

About *Bearing the Sword* Curriculum

Written by Chawna Schroeder

***Bearing the Sword* is a curriculum designed for high school students to teach them the basics of discernment and critical thinking. This is done through intensive Bible study and the analysis of media, specifically pre-selected film clips.**

Each part of *Bearing the Sword* is broken into fifteen five-day weeks. The first four days each week comprises of a short lesson (one to two pages) and a variety of exercises including Bible study, media analysis, and personal application. There are also optional fun activities and prayer prompts included at the end of each day. On the fifth day and throughout the fifteenth week, the principles learned will be applied to the simulated and controlled situations offered by film.

About the Books

The curriculum comes with up to five individual pieces: training manual, training notebook, answer key, media log, and DVD set.

- The **training manual** provides the daily lessons, discussion questions, and all information for the film analyses. This is one of the two books required for completing the curriculum.
- The **training notebook** is the student's workbook, containing Bible study, personal application, prayer prompts, and optional fun activities. This is also required for completing the curriculum.
- The **answer key**, as the title implies, provides answers and additional discussion prompts for use by a parent, teacher, or mentor. This book is an optional add-on.
- The optional **DVD** set collects all the movies, pre-clipped and divided by each class. While all information needed is found within the manual, there are scores of clips from a huge array of film used in each semester (two DVDs are required to contain all the clips). Also sometimes the timing for a clip is very precise—only a second or two from questionable material. As a result this is by far the most popular addition for the curriculum.
- The **media log** is also optional, as all the information is found within the training notebook. However, the notebook contains no place for the daily media analyses it requests, requiring all information to be transferred to an alternate source. The media log has all that information plus the space to write, providing a convenient place for the student record the daily media analyses.



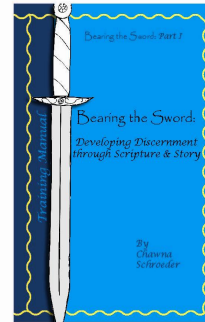
Material Covered in Each Semester:

Bearing the Sword: Developing Story Through Scripture & Story (Part 1):

This first part of the Bearing the Sword looks at the definition of discernment, the need for discernment, and the definition of good through an in-depth study of Philippians 4:8.

Table of Contents

Bearing the Sword	(Intro, importance of Scripture as foundation)
Getting a Grip	(Defining discernment, the double standard of good)
Practice	(Importance of discernment, using story to train)
Stamina & Strength	(Basics of implementing Scripture into life)
Training Manual	(Introduction to Philippians 4:8)
The Parry	(Whatever is true)
The Bind	(Whatever is noble)
The Cut	(Whatever is right)
The Block	(Whatever is pure)
The Beat	(Whatever is lovely)
The Thrust	(Whatever is admirable)
Defensive Stance	(Excellent)
Offensive Stance	(Praiseworthy)
Dealing with a Mixed Bag	(Working with gray areas)
Mock Battles	(Week of film application)

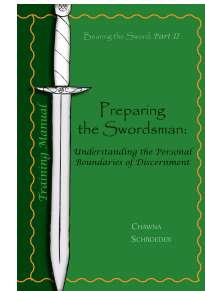


Preparing the Swordsman: Understanding the Personal Boundaries of Discernment (Part 2):

This second part delves into the affects of maturity and personal limitations on discernment; the four levels of physical and spiritual maturity; and the three major areas of personal limitations—personality, relationships, and environment.

Table of Contents

Understanding the Swordsman	(Introduction to study)
Positional Identity	(Who we are in Christ)
Training Stage I—The Initiate	(Maturity of infants)
Training Stage II—The Apprentice-Page	(Maturity of children)
Training Stage III—The Journeyman-Squire	(Maturity of adolescence)
Training Stage IV—The Master-Knight	(Maturity of adulthood)
Growing Up	(How to keep growing spiritually)
Understanding Style	(Introduction to personal limitations)
Recognizing Your Build, Part 1	(Personality Part 1)
Recognizing Your Build, Part 2	(Personality Part 2)
Alliances—Relating to Your Unit	(Family, friendships, and enemies)
Alliances—The Partnership of Marriage	(Gender and marriage status)
Training Environment	(Location, experience, and occupation)
Building Boundaries	(How to set personal limitation boundaries)
Mock Battles	(A week of film application)



Frequently Asked Questions

How early can I start my student on the curriculum?

