

Coach's Corner



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“The Armor Of Prayer”

In the last couple of church newsletters I have written about the helpfulness of using the armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-18 as a guide for prayer. As a reminder, here is that text:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. [12] For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. [13] Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. [14] Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, [15] and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. [16] In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; [17] and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, [18] praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

That list of armor ends by showing one of the pieces of the Christian's protective gear is in fact prayer itself. Verse eighteen relates to the preceding verses by giving one more way in which the Christian can “stand against the schemes of the devil” (vv. 11, 14). Paul says we stand by “all prayer and supplication”. We are able to remain strong and resist Satan by means of coming before God in praise, worship, thanksgiving, confession (all included in the more general term “prayer”), and also by means of bringing before God our needs, lacks, weaknesses, fears, and the like (what is meant by “supplication”). Additionally, Paul says the following about how this devil-battling, God-trusting, Christian-soldier-protecting prayer is to be done:

1. Exercise all types of prayer. This is most likely what is meant by “all prayer”. Prayer is communion with God that goes beyond merely bringing needs. The strongest Christian soldiers are those who worship, praise, give thanks to God, and confess sin—all in addition to bringing needs.
2. Pray at all times. This is similar to Paul writing elsewhere we are to pray without ceasing (1 Thes. 5:17). In other words, we will have longer times set aside for prayer (e.g. Luke 5:16) and we will pray spontaneously throughout the day as the need arises (e.g. Nehemiah 2:4). All in all, we will be anxious for nothing, but pray about all things (Philippians 4:6).
3. Pray in the Spirit. This means that we will be conscious of the need for the Spirit's help when we pray so we can fight off lack of focus, fatigue, and simply not knowing what to pray. In the latter case we will pray with the awareness that sometimes the Spirit will translate our groanings and requests into that which is more in line with God's will that they might be answered (Romans 8:26-27). Bottom-line, we come to God in prayer because we are absolutely dependent upon Him and we come in this dependence always aware we are dependent upon the Spirit of God to pray.
4. Remain steadfast toward the goal of praying in regard to the battle. Paul says that toward the goal of Spirit-empowered, Spirit-directed, varied, unceasing devil-defeating prayer we must “keep alert with all perseverance.” In other words, we dare not get lazy and think we don't need prayer. We

cannot stand against the devil and his schemes on our own. We cannot carry out our commission on our own. We must be strong in the Lord and we must be empowered by Him (2 Cor. 9:8; Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 2:1).

5. We must “keep alert...making supplication for all the saints.” It is interesting that the word translated “keep alert” is also used in Hebrews 13:17 for how elders are to keep watch over the souls of their congregation. God calls us to shepherd the saints, realizing they also are in battle facing the schemes of the devil and we must regularly pray for them and their needs in the battle. What this means, men, is that God calls you and me to pray for ourselves, our families, and our church that we would stand strong against the devil and stand strong for the glory of God!

In light of what Paul calls us to here, let me ask us some questions. Do we regularly pray for our own walk with Christ? Do we uphold our wife and our children in prayer as they are in the midst of spiritual warfare? Do we pray regularly for the flock over which we are assigned that they would have on the armor of God? Do we pray for our entire church that we would withstand in the times of evil and temptation? According to Acts 6:1-6, leaders within the church are to be committed primarily to prayer and to the various ministries of the Word (Teaching, evangelism, missions, apologetics, etc.). Are we men of prayer? If we are not, then we can almost guarantee that the church will not be and that the church will lack fruit. After all, without abiding in Jesus Christ we cannot bear fruit, we cannot do anything of eternal significance (John 15:5).

However the questions of the previous paragraph were answered, let us all commit to the following: (1) Make sure you have a prayer journal or prayer list where you regularly keep track of prayer needs and answers. (2) Commit yourself to a regular time of prayer each day. (3) Learn the art of praying throughout the day as needs arise. (4) Join us on Sunday mornings at 9:00 for prayer. I believe all elders should be present for that time unless you have ministry or other commitments during that time. (5) Pray and dream about how the Minden Evangelical Free Church can continue to grow as a house of prayer (Luke 19:46).

Joyfully Engaged In The Armor Of Prayer With You,

Tom