

Ephesians 6:18-24 Answers How to Pray

Introduction: Today's lesson is the last in Ephesians. It concludes Paul's instructions about spiritual warfare. Arguably, this information on prayer is the most important lesson in the whole letter to the Ephesians!

******According to 6:18-20, what important aspect of spiritual warfare must we not neglect? We must be ever vigilant in prayer!** This is probably where the greatest spiritual warfare is waged. This is our secret weapon, the nuclear option!

ESV **Acts 2:42** . . . they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

ESV **1 Timothy 2:8** I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

Andrew Murray: "We must begin to believe that God, in the mystery of prayer, has entrusted us with a force that can move the Heavenly world, and can bring its power down to earth"

1. The word "all" is found four times in 6:18 and shows the critical importance of prayer. **What aspects of prayer are preceded by the word all?** We are pray at all times, with all prayer, with all perseverance and for all the saints. Prayer is to permeate the believer's life. Just as our body breathes air, or soul is to breathe prayer.

— At All Times —

2. **How can you pray at all times (6:18) and still drive a car or be productive at work?** See *Colossians 3:2*. This refers to an attitude of prayer. Spurgeon supposedly said that he rarely prayed more than five minutes, but he rarely went more than five minutes without praying. It is living your life with a God-consciousness. If you find yourself tempted, pray. If you see something good, praise. If you see evil, petition. Thus *Colossians 3:2* urges, "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."

ESV **Luke 18:1** . . . he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

ESV **Acts 6:4** . . . we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

ESV **Romans 12:12** . . . be constant in prayer.

ESV **1 Thessalonians 5:17** . . . pray without ceasing . . .

"Life is to be a constant exercise of prayer" (John McArthur, *The Believer's Armor*, p. 195).

— In the Spirit —

3. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit (6:18)? Compare 5:18, Romans 8:26-27. Earlier Paul instructed the Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit (that is, led by the Spirit). To pray in the Spirit means we plug into what is important to God, we are sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit, we get on His frequency, we pray according to the teachings of Jesus, in harmony with God's will. The prayer that reaches heaven is the prayer that starts in heaven.

Charles Spurgeon: "If you want that splendid power in prayer, you must remain in loving, lasting, conscious, practical, abiding union with the Lord Jesus Christ."

Whereas theology is the knowledge of God, prayer is communion with God.

There is also more to our prayers than what we actually pray:

ESV **Romans 8:26-27** . . . we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words . . . the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

— With All Prayer and Supplication —

4. What is the difference between prayer and supplication (6:18)? The Greek word behind prayer (*proseuché*) is an umbrella term for all types of prayer (thanksgiving, petitions, praise, etc.). The Greek word underneath supplication (*deésis*) refers to a specific prayer request. The root word has to do with need, want or deprivation. We should pray particular, pointed prayers for other people's needs. Thus we should not simply pray "God bless the whole world". We should also pray for people's specific needs, such as, "God, please enable Joe to find enough work to support his family and to be able to do his work well."

— Keep Alert with All Perseverance —

5. In 6:19 it says, "To that end keep alert with all perseverance". **To what end should we keep on the alert (6:18)?** See 1 Peter 4:7. The "end" is praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication. We are to keep alert for situations that need prayer.

ESV **1 Peter 4:7** . . . be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

Application: We need to be tuned in, ever on the alert, so that we can pray intelligently and faithfully, like a sentry or watchman on the wall.

— For All the Saints —

6. According to 6:18, who should we pray for? See 1 Samuel 12:23. We are to pray for all the saints. Able brothers are on the field of battle beside us and need our support. We are to be unto them as Aaron and Hur were to Moses:

ESV **Exodus 17:9-12-13** So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.

ESV **1 Samuel 12:23** . . . far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you . . . (Samuel's promise to the people of Israel).

Ideas: Take a list of everyone in your church and pray through the list for each person's needs. Many missionary organizations print prayer guides for their missionaries. For example, Operation World produces a book detailing the spiritual situation of every county of the world that can be prayed through (www.OperationWorld.org). Another good prayer guide is the Voice of the Martyrs magazine (www.ICommitToPray.com).

— Paul's Prayer Request —

7. What did Paul want the Ephesians to pray on his behalf (6:19-20)? See *Matthew 9:37-38*, *Colossians 4:3-4*.

ESV **Colossians 4:3-4** . . . pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ . . . that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

ESV **Matthew 9:37-38** The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.

Application: This is a great prayer to pray for every missionary you know.

8. We are specifically instructed to pray for all the saints (6:18-19). What Scriptures can you think of that encourage us to pray for the salvation of the lost? Arguably, there is no direct command in Scripture to pray for the salvation of the lost. Instead, as here, we are instructed to pray for bold evangelism on the part of those who are already saved. However, Paul himself did pray for the salvation of the Jews (Ro 10:1).

