

***The Armor of God (Pt.3)***  
***Ephesians 6:18-24***  
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**INTRODUCTION**

1. This morning I would like to invite you to that last section found in Ephesians 6 called “The Armor of God.”
2. In our last time together, we looked at the last three pieces of armor in verses 16-17.
3. This morning we are going to look at *the petition of prayer* and see how essential prayer is in spiritual battle.
4. In this one verse we will see 5 ways we are to pray and the final exhortation that closes this letter by Paul to the Ephesians.
5. Read Ephesians 6:18-24
6. This section begins in verse 10 of chapter 6.
7. It is here where Paul talks about the armor of the believer.
8. Chained to a Roman guard, Paul uses the armor of the Roman soldier to describe the armor of the believer.
9. He says in verse 10 that the believer is to “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.”
10. Our strength for spiritual battle lies not in our own strength but in the strength of the Lord.

11. In relying on the strength of the Lord, Paul says in verse 11 to “Put on the full armor of God,” and he gives us the reason why — “so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil” and in verse 13, “so that you will be able to resist in the evil day.”
12. The armor is our protection against the “schemes” of the devil.
13. The battle that we are in is not “against flesh and blood” as verse 12 says but it’s against “the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”
14. It is at this point where Paul begins to identify each piece of the armor that the believer is to put on.
15. This is the “full armor of God” mentioned in verses 11 and 13.
16. Verse 14 begins the list by saying, “Stand firm therefore, **HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,** 15 and having shod **YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;** 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. 17 And take **THE HELMET OF SALVATION,** and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”
17. There are six pieces of armor mentioned in verses 14-17: the girdle of truth (v.14), the breastplate of righteousness (v.14), the gospel of peace (v.15), the shield of faith (v.16), the helmet of salvation (v.17), and the sword of the Spirit (v.17).
18. The girdle of truth refers to knowing the Word of God.
19. The breastplate of righteousness refers to obeying the Word of

God.

20. The gospel of peace refers to being confident in God's Word (assurance).
21. The shield of faith refers to believing God.
22. The helmet of salvation refers to believing God's Word.
23. And the sword of the Spirit refers to using God's Word.
24. Now as we look at verses 18-20, we see one final weapon: Prayer.
25. William Gurnall said, "We have at last set before you the Christian in his armour; and now he wants nothing to furnish him for the battle, or enable him for the victory, but the presence of his general to lead him on" (Complete Armor, Vol.2).
26. Every piece of armor is to be used with prayer.
27. The believers' protection is not only the armor but prayer.
28. Albert Barnes says, "It would be well for the soldier who goes forth to battle to pray—to pray for victory; or to pray that he may be prepared for death, should he fall" (Barnes' Notes on the New Testament).
29. Now we know that we're commanded to pray.
30. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, "pray" and it is used in the imperative mood.
31. We know that it is a sin not to pray because Samuel said in 1 Samuel 12:23, "Far be it from me that I should sin against the

LORD by ceasing to pray for you.”

32. But what does Ephesians 6:18 say about prayer?
33. How are we to pray according to Ephesians 6:18?
34. There are *5 ways given in how we are to pray.*

## I. Pray with All Prayer (v.18a)

“With all prayer and petition”

### A. There is More Than One Kind of Praying

1. “Prayer” Gr.proseuche, refers to general requests
2. “Petition” Gr.deesis, refers to specific requests

### B. We Are to Be Involved in All Kinds of Prayer

The use of both words points to the idea that we are to be involved in all kinds of prayer, every form of prayer that is appropriate.

Matthew Henry says, “We must pray...public, private, and secret, social and solitary, solemn and sudden; with all the parts of prayer: confession of sin, petition for mercy, and thanksgivings for favours received” (Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible).

John MacArthur says that we are to pray “in loud cries, in soft whispers, or silently; deliberately and planned or spontaneously; while sitting, standing, kneeling, or even lying down; at home or in church; while working or while traveling; with hands folded or raised; with eyes open or closed; with head bowed or erect. The New Testament, like the Old, mentions many forms, circumstances, and postures for prayer but prescribes none. Jesus prayed while standing, while sitting, while kneeling, and quite probably in other positions as well. We can pray wherever we are and in whatever situation we are in. "Therefore I want the men in every place to pray" (1 Tim. 2:8), Paul said. For the faithful, Spirit-filled Christian, every place becomes a place of prayer” (Ephesians).

