

**Stand Firm in Warfare:
The Call to Battle – Praying and Watching!
Eph 6:14-20 (Part 10)**

I. Introduction

A. Did you know – Ephesians has more Prayer / teaching on prayer PER VERSE than any other NT book?

B. Romans has more verses on prayer but also has 3X as many total verses

C. Ephesians has more prayer – 1b for 1b / verse for verse than Romans!

D. Paul MODELS prayer and MAKES prayer a PRIORITY in Ephesians!

1. Book outlines according to prayer
2. Paul teaches and then “prays it in”
3. Look at Eph 1

a) From v.3-14 – The wonderful PURPOSE of God for our salvation!

b) Then V.15-19

Eph 1:15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

c) What does Paul pray for? A: OUR UNDERSTANDING of what he just wrote!

4. Then from 1:19-3:13 Paul unfolds the POWER of God

carrying out the PURPOSE of God!

5. Guess what he does in 3:14-21? Prays it in again!

Eph 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

a) What does he pray for?

b) A: Our UNDERSTANDING and APPLICATION of that POWER in our lives!

c) How do are we supposed to apply that Power in our lives? A: Eph 4-6 Application section!

d) To me this is the greatest of Paul's prayers too!

6. Then Paul closes the letter with our section on prayer and it's priority in Spiritual Warfare!

II. Review

A. Remember our Outline: **STAND FIRM in WARFARE**

1. The CALL to PREPARE (6:10-13)

2. The Call to Battle / Fight (6:14-20)

a) The Mandate: 14 Stand firm therefore,

b) The Method (How we stand firm)

(1) The Girdle of Truth

(2) The Breastplate of Righteousness

(3) Feet shod with Gospel of Peace

(4) Then 16 in addition to all, taking up...

(a) Introducing the LAST 3 PIECES of ARMOR

(b) = put in place at TIME of BATTLE

(c) taking up = IMMEDIATE READINESS

(5) The Shield of Faith

(6) The Helmet of Salvation

(7) The Sword of the Spirit

(8) Praying in the Spirit (today)

III. The Manner of Taking Up Your Helmet and Sword: Praying and Watching

A. Look at V.18 – TWO MAIN ACTIVITIES HERE: PRAYING and BEING ALERT / WATCHING

B. Remember how this section works!

1. V.14 COMMAND: Stand Firm
2. THEN – a Series of phrases TELLING us HOW to STAND FIRM!
3. SIX of those are the pieces of armor
4. NOW TWO MORE that represent MEANS

C. Look at the keys to V.18

18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

1. TWO KEYS to V.18 – “pray” and “be on the alert”
2. BOTH
 - a) Continual activities –do always
 - b) Continue to explain / expand Spiritual Warfare
 - c) = Part of method of HOW we do Spiritual Warfare

d) TWO Questions arise

3. When are we to be praying and watching (be on the alert)?
 - a) Does it relate all the way back to standing firm (v.14)

- b) OR does it only relate back to Take up the helmet and sword in v.17?
- 4. What is the relationship between praying and watching?
 - a) When you read these verses it sounds like you're going in circles!
 - (1) Pray with all prayer and petition
 - (2) Be on the alert with all perseverance and petition
 - (3) What's going on here?

D. First – when are we to pray and watch/be on the alert?

- 1. Does it relate all the way back to standing firm (v.14)
- 2. OR does it only relate back to Take up the helmet and sword in v.17?
- 3. A: In a general sense you are to pray always
 - a) FIRST - Many argue that Praying and Watching GO ALONG with ALL of v.14-20 –
 - (1) with every part of putting on your armor.
 - (2) I DON'T SEE THAT AS PAUL'S EMPHASIS HERE!
 - (3) Grammar doesn't support that as strongly as it does our second choice
 - b) SECOND - Many passages show you that you are to pray unceasingly / always, etc.
 - (1) It seems most commentators default to that out of human logic / reasoning
 - c) THIRD – it is a tough choice and a close call
 - d) My choice is based on
 - (1) The grammar of v.14-20
 - (2) The example of Paul in v.19-20
 - (3) The focus it then brings to the application of prayer!
 - e) Let's look at this...
- 4. So again - when are we to pray and watch/be on the alert?

5. A: When we are taking up the helmet of salvation and the Sword of the Spirit – Battle prayers!

Eph6:14 Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH...; **16** in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith ... **17** And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **18** With all prayer and petition pray

a) What does that mean?

b) When do you take up the helmet and Sword? A: At the actual time of battle!

