

THE ARMOR OF GOD

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS WITH PASTOR JACK ABELEN

Knowing Our Adversary and the Armor of God Week 10: Ephesians 6:18-24 - Praying Always

Introduction

- A. Review our series: Ephesians 6:10-13 spoke of our adversary and our conflict and Ephesians 6:14-17 of the armor we must wear. We conclude tonight with one final section, Ephesians 6:18-20, as Paul speaks of the need for continual prayer.
- B. Since the armor God provides depends upon our intimacy with God and His Word, so prayer will help us maintain our nearness with God as we face spiritual battles each day. Though not a specific piece of armor, prayer is the oil that keeps each piece of armor working smoothly.
- C. We would like to focus on prayer tonight in terms of the context of these verses that follow the armor, with prayer actually being mentioned in the same verse as the last two pieces of armor.

Verse 18

- A. Notice Paul speaks of prayer three times in this one verse, along with the word always.
- B. Jewish religious practices set aside specific times each day to pray and the early church followed these practices for some time before prayer became an individual responsibility. Yet the early saints quickly learned how vital prayer was to their lives (Php.4:6)(1Th.5:17) and Paul stresses that here with the word always.
- C. Cornelius was a man who prayed often, who sought the Lord and found Him as a result (Acts 10:2). The early church also spent much time in prayer, even if at times they were not at all expecting to see God answer them (Acts 12:5,12-16).
- D. Access to God in prayer is one of the great privileges God gives to us when we come to Him by faith (Jer.33:3)(Heb.4:16)(Heb.10:19-23)(Eph.3:11-12). Jesus on more than one occasion stayed up all night to pray. That kind of determined effort tells us He was convinced of its value, importance and power.
- E. Perhaps we don't share that conviction since attendance at prayer meetings does not number into the hundreds and even when 50 men show up to pray, they are handed prayer requests from hundreds who see the need for prayer but might not have the assurance that God hears!
- F. Because prayer is defined as communication with God and Paul calls us to pray always, this kind of prayer is not simply folding our hands or bowing our heads but rather living in an awareness of His presence with us, practicing the presence of God, and having Him be involved at each turn is a necessary biblical pursuit (Col.4:2).
- G. God desires fellowship with us; He made us and saved us for that very reason. Fellowship that is daily, not sporadic or relegated to the emergency-call only type of relationship. Prayer requires steadfastness and perseverance and a conviction as to its value and importance.
- H. That concept is taught to us by Jesus in several places in the Gospels, two of which are most revealing: (Lk.11:5-13)(Lk.18:1-8).
 - 1. Both parables have the same method of teaching us the heart of God and His willingness to hear and respond to our prayers by setting Him in contrast with wicked, self-serving men who would only help someone if, in the end, it helps them more.

2. Persistence in prayer is always for our benefit as we learn to wait upon God, overcome the temptation to handle it ourselves in the flesh, and forcing us to stay close to Him constantly as we wait for Him to work.
3. Prayer is not a place for you to make your case or inform God of the situation but rather, a place where we learn to let God work and rest in His care; this is especially true as we don the armor and stand for the battle.

More on Prayer

- I. So we have frequency of prayer (always) and variety of prayer. Prayer (proseuche): the general word for prayer found most often in the scriptures. Supplication (deesis): specific prayer for a specific need.
- J. In the Spirit: refers to Spirit-led praying as we walk with Him, as opposed to canned prayers, written prayers, or even the much praying Jesus frowned upon in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt.6:7).
 1. True prayer stands in stark contrast to all the ritual and liturgy of man. We seek God according to what we know and have learned of Him (1Jn.5:14-15), balanced with His glorious promise (Jn.14:13-15), and helped in seeking Him by His Spirit who dwells within us (Rom.8:26-27).
- K. The focus of our prayers here is for others with all perseverance and supplication. Constant prayer, all manners of prayer, and focused heavily on watching out for each other as the enemy seeks to battle the saints of God.
 1. The devil accomplishes much when he isolates us in our difficulties and is quickly turned back as we stand together seeking God, equipped with His armor (1Co.10:13)(1Co.12:25-26)(Rom.14:7)(2Co.1:8-11).
 2. Epaphras caught that vision and was known for his constant intercession (Col.4:12-13).

Verses 19-24

- A. Paul concludes with the request that they might intercede for him in the place of ministry God had placed him.
- B. He also tells them he is sending Tychicus to more fully inform them of his situation so they might pray even more specifically.
- C. Paul prayed often and much for the new believers in Colosse (Col.1:3-4,9) while he was in jail in Rome, some 3 months travel away from them but he knew the power of prayer.
- D. We can be a part of the work of God anywhere and anytime through intercessory prayer; it is by far the most powerful ministry we all can participate in.
- E. Prayer is a place of accomplishing, of doing, of victory in Him for you and others. As you begin to fervently pray on the offensive for the needs of others, you will also experience His power at work. Jesus is also interceding for us (Heb.7:25).