1. Paul exhorted Timothy that “entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men” (1 Tim.2:1).
2. The writer of Hebrews said that Jesus, “In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.” (Heb.5:7).

“The soldier should use all kinds of prayer: public and private; deliberate and spontaneous; supplication and intercession; confession and humiliation; praise and thanksgiving” (William MacDonald, Believer’s Bible Commentary: Ephesians 6:18).

Charles Hodge says, “It is not armour or weapons which make the warrior. There must be courage and strength - and even then he often needs help. As the Christian has no resources of strength in himself, and can succeed only as helped from above, the apostle urges the duty of prayer. The believer is to avail himself of all kinds of prayer” (Commentary on Ephesians).

## **II. Pray Always (v.18b)**

“Pray at all times”

### **A. This Does Not Mean Always Saying Prayers**

1. We are not heard for our “vain repetitions” or much speaking (Mat.6:7)
2. Jesus said this is how “the hypocrites” pray.

“For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues

and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men.” (Mat.6:5).

They also “they suppose that they will be heard for their many words” (Mat.6:7).

## B. This Means A Continual Attitude of Prayer

“Praying always” or “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess.5:17) is “not some perpetual activity of kneeling and interceding but as a way of life marked by a continual attitude of prayer” (MacArthur).

This is “to live in continual God consciousness, where everything we see and experience becomes a kind of prayer, lived in deep awareness of and surrender to our heavenly Father.

To obey this exhortation means that, when we are tempted, we hold the temptation before God and ask for His help. When we experience something good and beautiful, we immediately thank the Lord for it. When we see evil around us, we pray that God will make it right and be willing to be used of Him to that end. When we meet someone who does not know Christ, we pray for God to draw that person to Himself and to use us to be a faithful witness. When we encounter trouble, we turn to God as our Deliverer. In other words, our life becomes a continually ascending prayer, a perpetual communing with our heavenly Father” (MacArthur).

Our prayers “should be continual, not sporadic; a habit, not an isolated act” (MacDonald, W., & Farstad, A. (1997, c1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary*).

1. The Jewish people of Paul’s day had several

prescribed times for daily prayer

Daniel prayed three times a day (Dan.6:10).

The psalmist said in Ps.55:17, “Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice” (NKJV).

2. The coming of the New Covenant and the birth of the church brought a new dimension to prayer as it did to everything else
  - a) Jesus said in Luke 21:36 - “But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”
  - b) Among other things, the earliest Christians in Jerusalem “were continually devoting themselves...to prayer” (Acts 2:42).
  - c) The God-fearing Cornelius, to whom the Lord sent Peter with a message of salvation, “prayed to God continually” (Acts 10:2).
  - d) In many of his letters Paul urged his readers to regularly devote themselves to prayer
    - (1) Rom.12:12 - “continuing steadfastly in prayer.”
    - (2) Phil.4:6 - “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”



- (3) Col.4:2 - “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.”
- e) The apostle assured Timothy, his beloved son in the Lord, that he prayed for him “night and day” (2 Tim.1:3).
- f) The early church knew the importance of prayer, and God honored their prayers, even when faith was sometimes weak—as in the case of those who were praying for Peter’s release from prison but did not believe Rhoda when she reported that he was knocking at the door (Acts 12:12-15).

“To pray at all times is to constantly set our minds "on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2).

The ultimate purpose of our salvation is to glorify God and to bring us into intimate, rich fellowship with Him; and to fail to come to God in prayer is to deny that purpose. "What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also," John said, "that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). Our fellowship with God is not meant to wait until we are in heaven. God's greatest desire, and our greatest need, is to be in constant fellowship with Him now, and there is no greater expression or experience of fellowship than prayer” (MacArthur).

In keeping with the context, Albert Barnes, says, “It would be well for the soldier who goes forth to battle to pray - to pray for victory; or to pray that he may be

prepared for death, should he fall. But soldiers do not often feel the necessity of this. To the Christian soldier, however, it is indispensable. Prayer crowns all lawful efforts with success and gives a victory when nothing else would. No matter how complete the armor; no matter how skilled we may be in the science of war; no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated. God alone can give the victory; and when the Christian soldier goes forth armed completely for the spiritual conflict, if he looks to God by prayer, he may be sure of a triumph. This prayer is not to be intermitted. It is to be always. In every temptation and spiritual conflict we are to pray” (Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible).

