

## The Prayer Warrior

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Ephesians 6:10-18 (text v. 18)

Prayer is a part of the armor of God. It is our secret weapon, for it is our unseen armor.

It is not optional equipment. Prayer is essential for a soldier on the battlefield. In any war, communication is essential. Soldiers must be in communication with their commander-in chief at all times (Heb. 2:10). In the Gulf War, before we attacked Iraq, all enemy communication was jammed.

Prayer is the ability to call on the Lord our God when we are in the thick of the battle. Prayer brings God onto the battlefield of spiritual warfare—It brings God into your situation, your conflict.

A.C. Dixon wrote: “When you rely on *organization*, you get what organization can do; when you rely upon *education*, you get what education can do; when you rely on *eloquence*, you get what eloquence can do— But **when you rely on prayer, we get what God can do!**”

Our text gives us **five essentials to be an effective Prayer Warrior.**

**I. Pray at all TIMES**— “*Praying ALWAYS...*”

- A. The very atmosphere and attitude of prayer (1 Thess. 5:17).
- B. Pray in all kinds of conditions.
  - 1. Pray about small matters—pray about big matters.
  - 2. Pray in time of trial—pray when life is easy.

**II. Pray in all WAYS**—“*ALL prayer and supplication...*” (cf. 1 Tim. 2:1-2).

- A. 31 times “*prayer and supplication*” are linked together in the Bible. Supplication is asking for a specific personal need.
- B. Prayer to resist temptation, prayer for wisdom, for power, for self-restraint, for protection of others, for growth, for conviction.

**III. Pray in the SPIRIT** (Cf. Rom. 8:26; Jude 20).

- A. Praying in the Spirit is to pray...

1. According to the Spirit's **CHARACTER**. As we "*walk in the Spirit*" (Gal. 5:16, 25), we should also "*pray in the Spirit.*" Walking in the Spirit is walking in accordance to the Spirit's nature and leading (cf. Rom. 8:14). The opposite is "walking in the flesh" (according to our nature).
  2. Under the Spirit's **CONTROL**—Praying as the Holy Spirit leads us. Note: "*in that day*" in John 16:23 cf. 14:16-20.
  3. With the Spirit's **COMMUNION**. We do not pray alone! The Holy Spirit is our prayer partner. As we pray, the Holy Spirit prays with us and for us, because He knows the will of God (v. 27).
- B. Four steps in praying in the Spirit...
1. Quiet your heart and surrender your will completely to God. Make sure your heart is free of all selfish desires.
  2. Acknowledge your lack of understanding concerning what to pray for and your total dependance on Him.
  3. Wait in prayer for the Spirit's promptings.
  4. Pray as He impresses upon your heart.

**IV. Pray with all PERSEVERANCE**— "*with ALL PERSEVERANCE...*"

- Satan will try to stop you from praying (Luke 18:1; 11:5-8).
- Prayer is a battle zone: We WATCH in prayer.

A. Battle DISTRACTIONS.

1. I battle **wandering** thoughts.

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I'm praying for Anita. Then I remember that bag of Snickers she gave me this week. Now, I'm thinking how good a Snickers would taste right now. Before you know it, I'm no longer praying, but I'm munching on a Snickers.

I'm praying for my wife Barb. That reminds me of the rhododendron she asked me to prune for her. That reminds me that the lawn needs mowing. Then I'm thinking about when will I have time to do it? Then I'm wondering if it going to rain or be sunny so I can work in the yard. If it's sunny, I

also need to wash the car. Finally I realize I'm not praying but daydreaming.

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2. I battle **wicked** thoughts— A joke I should not have listened to... a scene from a movie I should not have watched... An image from my past unregenerate days... a magazine article I should not have read.
  3. I battle **worldly** thoughts— What am I going to do when I'm done praying... what am I going to buy... who is going to win the game?
- B. Battle DISCOURAGEMENT— We get impatient when the answer doesn't come as quickly as we would like.
  - C. Battle DESPAIR— A situation seems impossible. We get frustrated and quit praying and take matters into our own hands, instead of trusting God.
  - D. Battle DISCONNECTION — Watch against sin in our life that would “disconnect” our prayer line with God.

**V. Pray for all SAINTS** — *“for ALL saints”*

- A. SERVING saints (vs. 19-20; Ex. 17:8-16). Paul often requested prayer for himself.
- B. SINNING saints (Job 42:10).
- C. SHUT-IN saints.
- D. SUFFERING saints (Heb. 13:3)
- E. SUCKLING saints (new converts)

**SUMMATION:** Battling in prayer takes discipline. You need to work at it. Not when you “feel” like it.

**ILLUS:** J. Sidlow Baxter describes how he learned to discipline himself to pray in “The Battle Called Prayer”—

My will was there to pray, but my emotions were all facing the other way... My will and I stood face-to-face. I asked my will the straight question, “Will, are you ready for an hour of prayer?” Will answered, “Here am I, and I'm ready, if you are.” So, Will and I linked our arms and turned to

go for our prayer time. Suddenly all the emotions began pulling the other way and saying, “We’re not coming!” I saw Will stagger just a bit, so I asked, “Can you stick with it, Will?” and Will replied, “Yes, if you can.”

So Will and I went, and we got down to prayer, dragging those wriggling, undisciplined emotions with us. It was a struggle all the way. At one point, when Will and I were in the middle of an earnest intercession, I found one of those traitorous emotions wandering away on the golf course, and it was all I could do to drag the rascal back. A bit later I found another of the emotions had slipped away two days ahead and was in the pulpit preaching a sermon I had not yet finished preparing!

At the end of that hour, if you had asked me, “Have you had a good time?” I would have had to answer, “No, it has been a tiresome wrestling with contrary emotions and a truant imagination from beginning to end.” What is more, that battle with the emotions continued for two or three weeks; and if you had asked me at the end of that period, “Have you had a good time in your daily praying?” I would have had to confess, “No, at times it has seemed as though the heavens were brass and God too distant to hear and the Lord Jesus strangely aloof, and prayer was accomplishing nothing.”

Yet, something was happening. For one thing, Will and I really taught the emotions that we were independent of them. Also, one morning about two weeks after the contest began, just when Will and I were going for another time of prayer, I heard one of the emotions whisper to the others, “Come on you guys, it’s no use wasting any more energy resisting... They’ll just go on the same.” That morning, for the first time, even though the emotions were still sullenly uncooperative, they were at least quiet, which allowed Will and me to get on with prayer without much distraction.

Then after another fortnight during one of our prayer times, when Will and I were no more thinking of the emotions than of the man in the moon, one of the most vigorous emotions unexpectedly sprang up and shouted, “Hallelujah!” at which all the other emotions exclaimed, “Amen! Praise the Lord!” And for the first time in the whole of James Sidlow Baxter—intellect, will, and emotions—were united in one coordinated prayer operation!