Depends. First, the curriculum assumes a strong biblical foundation, as it focuses on the application of Scripture and it is difficult to apply what you don't know. If your student cannot find the book of Obadiah or cannot relate the major stories from the New and Old Testaments, then a traditional Bible study might be more beneficial. This curriculum also depends heavily on the use of logic, which generally doesn't develop until later years. This is why the curriculum is listed for high school students.

That said, I have had students as young as thirteen tackle the curriculum. Such students usually take a year to complete one semester's worth, rather than the original fifteen weeks, and often require more hands-on interaction with the parent. If you are uncertain whether your student is ready, you might want to take your student through my book *The ABC's of Discernment*, which provides a devotional-styled overview of the basic principles in about a month.

How involved as a parent must I be?

The study is basically self-guiding for the older student, but I encourage the parent/overseeing adult to at least read through the lessons, engage the student in the discuss questions, and then analyze the movies at the end of week together. Of course, the Bible study, personal application questions, and prayer prompts all provide additional opportunities for you to engage the student, talk about a wide variety of issues, and share what you've learned over the years.

Can this curriculum be used with more than one student?

Absolutely! Because this curriculum is heavily based in discussion, this study also works well for siblings and small group study. In this case, each student works through the lessons and workbook material each day, while the manual's discussions and/or weekly movie analyses can be done together. For this reason, I offer special sets (sibling packs) for two students. I have also produced an extra book for the first semester called *The Commander's Guide* to help adapt the curriculum for small Bible studies or co-op groups.

What kind of class does this classify as?

It can be classified as a Bible study or a critical thinking class, and as a bonus, the workbook's review on the fifth day of each week can be used as a test.

How long will it take the student to complete the daily work?

It depends, of course, on the particular day (some are more intensive than others) and the particular student (how well versed in Scripture he or she is, how long is spent on personal application). However, on average, most seem to spend between 30 minutes to an hour on regular days while the movie analysis days average one to two hours, depending on the number of clips and amount of discussion.

Are there discounts for large orders?

Yes, I offer discounts for orders of ten or more packs. Contact me directly at imaginationinvestigation@yahoo.com for more information.

Pricing per Semester

Basic Pack	Contains 1 manual and 1 notebook (the essentials). \$40
Complete Pack	Contains 1 manual, 1 notebook, 1 answer key, 1 DVD set, and 1 media log. \$90
Sibling Pack	Designed for two students. Contains 1 manual 2 workbooks, and 2 media logs. \$95
Sibling Plus	Complete pack for two students: 1 manual, 2 workbooks, 2 media logs, 1 answer key, and 1 DVD set. \$130

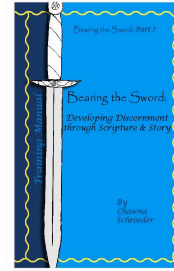
Ala Carte

Training Manual (Lesson book, essential)	\$20
Training Notebook (Workbook, essential)	\$24
Answer Key (optional)	\$20
DVD Set (optional, but recommended)	\$20
Media Log (optional)	\$20

Prices do not include shipping or any applicable sales tax.

Orders can be placed at www.chawnaschroeder.com/chawnas-nonfiction.html, or by contacting Chawna directly at imaginationinvestigation@yahoo.com.

Sample Lesson from *Bearing the Sword* By Chawna Schroeder



Week 1, Day 1: *Once Upon a Time* From Manual, Workbook & Answer Key

Red italics represent text found only in the Answer Key

Once upon a time in a strange land where mirages masqueraded as reality and substance was oft dismissed as shadow, a great famine beset the people of a mighty king. Vines withered. Trees bore no fruit. The fields failed to produce anything but a few scraggly heads of grain that would be not worth harvesting except for the greatness of the famine. Bread became scarce and so did hope.

Therefore, the mighty king prepared a special mission. This mission was of great importance, yet entirely unpredictable. It would require everything of the one upon whom it was bestowed. And whom did the mighty king choose? A great knight? A seasoned commander? No, the king chose to bestow this mission upon a gifted but unsuspecting young apprentice: You.

