

ISSUE 11

BLADE

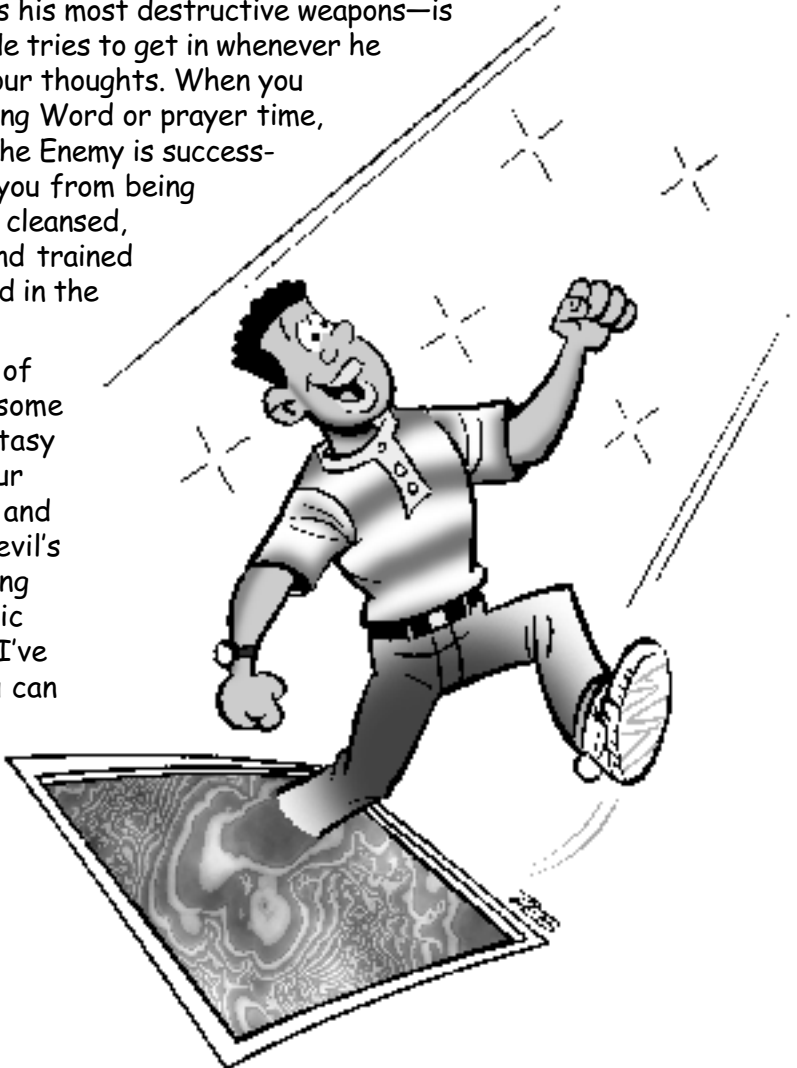


FOCUS YOUR MIND!

Even before you were sent to Earth, I destined that you would have a unique and exceptional upbringing—one that would allow you to have the most opportunity to grow and learn and become everything that I've ordained for you to be. But just because you were chosen doesn't mean that all of that is going to happen without a fight.

The most important battle—the one for which Satan reserves his most destructive weapons—is in your mind. He tries to get in whenever he can through your thoughts. When you daydream during Word or prayer time, for instance, the Enemy is successfully blocking you from being strengthened, cleansed, encouraged, and trained and established in the faith.

So instead of stepping into some dead-end fantasy zone, open your spiritual eyes and cut off the Devil's dreams by using those fantastic new weapons I've given you. You can fight better in the spirit than any fictional hero. You just have to focus your mind!



A Love for Singing.

I've given you a love for singing, for projecting and transmitting the sounds of your voice to an audience, but this desire is something you'll need to stay in close check with Me about. Though I made you to like and enjoy it, and there are times that that's all you really want to do, it's made to be used as a tool, as a way to bring others close to Me. If this driving passion in any way tempts you with the luster of the world, causes you dissatisfaction in your ministries, if it makes you look down on those who seem to be threatening your "freedom of song," then you'll have to realize that your perspectives need some readjusting. You'll have to desperately ask Me to give you the faith to wait till it's time to use this gift to the full, if this is what I have for you.