ESV **Romans 10:1** Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved.

Also, some understand 1 Timothy 2:1-4 to indicate we should pray for the salvation of those in authority over us:

ESV 1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The aim of the prayer of 1 Timothy 2:1 seems to be for peace since the conditions of tranquility and calm promote the spread of the Gospel. The “all” men that God wants to see saved refers to all men without distinction (Jew and Gentile, citizen and ruler), that is all classes of people. It does not refer to all men without exception. It is all men regardless of rank.

******9. Why did Paul send Tychicus to Ephesus (6:21-22)?** *Compare 6:20.* Paul was in prison when he penned this letter (6:20). He sent Tychicus there to inform the church how Paul was doing in prison. Tychicus probably delivered this letter from Paul to the church in Ephesus, along with Paul’s letter to the church in Colossae and Colossian church leader Philemon.

Prison Epistles: While in prison Paul composed Ephesians (6:20), Philippians (1:3), Colossians (4:18) and Philemon (1, 9, 10, 13). Epistles Paul Composed in Prison = Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon. It won’t make a person holy to know this, or make you any closer to Jesus, but it is helpful to understand the historical context of the letters in the New Testament.

Application: Paul instructed them to pray for all the saints and to pray for him as well. However, he knew they need information about him so as to pray intelligently. Thus, Paul arranged for Tychicus to tell the church how Paul was doing in prison. So too we need to communicate with each other, share each other’s burdens and lift one another up in prayer. Wednesday night prayer meetings are a good thing; so are reports from the mission field (letters, emails, Skype chats).

10. Who was Tychicus (6:21-22)? *See Acts 20:4, Colossians 4:7, 2 Timothy 2:14, Titus 3:12.* He was a fellow missionary who often traveled with Paul. Our word missionary is derived from the Latin translation of the Greek word *apostolos*. Both Paul and Tychicus were apostles. Paul was a big “A” apostle (one of the Twelve) and Tychicus was a small “a” apostle (like any modern missionary).

******With was benediction did Paul close this letter (6:23)?** Paul prayed for them to have peace, love with faith and grace. These things should be descriptive of every believer’s life.

Are you a peaceful person? Are you a loving person? Are you a faithful person? Are you a graceful person?

11. What kind of peace do you think Paul wanted the brothers to have (6:23)? The peace written about in Ephesians was peace between Jew and Gentile believers in the same church. It is also important to have peace with God, a divine, personal inner peace and also peace within a fellowship of believers.

12. Why do you think Paul paired love with faith (6:23)? See 1 Corinthians 13:2, 1 John 3:23, 4:20. Just as faith without works is dead, so too faith without love is nothing. Paul mentioned love three times in 6:23-24; it is an important mark of true faith.

ESV 1 Corinthians 13:2 . . . if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

ESV 1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

Sadly, Jesus later said this very church in Ephesus had “lost your first love” (Re 2:1-4).

Based on 6:23, what is the source of peace, love and faith? It is “from” God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is grace (6:24)? It is undeserved favor from God.

13. In Star Wars the mantra was, “May the force be with you”. 6:24 essentially says, “Grace Be With You”. **Based on 6:24, what type of people will grace be with?** Grace is with all who love the Lord Jesus with love incorruptible. We are saved by grace and we continue on in the faith by grace.

So What?

14. What did you learn about prayer from 6:18-23?

15. How do you need to pray differently as a result of 6:18-23?

16. Since God is sovereign, why pray? **1)** We are commanded to pray. **2)** God likes the fellowship! **3)** God has chosen to work in concert with the prayers of His people. **4)** Just as God predestined the end, He also predestined the means (prayer). **5)** It is said that prayer changes things. Even if prayer did not change things, it will change you!

John Wesley: “Prayer is where the action is.”

Andrew Murray: “Each time, before you intercede, be quiet first, and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, and how He delights to hear the prayers of His redeemed people. Think of your place and privilege in Christ, and expect great things!”

Oswald Chambers: “Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work.”

Hudson Taylor: “I have seen many men work without praying, though I have never seen any good come out of it; but I have never seen a man pray without working.”

If time permits, share prayer requests and spend time in corporate prayer.

**** = ask this question before reading the text aloud. This is put people's minds in gear and them something to look for as the text is read. It causes focus.

Teacher's note: These lessons are based on the ESV and are designed for 45 minute sessions. If you send out each lesson's questions a week in advance it will encourage people to think about the passage during the week. Coving each question in class will give importance to the questions and give incentive for the class to spend time preparing for the discussion.

Stephen E. Atkerson

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