Yes, you. God has prepared a special mission for you (Ephesians 2:10). What exactly this mission is I do not know, nor which gifts He has chosen to give you. Neither has He revealed to me where your journey will take you.

But this I do know: the way will be fraught with peril. “In this world you will have trouble.” (John 16:33) For the enemy prowls around looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8) and will stoop to any means to catch his prey, even masquerading as something beautiful and good (2 Corinthians 11:14). So we must prepare ourselves to face it.

Yet if we know not what form the danger will take, how can we prepare for it? Because the sword of truth can slay any foe we face, for the Word is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It penetrates. It divides, even separating soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It slices through thoughts and attitudes, because everything is laid bare before the God of the word and the Word Who is with Him (Hebrews 4:12-13, Proverbs 15:11, Ecclesiastes 12:14, John 1:1). However, owning a sword is not enough. We must do something with it. We must learn how to wield the truth.

So your mission awaits. Are you ready to start your training?

Sword Clash (Discussion Questions):

How does the thought of having a specific purpose make you feel?

Answers will vary. However, do not accept, “I don’t know,” as an answer. This is also a great opportunity to share what you thought/felt during a time when God asked you to do something specific.

What kind of mission might be God preparing you for?

Answers will vary. If the student is open, talk about what you see and where you think those giftings, passions, and personality quirks might be leading

What kind of dangers might you encounter?

Answers will vary, but be as specific as possible. E.g. A girl headed into a world where appearance is important, like modeling or acting, will face extreme pressure to stay very thin. Also consider your student’s personal weaknesses, such as cockiness or people-pleasing. (Weaknesses tend to be the flip side of a strength.)

What do you expect during the coming weeks of study?

Answers will vary.

Sharpening Your Sword (Bible Study):

This week’s memory verse is Hebrews 4:12. Take the time today to memorize it.

Read Ephesians 2:10 and 2 Peter 1:3. In light of having a mission to fulfill, what does this mean to you?

Answers will vary some, but should touch on most of the following facts: God created us. He has called us. He created us for the purpose of doing good. He has prepared/planned out the good He wants us to do beforehand. He has given us all we need for what He has called us to do.

Read Ephesians 6:10-18. Beside each piece of armor, name what purpose that piece would serve in the physical realm. Then explain how that physical attribute applies to the spiritual parallel.

Belt~ It holds our armor in place and carries our weapon(s). Truth holds the rest our armor in place; all we believe and do depends on truth. Without truth we are defenseless.

Breastplate~ It protects the chest and vital organs (heart, lungs, stomach, etc.). Righteousness protects our heart (emotions, will, character, hope).

Shoes~ It protects our feet and provides us grip. The Gospel gives us traction and the ability to go forward.

Shield~ This is our moveable defense armor. Faith stops direct attacks from any direction, such as doubt, fear, and despair.

Helmet~ This protects our head. Salvation secures the mind for God, and the security of knowing Whose you are protects against mental assaults.

Sword~ This is our offensive weapon, used to engage the enemy directly. The Word of God is how we defend our territory and how we defeat the enemy, taking Satan's territory.

Does anything else stand out to you from Ephesians 6:10-18? If so, what and why?

Answers will vary.

Communicating With Your Commander (Prayer):

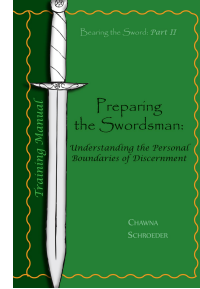
Thank God for equipping you for whatever work He may have for you. Ask Him for the faithfulness to fulfill that mission.

**The first three days of week one does not include the Warm Up (Media Analysis), Training Exercises (Personal Application) or a Cool Down (Fun Activity). For examples of these, see the following sample from the second part, Preparing the Swordsman.*

Sample Lesson from *Preparing the Swordsman* By Chawna Schroeder

Week 1, Day 2: *Understanding the Swordsman* From Manual, Workbook & Answer Key

Red italics represent text found only in the Answer Key



Wielding a sword is hard work. But knowing the maneuvers is only half of the battle. You must also know the one wielding the sword.

Most people think that means understanding your opponent—how he thinks, how he reacts, what his strengths and weaknesses are. All of that is true. We do need to understand those we face, both on the battlefield and along the way, and in due time we will study some of the most common strategies we will meet.