If I cause you to learn patience in the process, know that you will be the better for it, and a more greatly used vessel when I lead you to do these things.



A Don Juan Sheep.



When you're out—whether witnessing, provisioning, doing business, or just out for a walk—and someone lets you know that he likes you, it can be pretty flattering. It feels good, because someone has noticed you. There's nothing wrong with that. But if he persists, asks for your phone number, and is hoping to fill the boyfriend slot in your life, what do you say then? Do you give out your phone number? How should you handle the situation? It's hard to say no. It's hard to know just how to react.

Every situation is a bit different, and you have to check in with Me at each encounter, but here's one tip to get out of sticky situations. If a guy is badgering you, fill him in.

"Actually, I already have a boyfriend!"

Wait a minute! you think. *I don't have a boyfriend, but I sure do want one!*

You have Me, don't you? I'm your Boyfriend and best Friend.—Don't I count? Of course I do! Even though I'm not right there with you in the flesh, I'm there in spirit.

Then, if the guy is a sheep or at all interested in Me and the work that you're doing, you can explain to him that I can become his best Friend too. It might take some conviction to tell him about your faith, but most guys will admire you for it, and they'll see that you're different—not like the rest of the girls in the world.

It's important to have backup when explaining these types of things. It helps you to stick to your convictions, and also keeps the guy from getting too strong in his advances. You might be embarrassed to have your witnessing partner around, but there's more chance that your witness will be stronger with someone else's support, and that could make the difference for the guy's soul.

Looking Out for You.



I love to be with you, and I love watching you—your every move, your words, even your thoughts. I take such pleasure and such interest in you. My eyes are ever upon you and My heart is always tender toward you. I look out for you—not just for your protection, well-being and to provide your needs, but even more—to give you the little things, the extra blessings, the special experiences that I know touch and warm your heart and bring you joy.

BE ENERGIZED!

You're an important one to Me and I'm counting on you to give the Devil a blow and knock him out good every time he comes around telling you that you're no good, that things are too hard, and that you might as well quit. He's going to be cowering in the shadows one day, while you are rewarded with many honors for the faithful job you're doing for Me.



I will anoint you day by day and bring you through each storm even stronger. Hold on to My hand and the words I'm pouring out to you through your king and queen and the messengers I send from Heaven to speak, and through each word from My mouth. These words will be as energizing strength and will invigorate you every time you feel weary.

Just keep on going and keep Satan running, until you run into My arms, where you'll know you are loved so very dearly. You are the most precious thing to Me. I'll always be right by your side, through every second you live, for eternity and beyond. I need you and won't ever loosen My grasp on you.

You'll shine, My love, like the stars in the Heavens, and I'll be so proud of you, just like I am today, for the ways you've fought and won and have chosen to keep serving Me with all your heart and mind and soul.

I'll make you a shining example to many who are searching and looking for truth, if you draw that light from My face, if you drink in daily of all that I have to share with you. These are the things that will make you shine.

ASK ME AGAIN!

PUT ME TO THE TEST. PROVE MY WORDS AND THE VALIDITY OF THEM.

TELL THAT OLD PLUNK THAT NO MORE ARE YOU GOING TO GET TIED UP IN HIS SICKENING SLIME-PIT OF DOUBT.



TELL YOUR OWN HEART THAT WHATEVER I SPEAK TO YOU IS TRUE AND YOU WILL HOLD TO IT NO MATTER WHAT.

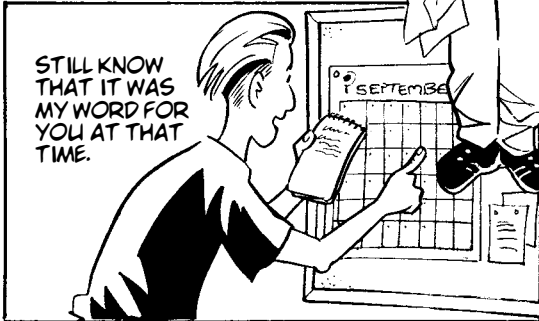
EVEN WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE THINGS CHANGED, OR PLANS WERE ALTERED.

