

THE SHIELD AND THE SWORD

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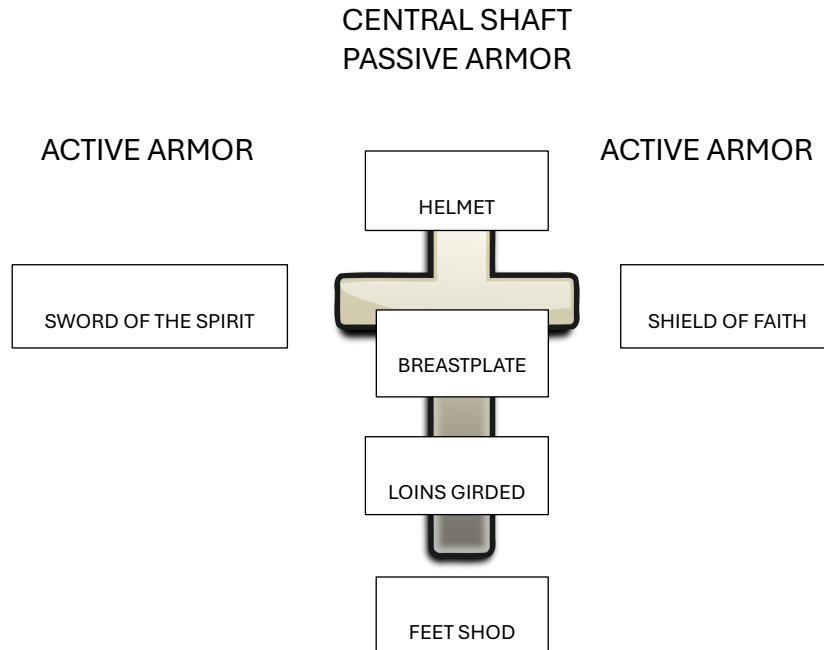
This year marks 45 years since God thrust me into full-time ministry. My life has been a series of experiences, both positive and negative, filled with pleasure and pain. I have witnessed and received great expressions of love, kindness, and support but have also faced equal levels of hate, rejection, and mockery. I learned early on that I must actively use the shield of faith to defend against all the arrows and fiery darts sent my way; otherwise, those arrows would penetrate my heart and lead to my own demise.

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (Ephesians 6:16)

Above all means “*over or above anything else.*”

Every piece of armor is important and needs to be used by the warrior in warfare. Every piece of armor is powerful and necessary in the warrior's arsenal. The feet shod, the loins girded, the heart covered with a breastplate, and the helmet on the head are all passive-protective items of the warrior's arsenal. On the other hand, the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith are the two components of weaponry actively utilized in defensive and aggressive warfare.

(see diagram on the following page)



The core and vertical pillar of your being (feet, loins, heart, and head) is protected with passive weaponry that guards your being from falling prey to enemy powers and attacks.

However, one item of armor is *above all* others. It is not that it is more important or more powerful than the sword of the Spirit or the helmet of salvation, for example, but rather because this piece of armor, the **shield of faith, is the first line of defense against that which is hurled against you in battle; the fiery darts**. The shield stands between you and the enemy's fiery darts—words.

In Paul's day, the fiery darts (spears, arrows, and missiles of fire) represented the most advanced weaponry of his time. These fiery darts were sent flying through the air with fireballs attached that would combust and explode on contact. Today, the most sophisticated weaponry used against the child of God is technology. The main power of technology is words. The main weapon used by demonic powers is words and word curses.

- He accuses the brethren with words.
- He captivates your mind with words.
- He sways your feelings and thoughts with words.
- He influences your choices with words
- His power of deception is in words.

- He persuades with words.
- He leads astray with words.

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. (James 3:6)

The tongue, the member that speaks words, is a fire ignited by the fires of hell. The spears, arrows, and fiery swords that demonic powers use to bind, curse, and destroy the people of God cannot be overcome without using the shield of faith.

My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. (Psalm 57:4)

Words carry the power to set free or to bind in chains. The power of a report will heal or kill, open or close, advance or hinder.

Israel missed the opportunity to conquer the land in the season God had ordained for them because of words spoken to them.

And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel (Numbers 13:32) read vs 25-33.

The Hebrew word for report is **dib-baw**, which means slander or to defame and to glide like a serpent. The highest form of fiery darts of slander is first against God Himself and His purpose, then against His people. I have watched many people miss their high calling because of words spoken to them, evil reports that have worked as word curses.