But understanding the opposing force is only half of the equation. We also need to understand the one wielding our own blade—ourselves.

For we too have weaknesses and strengths. We have personality quirks and personal obligations. Each stage of maturity we grow through brings new opportunities and fresh dangers.

As a result, we all are not equally suited for every task at every stage of life. Some missions we will grow into. Others we will grow out of. Some work is never meant for us. There will be training missions and transition missions, long-term missions and short-term missions. And sometimes, we step into a role and know, “This is where I’m meant to be.”

More than that, while God is sovereign and knows what missions He intends for us, He also provided us a free will. By not directly imputing His master plan into our mind (which is good, as our brains would overload), He allows us choose our path, even as He knows the choice we will make beforehand.

So God knows you. Do you?

Sword Clash (Discussion Questions):

Do you think it is more important to know yourself or your opponent? Why?

Answers will vary. Personally, I think knowing self is more important. Opponents will come and go, but you must live with yourself. Moreover, no matter who you face, they will most likely attack your areas of greatest vulnerability and weakness. So by knowing yourself, you are able to know part of the opponent’s plan, no matter who they are.

Do you see yourself as having one mission in life or many? Why?

Answers will vary. Again, it has been my observation that as a general rule (there are exceptions) we are given one main, overarching mission as well as many smaller missions for the immediate moment. Those smaller missions may or may not directly correlate (from our perspective) to the larger mission.

How do you reconcile God’s foreknowledge and sovereignty with your ability to make decisions?

Answers will vary, and the tension between these truths won’t be settled in a single discussion; theologians have been debating the balance for centuries. The key is to not throw out either truth in attempt to eliminate the tension: God is sovereign and omniscient (including all things future); we have free-will and are responsible for our choices. Somehow in God’s economy, these two statements are not contradictory.

Warm Up (Media Analysis):

Analyze one piece of media according to the standards of Philippians 4:8, looking at both how it conforms and violates those standards. Then rank the content, the presentation, and overall rating from -5 to +5.

Finally, summarize whether this was a worthwhile piece of media, explaining your reasoning.

Discuss today’s media analysis.

Sharpening Your Sword (Bible Study):

Copy this week's memory verse, Ephesians 2:10, including the address.

Read Psalm 139. In what ways does God know us? Be specific.

Answers may include (or reference) our actions, our thoughts, my travels, my rest, my habits, my words, my location, my body, my birth, all the days of my life, my heart, my worries, and my wrong/sin.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. What does God know about us?

Our temptations.

How does He respond accordingly?

He will not let us be tempted with more than we can handle and will provide a way out.

Read Matthew 6:31-34. What does God know about us?

Our troubles and our needs.

How should we act in light of this knowledge?

Don't worry, but seek God's kingdom and His righteousness instead.

According to Philippians 4:19, how does God act upon this knowledge?

God supplies all we need abundantly.

Training Exercises (Personal Application):

For what are you most thankful when you remember that God knows you completely? Why?

Answers will vary. You may want to share what you are thankful for too.

What areas are you most uncomfortable about God knowing everything and why?

Answers will vary. Again, allow your student to be uncomfortable while encouraging what might help ease that discomfort.

In what ways do you live as if God does not see you or know you completely?

Answers will vary.

How should you live in light of God's omniscience?

Answers will vary. Discuss practical steps in the right direction and encourage the immediate implementation of one change.

Cool Down (Fun Activity): Self-Portrait

Create a self-portrait which you feel reflects who you are, not merely externally, but who you are inside. Feel free to use any medium that suits you, and use any style, from abstract to literal, to capture that essence of self. Possible ideas might include photography, word collage, painting, drawing, Legos, monologue, movie reel, sculpture, scrapbooking, pinterest board, diorama, or a display of significant objects, among many, many others. Be creative! The way you express yourself will be as significant as what you express.

Present your art to two or three people. What do they say the artwork expresses about you?

What did you learn about yourself?

Communicating with the Commander (Prayer Prompt):

Thank God today for knowing you intimately and completely, even to the point of knowing the number of hairs on your head. Ask Him to change one specific action or area in your life to better reflect that He knows you completely.