AND IT LOOKS LIKE WHAT I SPOKE TO YOU AT THAT TIME WASN'T FULFILLED AS YOU THOUGHT OR HOPED.



STILL KNOW THAT IT WAS MY WORD FOR YOU AT THAT TIME.

AND IF THINGS CHANGE, ASK ME AGAIN WHAT'S GOING ON AND HOW I FEEL ABOUT THINGS.



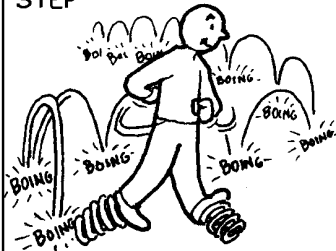
JEREMY '00

GET THAT BOUNCE BACK!

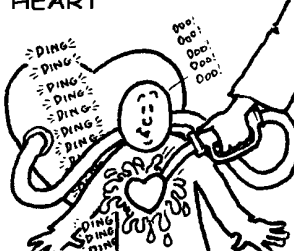
ART BY ANTHONY

WOULDN'T YOU JUST LOVE TO HAVE--

THAT BOUNCE IN YOUR STEP



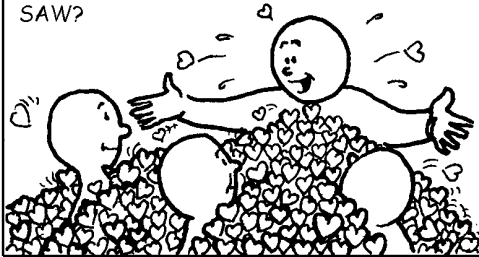
THAT JOY IN YOUR HEART



THAT SPARKLE IN YOUR EYES



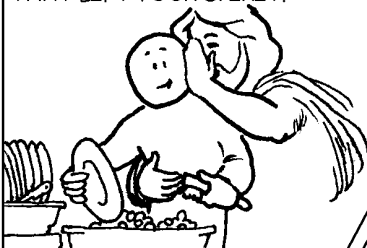
REMEMBER THOSE TIMES IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU WERE JUST SO HAPPY THAT IT OVERFLOWED ON EVERYBODY YOU SAW?



REMEMBER THE GOOD TIMES YOU HAD TOGETHER WITH ME WHEN WE LAUGHED AND TALKED AND CRIED AND WERE LIKE BOSOM BUDDIES?



LET ME TAKE YOU IN MY ARMS AND WHISPER ENCOURAGING THINGS TO YOU THAT LIFT YOUR SPIRIT.

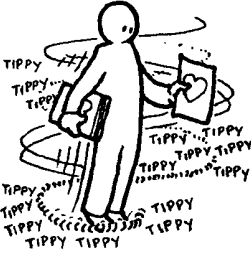


LET ME TAKE YOU TO PLACES YOU'VE ONLY DREAMED OF AND SHOW YOU WHAT IT'S REALLY LIKE.

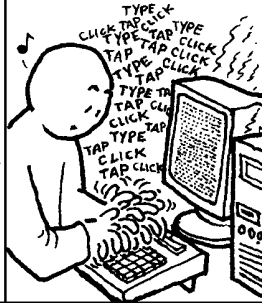


LET ME POUR OUT MY POTION OF STRENGTH AND SOOTHING BALM THAT WILL COVER YOU AND FLOW INTO EVERY PART OF YOU--

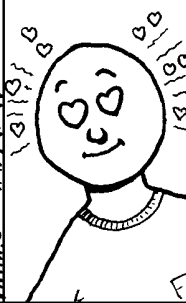
YOUR TOES,



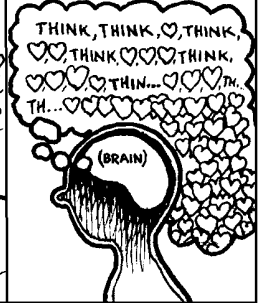
YOUR FINGERS,



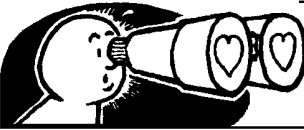
YOUR EYES,



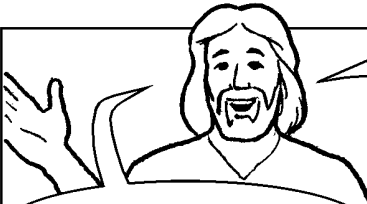
YOUR BRAIN



--AND MAKE EVERYTHING IT TOUCHES RELAXED AND FULL OF FAITH.



