

The Inseparable Power:
The Sword and the Spirit

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Many believers do their best to live according to the letter of the Word of God. Their intentions are good, but they often become spiritually exhausted from the strain of living up to a standard that the flesh cannot attain. Others are tempted to operate in subjective impressions of being moved by the Spirit. These people have no objective frame of reference from the Word of God. They may experience great emotional highs but are easily disturbed when they can't "feel" God's presence.

Though we are indeed new creatures in Christ, we still have to deal with an old sin nature and a mind that needs continual renewal by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. If we only rely on our own ability to obey what we know to be true, we may never experience the tremendous miracles God wants to perform in us through His two-edged Sword.

Revelation 1:16 speaks of the two-edged

sword that went out from Jesus' mouth. God intended His people to live by His Word *and* in the power of the Spirit. Trying to live by one without the other only results in frustration.

This booklet will describe how every Christian can enjoy a balanced walk with God, led by the Holy Spirit and governed by truth.

Chapter One

HAVING A SET PURPOSE

“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand” (Psalm 149:6).

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

“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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

“And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength (Revelation 1:16).

Everything about Jesus’ life on earth revealed a set purpose. As He went about preaching and teaching, His face was set toward Jerusalem

(Luke 9:51; 13:22; 18:31). Jesus fulfilled His purpose on earth when, in Jerusalem, He finished the work of Redemption (Luke 23).

Every spiritual individual has a goal set before him that completely controls his desires. The “congregation of saints,” the meek, beautified by God’s salvation, are said by the Psalmist to have “high praises” in their mouths for the Finished Work and for their eternal position in heaven. They also have a two-edged sword in their hand.

In Ephesians 6:17, the apostle Paul revealed what that sword is when he instructed believers to take up “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

As believers, we have to recognize the value of God’s two-edged Sword. The Holy Spirit must never be separated from the Sword, and the Sword must never be separated from the Spirit. When a man knows how to use the sword—the Word of God—and how to be led by the Spirit, he has what it takes to be an effective Christian.

As we often think of Him—the Crucified Lord who was buried, but who is now risen and ascended—our mind centers on Revelation 1:16. In this passage, His countenance was like the

sun, and out of his mouth went “a sharp two-edged sword.”

In His hand, Jesus held the seven “stars” (representing the seven churches in Asia Minor), and from His mouth came the “two-edged sword.” These edges refer to the Word and the Holy Spirit working together. “The flesh profiteth nothing: the words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life,” Jesus said (John 6:63).

There Is No Sword Like It

A most unique thing can happen when a Christian really understands how to use the Sword of the Spirit—not just the Sword, not just the Spirit, but the Sword of the Spirit. People who feel condemned after hearing a message from the Bible are taking only the Sword. And people who don’t want to implement truth in their lives, but who still want to “feel” spiritual through the gifts, take only the Spirit. Yet, the Word of God never separates the two. We are to take up “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

Pertaining to Goliath’s sword, David said, “Give it to me. Put it in my hand, for there is none like it” (see 1 Samuel 21:9). David was saying, “I know how to use the Sword. There is

nothing like it”—and there is nothing like the Sword of the Spirit, the powerful Word of God.

Moses, in Deuteronomy 1:17, said to the children of Israel, “If you can’t handle your problems, bring them to me. Give them into my hand. I will hear, and I will answer the problems.” Both David and Moses had confidence in God’s Word and confidence in the Spirit.

Every pastor who studies and meditates on the Word will be faithful to instruct his congregation in categories of doctrine. As we grow together in a progressive revelation of the Word of God, we know we will never fully comprehend all of it. Yet occasionally, people will attend service after service, hearing the progression of the messages but not applying what they have heard to their situation. Then they say, “I need more counseling,” when really, there isn’t much more anyone can say to help, outside of the revelation of the Sword of the Spirit from the pulpit.

The pastor may be able to help people get through a problem, but the point is this: If a believer receives the Sword with the Spirit, the Sword and the Spirit will separate the human spirit from the human soul to straighten out the issue. A person who won’t receive the Word when it comes from the pulpit won’t take the

Sword with the Spirit in a private counseling session either.

We may enjoy the Sword whether it reveals grace and mercy or deep conviction. But, the Sword will be ineffective without the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit will do nothing for us without the Sword.

“The words that I speak unto you: they are spirit, and they are life,” Jesus said (John 6:63*b*). The question a believer must ask himself is this: “Do I want the Sword *with* the Spirit to really change my life?” The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. The two edges are said to represent God’s goodness and His severity (Romans 11:22); but ultimately they speak of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God at work together in us.

Chapter Two

THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE; THE LETTER KILLS

Some people are able to quote the Bible fluently, but the Word never changes them. Though they are convicted, they never have a conversion because they don't let the Spirit take the Sword.

Paul said, "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." The Spirit must have the Sword, and the Sword is the Word. If the Spirit's Sword isn't at work in our lives, change will not come, even if we are teachers or preachers. Only the Sword of the Spirit can bring change.

Second Corinthians 3:6 warns that "the letter killeth." Some flaunt their knowledge of the Sword and debate what they know about it. They tell people what they think about it. They describe their interpretations of it and end up wrongly influencing someone who knows less about the Bible than they do. Those who listen

to such people don't understand that they are using the Sword without the Spirit.

When our old sin nature uses the Sword, harm comes to people. The letter kills when it is expressed apart from the Spirit. We can counsel by the Word, giving chapter and verse; but without the Spirit, we hurt the person being counseled, every time. When the *Spirit* takes the Sword, however, the human spirit is separated from the human soul, bringing in God's provision, God's solution, and God's presence to execute God's power. There isn't anything like the Sword and the Spirit doing their two-edged work.

One-Edged Existence

The reason many are not healed is because the Spirit isn't allowed to use the Sword in their lives. Marriages break up and are not reconciled because couples don't have the Sword being used by the Spirit. The reason many addicts are never delivered from drug abuse is that they may have the Sword, but they do not have the Spirit taking it up.

A one-edged sword is not effective. The two-edged solution to any problem—the Sword of the Word handled by the Holy Spirit—is the

only thing that works, whatever the issue is.

There are Christians who emphasize the Spirit without the Sword. Others emphasize the Sword and no Spirit. Both examples use one edge without the other, and both need the two-edged Sword of the Spirit in their hands—the two-edged Sword that went from Jesus’ mouth in Revelation 1. The two-edged Sword is the only one that works.

Without the Sword and the Spirit, believers easily become subjective and proud in their spiritual concepts, evaluations, and communications about God. If there is no Word of God, a believer can only be subjective; if it is all the Holy Spirit without the Word, there is no objectivity. A ministry only grows, develops, evangelizes, and makes disciples honestly and realistically with God when its members live under the power of the two-edged Sword.

When Jesus healed the woman of her issue of blood, He said, “I perceive that virtue is gone out of me” (Luke 8:46). The power of the Spirit of God went out from Him. Then the woman came forward, and Jesus said, “Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace”—that is the work of the Word of God. The two-edged Sword brought a miracle. Acts 10:38 tells us that Jesus

of Nazareth was anointed of the Holy Spirit and went about healing all who were oppressed of the devil. Once again, the Word and the Spirit have to work together.

The singers who sing in church need to have more than the Word of God; they need to have the Spirit of God, too. A missionary on the foreign field needs more than just the Spirit, more than just the Word; he has to have the two-edged Sword in his hand.

Any Christian marriage could be healed this instant if the Spirit could take the Sword and deal individually with each person. If the couple really were to seek after God, the Spirit could take the Sword and make a difference. Instead, what often happens is that they argue about their interpretations of the Sword and there is no power in that. They wind up killing each other with the letter. They become separated by the very Word that could bring them together if it were being used by the Spirit. Oh, can you see how crucial it is for us to understand this?

The Power of "It Is Written"

In Luke 4, the Spirit of God led Jesus Christ to fast in the desert for forty days and forty nights. There, He was tempted by Satan physi-

cally, psychologically, and spiritually. Jesus was hungry when the tempter came and said, “If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread” (Luke 4:3). Jesus’ response was, “It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God” (Luke 4:4).

Jesus was confessing, “The Spirit led Me here into the wilderness, and I have the two-edged Sword in My mouth and in My hand. Yes, I am hungry. I am very hungry. I have a tremendous need—but, ‘It is written....’ I will base everything that I think on ‘It is written.’ Do I have strength? No, I have none. Am I hungry? Yes. Are all the demons of hell after Me? Yes, but it is written that man shall not live by bread alone, even when he is hungry.” That is how Jesus overcame the physical temptation.

Next came a spiritual attack, when Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world in return for a moment of worship from the Son of God. “And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Luke 4:8). Jesus resisted Satan with “It is written.”

In the next temptation, Satan applied psychological pressure by taking Jesus to the holy

city, setting Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and daring Jesus to cast Himself down. This time, the devil used the Scripture: "For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Luke 4:10-12). Jesus fought off all these temptations with the two-edged Sword: "It is written."

Chapter Three

THE COMFORTER IS ALWAYS THERE TO HELP

We cannot comfort people by preaching at them and casually throwing them verses of Scripture. We have to weep when they weep and rejoice when they rejoice (Romans 12:15). This is what God does to bring comfort. In all of our afflictions, Jesus was afflicted (Isaiah 63:9). When we are afflicted, God doesn't come down and tell us to change. He feels what we feel. That is what the Spirit—the Comforter—does as He picks us up by identifying with us. The Comforter comes along side of us, ready to lift us when we fall.

“I will weep with you, and we will get through this together.” This is how the Spirit speaks to us (Romans 8:26). This is how God works with His two-edged Sword. “I will be with you through it all. I will pick you up as I weep with you.” He knows what we are going

through (Hebrews 4:15).

With God in the Holy of Holies

A believer is the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). The body is the outer court of who we are. Often, we find remedies for the outer court without going to the Holy of Holies first. We will do everything to find help for our outer court, fixing up the shell that everyone can see. The soul represents our middle court, where many people can come in. We share with them and they share with us. The human spirit is our Holy of Holies. No one but God can enter into our Holy Place.

The Holy Spirit takes up the Sword and sweetly separates the human spirit from the human soul so that God can minister to us. God wants us to go past the outer court, through the soul, and into our human spirit where He dwells—just God and you, in your Holy of Holies. We have beautiful fellowship when we stay in the Holy of Holies where God lives, and that fellowship spreads through the middle court of the soul to the outer court, to be revealed on our countenance and in our conversation.

This all happens when the Word of God becomes a two-edged Sword in our lives. Though

we may be pierced, it does no damage; it isn't done to hurt us, it is done to heal. When the Sword of the Spirit pierces, it opens us up to God-consciousness—to God's comfort, conviction, and compassion. It opens us up to God's wisdom, direction, and deliverance in our lives. God's way, truth, and life now have a way to work.

CONCLUSION

So many people follow God's Word, but they don't follow God's life. They follow the Sword, but not God's way. They have a one-edged existence without the two-edged Sword of the Bible. God's truth is in the two-edged Sword—it takes the Spirit and the Word together to work as our offense as well as our defense.

The Sword of the Spirit is always motivated by love. It always manifests grace. And even in discipline and correction, the Sword of the Spirit brings forth peace and the fruits of righteousness.

If we let the Word and the Spirit work deeply in our lives, we will be transformed more and more into Christ's image, and we will manifest Him through our lives.