

# Swordsman of the Word™

Rightly wielding “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph 6:17)

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Category: ESSAY

# A Hard-Won Triumph of My Faith

August 9, 2020 | By Arjay B. Araña

Last month, July 12, 2020, marked the second-year anniversary of *Swordsman of the Word*. When I made my first post in this blog two years ago, I was full of hope and expectation about the blessings the future might bring. Well, I never thought that the next two years would turn out to be such a struggle getting this ministry off the ground, and that they would bring me — in addition to the blessings — much pain, hardships, and regrets. And that is because, in the final analysis, *Swordsman of the Word* had seemed to others to be much too radical and much too ambitious to be attempted by someone like me. A nobody. Gifted, maybe. But still, a nobody.

What I've been reminded of recently, however, is that this ministry is ultimately *only* between me and God. I'm the one whose faith in him is being tested. And I'm the one who is accountable. I'm the one who is standing before him in judgment and giving account of the things I've done in regard to it. (As I have declared in **Running this Blogging Race Once Again** [[swordsmanoftheword.com/2019/12/27/38945/](http://swordsmanoftheword.com/2019/12/27/38945/)], the only authority I recognize now for this ministry is the Bible, God's Word.) Therefore, as long as I'm in line with the things God has said, and as long as I have his approval for this work, what others think of *Swordsman of the Word* doesn't really matter. People's opinions (and people's obstructions) don't affect its legitimacy, nor will they overcome its power and continuity.

This is the first of three essays that will complete this ministry's new founding documents. They will all answer the question, "What does *Swordsman of the Word* mean to me personally?"

Actually, I could already proceed with my blogging without answering this question. What I've already declared and settled in my last few blog posts are enough to get me started in this new stage of my blogging. But my heart prevents me from doing so. I need to settle this question, it says. I need to do this. For this ministry's future. For my own well-being. And for your blessing.

And so for the past several months I've been mulling it over, asking myself, "What does *Swordsman of the Word* mean to me personally?" And quite frankly, though my answers are clear and definite, the contexts and stories behind those answers are such heavy burdens on my soul. I just have so much to say — so much pressure to release inside me — that sometimes my thoughts and feelings are like a dam just waiting to burst.

And they do need to be dealt with — my emotions and thoughts, they need to be purged out, written out — for my well-being and my healing. However, the reality is this: I just don't have the time right now, nor the energy, nor the desire for some serious and deep introspection. I have much to say, yes, but I can't and don't want to pay the price for speaking. I need a break.

My heart needs a break. Besides, I need to get on with my real works for blogging, and these unwritten essays — my answers to the question — are keeping me from that.

Therefore, I've decided to compromise: I will only write these essays as straightforward as I can. I will give you my answers, and then I will explain why. For sure, I will be leaving much things unsaid, but there is always time for that tomorrow. To write a book maybe. When I already have someone to hold me when I cry....

I have three answers to the question, "What does *Swordsman of the Word* mean to me personally?" My first answer is, **it is a hard-won triumph of my faith.**

## My Surrender to God

I started this blog two years ago, but the truth is, *Swordsman of the Word* has always been a test of faith for me, and its roots go way back to 14 years ago, in 2006, when I first surrendered my entire life to Jesus — after falling in love with him two years before.

I am an artist of words. A man of deep feelings. A man of deep thoughts. And a man rejected by many because of my gifts. It's no wonder then that when I fell for God, it was all consuming. I just loved him so much, and I wanted to serve him with my life. I knew that I have the gift for writing (though it was still undeveloped at that time), and I wanted to write for him. For his glory, of course... but also for mine.

Long story short, I was made to choose. God made me choose. Between his plans for my life and the plans that I and my family already had. I was in college, studying to be a chemical engineer, and choosing him meant that I would never be able to finish my studies... and never be able to fulfill my ambitions.

I chose Jesus, my friends. I chose God. I chose to follow him wherever he leads me, to fulfill his plans for my life. And it was the hardest thing I ever did, because I also love my family, and they had sacrificed so much for me. The bottom line is, I failed them, and I broke their hearts. Oh, how high are the costs we pay when we love someone, especially God! Jesus said, "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me isn't worthy of me. He who doesn't take his cross and follow after me isn't worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37-38 WEB).

After I made my choice, I fully expected to be led to my "promised land." You know, where I'd be writing religious stuffs, earn a lot of money, and become famous. But the problem was, I was far from ready to serve my Lord — with my impure motives for wanting to serve the least of my problems. I still had so much to learn about the ways of God, still had so much growing up to do. And so God had led me, not to my expected place of milk and honey, but to the wilderness of want and suffering. To be trained. To grow up. To be made holy. And to make preparations for the works that I'd be doing for him someday — works that I could only guess at, for they were veiled and far away.

**This is my great test of faith:** To follow God wherever he leads me, and to persevere and to be steadfast in my faith despite all the delays and setbacks. How far, how deep, for how long, and for how much sacrifice will I continue to trust in him?

I should mention here, as an aside, that I had no church during my wilderness time. I was disillusioned with the churches I had contact with, and a good local church that would accept me was one of those things I hoped God would lead me to. I should also mention that, though I had no church, a few Christian internet ministries had helped me greatly, particularly **LivePrayer** [[liveprayer.com/](http://liveprayer.com/)].

