

Ephesians 6:18 -The Church's Armor: Prayer

TSK, GreekLexicon, Gill, Calvin, Handfuls, Moule, JFB, Robertson, PNT, Rienecker, Geneva, Family, Trapp, Barnes, Clarke, Henry, Hodge, Gaebelein, Hendriksen, Ellicott

Beloved in Christ:

David said, "When You said, 'Seek My face,' My heart said to You, 'Your face, LORD, I will seek.'"

St. Augustine wrote: "Prayer is the key that opens heaven..."

John Calvin called prayer the "chief exercise of faith."

A recent theologian said: "'Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint on his knees.'"

They were all right. Prayer is an essential weapon in the Christian's fight against the Devil, the world, and our flesh. You need prayer to fend off the Devil and you need prayer to fight for Christ's kingdom. You will hear about this today.

Our headings are:

Pray Constantly

Pray Comprehensively

Pray Passionately

Pray through the Spirit

Pray Watchfully

Pray for all Believers

Our goals are: **That you will be thankful for, and use the armor the Lord has given you, to fight to protect yourself and to conquer the world for Jesus.**

18 **praying always** with **all prayer** and **supplication** in the **Spirit**, being **watchful** to this end with all perseverance and supplication for **all the saints** —

Pray Constantly

1. The Ephesians Christians had no weapon of themselves, so they needed help from God to fight off the Devil when he attacked them and when he tried to quell the expanding of Christ's kingdom through evangelism.

So God gave the Ephesians, and all Christians, the weapon of prayer, by which they could plead for everything they needed for this cosmic fight. (I know some people like to say that prayer is not a weapon, but only a preparation for battle. But prayer is described as a tool and we will use it that way.)

2. Because this weapon was so essential on a daily basis, even hourly basis, God wanted the Ephesian Christians to always pray.

So when they felt tired (which is a great time for the Sneaky Snake to attack) they had to pray.

When they were busy (which is when it was easy to ignore God) they had to pray.

When they were going through hard times (like Peter looking at the wind and the waves and

starting to sink) they had to pray.

When things were going well (they were healthy, the job was great, children were doing their homework - and eyes came off of Jesus) they had to pray.

Luke 18:1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men **always ought to pray** and not lose heart,

Romans 12:12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, **continuing steadfastly in prayer**;

1 Thessalonians 5:17 **pray without ceasing**,

3. Lessons:

a. The fact is, no man can wield the sword of the Spirit (evangelize) properly without constant prayer. Even shorter: You can't fight without prayer.

b. It makes sense, then, to constantly pray. Wouldn't every wise Christian want to **stand under the banner of the one who never lost a war**...be under the one who had the ability and desire to help them?

c. The Devil can't defeat a praying Christian. Someone wrote: "Restraining prayer, we cease to fight; Prayer makes the Christian armor bright; And Satan trembles when he sees, The meanest (the most ordinary) saint upon his knees."

Pray Comprehensively

1. Not only were the Ephesian Christians to pray constantly, but they were to pray comprehensively –for all things and all times!

2. Consider some of the different circumstances for prayer the Ephesians had to consider.

- a. They were to pray **in their minds and they were to pray with their voices.**
- b. They were to pray **privately (in their closets) and they were pray publicly.**
- c. They were to pray for **the destruction of evil and praise God for his tender mercies.**
- d. They were to pray in **prosperity and they were to pray in adversity.**
- e. They were to pray when they **were happy and excited** (when a Christian least prays) **and they were to pray when they were sad.**
- f. They were to pray when **they were in good relations with God and they were to pray and confess their sins when they sinned.**

3. Lessons:

a. Pray everywhere! Pray in the closet and pray in the restaurant. Pray while you are driving!

b. Pray for everything. Pray when your baby is sick. Let him hear you call on God from

the cradle! Pray that your husband will come home in a good mood. Pray your children will do their homework. Pray for strength to shovel the snow. Pray your Dad will come home safely.

c. When you pray everywhere and for everything you are acknowledging God cares even for the smallest thing in your life. This will glorify him. And even those who hear-you baby in the crib-will be inclined to give God praise as he gets older.

Pray Passionately

1. It is good to always pray, it is good to pray everywhere and for all things, but the Ephesian Christians also had to pray with an intensity of spirit for extremely difficult things. After all, not all prayers are the same. For instance, the Lord said that **sometimes prayer had to be accompanied by fasting.**

An imploring request is more intense than regular prayer. **Supplications are prayers from deep within your spirit!**

2. So what might the Ephesian Christian make supplication for before God?

- a. They might have made **supplication for a loved one who did not believe and was about to die.**
- b. They might have made **supplication if war, or famine, or disease was about to break out.**
- c. They might have made **supplication if they were about to face some great personal difficulty**...like Jesus in Gethsemane before he faced his biggest battle on the cross! Some Christians faced death for their faith and needed to make supplication.

Isaiah 26:16 LORD, in trouble they have visited You, They poured out a prayer **when Your chastening was upon them.**

3. Lessons:

a. Passion is a God-given emotion. Use it. It would be sad if you don't feel strongly about issues to pray passionately about them.

b. Do you have a loved one who does not know Jesus and is older or sickly? Pray with passion. **Are you unsure about a major decision you have to make** in your life? Pray with passion. **Are you frustrated with the way things are in your life?** Pray with passion. Are you worried about the 100,000 babies Canada kills every year? Pray with passion.

