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How to Pray

A Prayer Strategy for the Battle

How to Pray - A Prayer Strategy for the Battle
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“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, and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak.”

Eph. 6:18-20 (ESV)

A picture of five men painting the inside of a swimming pool illustrates a significant truth. Three of the men are leaning over the side of the pool, holding a fourth man by his legs as he hangs upside down with a paint roller in his hand. It's clear that he's painting the sides of the pool. A fifth man is kneeling next to the three holders. He too is leaning over the edge, with one hand holding a paint can and the other extended towards the man applying the paint. His job is to dip the brush into the paint can for the man hanging upside down. Funny.

Another picture illustrates the same truth. This picture is simpler. It's a close-up showing newly completed roads leading to a new housing project. A series of telephone poles supports wires stretched above and across the new roads. However, one telephone pole stands in the center of the main road. That's right. It's installed in the center of the road on top of the asphalt, not along the side of the road like the others. Also funny.

Both pictures are comical and spark laughter. But they both illustrate the same vital truth: strategy is important. When painting a swimming pool, strategy is important. When building a road, strategy is important. But even



more important than simply having a strategy is making sure it's a good one—one that will ensure success.

The same is true when it comes to living the Christian life: strategy is important.

The Christian life requires a strategy because following Christ in daily life is inherently a spiritual battle. The word battle may be an understatement: full-scale war is more appropriate. When God transfers a person from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of his beloved Son (Colossians 1:13), that person is awakened to the spiritual war that is both within him and surrounding him.

The Apostle Paul understood the importance of strategy. As he penned the New Testament book of Ephesians, he spent most of the book articulating profound theological truths about a believer's relationship with Jesus Christ, and then closed with simple but profound truths about this spiritual battle surrounding those who follow Jesus Christ. But before we look at Paul's strategy, let's take a quick look at the background of Ephesians and then walk through the book to frame the context for his prayer strategy for spiritual warfare.

Background of Ephesians

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is distinct from his other epistles in that he did not address a specific situation. This letter seems more like a homily or a speech in which he sought to articulate truth about the great salvation provided for us by Jesus Christ. He knew the believers in Ephesus well as a result of the three years he had spent ministering there (Acts 19:1-20:1). He wrote this letter around 60 AD, during his first imprisonment in Rome. He was under house arrest, which meant that he lived in his own house, but under the watchful eye of Roman soldiers who lived with him to ensure that he did not escape. His ministry seemed to continue unhindered, limited only by his inability to move beyond his household. During this time, he also wrote letters to the Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.



A Walk Through Ephesians

In chapter one, Paul described the spiritual blessings that believers have in Jesus Christ (1:3). He spoke of God's work in election, predestination, and redemption; the riches of grace; and the believer's spiritual inheritance (1:4–11). He affirmed that salvation is safe and secure because the Holy Spirit seals the deal as a guarantee (1:13).

In chapter two, he described what believers had been like before salvation. They were dead in sin (2:1). But now, God had made these spiritually dead people alive in Christ because of his rich mercy (2:4). This spiritual resurrection gives believers a seat in the heavenly places with Christ (2:6). This amazing work is all accomplished by God's grace through faith. It is not by any work of man, so that no one can boast and take the credit that belongs to God (2:8–9).

Paul then reminded the believers at Ephesus that they had once been separated from God and alienated from Israel because of their sin (2:11–12). But now, they are brought near by the blood of Christ (2:13). And because of this, God has removed the wall of racial hostility from between Jews and Gentiles and has made believers from both people groups into one new man (2:14–18).

In chapter three, Paul affirmed that the mystery of Christ had not been seen by previous generations but was now revealed to him (3:3–5). This wonderful mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs with the Jews, and they are partakers of the promise of Christ through the gospel (3:6). Now, through the church, God's manifold wisdom can be known (3:10), as this aligns with God's purpose (3:11). Paul then prayed for his readers to experience spiritual strength through the Holy Spirit, and to comprehend Christ's great love that surpasses knowledge (3:16–19).