J.C. Philpot said, “If we do not continually "pray in the Spirit," our limbs will, so to speak, shrink, and our armour drop off. The knights of old exercised themselves every day in their full armour, or they could not have borne it, nor used their weapons with dexterity and strength. So must the Christian warrior, by prayer and supplication, ‘exercise himself unto godliness’” (Daily Words for Zion’s Wayfarers).

Thomas Brooks said, “The Greek is a metaphor taken from hunting dogs, that never give over the game till they have got their prey. A Christian must not only pray, but hold on in prayer, till he hath got the heavenly prize. We are wanting always; and therefore we had need be praying always. The world is always alluring; and therefore we had need be always a-praying; Satan is always a-tempting; and therefore we had need be always a-praying; and we are always a-sinners; and therefore we had need be always a-praying; and we are in dangers always; and

therefore we had need be praying always; and we are dying always, 1 Cor 15:31; and therefore we had need be praying always. Man's whole life is but a lingering death; man no sooner begins to live, but he begins to die. When one was asked why he prayed six times a day, he only gave this answer, "I must die, I must die, I must die." Dying Christians had need be praying Christians, and they that are always a-dying had need be always a-praying. Certainly prayerless families are graceless families, and prayerless persons are graceless persons, Jer 10:25" (Works, Vol.2).

### **III. Pray in the Spirit (v.18c)**

“In the Spirit”

Jude also tells his readers the same in Jude 1:20 where he says, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit.”

What does it mean to “pray in the Spirit?”

#### **A. This is Not Speaking in Tongues**

Some say that praying in the spirit is praying in tongues or some other ecstatic or dramatic manner.

#### **B. This is Praying in the Name of Christ**

1. This is praying consistent with the nature and will of Christ
2. It is to pray in concert with the Spirit (ie., directed and empowered by the Spirit)

Romans 8:26-27 says, “And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; 27 and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

- a) As the “Spirit of grace and of supplication” (Zech.12:10), the Holy Spirit continually prays for us.
- b) For us to pray rightly is to pray as He prays—to join our petitions to His and our will to His. It is to line up our minds and desires with His mind and desires, which are consistent with the will of the Father and the Son.
- c) To be “filled with the Spirit” (Eph.5:18) and to walk in His leading and power is to be made able to “pray in the Spirit,” because our prayer will then be in harmony with His.

“As we submit to the Holy Spirit, obeying His Word and relying on His leading and strength, we will be drawn into close and deep fellowship with the Father and the Son” (MacArthur).

#### **IV. Pray Being Alert (v.18d)**

“And with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance.”

##### **A. Believers Are to Be on the Alert**

“Alert” Gr.agrupneo (pres.act.part.) is literally, “be awake” (Friberg) or “sleepless” (Thayer). It is “earnestly,

courageously, and persistently bringing everything in our lives before God” (MacArthur).

Albert Barnes says, It is “watching for opportunities to pray; watching for the spirit of prayer; watching against all those things which would hinder prayer.”

This is watching “before prayer, in prayer, after prayer” (Vincent).

1. Jesus told His disciples to keep on the alert and pray

Mark 13:33 - “Take heed, keep on the alert; for you do not know when the appointed time is.”

2. The writer of Hebrews told his readers that Elders watch over their souls

Heb.13:17 - “Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep *watch* over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”

## B. Believers Are to be Alert with All Perseverance

“Perseverance” Gr.proskarteresis, means “to be steadfast, constant, and persevering.”

1. Paul counseled the Colossians to “**devote** [themselves] to prayer” (Col.4:2).

“Devote” is the same word translated “perseverance” in Ephesians 6:18.

2. The word is used of Moses’ faithful endurance when

he led the children of Israel out of Egypt

Heb.11:27 - "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen."

3. This is the same as "keep on asking" that James mentions in James 1:5

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God" (keeping on asking - present tense).

## V. Pray for All the Saints (vv.18e-19)

"And petition for all the saints"

### A. We Are a Family

1. The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9 begins with "Our Father" not "My Father."

"We pray as part of a great family that is also talking to God, and we ought to pray for the other members of the family" (Wiersbe).