I CAN EVEN GIVE YOU A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE TO SEE WHAT THINGS WILL BE LIKE FOR YOU.



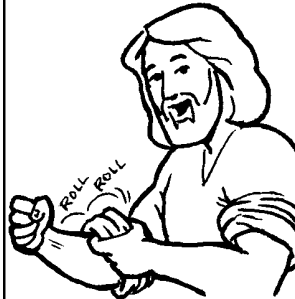
I CAN DO ALL THESE THINGS FOR YOU IF YOU'LL JUST PUT YOURSELF IN MY HANDS.

DON'T LOOK AROUND OR LET THINGS AROUND YOU BOTHER YOU SO MUCH--



JUST LOOK UP AND LET ME REFRESH YOU AND GIVE YOU ALL THE LOVE, CARE, PROTECTION, UNDERSTANDING, FUN, ENCOURAGEMENT AND FRIENDSHIP THAT YOU NEED.

I'M READY AND WAITING TO GIVE YOU ALL THIS--



--AND MORE--

AND I WILL,



--IF YOU'LL LET ME!

LIMELIGHT OR NO



It's cool when you get a chance to be in the limelight once in awhile, isn't it? Maybe you did a bunch of Christmas performances with other young people. Maybe you're handy with computers and you helped set up a website or write a computer program. Maybe you're kind of creative and you made a neat mural with some of the kids in your Home. Whenever you get a chance to do something a bit unusual, or noticeable, the praises and compliments start comin', and man do they feel good!

But guess what? I designed your life so that even if you do get extra attention for something you accomplish, things aren't *always* like that. Sometimes you'll go through stretches of your life when you wonder if anyone notices *anything* you do! But see, I work it out this way to help you realize the importance of serving Me just because you love Me. Those unseen hours of being a faithful servant, of filling in wherever there's a need, and of doing whatever I ask you to do with your whole heart, are very precious gifts to Me! They're even more priceless than your more showy gifts—the things you do that others praise you for—because I know you're doing those unseen things just because you love Me and want to serve Me.

So thanks for doing your best to jump in with both feet when I ask you to do shows, or use your computer skills, or do something far-out with the kids; but thanks even *more* for your faithfulness in all the little things that come your way every single day. It's those little things that will deepen your character and mold you into a vessel that will be highly prized in My household.





Making it as a Man.

Here you are, sitting on the fence between boyhood and manhood, wondering when you're going to be fully out of one world and into the next. It's a tricky path to navigate. There seem to be so many contradictions in your life as you're making the adjustment. New ideas are popping into your brain, new hormones are rushing through your body, and maybe there are embarrassing manifestations of adolescence on your face!

Don't worry. You can make it. You can survive, and many of the embarrassments and awkward moments of this age can make you an even better man when you come out on the other end. Just keep looking to Me for how to be, and how to grow into the man I want you to be. You're a warrior in the making, so don't let what you see in the mirror discourage you if it's not all you'd hoped for.

And remember, your inner strength is more important than your outer strength. Much more. Brawn is often glorified in the world, but when the heat is on and you or your loved ones are in serious danger, it's that inner strength and that ability to look to Me for My power that's going to make you the hero.

MORE NOBLE



Not a lot is said about the Berean Church except that “These were more noble, in that they searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11). Paul was shining a whole new light on things that turned their understanding of the Scriptures topsy-turvy. But they didn’t reject what he said. Instead, they went to studying to see if what he was saying was backed up in the written Word, and you can bet they found it was.

It’s the same situation with the new things I pour out today. You have to go to the Word to see if there is a foundation for what is being spoken. This will give you the faith to drink in the New Wine.