6. Think about this in battle terms – Praying and watching here is focused on BATTLE PRAYER!

a) IOW – Prayer and alertness in Spiritual warfare against Satan is

(1) FOCUSED on the Battle

(2) During the BATTLE!

7. Illustration – Paul Himself in the next verses!

a) Paul appreciated general prayer on his behalf

b) BUT – he follows this instruction with a specific prayer for him in the battle – look at v.19-20

Eph6:19 and *pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, **20** for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

(1) Pray for me to fight the good fight!

(2) To fight boldly!

c) We all know that we remember to pray during trials and suffering and OFTEN FORGET to PRAY when times are good

(1) Paul's in chains – he could easily weaken and not fight as hard!

(2) His prayer request – pray that I fight just as hard on this part of the battlefield!

E. Second – what is the relationship between praying and watching (be on the alert)?

1. Look at v.17-20 and see the flow
 - a) it's time to fight and you put on the helmet and raise the sword

[Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.](#)
 - b) What's the manner in which you do this? A: Prayer
 - c) With EVERY prayer you pray =

[Eph 6:18 With all prayer and petition](#)
 - d) Keep, continuously praying at every opportunity in the Holy Spirit:

[pray at all times in the Spirit,](#)
 - e) NOTICE what Paul says next:

[and with this in view,](#)
 (1)= for this purpose
 (2)= to this end
 (3)? for what purpose Paul?
 - f) To keep /alert keep watching!

[be on the alert](#)
 - g) How are we to be on the alert?

[with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,](#)
 - h) Wait a second! If you Pray for the purpose of staying alert, then why does staying alert need praying (petition)?!!!
 - i) Sounds like CIRCULAR REASONING!

(1)It is! In a good sense!
2. Let me explain
 - a) You are going into battle or in battle and the manner in which you put on your helmet and use your sword is with prayer!

(1)Makes sense! Everything we do should be bathed in prayer!

- b) So, you pray at all times in the Spirit
- c) Then Paul added "[and with this in view](#)" = "for the PURPOSE of"
- d) For the purpose of what? [Be on the alert](#) = keeping ALERT!

e) POINT 1: PRAYING LEADS to ALERTNESS!

(1) Makes sense! If you're constantly praying in SPIRITUAL WARFARE – AREN'T YOU more ALERT to the SPIRITUAL WARFARE AROUND YOU?

(2) As you think of more things to pray for, you are MORE ALERT to the battle around you!

(3) So again POINT 1 PRAYING LEADS to ALERTNESS!

f) BUT – how are we to be alert?

g) A: with all perseverance and petition!

h) What's Paul putting petition in there for?

i) A: POINT 2 – BEING ON THE ALERT (Watching) LEADS to MORE PRAYER!

j) Again – Makes sense! Now that you are ALERT from Prayer, YOU SEE MORE THINGS TO PRAY FOR! – THINGS FOR other saints in Spiritual Warfare!

3. It's a circular cycle that should just keep feeding you to PRAY and WATCH MORE and MORE and MORE! One feeds the other!
4. Until you understand this, you'll find v.18-19 just a lot of repetitious wording that is hard to structure!
5. A lot of preachers and commentators don't see the structure and just flatten the whole section out into a bunch of points on prayer!

F. Well – Paul is going to instruct that PRAYER and ALERTNESS are A NECESSARY PART of SPIRITUAL WARFARE

1. It is NOT a PIECE of ARMOR
2. BUT is A NECESSARY PART of the METHOD of the COMMAND to STAND FIRM.
3. It's the MANNER / the WAY in which we are to put on the helmet and take up the sword
4. We are to pray for the purpose of being alert
5. And being alert we are to pray more!
6. One more time – Praying and watching:
 - a) ARE NOT a piece of armor
 - b) ARE a necessary part of spiritual warfare
 - c) = IS a necessary part of the method of how we are to STAND FIRM – AT THE ACTUAL TIME of BATTLE
 - d) It's HOW we take up the helmet and sword and fight – FIGHT WITH PRAYER and ALERTNESS!

G. You may be thinking – isn't Bill splitting hairs a bit here?

H. A: NO!

1. There's an emphasis here that we need!
2. That we often miss!
3. And – you know what? Paul's own request for prayer – FITS this interpretation – PRAY FOR ME IN BATTLE!
4. THEN – we need to do the same for each other!