Chapter four marked a transition. Chapters one through three lifted the readers' gaze up to the heavenly places. Then chapters four through six brought it down to the earthly spaces. Paul exhorted them to live out the profound theological truths he had just described. This transition began with an appeal to walk in a manner that is



worthy of their calling by demonstrating the character of Christ (4:1-3).

Paul then listed the spiritual roles that God gifted to the church to build it up. These were the apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers (4:11-13). Their goal was—and is—to equip believers for the work of ministry. After that, Paul described the new life that should characterize everyone who follows Christ by contrasting it with the old, sinful life (4:14-32).

In chapter five, Paul called the Ephesian church to be imitators of God and walk as Christ did (5:1), reemphasizing what he said in chapter four about a worthy life. This also came with an exhortation to flee from sexual immorality and live a life of purity (5:3-12). He urged them to be wise, redeem their time, understand God's will, and submit to the Holy Spirit's influence (5:15-18).

Chapter five ended and chapter six began with instructions for family and household relationships. Paul specifically highlighted the marriage relationship and the picture it provides of Christ's relationship with his church (5:25-33). He also described relationships between parents and children (6:1-4) and between bondservants and masters (6:5-9).

Apart from a few final greetings, chapter six concludes with a description of the spiritual armor needed to engage in the invisible warfare that surrounds believers. No doubt Paul was influenced by the Roman soldiers who guarded him during his days of house arrest. As he wrote this letter to the Ephesians, he had a clear view of the armor worn by these men. As he looked at the helmet, breastplate, belt, shoes, shield, and sword equipping these soldiers, Paul painted a spiritual analogy to encourage believers to put on the whole armor of God as they engage the enemy in spiritual warfare.

Warfare is serious. The armor is necessary. But so is a battle plan.

A dark silhouette of a person in a prayerful pose, with hands clasped and head bowed, set against a blue background. The person's arms are raised, and their hands are pressed together in front of their face.

Spiritual Warfare

There is a story told about a military general who led his troops into battle. He and his men found themselves in the awkward and dangerous position of facing enemy troops on all sides of their position. As the general stood before his men, he proclaimed these optimistic words: “Men, we are surrounded by the enemy. That means we have the greatest opportunity ever presented to an army. We can attack in any direction we choose.”


Optimistic? Yes. Realistic? Maybe not.

Unlike this general’s speech, the words of the Apostle Paul concerning the spiritual warfare that surrounds us on all sides are both optimistic and realistic. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he commanded his readers to be strong in the Lord through the strength the Lord provides (6:10). Believers cannot fight the spiritual war any other way, especially not in their own strength. Paul also ordered them to put on the whole armor of God (6:11). Without it, they could not stand against the schemes and tactics of the enemy.

It is worth noting Paul’s description of the enemy in verse 6:12. He said that the enemy is not other people. That’s what the phrase, “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood” means. So, if you are having a hard time with difficult people at church or at a Bible study, or even if you are watching politicians you disagree with on the television, you can look at them and say to yourself, “They are not the enemy.” Paul instead taught that our enemy is comprised of rulers, authorities, cosmic powers, and spiritual forces of evil. In other words, our enemy is in the spiritual realm. The enemy is Satan and his demons.

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”

Eps. 6:13



This is why in 6:13 he says, “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.” The word therefore points back to verse 12. Since our enemy is not flesh and blood people we can see, but rather invisible demonic spirits we cannot see, we need to put on the whole armor of God. Only then can we engage the enemy. Only then can we take our stand.

But after putting on our spiritual armor, we need a battle plan. We need a strategy.

Spiritual Warfare Strategy

A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a goal. It’s a game plan that breaks down the steps you need to take to get from one point to another. In military language, a strategy is the practice of reducing an adversary’s physical capacity and willingness to fight. This action is continued until the goal is achieved.

In the spiritual battle, our enemy is constantly roaming like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). In order to defeat him, we need the armor, and we need a strategy.