Accept the New Wine by faith, but feel free to check it out according to the yardstick of the written Word.—Not in a cynical* or skeptical** way, but in an open-minded, believing way, and you won’t be disappointed.

*cynical: Expressing or exhibiting scorn and bitter mockery.

**skeptical: Marked by or given to doubt; questioning.)

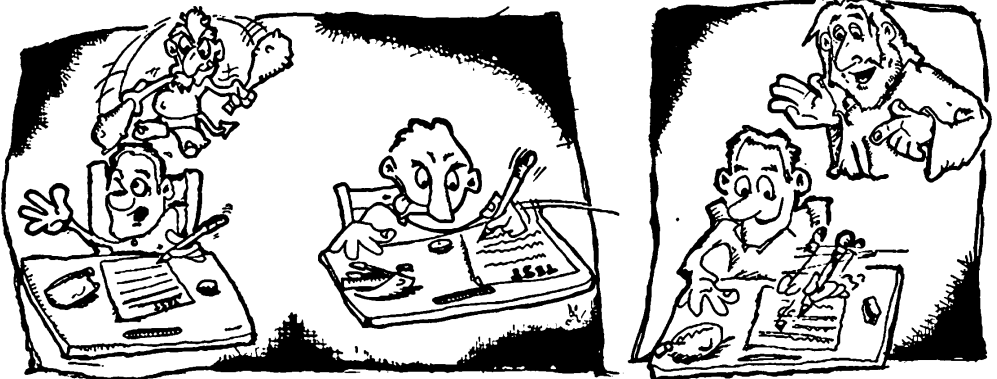
NOT BRIGHT enough?

Ask the **MEGA-BRAIN!**

THE ENEMY BEATS YOU OVER THE HEAD WITH HIS CLUB OF DISCOURAGEMENT, TELLING YOU YOUR MIND IS NOT BRIGHT ENOUGH, OTHERS ARE SO MUCH BETTER THAN YOU, AND THAT YOU JUST CAN'T LEARN AS FAST AS THE OTHERS. IT'S JUST ANOTHER TRICK TO TRIP YOU UP AND TO GET YOUR MIND OFF THE HEAVENLY VISION AND GOAL.

IF THERE ARE SIMPLE THINGS THAT YOU FEEL YOU SHOULD HAVE LEARNED LONG AGO, AND YOU JUST CAN'T SEEM TO REMEMBER, MAYBE THERE ARE SONGS YOU CAN SING OR STORIES OR RHYMES THAT CAN HELP THESE THINGS STICK BETTER. MAYBE YOU NEED TO SEE THINGS WRITTEN OUT MORE, WRITING THEM ON CARDS TO REVIEW MORE OFTEN. YOUR MIND HAS TO BE TAUGHT IN LOTS OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF WAYS. WHAT WORKS GOOD FOR ONE OF YOUR PEERS MIGHT NOT BE WHAT YOUR BRAIN NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO RETAIN BITS OF KNOWLEDGE.

