

Home Group Leader's Notes for "Armed" series
Armed #8 – The Sword of the Spirit

LOOKING BACK

What role has the Bible played in your Christian experience? What are some verses, passages, or stories of the Bible that you personally cherish?

LEADERS: Let people share their experiences openly and w/o seeking to "fix" or give them counsel on what they should be doing better. For those who struggle with regular Bible intake (personal & corporate reading and studying), our prayer is the Holy Spirit will illuminate their need for the word of God and create in them an insatiable hunger and thirst for His word. Prayerfully, the people in your group will be able to share positive experiences they've had regarding the word of God and its impact in their lives.

LEARN FROM GOD'S WORD

In Genesis 3:1, how does Satan attack Eve? Why is identifying Satan's scheme in this passage important to our standing firm and strong in the spiritual battle?

LEADERS: Satan's scheme was to cause Eve to doubt God's word. If we're going to be a people who stand in the spiritual battle and not be taken out, then we need to believe God's word and not be persuaded otherwise.

Matthew 4:1-11 How does Jesus model for us how to use the sword of the Spirit when He was tempted by Satan? What can we learn and apply from Jesus' example?

LEADERS: While in the wilderness, Jesus uses the word of God to fight against Satan's temptations. He models for us the importance of not just knowing the word of God, but being able to rely on it and recall it when we are faced with temptations and lies of the enemy.

Look at Psalm 119:109 and 119:111. How is hiding God's word in our heart part of an effective offense in fighting against temptation.

LEADERS: We see how the Psalmist hid God's word in his heart to fight against the lies and lure of temptation. By hiding God's word in our heart, we will be able to fight more effectively when temptation comes our way.

Study John 5:39-40. How is it possible to be an avid student of Scripture and yet miss the point entirely?

LEADERS: The Scriptures are meant to point us to Jesus. If we study Scriptures apart from Him or divorced from Him, we miss the point entirely. In our desire to be students of the Bible, let's remember who Scriptures are all about and who is the true Word of God.

Read both 2 Timothy 3:16 and 1 Thessalonians 2:13. According to these two verses, who is the true author of Scripture and what are the various benefits of Scripture?

LEADERS: We see in these passages the Scriptures being called the "word of God" and "God breathed," meaning the author is none other than God himself. This means that Scriptures are His words that are given to work in our lives by teaching, rebuking, correcting, training us for righteousness, and equipping us for every good work.

In John 8:44, Jesus tells us that our enemy is not only a liar, but the father of lies. Some of the greatest lies that he speaks are those that attempt to cause us as God's children to doubt the Father's love and forgiveness of sins. Take a few minutes to read and meditate on these Scriptures so you can go on the offense next time doubt or discouragement comes your way: **LEADERS: As stated above, the enemy loves to cause God's children to doubt their Father's forgiveness and relationship with Him. All these verses are given to help people "Preach the gospel to themselves" so that when they doubt, they can recall the sure promises of God. These are also good to share with others who are not yet Christians so they can hear the good news of the forgiveness of sins.**

- Micah 7:19
- Psalm 103:12
- Romans 8:1
- 1 Timothy 1:15
- 1 John 1:9
- Romans 8:28-39
- Revelation 12:10-11

DISCUSS TOGETHER

In taking up the sword of the Spirit, why is it crucial to remember who our true enemy is and who the sword is supposed to be used against?

LEADERS: We must recognize that the word of God is a sword to fight against Satan and his emissaries, not each other. We have to be careful not to turn our swords against one another and inflict unnecessary damage and hurt to our fellow soldiers.

It's been noted that the sword of the Spirit is the only piece of spiritual armor that is used as an offensive weapon to go on the attack with. How are you intentional in keeping your sword ready for battle? (i.e., reading it, hiding it in your heart, committing it to memory)

LEADERS: The purpose of this question is to discuss the various ways in which your group members engage the word of God and to learn from one another. There is no "one size fits all" approach to this spiritual discipline but hopefully this will help encourage others who struggle in this area and give them some tools and tips to learn from and put into practice.

Can you describe and share a time or season when the Word of God pierced you in a profound way, touching your heart or mind?

LEADERS: Prayerfully, your group members will be able to share their experiences on how the word of God has touched them personally. Whether it's encouragement, conviction, reminders, or a precious promise, the purpose of this question is to get people talking about how they've been touched by word of God and have heard the Lord speak to them through it.

How have you had to use the word of God like a sword against the lies, condemnation, or doubts of the enemy?

LEADERS: Again, a very experiential question but one I hope will spur a real, transparent conversation about the ways God's word has been used to help fight against the enemy, especially in this season. Don't be afraid to share your story and model transparency with this question.

As we engage in spiritual battle, why is it vital to remember that the Bible is God's authoritative word and not just a book of suggestions?

LEADERS: We want to be a people whose lives are not only informed by the Bible, but whose lives are aligned to Scripture, allowing it to transform us. When we stand under its authority, our lives will reap the benefits and we will bear fruit leading to the Lord being glorified.

Where in your life do you desire God's word to rule more authoritatively over and transform?

LEADERS: Let your group share those areas of their lives where they need to be more led and ruled by God's word than their own thoughts, opinions, and biases (ex: social issues, the political arena, marriage, dealing with kids, or other relationships, finances, relationships, work, etc.).