2. We are to pray for "all the saints" (vv.18e-19)

Thomas Boston said, 'Confine not your prayers to your own private case, but in all earnestness extend them to the church of Christ in the land where you live, and through the world. Prayer is a duty wherein all the members of Christ on earth can have actual communion; they meet at the throne of grace who never saw one another's face. It is the joint petition of all the saints, "Thy kingdom come." Pray for the building up, increase, peace, and purity of the church

universal” (Works, Vol.4).

- a) Paul asked the Ephesians to pray for him in verse 19 – “and for me”

“Paul was writing from prison. Yet he did not ask prayer for his early release. Rather he asked for utterance in opening his mouth boldly to declare the mystery of the gospel” (MacDonald).

- b) He asked the Romans to pray for him in Rom.15:30:

“Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to *strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.*”

- c) He asked the Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, and Philemon to pray for him (2 Cor.1:11; Phil.1:19; Col.4:3; 1 Thess.5:25; 2 Thess.3:1; Phile.1:22)

- d) The writer of Hebrews asked his readers to pray for him - Heb.13:18

“*Pray for us*, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.”

## B. We Are in Warfare

1. The context for which Paul exhorts the Ephesians to pray for the saints is during the midst of battle.

2. “Elsewhere Paul commands us to pray for unbelievers, for government leaders, and for others, but here the focus is on all the saints. It is only saints, Christian believers, who are involved in the spiritual warfare for which God provides the armor Paul has just been describing and who are able to pray in the Spirit” (MacArthur).

## CONCLUSION

1. Paul gives closing remarks in verses 21-24 by saying that he was “sending Tychicus from Rome to Ephesus to let the saints know how he was getting along.
2. He commends Tychicus as a beloved brother and faithful minister (servant) in the Lord.
3. There are only five references to this man in the NT. He was one of the party that traveled with Paul from Greece to Asia (Acts 20:4). He was the apostle's messenger to the Christians at Colosse (Col. 4:7); to Ephesus (cf. 6:21 with 2 Tim. 4:12) and possibly to Titus in Crete (Titus 3:12).
4. His twofold mission at this time was to inform the saints concerning Paul's welfare in prison, and also to encourage their hearts, allaying any unnecessary fears.
5. In the closing verses, we have Paul's characteristic greetings—peace and grace. In combining these two, he wishes for his readers the sum of all blessings.
6. In verse 23 he desires that his readers may have peace and love with faith. Peace would garrison their hearts in every circumstance of life. Love would enable them to worship God and work with one another. Faith would empower them for



exploits in the Christian warfare. All these blessings come from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, a fact that would be impossible if They were not equal.

7. Finally the beloved apostle wishes grace for all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an incorruptible, sincere love” (MacDonald).
8. Jonathan Edwards says, “The last word, in the original, signifies in *incorruption*; which shows, that the apostle was sensible there were many who had a kind of love to Christ, which was not pure and spiritual” (Works, Vol.11).
9. Thomas Brooks adds, “The true bred Christian amat Christum propter Christum, loves Christ for Christ; he loves Christ for that internal and eternal worth that is in him; he loves him for his incomparable excellency and beauty, for that transcendent sweetness, loveliness, holiness, and goodness that is in him; he is none of those that loves Christ for loaves, neither will he with Judas kiss Christ and betray him; nor yet will he with those in the Gospel cry out, "Hosanna, Hosanna," one day, and "Crucify him, crucify him," the next, Matt 21:9,15" (Works, Vol.2).
10. So how are you praying?
11. Are you praying “with all prayer and petition”?
12. Are you praying “at all times in the Spirit”?
13. Are you praying “on the alert with all perserverance and petition for all the saints”?
14. We are all engaged in spiritual warfare.
15. We need to pray that every believer will realize this, use the

armor that God provides to fight against the enemy and sin.

16. Our consistent, fervent prayers on each other's behalf will aid us in the battle.
17. I gain strength in the fight when I know there are others in the same battle praying for me.
18. As we close this morning, let's doing what comes naturally to the child of God.
19. Let's pray.
20. If you here today without forgiveness of all your sin, I want to call you to turn from your sin and come to Jesus Christ who died as a substitute for penalty of your sin.
21. Call on Him now as we pray.