

# Prayer - Resource for Victory

by Theodore Epp

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*Prayer is a vital component of spiritual warfare, and believers must constantly pray in the Spirit to stand victoriously in the conflict.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:15

**Topics:** "Prayer", "Spiritual Warfare"

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## Description

Theodore Epp emphasizes the paramount role of prayer in the life of believers, particularly as outlined in the book of Ephesians. He highlights Paul's prayers for wisdom and experiential knowledge of Christ, asserting that prayer is essential for putting on the spiritual armor and achieving victory in spiritual warfare. Epp illustrates that prayer is a conflict in itself, requiring perseverance and reliance on the Holy Spirit for guidance and strength. He encourages believers to maintain constant communication with God, acknowledging their dependence on Him while standing firm against spiritual adversaries. Ultimately, through prayer, believers can claim their position in Christ and experience triumph over challenges.

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## Transcript

In the book of Ephesians, prayer reaches the highest pinnacle of any place in the Bible. Two of Paul's prayers are recorded in this book. The first prayer (1:15-21) was for the believers to have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. The second prayer (3:14-21) was for believers to have an experiential knowledge of Christ's indwelling work within believers.

In connection with the spiritual armor of believers, another reference is made to prayer: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (6:19). Here we see that in addition to taking on the entire armor of God, believers are to be constantly praying. Prayer is not regarded as part of the armor, but the believer who has on the armor is to persevere in prayer. Romans 13:14 tells us to "put . . . on the the Lord Jesus Christ," and this is done by prayer, for Christ is made real to us through prayer.

In order for believers to stand victoriously in the conflict--even with the complete armor--there must be constant, earnest prayer. It is through the prayer of faith that the believer's armor is first put on, and then becomes effective. Since prayer is associated here with warfare, the indication is that prayer itself is part of the battle.

Our Savior knew of the battle of prayer, for He agonized in prayer. While He was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He thought about His coming death on the cross "and being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). The word translated "agony" refers to a conflict, fight or contest. Here it denotes severe emotional strain and anguish. Jesus was having an intense struggle in prayer because of the cross that loomed before Him.

Prayer is a conflict in itself, and it is vital in the spiritual warfare in which every believer is involved. Notice from Ephesians 6:18 that praying and watching should be done "with all perseverance." This doesn't mean that we defeat Satan by working and striving in prayer, for we have already seen that Satan is a defeated foe because of Christ's work on the cross. However, our agonizing in prayer has to do with our taking our position in Christ as the victorious one. We are to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12) by means of prayer.

### Praying in the Spirit

Ephesians 6:17 tells of the "sword of the Spirit"; verse 18 tells of praying "in the Spirit." Just as human weapons are of no value in spiritual warfare (2 Cor. 10:4), prayer that is not in the Spirit is also of no value. A prayer that is lovely to listen to may not necessarily be "in the Spirit." Some believers may not know how to express themselves adequately in prayer before others, but they may be praying effectively in the Spirit.

Prayer is effectual when it has its origin with God. God sees the whole battlefield and knows the Devil's plans. God decides the place and part of every soldier in the conflict, and He directs the movements of the entire spiritual army. Since God sets forth definite objectives to be carried out in His eternal purpose, He must also implant in us our prayers for spiritual victory. God communicates to us through the Holy Spirit the prayers we are to pray. The Holy Spirit lays the proper burden on us, motivates us and gives us the thoughts to pray (Rom. 8:26).

So it is God who gives the deep sense of urgency for prayer and who also gives assurance of victory. We don't know where Satan has placed his snares and pitfalls; but if we are alert to the Holy Spirit, He will stimulate prayer within us so we will be forewarned and fully ready with the provided armor. We should be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's work in our lives as He prompts us to prayer and gives assurance that our prayers will be answered.

Even though we don't know what to pray for, the Holy Spirit will prompt us and will pray through us. The Father, through the Spirit, motivates us to pray for what we should (Rom. 8:26,27). Then we, in the Spirit, present our petitions back to the Father in the name of Christ. Even in prayer, we can expect God to work in us to give us the desire to pray and then to energize us as we pray (Phil. 2:13).

### Praying Constantly

The words "praying always" (Eph. 6:18) suggests alertness as well as praying at all times under all conditions. This is unbroken communion with the Lord, not just set times of coming to Him in prayer. It's good to have definite times set aside to spend in prayer, but we should be talking to the Lord throughout the day as we go about various tasks.

Praying constantly in the Spirit has two significant implications: First, it is an admission of our ignorance and impotency in spiritual conflict--we don't know what to do and we don't have the power, of ourselves, to do anything. Such prayer is heeding the words of Proverbs 3:5,6.

Second, it reveals to the Enemy that we are totally depending on God because we don't have supernatural wisdom and power. By means of prayer, we are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10).

The prayer warrior is a paradox: Toward Christ he shows conscious weakness and seeks strength and wisdom; toward Satan he shows strength in Christ and stands firm in the place of victory.

In ourselves we can do nothing, as is evident from Christ's words in John 15:5. However, in Christ we can do all things, as Paul stated in Philippians 4:13. As we claim our position in Christ through prayer, He will always cause us to triumph (2 Cor. 2:14).

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