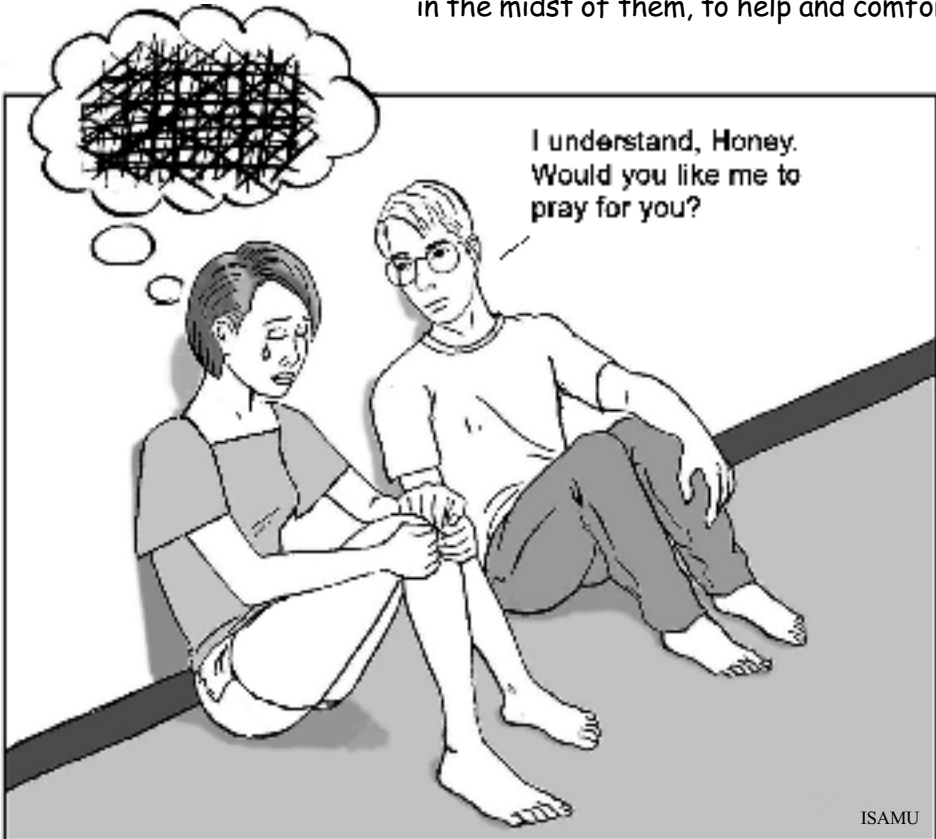
IF THERE'S SOMETHING THAT YOU NEED TO LEARN AND WANT TO LEARN, I CAN GIVE YOU THE WILL POWER TO STICK TO IT AND LEARN IT TILL YOU GET IT DOWN GOOD. REALLY PRAY AND I'LL HELP YOU IN THAT AREA. I'M A MEGA-BRAIN, AND KNOW JUST HOW TO HELP YOU!



WHEN YOUR THOUGHTS TURN TO MUD.

Have you ever been in a situation where it seemed like there just wasn't a way out? Every time you attempted to talk to someone about it or even think about asking someone to pray for you, your head started to ache and your thoughts turned to mud. And when you attempted to explain it, your speech started to break up, till finally you started to cry and sob. You blubbered so much that no one could understand you, other than that you were really going through a time of tough emotional and spiritual testing.

Hey, we've all been there! Why do you think I had to make those short trips out of camp at night to pray to My Father? I needed help! I needed to talk to the only Someone who had more faith and wisdom than Me. The point is that you've got to talk to your parents or shepherds when you run up against something heavy. Where two or three are gathered, there I am in the midst of them, to help and comfort.



ISAMU



The Downside of Dabbling.

Do you know why it's so important to avoid ungodly influences—unedifying movies, music, computer games, or Internet sites? It's because when you make the willful choice to purposely watch, listen to, play or read something that's full of negative or dark influences, that darkness *attaches* itself to you and becomes part of your spirit.

It's like opening the door of your heart to some dark spirit, and saying, "Well, I know I really shouldn't do this, and it's not like I want you to stick around afterwards or anything. I'm just kind of curious to see what you're like. So right now, while no one's looking, why don't you come in, just for a little while, and show me your stuff? I'm not going to really get into it or anything, and hopefully no one will even know you've been here. But I just have to see what it feels like. After I'm done, would you please just quietly leave, without making a big scene or anything?"

You can't wallow in the mud without getting dirty, and you can't play with fire without getting burned. That's why I ask you to do your best to minimize and avoid ungodly influences in your life. I don't want you to get dirty, and I sure don't want you to get burned.

Hear the Whispers

(Dad:) When you turn over control to the Lord and you let Him make the decisions, and you do things His way, that's when your weakness turns into your strength. The Lord's strength is made perfect in your weakness.

You can learn from the example of Joan of Arc. Joan was a young, meek little girl when the Lord chose to use her rather than an important general to lead the armies of France in to battle. When she sought to hear the whispers before every move she made, and was willing to do the things the Lord instructed her to do, and let the Lord work through her, He did, and she led her people to great victories! God wants to use you too. Just turn your eyes upon Him and do the things He wants you to do, and He will use you and make you a blessing.