Paul outlined his strategy for spiritual warfare in Ephesians 6:10–18. The goal is to stand against the devil’s schemes (6:11) and withstand in the evil day (6:13). To do this, a believer starts by standing in God’s strength, understanding who the enemy is and is not, and taking up the whole armor of God. That requires putting on all the pieces of spiritual armor described in verses 14–17. But the crux of Paul’s spiritual warfare strategy hinges on verse 18: prayer.

Look at what Paul said, “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.” Prayer is the determining factor of Paul’s spiritual warfare strategy. We can put on the armor of God, shine it up, run out to face the enemy, and take our stand. But we will lose



the battle if we fail to pray. John MacArthur said, “Prayer is the very spiritual air the soldier of Christ breathes. It is the all-pervasive strategy in which warfare is fought.”

Wearing the armor is necessary. But so is executing the strategy, and the strategy for spiritual warfare is prayer. The essential question verse 18 answers is this: How do we pray in the battle? Paul answers that question by providing six components of a prayer strategy for spiritual warfare.

Component 1:

The Place for Prayer (“praying at all times”)

The word for praying in verse 18 means to speak to or make requests from God. The words *pray*, *praying*, or *prayer* can be traced throughout the entirety of Scripture. In addition, there are over 650 prayers recorded in the Bible. It is clear that God’s people pray.

God created us for relationship with him. Relationships are built on communication. Communication involves both hearing and speaking. In our relationship with God, he speaks to us through the Bible. We hear his voice through the pages of his inspired Word. All Scripture is the very breath of God (2 Timothy 3:16). If we want to know what God is saying to us and to our world, we need to read his Word. He has spoken. Our task is to listen.

We speak to God through our prayers. It’s an important part of our relationship. In our prayers, we share our hurts and problems. In our prayers, we confess our sin and seek forgiveness (1 John 1:9). Our relationship with Christ is sustained and maintained by this communication—by God speaking to us through his Word and us speaking to him through prayer.

“Praying at all times” gives the time and place for prayer. Some translations say “on all occasions” (NIV), “praying always” (NKJV), or “at all times and on every occasion” (NLT). It’s clear that the idea is to pray at all times. Pray before meals, yes. Pray before bed and after you wake up,



yes. But don't stop there. Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Jesus taught his disciples a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart (Luke 18:1-8).

“Praying at all times” involves praying wherever you are: at home, at church, in the car, at work, at school, on the sports field, at the movie theater, or wherever you happen to be throughout your day. Prayer is the simplest of all spiritual disciplines and can be done anywhere with little preparation. It only requires us to talk to God. But at the same time, it seems to be the hardest to implement. If you ask most Christ-followers, they would agree that their prayer life is not what it should be. But Paul makes it clear that in order to fight the spiritual battle, we must constantly and continually be in prayer, at all times and in all places.

“But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit”

Eph.1:20)

Component 2:

The Power for Prayer (“Praying. . . in the Spirit”)

“Praying. . . in the Spirit” reveals Paul’s second component in his prayer strategy: understanding and utilizing the power for prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who provides the power for prayer.

Spirit translates a Greek word meaning breath, wind, or spirit. It is the word in the New Testament used to describe the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 6:18, most—if not all—English translations utilize the definite article in front of the word Spirit even though it is absent in the original. Paul’s statement here seems akin to the Apostle Jude’s statement, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit” (1:20). But a question arises from both verses: What exactly does




it mean to pray in the Spirit? There are different understandings as to what this means.

Some view Ephesians 6:18 as the Holy Spirit praying for believers. We read in Romans 8:26–27 that the Holy Spirit intercedes and prays for believers in their weakness with groanings too deep for words. However, Paul’s command in Ephesians 6:18 is directed towards believers. His emphasis is not on the interceding ministry of the Holy Spirit, but rather on the daily, moment-by-moment praying of the believer. In other words, Ephesians 6:18 is talking about the believer praying in the Spirit, not the Holy Spirit praying for the believer.

