

Radical Protection - PART 4
Taking up the Taser
Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage: Ephesians 6:17b
Subject: What offensive weapon we should take up as part of the whole armor of God
Complement: the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.
Exegetical idea: As part of the whole armor of God Christians should take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
Preaching idea: **The Word of God is your powerful defense against the enemy.**
Purpose: To encourage my hearers to take up the Word of God as a powerful defense against the enemy.

In this series on Radical Protection, we have been studying Paul’s counsel to Christians in Ephesus, recorded in Ephesians 6, beginning with verse 10. We have noticed that we are all involved in a cosmic battle and God wants to protect us with the covering that He alone can provide. Let’s read again from our scroll, beginning with Eph 6:14 and read down through the end of verse 17. “.....”

In part 3 of this series, we studied about the defensive weapons: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, our feet shod with the readiness of the Gospel of Peace, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation. Now Paul introduces another piece of the whole armor: The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Paul did not choose a long decorative ceremonial sword, but a makaira, a short fighting sword (pick up the makaira). This was the type of sword that Peter used in the Garden of Gethsemane when he cut off the ear of the High Priest’s servant. The makaira is designed for close-quarters combat. In the cosmic conflict against spiritual forces opposed to God, Paul chose this short fighting sword as a symbol of the powerful word of God.

“Take up the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.”

If Paul was alive today, writing to Christians in the 21st century AD, perhaps he would choose something else as a symbol of the powerful word of God—not a short fighting sword that is designed to wound and kill, but rather a weapon that is designed to neutralize, to incapacitate the enemy.

Have you ever seen one of these? It’s a C2 Taser. This Taser fires two small dart-like electrodes, which stay connected to the main unit by conductive wire. These two small dart-like electrodes are propelled up to 15 feet by a small compressed nitrogen charge similar to the operation of a paintball gun. The electrodes are pointed to penetrate clothing and barbed to prevent removal once in place. This Taser uses EMD technology. It delivers a powerful electrical charge that results in neuromuscular incapacitation, interrupting the ability of the brain to control the muscles in the body. In simple language, if you are struck by a Taser, you collapse. Most people who have been Tasered once want to avoid being Tasered a second time. I can understand why. That would be a shocking experience!

Perhaps Paul would choose this Taser to complete the whole armor of God, and he would refer to it as the Taser of the Spirit. Human-made Tasers can incapacitate people but they can’t incapacitate principalities and powers, world rulers of darkness and spiritual forces of wickedness in super-terrestrial realms. We need a supernatural Taser, the Taser of the Spirit. The Taser that God provides has supernatural power.

Paul uses a very specific language when describing this weapon. The Taser of the Spirit is the “word of God.” Paul doesn’t use the Greek noun Logos, which is often used in the NT and is translated “word”, but rather the Greek noun rhema, the rhema of God, which means a specific

saying of God. Your defense against the enemy is not the Bible as a book to strike him over the head, but rather specific sayings from the word of God.

Jesus modeled this use of Scripture when He was attacked by Satan. When tempted by the enemy to turn stones into bread, Jesus tasered Satan with “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone but by every rhema, every saying, every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” In fact, in response to each of the temptations recorded in Matthew 4, Jesus always used the Taser of the Spirit, He always gave a specific rhema of God, a specific saying from Scripture.

Having been Tasered 3 times, Satan was neutralized and incapacitated. Matthew records that “the devil left Him” Matthew 4:11. Luke records that the devil “departed from Him until an opportune time” Luke 3:13.

How did Jesus know which specific sayings of God to use as a means of incapacitating the enemy? Surely He wasn’t just guessing, just firing randomly. Jesus didn’t just randomly fire sayings from Scripture like “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” or “You shall not steal” hoping that some saying fired at the enemy would incapacitate him.

So how did Jesus know what specific sayings of God to use in His battle there in the wilderness? I believe that Jesus gives us an answer to that question in 2 passages of Scripture. The context of the first passage is a time when we will be called to give our testimony. And Jesus tells us in Matthew 10:19-20, “.....”