Pray through the Spirit

1. The Ephesians Christians not only needed to pray from their spirits, but their prayer had to come through the Holy Spirit for them to get the strength to fight off their dangerous enemy.

Jude 1:20 But you, beloved, **building yourselves** up on your most holy faith, **praying in the Holy Spirit,**

2. Yes, the Holy Spirit assists the Christians in their prayers – every single day.

Romans 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 26
Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The Holy Spirit purifies the believer's prayers...and teaches him to pray...and makes intercessions on his behalf.

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

3. Lessons:

a. Don't let your prayer be dry. Your prayers will be dry if they come ritually – without the Holy Spirit working. Ask the Holy Spirit to bless your words and correct what you say incorrectly. **Write things down for which you must pray.**

b. And while you are doing that, ask him to comfort you as you fight...and put the right words in your mouth...and make you bold. These are all things Jesus said he would do for you through his Holy Spirit!

Pray Watchfully

1. The Ephesian Christians were challenged to pray watchfully, as prayer without work is weak!

This was the language of Jesus to his disciples just before he was captured, charged, convicted, and crucified. He knew the danger that was coming. They had to pray for help...but also watch out for dangers. (See also Matthew 26:41)

Luke 21:36 "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

This word is used to describe the one who passed the night without sleeping.

Look at some other warnings to do this...and when there are repeated warnings, know it is important to note.

Colossians 4:2 Continue in **prayer, and watch in the same** with thanksgiving;

Mark 13:33 "Take heed, **watch and pray**; for you do not know when the time is.

Luke 21:36 "**Watch therefore, and pray always** that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

2. The Ephesian Christians were challenged to watch out for the enemy because he was dangerous – a roaring lion...seeking whom he may devour, and because he posed a constant danger.

3. Lessons:

a. Pray God will protect you from falling into the Devil's trap and not fall into an addiction, but don't hang around people who are weak and addicted. (The "watch" part!) Move away. Hang around people who will challenge you to live well. When you pray for God to provide a good spouse for you...don't hang around people who only talk about money...or how important they are...and talk little about God. Hang around with good people! (This is most important for you young people!) Watch what is going on in your heart, in your home, in Ontario, and in Canada! You have to pray, and you have to fight!

b. The Devil may come to you in very sneaky ways; that is his modus operandi. He might bring temptation even through religious people. (An Assemblies of God church now welcomes LGBTQ people as members and leaders... It might seem loving, but it is evidence of hate those people!) If you were in that church, you would seem like you were intolerant if you did not support this...and especially if the leaders said that this was a "prophecy" from God! The Devil is a deceiver! Watch his traps!

Pray for all believers.

1. While it was normal for the Ephesian Christians to pray for their own (very real) needs, and the Devil was constantly attacking them to make them feel weak and even afraid, they had to have sympathy for their brothers who needed help!

Brothers were prone to sin too. So they needed each other to fight together to overcome the Devil and establish Christ's kingdom in the world. They could not fight in detached parties. So pray they were challenged to pray for each other.

Look how Apostle Paul expected the Philippians to pray for him...and how he expected God would answer their prayers.

Philippians 1:19 For I know that this will turn out **for my deliverance through your prayer** and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Christian brothers are fighting for a similar cause. And the success of one is dependent on the success of each other.

2. The Ephesians Christians had brothers from every nationality, race, age, sex – so male and female, and in all different condition, in all places, and of every Christian denomination.

3. Lessons:

a. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he did not start the prayer with “My Father in heaven.” He said, “Our father,” showing the family relationship. Every Christian, no matter his state, or how weak his doctrine might be, is your brother!

b. So pray for each other in the church. We need your prayer! Yes, you sometimes can't do anything about it. But God can! And if Jesus prays daily for the saints, you should too!

c. Only those with hearts of stone are not moved to pray when they hear and see the suffering of their fellow brothers and sisters in Jesus. But knowing your hearts are not of stone, how is your prayer for each other?

Conclusion:

The Ephesian Christians were called to put on their last piece of their armor: Prayer. They had to pray constantly. They had to pray for all things, in every place, and in every circumstance. They had to pray with passion, perseveringly. They had to pray with the Holy Spirit's help. They had to watch while they prayed...watch out for coming dangers. And they had to pray for all believers – male, female, old, young, boy, girl, foreign, domestic, rich, or poor.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Pray to your heavenly Father because Jesus satisfied the Father's anger against you.

There is no prayer without sacrifice!

2. Pray to do the work the Lord has called you to do. You need to keep strong. You need to fight and conquer the enemies.

3. What is your prayer life like? Only you can answer that question. It is usually one of the weakest points in most Christians' lives. I hope it is not for you.

Finally, maybe you are not a Christian today, but there are prayers being offered for you – even now. We want to rescue you from Satan's clutches and bring you into God's family. Don't fight the pull of the Holy Spirit. Surrender and live – live forever.