You have heard Christians say that God is faithful. And that is true. In fact, many of us just take it for granted that God is faithful. But what if your entire life, your entire future, rests on the faithfulness of God? I'm sure you wouldn't take his faithfulness for granted. As I don't take his faithfulness for granted.

And the Lord my God is indeed faithful. All my sacrifices, and all the sufferings I experienced in my sojourn in the wilderness had not been in vain. When he judged me ready enough, he finally called me to work for him full-time, and to start *Swordsman of the Word*.

Yes, it was a dream come true. More, it was my faith realized — a hard-won triumph. You see, my friends, even though this ministry is only just beginning its work, even though there is no real financial support yet, and even though I still have much studying to do to become a competent Bible teacher, just the fact that *Swordsman of the Word* already exists — with the approval of God Almighty — is already a great victory. Because I don't have to wonder anymore, "How much longer must I wait, God?" Or, "Where are you taking me, God?" Much of my future has been unveiled before my eyes, and its wonderful, and I work now towards that future.

I wanted to serve God through writing. And after many years of preparation, I've founded this ministry — the first-fruit of all the works that God wants me to do for him, which involve far more than just writing. So this was never really about blogging per se. Blogging is just my present platform. Rather, this has always been (and will always be) about serving my God and King.

I hope that you see it now more clearly, my friends, that when I began all these, there really was no going back for me. No difficulties, no challenges, no pains can stop me from my tracks. They may delay me, yes, but that's all. Because giving up on *Swordsman of the Word* was never an option — that would deny the past 14 years of my life! I've given up so much, sacrificed so much, and experienced so much pains not to see this through. Also, giving up would be tantamount to turning my back on Jesus. Tantamount to betraying my Lord. And that, I hope, with the grace of God, I will never do. I said yes to my Lord's call, and I'm not taking it back.

Now, to end this essay. Recognizing that *Swordsman of the Word* is ultimately only between me and God, and recognizing also his sovereignty over my life and the whole universe, I am now leaving in his hands all the injustices and the resulting sufferings I've experienced since I started this ministry. I am trusting that he will do right by me.

Nevertheless, even though I've triumphed over them, I am still marked forever by the wounds, and I might never get over regretting the things that could have been. My consolation and my hope in all these is the **providence of God** [[ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/providence-of-god/](http://ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/providence-of-god/)] — his power to work out all these things for my good (Romans 8:28). And already I'm seeing the results. One is my declaration of independence for *Swordsman of the Word*, which is now a dual-nature ministry/business undertaking. Another is my adoption of TGC's Confes-

sional Statement, which has given me a strong theological anchor. (These are decisions that have eternal and far-reaching consequences.) Furthermore, I've grown up so much spiritually these past couple of years, and because of all the delays, my foundations for blogging have become stronger than ever.

I can't wait to see the things that will happen when God brings all these into full fruition.

**Tags:** religion, Christianity, Christian, God, Jesus, rejection, suffering, writing, blogging, ministry, faith, victory, loving God, sacrifice

*Note: This post is part of the collection New Founding Documents.  
[swordsoftheword.com/archives/sets/founding-docs/](http://swordsoftheword.com/archives/sets/founding-docs/)*

## About



Do you hunger for God? To know him more and his Word, but are overwhelmed by the huge amount of study materials out there?

Are you longing for the Bible to become more personal to you? To find in your study the balance between the theoretical and practical, between the scholarly and personal? The balance between truth and grace?

*Swordsman of the Word* is a blog about God and the Bible, but it is much more than that. This is also my own journey towards knowing God more through his Word, and towards understanding and changing my own life — and the world around me — in the light of that Word.

This is an invitation for you to join me in my journey.



My name is **Arjay B. Araña**. I'm a Filipino, and I've been in love with Jesus since 2004.

I am a conservative evangelical, though I'm still in the process of discovering and affirming my theology. (In regard to this process, my goal is to be able to fully accept *The Gospel Coalition's* Foundation Documents.) I haven't attended any seminary (and never will), but I have studied in a Bible school where I received training for the ministry. Furthermore, through my own efforts, I am a serious student of *Ligonier Ministries* (R.C. Sproul et al.) and *Grace to You* (John MacArthur).

My calling from God is to be a teacher, a missionary, and maybe even a pastor. This blog is part of my works for God — in Christian education, the missions, and pastoral ministry. It is solely dedicated to my personal essays and reflections, and its purposes are (1) primarily, to help you know God more, through his Word and through my own life, and (2) to share with you my passions and burdens as a servant of the Lord Jesus.

**More Information:** My posts in the following category tell more of the philosophy and the story behind my work here: [swordsmanoftheword.com/category/about/](http://swordsmanoftheword.com/category/about/). Also, I've talked about my personal life and my own walk with God in my testimony: [swordsmanoftheword.com/archives/sets/my-testimony/](http://swordsmanoftheword.com/archives/sets/my-testimony/).

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*This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God,  
and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ. — John 17:3 WEB*

How has this ministry helped you, my friend? Have you started to know God more?

The truth is, all these things I've talked about won't have any real meaning to you unless you first have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

If you want to know how to start such a relationship (and to know the story, the privileges, and the responsibilities that accompany this relationship), please read this: **God's Plan of Salvation**.

[swordsmanoftheword.com/salvation/](http://swordsmanoftheword.com/salvation/)