Fiery darts are launched at you from all directions. The first line of defense is the shield of faith. **The Romans called these shields a “scutum”** (pronounced as skyoo-tm).

The meaning of the word "shield" is...

- a large door-shaped shield
- a door
- portal

- entrance (the act of opening and closing)
- a gate

The shields were 3 - 3 ½ feet tall and were often just as wide. They were curved, providing a greater ability to deflect flying arrows and spears. In the center of the scutum was a metal knob called “the boss.” It was used to knock out opponents when in close combat. As long as the shield remains actively positioned, the door is closed to any enemy attacks, influence, or takeover. The shield protects all other armor used in more personal and interactive combat.

So, what is this door? What is this shield that must remain upright and pointed toward the fiery darts? Paul stated that it is with the shield of faith that the fiery darts are **quenched (extinguished)**. Clearly, this “above all” piece of armor is important but is also widely overlooked!

The Greek word for faith is *pis-tis*, which signifies persuasion, moral conviction of truth, and God's truthfulness. It also encompasses assurance and actively believing in God and what He has spoken.

- To be **persuaded** means to be convinced and to be caused to believe something through words of reason and purpose.

Many people, and I dare say most, do not equate faith with their persuasion. *Faith is rooted in your persuasions.* You don't believe in or have faith in anything that you are not persuaded about. The church generally lacks faith due to a lack of persuasion or because people have grown complacent in their persuasions. **Faith (persuasion) comes from hearing; conversely, doubt also develops from what we hear.** Fear, resistance, and poor choices often arise from words spoken into our ears—words that possess the power to *bless or curse*.

A war is being waged against the Word, a war of words and word curses that create doubt and oppose the truth. A brutal battle has been set against God and His Kingdom. This isn't anything new—it's been part of mankind's history since the beginning. The Kingdom of God suffers violence.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. (Matthew 11:12)

From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violent assault, and violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize] (Amplified Bible Matthew 11:12)

To **suffer violence** means to crowd oneself into, to force, press, and seize. **The Kingdom experience is an experience that every demon from hell wants to prevent you and me from having.** Why? Because it is the ultimate—it is the Father and the throne. The fiery darts of words penetrate your heart and kill your vision and faith by destroying your persuasions or causing you to let down your guard and put the shield down or open the door.

LESSON 2: The Sword of The Spirit.

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (Ephesians 6:16-17)

The upheld shield of your persuasions (the shield of faith) quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one, while the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, actively neutralizes the enemy's tactics.

The sword of the Spirit is Truth—it is the Word. Jesus said, “The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life” (Spirit and life is breath, power, inspiration, and anointing - John 6:63). In other words, Jesus said, “My words are not just sentences and quotes but inspired *living action, breath, movement*”; His Word is not just what He says, but rather who He is—an alive, breathing, and moving being—Living Word! How does that work for us?

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

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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.

The Word is a spiritual sword—active and alive. It is not a dead letter but something breathing, moving, and actively demonstrating power and response.

The Sword of the Spirit, the Living active Word, judges the inner being of our thoughts and motives, actively separating the body (joints and marrow), the soul, and the spirit. Hence, it shows us how to act (body), think (soul), and feel (spirit). We all desire to possess the sword's power, but few want to live the Word in body, soul, and spirit. Allow me to explain.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).

We think of the *Word of God* as alphabetical letters formed into words, words formed into sentences, quotes, scriptures, and a complete collection of sixty-six books called the Bible. Although the sixty-six books contain the Word, they are not *The Word*. A written composition is not alive; it is a dead letter. Without breath and Spirit, the “book” is not living. Attempting to wield the Sword without God's living breath and Spirit amounts to nothing more than uttering words. There is more to the use of the Sword than that.

The Word existed long before sentences and written forms. It is more than that. The eternal Word LIVES, whereas the Bible is a record of the Word that lives, given to us to become a living, breathing reality in and through our lives.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. (Revelation 1:1-2)

The written Word is a record and a witness to that which is living and breathing. To bare record means to testify, witness, give evidence, and report to something that has been, is, and shall be.

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Peter 1:23)

The word lives and stands in place forever. For something to live, it must breathe, move, respond, and act according to its nature. The born-again experience is by the Living Word that is eternal and remains forever.

