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Ephesians 6:18 *Praying always with all prayer and supplication* [requests] *in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication* [and keep alert and always making requests] *for all saints*;

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I. Introduction

A. Review: The first five weeks of this series we've studied¹:

1. [An overview of the armor of spiritual warfare](#), Ephesians 6:10-13
2. [Truth and Righteousness](#) (the breastplate and belt), verse 14
3. [The Power of the Gospel](#) (the shoes of the warrior), verse 15
4. [The Priority of Faith](#) (the shield), verse 16
5. [The Helmet and the Sword](#), verse 17

B. God delights in answering our prayers in ways we don't expect.

C. Prayer is one of the tools we use in spiritual warfare.

1. A soldier in battle needs to know what mission he needs to accomplish. He learns his mission by listening to orders from his superiors. Without these commands, each soldier would be fighting alone. By these commands soldiers work together toward winning the victory.
2. A believer in battle, protected by the armor of God, must stay in touch with his/her Commander through prayer. Jesus knows His plans for His will to be accomplished in our lives every day. Like the radio on the battlefield, prayer is how we receive orders from our Commander to win our victory.

II. The Persistence of Prayer: "*Praying always...*"

A. Always be in prayer. Be in constant contact with God.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 *Pray without ceasing.*

Luke 18:1 *And he* [Jesus] *spoke a parable unto them* [disciples] *to this end* [for this reason], *that men ought always to pray, and not to faint* [and never give up];

¹ To download the sermon notes for these lessons, hold down the CTRL key on your keyboard (the cursor will turn into a little hand) while left-clicking on the blue (or sometimes purple) text. If a small box pops up asking you if this is from a trusted source, click OK. The notes will appear as a small rectangle in the lower-left corner of the window. Left-click on the up arrow, then choose 'Open'. The notes should automatically open in an Adobe Acrobat Reader window.

III. The Possibilities of Prayer: "...with all prayer and supplication..." There are no limits on prayer.

A. Pray on All Occasions: Every moment we have to ask God to help us or somebody we know needs help.

B. Pray in All Places:

Examples of some of the places people prayed in the Bible:

- In Church
- At home (in our prayer closet)
- At meal times
- In public
- In a fish's belly
- In battle, before battle, and after battles
- In prison
- On mountaintops
- Many other places...

C. Pray for All Things:

Examples of some of the things people prayed in the New Testament:

- Safety
- Forgiveness
- Food
- Faith
- Other People (intercessory prayer)
- Healing
- Wisdom
- Relief from Suffering
- Rain
- Children
- Health
- Prosperity
- Spiritual Strength
- Many other things...

IV. The Petition of Prayer: “*Praying...with...supplication...*” Supplication means “to ask” or “to request something”.

A. Jesus listed many things that should be present when we humbly come to God with our prayers:

- Worship;
- Thanksgiving;
- Gratitude;
- Praise;
- Confession;
- Requests.
- Many other humble attitudes...

Jesus instructed us to incorporate all of these in His model prayer:

Matthew 6:9–13 *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. ¹⁰Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹Give us this day our daily bread. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³And lead us not into [and don't let us yield to] temptation, but deliver [protect] us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.*

B. If our needs are not met, it is probably because we didn't ask God for it in prayer

James 4:2 *Ye lust, and have not [You want something you don't have, so you plan or kill to get it]: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain [and still you can't get it]: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*

C. God wants us to come to Him with our needs even though He knows what we will be asking for beforehand.

Matthew 6:8 *Be not ye therefore like unto them [do not pray the same words over and over, like the heathern]: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.*

- Prayer maintains and deepens our connection with God
- God wants us to learn to want what He knows we should have
- Prayer is preparing ourselves to receive from God
- We learn God's perspective when He answers our prayers

“Prayer is surrender—surrender to the will of God and cooperation with that will. If I throw out a boat-hook from the boat and catch hold of the shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.”—E. Stanley Jones

V. The Power of Prayer: “*Praying...in the Spirit...*”

- A. The Holy Spirit, who lives in us, makes sure our prayers are presented to God correctly. The Holy Spirit is certain of what we need, and He presents it to God most effectively.

Romans 8:26-27 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities [weaknesses]: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought [for we don't know what we should pray for]: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered [with requests that language alone cannot express]. ²⁷And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

- B. “Our prayers lay the track down on which God’s power can come. Like a mighty locomotive, his power is irresistible, but it cannot reach us without rails.”—
Watchman Nee

VI. The Precision of Prayer: “*...and watching thereunto with all perseverance...*”

- A. Watching means to be awake and vigilant. An example of watching happened when Nehemiah was supervising the rebuilding of the walls around Jerusalem. The builders had to work with one hand and hold their sword in the other hand in case they were attacked by evil men who didn't want the wall rebuilt.

Nehemiah 4:17-18 *They which builded on the wall* [The people who built the wall], *and they that bare burdens* [the people who carried bricks up to the builders], *with those that laded* [], *everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon* [worked with one hand and held his sword in the other hand]. ¹⁸*For the builders, everyone had his sword girded by* [strapped to] *his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me* [Nehemiah].

Like Nehemiah's builders, we need to be living our daily lives, doing what we need to do, but at the same time watching the things around for which we should be praying. We also are in spiritual warfare.

- B. We must be specific in our prayers. We will glorify God when we see Him take care of us as His children. To do this we must know that it is God who is answering the prayer we made to Him in secret.

Colossians 4:2 *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same* [and let your mind be alert while you're praying] *with thanksgiving;*

VII. The Perseverance of Prayer: “*Praying...with all perseverance...*”

- A. A change in our routine can upset our prayer life. Especially in a time of pandemic, it is easy to put off essential tasks. We should copy the pattern of the early church.

Acts 2:42 *And they continued steadfastly* [And the new believers were diligent] *in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

- B. The early church leaders thought prayer was one of their two most important ministries

Acts 6:4 *But we [the Apostles] will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word [and to studying and preaching the Bible].*

- C. The early church in the seat of the Roman Empire thought prayer was important.

Romans 12:12 *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; **continuing instant** [always ready to go to God] **in prayer**;*

VIII. The Purpose of Prayer: “*Praying always...with all perseverance and supplication...for all saints.*”

- A. Our greatest example of a prayer-warrior is Jesus Himself. Jesus prayed for His disciples.

John 17:9 *I [Jesus] pray for them [the disciples]: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*

- B. Paul prayed for believers he had never met. When Paul wrote his letter to the Rome Church he had never been there. Likewise, we should pray for others.

Romans 1:9 *For God is my witness, whom I [Paul] serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I **make mention of you** [the believers in Rome] **always in my prayers**;*

- C. If we love someone, we will pray for them.

1 Samuel 12:23 *Moreover as for me [the priest Samuel], **God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you** [the people of Israel when they asked for a king]: but I will teach you the good and the right way:*

IX. Conclusion:

- A. Prayer can be learned. Jesus gave us this instruction:

Matthew 6:6 *But thou [believers], **when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.***

- B. James, the half-brother of the Lord Jesus, gave this testimony about prayer after a lifetime of practice:

James 5:16 *Confess your faults one to another, and **pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much** [The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective].*