Another view suggests that praying in the Spirit refers to praying in tongues. Many today describe speaking in tongues as the use of a private prayer language between God and the person praying. They quote Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 14:14: “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.” The thinking is that praying in the Spirit involves prayer that is separated and distinct from the mind. However, Paul rebuked this idea in the very next verse by saying that prayer is to be done with both spirit and mind (1 Corinthians 14:15). In addition, Paul affirmed that spiritual gifts were not given for private use but rather for the common good of others in the church (1 Corinthians 12:7). So, praying in the Spirit does not mean praying in tongues.

If these views do not accurately explain praying in the Spirit, what does Paul mean in Ephesians 6:18?

To answer this question, let’s look back at verse 17. The sword of the Spirit is the last piece of spiritual armor Paul mentioned. He described it as “the word of God.” Then, in verse 18 he wrote, “praying at all times in the Spirit.” There seems to be a connection between these two verses. If the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, then praying in the Spirit must be closely tied to praying the Word of God. In a specific sense, it is praying Scripture. But in a general sense, it is praying for those things that are in alignment with God’s Word.



Although Romans 8:27 described the Holy Spirit's ministry of prayer for the believer, one principle can be taken from it and applied to how we pray as believers. “. . .the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” The Spirit does not just pray randomly for anything. His prayers are guided by and aligned with God's will. The Apostle John communicated the same principle: “and this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us” (1 John 5:14).


In a similar teaching, Jesus connected prayer to his name. He told his disciples, “If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it” (John 14:14). And, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you” (John 16:23). But he also connected prayer to his words: “if you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7).

So, if we connect these ideas, praying in the Spirit has two aspects: first, we must pray in accordance with God's will—which means praying in accordance with Scripture, because the Bible is God's will revealed to mankind. Second, we must pray in Jesus' name, which means praying for those things that are worthy of the name of Jesus Christ. There is a sense in which these concepts restrict our prayers because we cannot pray outside of them. However, when we pray in this way, our prayers are empowered by the Spirit. This power for prayer is vital for engaging the spiritual warfare around us.

Component 3:

The Patterns for Prayer (“with all prayer and supplication”)

The phrase “with all prayer and supplication” gives us the patterns for prayer. Paul's prayer strategy for spiritual warfare includes different types of prayer. The word *prayer* in this verse means to speak to or make requests from God. *Supplication* means to plead or beg. Supplication is usually connected with urgency based on a presumed need. Most of us can relate to the first word, because we often ask God for things. But I wonder how often we connect with



the second word. How often do we pray with a sense of urgency? How often do we get on our face before God to beg and plead with him to work? Paul pushes his readers towards this type of prayer for the battle.


“I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.”

Eph. 2:1

While he does not unpack the words *prayer* and *supplication* here, Paul does use them in 1 Timothy 2:1 along with two other words that provide patterns for prayer. Paul stated, “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people.” Supplications are cries for mercy and favor accompanied by urgency, pleading, and begging. Prayers are the requests we ask of God that demonstrate our total dependence on him. Intercessions are prayers on behalf of someone else. Intercessions could be for other believers, as Paul cites later in this verse, “for all the saints,” or they could be for unbelievers. Prayers of thanksgiving express gratitude for all the benefits of God’s good providence towards us. So, it seems that Paul is not content with just one type or pattern for prayer; he instead advocates for multiple patterns.

One of the common ways that churches organize corporate prayer meetings is by following the ACTS model of praying. Some believers follow this in their own private prayer life. ACTS is an acrostic for adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication. This is a good strategy that would be consistent with Paul’s admonition for prayer in spiritual battle. Adoring our great God is always a good place to start. In my own prayer life, I often jump straight to my own supplications: “Lord, help me to be godly. Help me to bring glory to you. Give me pure thoughts. Show me how to love people better. Help me to do well this week in . . .” You get the idea.

The ACTS model begins by focusing on God’s person and character. We adore him. He is good. He is faithful. He is holy. He is just. He is righteous. He loves us. But this



adoration also compels us to confess our sin. We cannot adore God in the beauty of his holiness and disregard our sinful condition before him. The prophet Isaiah's experience before the Lord caused him to cry out, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5).


Yes, we have redemption through his blood and the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace (Ephesians 1:7). Yes, we have all the spiritual blessings in Christ that Paul outlined in Ephesians 1-5. But our daily walk with him requires maintenance as we continually struggle with sin. We need to confess our sin daily and experience yet again that God is faithful and just to forgive our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Starting our prayers with adoration can, and should, lead us to confession of sin. The forgiveness and cleansing that comes with confession should then lead us into thanksgiving. Paul said to "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Since we are to pray according to God's will, we must always include thanksgiving in our prayers. This progression of adoration, confession, and thanksgiving prepares our hearts to make the supplications.

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"

Thess. 5:16-18

In Ephesians 6:18, Paul said we are to be "praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication." In Philippians 4:6 he said, "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." Praying at all times and not being anxious are appropriate admonitions in the midst of spiritual battle. Evil days make



us anxious. Therefore, we need to pray at all times using many patterns of prayer.

Component 4:

The Precaution for Prayer (“keep alert”)

A fourth component to Paul’s strategy for prayer is a precaution. The ESV says, “keep alert.” The NKJV says, “being watchful.” The NASB says, “be alert,” and the NLT says, “stay alert.” These translations use the English words alert and watchful for a Greek word that means to be alert and to make an effort to learn what might be a potential threat. This is helpful advice for soldiers engaged in a battle. They always need to be on guard, especially when fighting an enemy they cannot see and who does not rest.


Paul’s precaution echoes Jesus’ words in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before he was crucified. He had gone there with his disciples to pray. He told them to sit and then moved a short distance away from them to pray to the Father. This was one of the most difficult times of prayer our Lord experienced during his time on earth. He submitted his will to the Father’s, knowing he was about to be crucified. After agonizing prayer, Jesus returned to his disciples, only to find them sleeping. He said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:40-41).

Our prayer strategy requires alertness. It requires constant vigilance. But it also requires perseverance

Component 5:

The Perseverance in Prayer (“with all perseverance”)

Perseverance is the fifth component to Paul’s prayer strategy. It is closely connected with the precaution to be alert. It means to continue to do something with intense effort, despite any difficulty. It requires devotion and persistence. While we are staying alert and watchful for the enemy, we need to continue and persevere in prayer.



In general, it is difficult to do this. We are hindered on all sides by our attention spans, our busy schedules, our family demands, and often our own laziness. When you add to these distractions the number of prayers that seem to have gone unanswered, we can easily lose our motivation to pray. Our perseverance fades.

But Paul said to keep praying. He taught this and modeled it throughout his epistles. He wrote:

- “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it . . .” (Colossians 4:2)
- “. . . Let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6)
- “Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. . .” (Ephesians 6:18)
- “. . . I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.” (2 Timothy 1:3)

John Piper said, “Perseverance is the great test of genuineness in the Christian life.” The Apostle James said that “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man” accomplishes much (5:16 KJV). We “ought always to pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1).

Component 6:

The People to Pray For (“for all the saints”)

The final component to Paul’s prayer strategy in Ephesians 6:18 is the target for prayer. In this spiritual battle, we need to pray for people. Specifically, we need to make “supplication for all the saints.” Saints translates a word that means holy persons who belong to God. While it is always appropriate to pray for lost people (Romans 10:1, 1 Timothy 2:1–4), Paul’s emphasis here is on Christian people who are fellow soldiers in this spiritual battle. We need to pray intentionally and strategically that Satan does not devour us or our brothers and sisters.

This component is a progression from the previous five. After putting on the whole armor of God to stand against Satan’s evil schemes, and then praying in the Spirit at all times with



all kinds of prayers, while staying alert and persevering, God's people are the ones to receive the benefit of strategic prayers. But if we are to pray "for all the saints," at least two questions arise. First, who specifically are we to pray for? Second, how should we pray for them?


