weapon in our hands, a spiritual sword!

In Paul's day this weapon was a short, one-handed sword that was carried in a leather sheath at the soldier's waist. It was ready instantly for hand-to-hand combat. *Read Ephesians 6:17.*

1. In presenting the sword, Paul mentions two defining aspects. What are these?

2. Paul explains that the sword originates from the Spirit. How might the Holy Spirit be involved in how the sword is used in our lives?

3. If we think of the sword as a spiritual weapon to be used against our spiritual enemies, in what situations would we rely on a sword?

4. Paul further explains that the sword is "the word of God." How can God's Word of truth be used as an offensive weapon to destroy and expose the enemy's schemes against us?

| How can it also act as a defensive weapon to protect us?

| 5. Tell a story from your own experience of how God's Word protected you from temptation or harm or how you were able to resist the enemy with the sword of God's Word.

| 6. What are some areas of your life where you need to be on the offensive to take back ground the enemy has claimed or to overcome one of his lies that you have accepted?

| 7. How might you do that? What is your plan, and who can help you in carrying out that plan?

| Read Hebrews 4:12-13.

| 8. What additional insight does this passage give you about the Word of God as a spiritual sword?

| 9. What does it mean to allow the Bible to penetrate your heart and mind?

| 10. How do you feel when you think of everything being "laid bare" (v. 13) before God?

| 11. **Armor Assessment.** A Roman soldier would be required to keep his sword ready for battle and to be ready to use the sword effectively. How would the soldier do this?

12. Using a scale of 1 to 5, evaluate your battle readiness with the sword of God's Word. Explain your evaluation.

13. What is your strategy to increase your effectiveness?



*God's Word is a light on our paths, honey in our mouths, strength for our souls, and a sword in our hands. Express to God how you want to know him and his words more deeply each day.*

### **NOW OR LATER**

Write daily in a journal or notebook some of the things God speaks to you about as you read his Word. Then determine to obey what God tells you.