

Spiritual Warfare: The Furnishing for Spiritual Warfare - 5

Introduction: Having concluded **verses 11-17**, Paul now summarizes the final instructions concerning the spiritual warfare of the believer.

We see in this passage the three thoughts we began with in the first lesson on the Furnishings for Spiritual Warfare. The whole armor of God deals with three items that are necessary for the Christian to succeed in Spiritual Warfare. We have His Word, His Presence, and His Power. As we continue in this passage, we come to the Soldier's actions for Jesus Christ. Notice with me **verses 18-20**.

Ephesians 6:18-20 *“18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; 19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”*

The first action of the Christian Soldier in spiritual warfare is to pray. The Christian Soldier must be engaged in prayer. This is of such great importance. The command is simple.... we are told to pray always. The Bible says, “Praying always...” We must determine what this means. The question sometimes arises: How do I arrive at a proper interpretation? Below are five rules we should follow when interpreting Scripture.

1. **We interpret literally.** (This does not discount the use of metaphors or symbolism or any other form of literary device. When we say we interpret literally, we are saying we take the text at face value. If I am, for instance, in a poetical book of the Bible, I must understand that poetic devices will be used. If I am in an apocalyptic book of the Bible, I am to understand that there may be some apocalyptic symbolism used.)
2. **We interpret grammatically.** (We look at the Grammar that is used. I.e., this is a noun; this is a verb, this is a conjunction, etc.)
3. **We interpret historically.** (We understand the historical context of this passage. What time period are we in? What historically has taken place? What can we know about the people, place, or things discussed in the passage? When I see the word ‘lamp’ in Scripture, I cannot in all aspects compare this to a ‘lamp’ in the 21st Century, etc.)
4. **We interpret culturally.** (As best as we can, we try to determine the culture of the people involved in the text. Hebraisms, Greek Culture, Roman Society, etc...)
5. **We interpret contextually.** (What is the theme of the chapter? What is the theme of the passage? What is the theme of the verse? How does this fit in with the rest of the Bible?)

The Bible says, "Praying always..." Does this mean we must pray all the time (never sleep, never eat, etc.)? This cannot be the meaning. So what does this mean? Notice the rest of the verse.

*"18 **Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;**"*

The underlying indicates that we are to pray: *διά* - through, *πᾶς* - all, every, *καιρός* - occasion, time. ---- 'through all occasions [time].'

What does this mean? It means that:

Prayer is to be **consistent**.

This falls in line with the metaphor used here. Consistency of a Soldier is paramount. Prayer ought to be consistent, but then secondly, it ought to be:

Prayer is to be **instant**.

In **Romans chapter 12**, Paul is dealing with the practical living of the Christian life. He gives a long list of helpful instructions for everyday living.

Romans 12:9-13 *"9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; **continuing instant in prayer**; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."*

We can pray instantly. The enemy of our Souls can attack at any time. You and I must be prepared to pray instantly. The Bible tells us that we have a privilege to pray because of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4:14-16 *"14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, **let us hold fast our profession**. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 **Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*

Prayer is to be **persistent**.

When we look in the Gospel records we find on several occasions that the Lord Jesus Christ dealt with this matter of prayer. In **Luke chapter 18**, for instance, the Lord gave the parable of the Widow and the Unjust Judge. The sum of what the Lord taught is shown in **verse 1** before the parable.

*"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men **ought always to pray**,*

and not to faint;”

We see in that parable not only consistency but **persistence**.

Notice again **verse 18**, *“Praying always with all supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”*

This injunction to prayer consistently, persistently, and instantly covers all aspects of praying.

We are making requests or supplications. (Petition or earnest request.)

We are interceding on behalf of others. (Praying on their behalf.)

We are praying to be enabled for the work God has called us to do.

We are praying for wisdom to be led by His Spirit.

How are we to know how to specifically pray for others concerning the trials and difficulties of this life? Through the meetings of the local church. **Oh, how vital this is to be connected with the local church to know what to pray for. It is crucial for us to understand the times and know what is taking place so we can pray in the Spirit.**

We see that we are to pray for **all saints**. That is for all those that are part of the family of God. Notice secondly, we are to pray specifically **for utterance to speak the mysteries of the Gospel boldly**.

It is evident that I need God’s help to speak the mysteries of the Gospel properly and boldly. What good would it do us to have all these other items in place, yet we are not advancing with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? I have found that I cannot be a proper witness for the Lord without His enablement.

“19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

“There is something especially touching in this. He was “an ambassador” - sent to proclaim peace to a lost world. But he was now in chains. An ambassador is a sacred character. No greater affront can be given to a nation than to put its ambassadors to death, or even to throw them into prison.”- Albert Barnes.

Paul’s desire was to be equipped for spiritual warfare and be enabled by the Lord to speak boldly and rightly the mysteries of the Gospel.