How does the Spirit of our Father in heaven speak through us? Does the Spirit take control of our vocal cords? No. Listen to these words of Jesus, recorded in John 14:26. “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all the things I have said to you.”

How did Jesus know what specific sayings of God to fire at the enemy in the wilderness? The Holy Spirit brought those sayings to His remembrance. Now bringing specific sayings to our remembrance presupposes something very important. What is that? It presupposes that those specific sayings have first been stored in our memory.

Listen to me very carefully. In this great cosmic battle between good and evil, it is essential that we store the sayings of God in our memories. To use the language of the Psalmist, we must hide God's Word in our hearts. Then when the kingdom of darkness comes in like a flood, the Holy Spirit will bring the specific sayings from the Word of God to our remembrance in order to incapacitate the enemy.

So here is a vitally important question: How can we fill our memories with the specific sayings of God's Word? Let me suggest three ways. I've tried them all and they all work. One might work better for you than another, but I would encourage you to try them all. This is not optional entertainment. This is intentional preparation in the cosmic battle between good and evil.

Strategy #1: Saturate your mind with the Word of God. In the past, that was accomplished in one of two ways: read, or have someone read to you. Most early Christians memorized the Scriptures by having someone read to them out loud. That is why the Book of Revelation includes a blessing both for the one who reads and those who hear (Rev 1:3). Today we have many ways to saturate our minds with the Word of God. We can listen to the Bible on CD, we can watch the Bible on DVD, we can listen on our iPod or MP3 player.

Not long ago, I have the privilege of interviewing Barry Black, Chaplain of the US Senate. He has a long commute to the Capital each day. Instead of wasting time or being

stressed out by rush hour traffic in Washington, DC, Barry Black saturates his mind with the Word of God by listening to the Bible on CD. Simply playing the Word of God on CD during his commute to work and home again, he can listen to the entire Bible four times every year. What a great example of our first strategy of filling your memory with the rhema of God—saturation.

You can load Scripture onto your MP3 player, or your iPod. You can watch word for word DVDs of the Gospels. You can even use the old-fashioned approach and read your Bible, or have someone read to you. Set aside all of the distractions, all of the noise, and saturate your mind with the Word of God.

Strategy #2: Rote memorization. There is a second strategy that can help you to fill your mind with the sayings of God—rote memorization. This has worked for generations and there are simple steps that can help you with this process. Most people write out the saying that they want to hide in their hearts. I have a little box of memory cards. Some packs are whole books of the Bible. Others are specific verses. In order to help those sayings to stick in your memory, you need to repeat them frequently throughout the first day and then periodically in the weeks and months ahead. Otherwise, you'll be like the little girl who was asked, "What is memory?" "Oh," she replied, "that is what I forget with."

I have developed a simple Bible memorization plan, with some practical guidelines and a 14-week curriculum for hiding the rhema of God in your heart. If you would like a copy of that plan, you can write to me at dmorris@radicalprotection.com.

Some years ago, I met a young pastor named Robert Banks. He used this second strategy of rote memorization to fill his heart with the rhema of God. Robert was not always a Christian.

When he came to the conviction that the Bible was more than just human words about God but was indeed God's Word to the human family, Robert decided to take the Bible very seriously. In fact, he decided to fill his mind with the rhema of God. When I first met him, Robert had memorized over 380 chapters of the Bible. The last time I checked with Robert, just a few weeks ago, he had memorized more than 600 chapters of the Bible. If you're interested in learning from Robert's experience, write to me at dmorris@radicalprotection.com and I'll give you his e-mail address. He is living proof that it is possible to fill your mind with the rhema of God through rote memorization.

Strategy #3: Scripture Songs. There's a third strategy for filling your mind with the rhema of God that I would like to recommend to you: singing Scripture songs. In my opinion, there is no easier way to fill your heart with the rhema of God than through Scripture Songs. Even secular advertisers realize that messages become more sticky when they are attached to a tune.

I learned my first Scripture song just a few months after I had made a total surrender of my life to Jesus as my Savior and Lord. Perhaps you know this song too: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." I loved that Scripture song, and I still remember that rhema of God to this day. It was such a refreshing change from the secular rock songs that had filled my mind in the previous years.

