

Discussion Starter #1: What is your favorite thing about prayer?

Key Passage: *“Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.”* (Ephesians 6:18-20)

TEACHING POINT

#1

Prayer—reliance upon God—is the means by which we draw spiritual strength from God to use our spiritual armor.

Notice v.18 instructs us to pray *“in the Spirit.”* Praying in the Spirit does not refer to the words we are saying as we pray; rather it refers to *how* we are praying. Praying in the Spirit means praying according to the Spirit’s leading. It is praying for things the Spirit leads us to pray for. Romans 8:26 tells us, *“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”*

Prayer is the means by which we put the armor on. The way to put on each piece of spiritual armor is by praying. It is something you must do for yourself—you can’t put the armor on someone else, and they cannot put the armor on you. Once you have put on the armor, you find that God has equipped and prepared you for the battles of the day.

Prayer is also the power that makes the armor work. Prayer gives us the energy, strength, and power we need to face the battle.

When our armor is working through prayer, we are able to stand, and Satan is unable to rob us of our blessings.

- Prayer helps us focus on truth—to put in the belt of truth.
- Prayer helps us claim our righteousness in Christ and to live righteously—to wear the breastplate of righteousness.
- Prayer prepares us to share the gospel—to put on our peace shoes.
- Prayer strengthens our faith—to take up the shield of faith.
- Prayer helps us to think biblically—to put on the helmet of salvation.
- Prayer helps us to use the Word of God offensively and defensively—to wield the sword of the Spirit.

Without prayer, without reliance upon God, our efforts at spiritual warfare are empty and futile.

TALK ABOUT IT:

- How can we know if we are praying in the Spirit (v.18)?

TEACHING POINT

#2

Prayer has many aspects, all of which are important in spiritual warfare.

In Ephesians 6:18-20, Paul writes about five unique and important aspects of prayer:

When to Pray – Paul also explained when to pray: “*at all times*” (v.18a). Some people pray only in emergency situations—the only word God ever hears from them is “help”! But Paul says we are to pray at all times: when things are going well and when things are not going well. When the sun is shining and when we are caught in the storms. Prayer is to be a constant practice in a Christian’s life (1 Thess.5:17).

Where to Pray – We are to pray “*in the Spirit*” (v.18b). This not only emphasizes praying in accordance with the Spirit’s leading, but it also reminds us that we can pray anywhere since the Spirit is omnipresent. We do not have to be in church to pray. We can pray at home, at work, in the car while driving (with eyes open, please!), etc.

What to Pray – Paul tells us to pray “*with all prayer and supplication*” (v.18c). Our prayers should not be only about asking; our prayers should also include thanksgiving, praise, confession, and intercession.

How to Pray – Paul tells us that we are to “*keep alert with all perseverance*” (v.18d). Keeping alert means to be attentive or vigilant. It implies having an awareness of the problems around us and an awareness of God’s Word so we can pray intelligently for the application of God’s Word to those problems. And we are to pray with perseverance—that is, with persistence, giving constant attention. We are to pray and pray and pray some more until an answer comes

Who to Pray for – Paul tells us to make supplication “*for all the saints*” (v.18e). There is no one we should leave out of our prayers! Notice in v.19-20 Paul then requests prayer specifically for himself. But pay attention to what he asked us to request for him: “*and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.*” Paul did not pray for release from his difficult situation, but for the power to use that situation to further the gospel. When Paul wrote these words, he was a prisoner in Rome, facing possible death for preaching the gospel. Yet, rather than asking for deliverance, he asked when he opened his mouth he would have a message from God, and he asked that when the opportunity arose, he would have the courage to boldly proclaim the message.

TALK ABOUT IT:

- Do you have a favorite place to pray? If so, where—and why there?
- What can we learn from Paul about his requests in v.19-20?
- What are some important truths you’d teach a new Christian about how to pray?

#3

God has given us a battle plan for when we are under spiritual attack.

First, when under spiritual attack, we must determine whether what we are experiencing is truly a spiritual attack from demonic forces or simply the effects of living in a sin-cursed world. Some people blame every sin, every conflict, and every problem on demons they believe need to be cast out. The apostle Paul instructs Christians to wage war against the sin in themselves (Rom.6) and to wage war against the evil one (Eph.6:10-18). But whether we are truly under spiritual attack from demonic forces or battling the evil in ourselves and in the world, the battle plan is the same.

Second, we must be strong in the Lord and in His power, not in our own power which is no match for the devil and his forces. Paul exhorts us to put on the armor of God, which is the only way to take a stand against spiritual attacks. In our own strength and power, we have no chance of defeating the “*spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms*” (v. 12). Only the “*full armor of God*” will equip us to withstand spiritual attack. We can only be strong in the Lord’s power; it is God’s armor that protects us, and our battle is against spiritual forces of evil in the world. We are to buckle on the belt of truth, speaking truth against Satan’s lies. We are to put on the breastplate of righteousness, resting in the fact that we are declared righteous because of Christ’s sacrifice for us. We are to wear the peace shoes, proclaiming the gospel no matter how much resistance we receive. We are lift up the shield of faith, never wavering in our faith no matter how fiercely we are attacked. We are to put on the helmet of salvation, claiming the assurance we have of our salvation, an assurance that no spiritual force can take away. We are to wield the sword of the Spirit, using God’s Word—not our own opinions and feelings—to defeat Satan. We are pray in the Spirit with the full awareness that prayer—reliance upon God—is the means by which we draw spiritual strength from God to use our spiritual armor.

Third, we must follow Jesus’ example in warding off direct attacks from Satan when He was tempted by him in the wilderness (Mat.4:1-11). Each temptation was answered the same way—with the words “It is written” and a quote from the Scriptures. Jesus knew the Word of the living God is the most powerful weapon against the temptations of the devil. If Jesus Himself used the Word to counter the devil, do we dare to use anything less? *

* Adapted from the article “What Can I Do When I Am Under Spiritual Attack?” at gotquestions.org. Used with permission.

TALK ABOUT IT:

- How can you tell if the spiritual attack you are facing is a direct attack from Satan or simply the effects of living in a sin-cursed world?
- Which pieces of the armor do you find difficult to remember to put on? Why?
- Looking back over this *WWN: We Wrestle Not* series, what are 2-3 key takeaways that you believe will benefit you in your walk with the Lord and in your battles with Satan?