Let me reiterate again: the Word is a living Spirit, life, breath, fire, and power. Knowing this, the question remains: “How do we use the sword of the Spirit?”

The Father is the Eternal Word. He is the origin and source of the Word. From the beginning, He was the Living Word, and the Word was with Him. The Word resides in Him, the Word is Him, and yet the Word is with Him. He is Spirit, breath, water, and fire without form. He poured Himself into a living form called His Son, Christ, the anointed one. We could never know the Father without His Son, Christ the Word. The Christ was with God, and yet He was God. He considered Himself equal to God because He is God (Philippians 2:6).

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

The eternal, invisible Word was placed within a visible form, a body of flesh called Jesus.

He is the Word, not a book, yet He is a book, not letters and sentences but Word in living action and deeds. He is the invisible Word of God acted out in a visible, tangible form.

Through Him, the Word is not only heard but seen. He is not read but experienced. *The Word's glory (the life and presence) was seen and experienced as it was manifested in the life, actions, deeds, and manner of Jesus, the Living Word of God.*

If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. (John 14:7-10)

Jesus is the living, breathing manifestation of the Father, who is the origin, the beginning, and the eternal Word. Jesus said, “The words I speak to you are not this flesh and blood that you see, but they are the Father that dwells in me and is seen through me.”

We can quote scripture all day and yet fall into a temptation and a snare. We can speak all manner of verses and memorizations and yet not live victorious and overcoming lives. For many years, I was brainwashed into believing that by simply saying, “God’s the Head,” I was living in victory. But my actions did not align with my words. It is true that God is the Supreme Ruler and King, but I was simply quoting words. It wasn’t until I began living “God’s the Head” through submission, obedience, and surrender to His Kingship and rulership that the truth of His headship became a reality. The Word is not simply something you say; it is something you do. Until the words coming out of your mouth are joined to living action, they are simply words with no power. The word must become flesh, our flesh.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. (James 1:22-24)

The Holy Place in the Old Testament is a type and shadow that demonstrates the principle of both aspects of the Word, the knowledge and the practical application (the letter and the Spirit).

The Holy Place contained three pieces of furniture: the golden altar, the golden candlestick, and the golden table of Shewbread. The two extremities, namely the right and left hands, held two pieces of furniture representing the Word, the Truth.

- The Golden Candlestick speaks of the written revealed Word of God. It speaks of the Word that enlightens and directs, representing all sixty-six books of the written Word.
- However, the Golden Table of Shewbread also represents the Word. The Word is the “Bread of Life.” The Light is given to direct and show the way, whereas the bread is given as a substance that becomes a part of your life. Bread is to be eaten, consumed, and digested, becoming part of the fibers of your being. There is a saying, “You are what you eat.” This is true in the spiritual sense as it is in the natural.

One is knowledge, and the other is experience, but you have to have both centered around a heartbeat of prayer and worship unto God, the Golden Altar.

*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
(Romans 10:17)*

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:26)

Faith comes by hearing the Word, but faith without works is dead, just like the Word without action is empty and lifeless. The Sword is powerless without living action!

We must LIVE the Word, breathe it, act it out, and follow its example. The Eternal Living Word became flesh (John 1:14) and walked among us. Seeing Him is seeing the Word in action, alive. The Word is Spirit and life. **To activate the sword is to live the Word.**

You can have a Bible sitting on your coffee table or nightstand until Jesus comes, and you can even read it and study its contents 24 hours a day. However, it's nothing more than a dead letter and empty theory unless you live it; you must eat it, digest it, and allow it to become a part of who you are. To

become sons of God like the Son of God, we must embody the Word of God—in other words, we must become active LIVING-WORD beings like Jesus!

The shield of faith is your persuasion standing between you and the fiery darts of the wicked one, whereas the sword of the Spirit is activated by you living the Word and becoming like Jesus. You, your life, actions, behavior, and words become the sword! ***You become the sword!***

When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. (Zechariah 9:13)

Judah and Ephraim (Ephraim representing Israel) were combined like a bow and arrow in war. The sons of Zion emerged from the united nations of Judah and Israel. God referenced these sons of Zion (the sons of God) as swords. It wasn't that God described them as holding swords in their hands; rather, they were the swords themselves. You are the sword; you become the sword by maturing into the sonship of God, Christlikeness!

With the shield and sword, we must get violent (zealous, on fire, determined, committed, and active) in pursuit of the Kingdom.