Unfortunately, I didn't find many songs like it. For some reason, a lot of songs were written about life but not many songs were written using the specific sayings from the Word of God. All of that changed after I married my wife Bodil and we had our two little boys.

When our boys were little, my wife noticed that she could still remember all of the

nursery rhymes that she had learned as a child—songs like ‘Mary had a little lamb’ and ‘Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.’ She had learned those songs 20 years earlier and all of the words were safely stored in her memory, connected to a tune. That’s when she had an idea, what she refers to as an inspiration from God. What if she would choose precious sayings from the Word of God, put them to music and hide them in the hearts of our children. Would those words be safely stored to be remembered in a time of need? Our experience as a family has answered that question with a resounding YES.

A specific saying from the Word of God that motivated us is found in Colossians 3:16. “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Scripture songs are a wonderful way for the rhema of God to dwell in you, to find a home in your hearts.

When our youngest son Jonathan was about 10 years old, he developed an interest in mountain biking. He became the happy owner of a beautiful white Trek 830 mountain bike. And he wanted his daddy to ride with him, so I purchased a bright green Trek 8000 mountain bike with a front shock because I was older and not able to bounce quite as easily as my 10 year old. Do you know what I discovered when we started mountain biking together? How many dogs there are in the world! And it seems that dogs like to chase bicycles, especially my bicycle. I’d had some negative encounters with dogs when I was younger and so when a dog chases me, I assume that it intends to bite me!

One day, Jonathan and I decided to take a bike ride near our home. I took the lead on my bright green Trek 8000 and Jonathan was close behind me on his white Trek 830. We were both

wearing our helmets and we were ready for action. Or so I thought. About a mile from a house, we were riding along the side of the road when I saw a dark mass in my peripheral vision. It was moving rapidly in my direction. When I turned my head, I caught sight of a large black dog. It looked like a cross between a Rottweiler and a Pit Bull and it was running right towards my bike. I panicked. I began to peddle at a furious rate. I was hyperventilating. My heart was pounding in my chest. To my dismay, the black dog was gaining ground. With one last burst of energy, I surged forward. I was safe! A feeling of euphoria settled over me, and then I remembered something very important—I was a parent! Jonathan was riding right behind me, at least the last time I checked. I stopped by bike and turned around. Jonathan was calmly peddling his bike and the big black dog was just sitting there on the side of the road, watching him go by. The dog didn't even bark!

When Jonathan caught up with me, I said, “Jonathan, did you see that huge black dog?” “Yes, daddy,” he replied. The first song that I sang was “The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear Him and delivereth them.” Then I sang, “Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” The enemy sent fiery darts of fear and anxiety, but they were extinguished by the shield of faith. And then Jonathan used his Taser, the Taser of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

I learned an important lesson that day. It's never too early to start filling the minds of your children with the rhema of God, the sayings from the Word of God. I also learned the truth of the Word of God that there are times when a little child shall lead them.

In our battle against the kingdom of darkness, God has provided a weapon that can deliver an incapacitating power charge against the enemy—the Taser of the Spirit. So fill your mind, fill your heart, with the sayings of God. Use saturation, use rote memorization, sing Scripture songs. When you clothe yourself with the defensive weapons of the armor of God, don't forget to take up the Taser of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. And when the enemy shoots a fiery dart of fear at you, hold up your shield of faith and fire back with “This is what the LORD says: Be strong and of good courage, do not fear not be afraid of them, for the Lord your God He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” Deut 31:6. When the enemy shoots a fiery dart of despair, reminding you that you have failed again so you might as well give up, curse God and die, you hold up the shield of faith and fire back with “This is what the Lord says, “If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” 1 John 1:The Word 9. When the enemy shoots a fiery dart of hopelessness, hold up the shield of faith and fire back with “Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Therefore I hope in Him” Lamentations 3:22-24

Put on the whole armor of God, and don't forget to take up the Taser of the Spirit which is the rhema of God. The Word of God is your powerful defense against the enemy.