

Have you ever handled a sword? They can be heavy and unwieldy. I don't like edged weapons to begin with, and having a double edged sword swinging around seems to me a good way to get seriously cut. So I don't fool around with them. Hang it on the wall and leave it alone. We cannot leave the word of God alone if we want to stand in hard times.

In the verse above, the word of God is called the sword of the Spirit. In my Christian life I have miss-handled God's word. I took it out of context to fit my lifestyle and got cut in the process. I sliced up my family with sternness. Took a light view of sin and pierced my soul with sorrow. I severed the bonds of marriage, not taking serious the warnings against lust.

When I repented, confessed the sins to my Father, pled the blood of Jesus, surrendered to His Holy Spirit – I found the sword of God's word now works for me, defends me against wrong thinking, and... myself - of all people.

Wearing God's armor, all of it, guarantees Satan is our enemy. He never rests when it comes to seeking our defeat. Lies are his weapons and he is very practiced at it. The sword of God in the power of His Spirit defeats Satan every time. The key here, to defeating Satan, then, is learning to use this sword effectively.

As anyone proficient with weapons will tell us, practice, and by this, I mean the handling of a weapon in every aspect of its design, is a must. Practice begins to develop a feel for the weapon. As we handle the word of God by reading, studying, and, the part I struggle with, memorizing verses, we defend ourselves.

Once, in the middle of the night, depression lay heavy on me like a smothering blanket. Thoughts laced with despair ran through my mind endlessly. I was helpless to understand what was happening to me. All those years 'playing at church' and I did not realize this mental assault came from the pit of hell. Lies whispered to me, that I would be better off dead. The pain would end, you know. I began to contemplate my death.

From somewhere a thought came to pray to God's Holy Spirit to seal my mind in the name and blood of Christ. I prayed and proclaimed my mind holy ground where only Jesus could walk and speak. This prayer was powerfully effective. I have used it many times since.

Where would such a thought to pray this way come from? I had no conscious knowledge of praying like this. I think somewhere in the years spent in church, the truth of God's sealing power was probably spoken of and when I needed it, made available to me. Prompted by His Holy Spirit, I prayed and God heard.

I now read the Sword twice daily. Someday, I may even become proficient with it.

D. Franklin Bradley – dfbradley@hopesharbor.net