

A. WEAPON

- We have a powerful defense whenever we encounter temptation or trials of any kind. Eph 6:16-17 NLT – Hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
- Faith in God's Word + the Mind of Christ we received at salvation + the principles and promises of God's Living and Active Word = Victory over the enemy
- The particular word for "word" in this passage is "rhema." When we seek God through His written word (logos), the Spirit will apply it to our situation (rhema).
- It's from the posture of abiding in Him and His words abiding in us that we are best able to wield this weapon to win our current battle with the kingdom of darkness.
- Every device of the enemy can be overcome when we employ the mighty Sword of the Spirit just as Jesus did: Luke 4:1-14 NLT -- Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry. ³ Then the devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread." ⁴ But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.'" ⁵ Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ "I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them," the devil said, "because they are mine to give to anyone I please." ⁷ "I will give it all to you if you will worship me." ⁸ Jesus replied, "The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the LORD your God and serve only him.'" ⁹ Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off!" ¹⁰ For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect and guard you. ¹¹ And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'" ¹² Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the LORD your God.'" ¹³ When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came. ¹⁴ Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region.
- We can be courageous in facing an enemy attack by asking the Spirit to remind us of what's true and to make those particular Scriptures alive to us. Jesus did just that!
- Insights:

B. WARFARE

- The temptations in the wilderness were specific to Jesus and His call. However, they represent the main tactics that Satan uses against all believers.
 - 1) Doubt and Shame
 - True to his nature, the devil continually seeks to introduce doubt about God's goodness and truth. He wants us to believe the lie, "God is holding out on me."
 - The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to fast and be tempted, so it would not be difficult to doubt the Father and His good will after 40 days with no food. (vv. 2ff)
 - As humans, we're liable to the underlying lie, "God won't come through for me. I am not enough." We question God's covenant to be our Father and we, His child.

- Instead of a confident warrior attitude, we can slip into a victim mindset that leaves us feeling helpless, bitter, blaming, entitled or self-pitying.
- We see Jesus answer this temptation with bold faith in God's provision for His physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. (Deuteronomy 8:3)
- Is 55:2-3 NLT -- Listen to me, and you will eat what is good. You will enjoy the finest food. "Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life. I will make an everlasting covenant with you. I will give you all the unfailing love I promised to David.
- LISTENING EXERCISE
Lord, we ask for your insight and revelation as we consider these truths about doubt and shame. Let us see specific ways the enemy has corrupted our thinking:

Where am I entertaining the idea that You are holding out on me?

Has shame found a place in me through my doubts about myself and my worth? If so, in what areas of my life?

Have I drifted into a victim mindset in any of the hard things I'm facing? If so, where?

2) Discouragement and Fear

- Satan wants us to fall prey to the idea that "there must be a better or easier way than God's way." He was attempting to get Jesus to bypass the Cross. (vv. 5 – 8)
- Despite the reality that we will surely know pain in this broken world, no one wants to experience it. We fear it and seem to find countless ways to avoid it.
- We succumb to the temptation to worship other things that offer us temporary comfort because, beneath it all, we fear, "God is not worth it/It's not worth it."
- God put the worship of God and the desire for His glory into our spiritual DNA. The enemy will go to any length to thwart this being our lifestyle.
- We see Jesus relying on the Sword of the Spirit to fight discouragement and fear.
- Ps 40:2 NLT -- He lifted me out of the pit of despair, out of the mud and the mire. He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along.

○ LISTENING EXERCISE

Holy Spirit, we ask for You to search us as we consider these truths about discouragement and fear. Reveal specific ways the enemy has invaded our thinking:

Is there anywhere in my life where I am tempted to believe there's a better way than Your way?

In the painful areas of my life, please bring to light anything besides You that I am depending upon to comfort me:

3) Deceit and Pride

- Our enemy will even use Scripture against us. He will twist or misapply the Word of God to deceive us.
- He did this when he tempted Jesus to test God. He was in essence asking Him to demand proof that God's Word is true. (vv. 9-11; Ps 91:11-12)
- The root of this demand is pride. Pride rejects God's will in exchange for our own ideas and refuses to give God the glory that He is due.
- Jesus could have exalted Himself another way than God's way. But, because He knew the Father's heart, He overcame by declaring the truth of Who God is.
- Is 25:1 ESV -- O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you; I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

○ LISTENING EXERCISE

Holy Spirit, we ask for your insight and revelation as we consider these truths. Please open our eyes to see specific ways the enemy has corrupted our thinking:

Please point out anywhere that I have fallen for a message that is not Your truth, especially in regards to Your character and will for my life:

Has pride taken root in me because I have believed that my way is better than Yours? If so, in what areas of my life?

- If we have compromised or fallen short, we can turn to our Father to find forgiveness and grace. Like Jesus, we can emerge from trials in the power of the Spirit. (v, 14)
- Let's choose to go to God and His Living and Active Word to find solid ground that will allow us to stand firm and grow stronger in these vulnerable places.
- Insights:

