

## Putting on the Whole Armor of God through Prayer

Daniel 10:13; Ephesians 6:18

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Putting on the whole armor of God in order to resist the devil and his temptations without prayer would be like having the best military equipment in the world to fight the enemy without the fuel/energy to use it. What makes the whole armor of God effective in standing against and in defeating the enemy is the power of Jesus Christ working in us by means of prayer in communing with Christ throughout the day.

The whole armor of God is a great blessing purchased for us by Christ and is necessary to put one in order to resist the wiles/temptations of the devil. But let our confidence not be in the armor, but in the Lord Jesus who gives us the courage and strength to take up the whole armor of God to defeat the enemy. King Saul wanted David to put all his confidence in the king's armor, but David realized there was only victory in the Lord, which he demonstrated by calling upon God to bring victory even through the use of a stone and a sling (Psalm 144:1). The armor is ours in Christ, but how do we put it on and keep it on? Through prayer and communion with Jesus Christ. That is the message of Paul from our text today.

We come today to consider the power that energizes us in this spiritual battle (the power of Jesus working through His Spirit within us). Without prayer and communion with Christ, our armor will prove to be as ineffective against Satan as Saul's armor was on David in fighting Goliath. The main points are found in the use of the word "ALL" four times in our text: (1) Praying at ALL Times; (2) Praying with ALL Prayer and Supplication; (3) Watching with ALL Perseverance; (4) For ALL the Saints.

### I. Praying at ALL Times.

A. Prayer is not listed by Paul as one of the pieces of the armor of God because it is that which energizes us to put on the whole armor of God (whether it be the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the boots of gospel peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, or the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God). But even prayer is not the power; it is the means of accessing the power. The power is Jesus Christ.

#### B. What is prayer?

1. Prayer is a most important part of communing with Christ. He speaks to us through His Word. We speak to Him through prayer. Prayer reveals we have a personal relationship with the living God that created us and redeemed us. Prayer is pouring out our hearts in faith and love to the Lord in praise, in thanksgiving, in confession, repentance, and seeking forgiveness, and in requests for our needs. **Without earnest prayer**, Jesus will be a stranger to us. **Without fervent prayer**, there is no nearness or no passion for Jesus; there is only a knowledge about Him. **Without sincere prayer**, Jesus is just a fact, not our personal Savior/Lord.

2. Just as being fruitful in growing in conformity to Christ comes from our communion with Christ (John 15:5), so likewise does taking up the whole armor of God against the temptations of the enemy.

3. Jesus assumes all His true disciples will pray ("**When** thou prayest"). Prayer is not optional, nor is it a suggestion. It is a necessity in the life of a Christian and in this daily battle we face. If Jesus is our life (like the air that we breathe), then prayer is breathing in/out that life. Though He was God in the flesh, Jesus communed with His Father in prayer—all night (Luke 6:12). How much more we need that communion with Christ as mere flesh in our battle against the enemy!

C. "Praying always"—literally, praying at ALL times ("pray without ceasing" 1 Thessalonians 5:17—this is a command). How do we do that?

1. This is not a command to be consciously praying one long prayer without pause forever

and ever. It means that we are to live in the presence of Christ—in communion with Him both day and night.

2. Whatever we do (whether we work, eat, exercise, listen, study, drive, sleep, worship), we are to take the Lord Jesus with us—not leave Him behind in certain parts of our life. Throughout the day and night (and not just appointed times of private worship, family worship, and public worship) we are to thank Him for His blessings. We are to cry out to Him for our needs. We are to seek His wisdom and guidance. We are to plead for His safety and protection as we travel. We are to call upon Him in a battle against a temptation. We are to repent and seek His forgiveness for sin. We are to pray for/bear the burdens of others.

3. To pray at ALL times means we are to seek to be near the Lord in our desires and thoughts whatever we do throughout the day. This is where we will find the greatest joy, peace, contentment, holiness, mercy, and power to overcome the enemy and all his temptations. Jesus calls us to that blessed communion with Him in prayer. There is not a safer place in facing the attacks of the enemy (Psalm 91:1-7).

4. When we live in communion with Christ, the enemy will not have an open invitation to attack us, and we will be ready and armed at all times to use the whole armor of God against Him. This is the goal for which we strive. It is not in our own strength (John 15:5), but in the strength of the Lord (Philippians 4:13). Like all spiritual exercises, we must train ourselves by the power of Christ living within us.

5. The question for each of us is this: Do we want to live in the presence of Christ? Do we want to commune with Jesus throughout the day and night? That is the heart of a true disciple of Christ (even though we will struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil). It begins within our heart, in our desires, and flows forth in our prayers for Christ to work within us both to will and to do His good pleasure.

## **II. Praying with ALL Prayer and Supplication.**

A. The use of the word, ALL, means with ALL kinds of prayer and supplication. All forms of prayer and supplication are to be employed.

B. The word for “prayer” means prayer in general, while the word “supplication” (“supply” is the root of this word) means petitions and requests for needs that we have.

1. Rather than thinking that we can only pray when we do so in more formal times of prayer in private worship, family worship, or public worship, Paul calls us to prayer at ALL times with all kinds of prayer and supplication.

2. “ALL kinds of prayer and supplication” mean prayer over meals, supplication for protection, wisdom, guidance, courage, patience, peace with others, requests made known to the Lord outwardly and inwardly, spontaneous prayers on the spur of the moment and prayers well thought out, prayers with tears and without tears, prayers of thanksgiving and praise, prayers of confession, repentance, seeking forgiveness, and prayers to be delivered from temptation and to put on the whole armor of God.

3. When throughout the day, all kinds of prayer and supplication occupy our thoughts, desires, and words, the enemy’s attempts to lead us away into temptation are far more likely to fail than to succeed. That is why the devil seeks to overwhelm our minds with anything other than with prayer and communion with Christ—fears, pleasures, conflicts, busyness, etc. Let us learn to seek Jesus and draw near Him when we feel overwhelmed. That is how we turn every temptation from our hurt to our help.

4. “In the Spirit”. Paul reminds us that we cannot do this in our own mere strength and determination. It is only with the help and strength of the Almighty Holy Spirit that we are able to do that which seems impossible to us (Ephesians 3:20). That power is ours within us.

## **III. Watching with ALL Perseverance.**

A. In the battle against temptation in our lives, one of our greatest weaknesses that the devil takes advantage of is our laziness in falling asleep at our post as a soldier of Jesus Christ.

1. We allow our communion with Christ to grow lukewarm due to work/pleasure/sin. We do not take temptation seriously and let down our guard. We think that we will not fall into that same

temptation again after repentance, but that is the very opening the devil looks for (1 Corinthians 10:12).

2. That's what happens when we are not living in communion with Christ. This is precisely the warning Jesus gave to His disciples (Matthew 26:41).

B. This is a "watching with ALL perseverance and supplication."

1. In other words, in our battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil we must be watchful/vigilant that we not grow weary of watching, or become lazy in watching, or stop watching altogether, but rather in prayer and communion with Christ we are to persevere in watching and to supplicate Christ's help in watching.

2. Paul knows us so well, and how easily we are distracted by amusements, pleasures, sins, busyness, laziness, coldness to not persevere in watching that our communion with Christ does not slowly become more and more distant. That is exactly the opportunity that the devil is waiting for in order to attack us with that temptation that blindsides us. Pull us away from communion with the Good Shepherd, and we will be picked off by the enemy. Where is perseverance found? It is found in Christ and in communion with Him (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

#### IV. For ALL the Saints.

A. The last use of the word, "ALL", is brought to our attention by Paul to remind us that we, as individual Christians, are not the only ones under attack by the enemy—we have many brethren throughout the world that are facing perhaps even more severe attacks from the enemy than what we are facing ourselves. Do we care about what other believers are facing in their lives by way of fears, heartaches, persecution, lusts, physical afflictions, falling away from Christ, break-up of families?

B. We cannot pray for ALL of the saints in the world by name (we are not omniscient), but we can pray for ALL kinds of saints in the world as we hear about the attacks of the enemy against them in seeking to lead them away from Christ, to discourage them, to persecute them, to afflict them, and to take them down the path of worry, fear, and despair.

1. We begin with the needs of those saints who are nearest to us (in family and church) and then broaden our horizon to those at a greater distance in relationship and geography. That is why the Lord's Prayer is given in the plural ("OUR Father which art in heaven", "Give US this day OUR daily bread", "forgive US OUR debts as WE forgive OUR debtors").

2. In praying "for ALL the saints", we as good soldiers of Christ confess that we have one another's back. On the battlefield, it is knowing that each soldier has the back of the other soldier that binds them together and inspires them to continue the fight. That is especially the case in our spiritual battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. We are not in this battle alone. Let us have the backs of one another rather than stabbing one another in the back or going for the throats of one another.

3. The enemy delights to use conflicts in our marriage, family, and church to attack us, to overwhelm us, and to defeat us. A kingdom (family or church) divided against itself by way of attacks, gossip, and harsh words/actions for one another cannot stand. But a kingdom united in Christ's truth and love and upholding one another by persevering in prayer for one another will not fall. It is our prayers for one another that God uses so often to keep us going when we feel like falling.

C. Prayer unto Jesus and communion with Him at ALL times, with ALL kinds of prayer/supplication, watching with ALL perseverance, for ALL the saints is the certain way appointed by Jesus to put on the whole armor of God in overcoming the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

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