The first question is simple enough: who are we to pray for? Paul answers that question in 1 Timothy 2:1. He said we are to offer supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for all people. That's a hard task to do, but I think Paul meant all kinds of people as he then mentioned kings and those who hold high positions in government.

Paul also instructs us to pray for our pastor-elders and church leaders (Ephesians 6:19-20, Colossians 4:3). We should pray for believers in our church who are the "one anothers" (Romans 1:9, James 5:16). We should pray for believers who are spiritually sick (James 5:14-15). And of course, we cannot forget the missionaries (especially the ones your church supports). This is not an exhaustive list, but it does reveal key people who are engaged in the same spiritual battle as we are, and they need our prayers.

The second question is more complex: how should we pray for these people? Before we answer that question, let's think about how we typically pray for one another in small groups and church gatherings. We share our prayer requests. We invite our brothers and sisters to take these requests before the Lord. But have you noticed the types of requests we share? We pray for pets, hip replacements, knee surgeries, travelling mercies for vacations, job promotions, good grades on exams, and sunny days for outdoor events. It's not necessarily wrong to pray for those requests, but let's compare them with how Paul prays for his people.

In Ephesians 1:16-23, Paul told his readers that his prayer for them is continual. He outlined the requests he prayed for them:

- That God would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him
- That the eyes of their hearts would be enlightened to know the hope of his calling

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- That they would know the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints
 - That they would know the immeasurable greatness of his power toward them

Paul's prayer for them in Ephesians 3:14-21 is similar. He writes, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father":

- That he may grant them strength with power through his Spirit in their inner being
- So that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith
- That they may be rooted and grounded in love
- That they may have strength to understand (with all the saints) the breadth, length, height, and depth of the love of Christ
- That they may be filled with all the fullness of God

Elsewhere in Scripture, Paul prayed that believers would be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that they could walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (Colossians 1:9-10). He also prayed that God would make believers worthy of God's calling, fulfill their every resolve for good, and fulfill every work of faith by his power, so that Jesus' name would be glorified in them (2 Thessalonians 1:11).


Can you imagine what it would look like at your next prayer meeting if someone responded with these requests when the Bible study leader asked, "How can we pray for you and for one another?" It would be an interesting and powerful prayer meeting.

Component six in Paul's prayer strategy was to pray "for all the saints." After that, he closed the section on spiritual warfare with a personal prayer request in verses 19-20.

"... and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak" (Ephesians 6:19-20).

He made a similar prayer request to the Colossians too:

"At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of

A dark blue silhouette of a person's head and shoulders in profile, facing right. They are wearing glasses and holding an open book. The words "Holy Bible" are visible on the cover of the book. The background is a lighter blue gradient.

Christ, on account of which I am in prison—that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak” (Colossians 4:3).

In both requests, it is interesting to observe that Paul included the words “I am an ambassador in chains” and “I am in prison.” Remember that he wrote both books while imprisoned. The cause for his imprisonment was preaching the gospel. Even so, his prayer request was that he would be able to boldly speak the gospel and be clear in his presentation.

Let’s Make the Connection

Thinking through Ephesians 6:18, how would you rate your current prayer strategy? How does it compare to what Paul articulated? What can you do to improve it? What will you do to improve it?

Paul described the pieces of spiritual armor needed for the battle. He commanded us to put on all of it, the whole armor of God. He then provided the strategy for victory. It’s a prayer strategy that included six components: the place, the power, the patterns, the precaution, the perseverance, and the people for whom to pray. We have the equipment, and we have the strategy. Now, we need to execute the plan.

A story is told about a football coach known for succinct statements after his team lost a game. Every time they would lose, he said to his players, “Gentlemen, I told you how to win. You did not do what I told you, and you lost.”

Like football players, Christians can have great skills, the best training, the best equipment, and a good strategy and yet fail when they don’t execute the strategy. The Apostle Paul gave us the strategy for spiritual warfare: “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.”

Let’s pray.

DR. BOBBY HILE

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