IV. The Emphasis of Prayer

A. Repetition = EMPHASIS – must know / do

B. FOUR TIMES: Praying and Petition mention in V.18

C. FOUR TIMES: "all" / "always" used

D. Paul – As you go into battle / as you fight the battle

1. PRAYING IS CRITICAL, CONTINUAL
2. PRAYING ALL TIMES, ALL SAINTS, ALL KINDS

E. Praying MUST SATURATE YOUR LIFE

F. Between the repetition and "alls" – YOU ARE LEFT PRAYING EVERY OPPORTUNITY, EVERY WAY/SHAPE/FORM, for EVERY SAINT!

G. There's a SATURATION here that is staggering

1. Hindus / Buddhists have "mantras" = simple phrase that they repeat over and over and over (Rama is the most common)
2. Why? Trains and controls the mind.
3. Analogy – If you walk and elephant through town that long trunk will be reaching out and grabbing – causing all kinds of trouble
4. BUT – if you give it a stick to hold, it will calmly walk along occupying the trunk with the stick!
5. POINT – They are trying to train their minds to be calm AND ARE WILLING to DIVERT EVERY FREE MOMENT to repeating their mantra!

H. PAUL – We should be WILLING TO TAKE EVERY FREE MOMENT of OUR THINKING – EVERY OPPORTUNITY and DEVOTE IT TO PRAYER

1. That is staggering!
2. We don't think that way / consider Spiritual Warfare that serious
3. We are lightweight, half-hearted soldiers if we don't pray as we ought!

V. The Expectations of Praying–

[18](#) With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit,

A. Why "expectations" of praying?**B. "[With all prayer and petition](#)" = with EVERY PRAYER**

1. = Let me INSTRUCT YOU about PRAYER

C. Then "[Pray](#)"

1. = the first of two Participles that key this section
2. = Present, continual activity = keep on praying
3. = As the enemy approaches – put on helmet with prayer
4. = As you take up sword of the Spirit – Do so with prayer
5. = As you USE the sword in battle – Use WITH PRAYER!

D. What does Paul want to teach us about prayer here? – the expectations of every prayer?

E. God expects you to pray IN ALL SITUATIONS (God expects you to pray EVERY KIND of PRAYER)

1. With all prayer and petition
 - a) Prayer = general term for prayer
 - b) Petition = specific requests
 - (1) Comes from root = need, lack, want
 - (2) Developed into “request, petition, entreaty” FOR “need, lack, want”
 - c) Paul – I’m including ALL KINDS of PRAYERS FOR ALL SITUATIONS but am FOCUSING on PETITION
2. Situation: Someone needs strength, courage faith, hope, etc. during battle (Situation = NEED)
 - a) Kind of Prayer = PETITION
3. Situation: God has just delivered you or someone else from suffering or a trial
 - a) Kind of Prayer = PRAISE or THANKSGIVING!
4. Situation: I sinned during the battle
 - a) Kind of Prayer = CONFESSION!
5. Can you think of ANY SITUATION in spiritual warfare that DOESN'T NEED PRAYER? NO!
6. Can you think of ANY KIND of PRAYER that is not appropriate during Spiritual Warfare? NO!

F. God expects you to pray at EVERY OPPORTUNITY!

pray at all times

1. NOT Chronos time (chronological time)
2. = kairos time = time seen through events not passage of time
3. = PURPOSE of Time NOT PASSAGE of Time
4. “all times” = at every opportunity
5. even has meaning: at EVERY CRITICAL TIME

6. DOES NOT take away from the CONTINUOUS / UNCEASING aspect of prayer
7. AGAIN = battle prayers focused on praying AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY DURING BATTLE!

[Php 4:6](#) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

[Col 4:2](#) Devote [=persistence / endurance] yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

[2 Ti 1:3](#) I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day,

8. This is a battle! Pray at EVERY OPPORTUNITY – ESPECIALLY at CRITICAL TIMES – for yourself and for others!

G. God expects you to pray in the HOLY SPIRIT!

in the Spirit,

1. Hopefully, you are already living out Eph 5:18 at this point!

[Eph 5:18](#) And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

 - a) = a life CONTROLLED by the Holy Spirit
 - b) IF so your prayers are His Prayers
 - c) Your will is Christ's will, the Father's will!
2. IOW – we don't just PRAY in the Spirit – WE START by LIVING A LIFE CONTROLLED BY the SPIRIT – THEN pray in the Spirit!
3. "in the Spirit" =
 - a) CONSISTENT with WHO HE IS (His nature)
 - b) CONSISTENT with HIS WILL
4. If your life is not CONTROLLED by the SPIRIT, it will be HARD to PRAY what the Holy SPIRIT WILLS
5. What will you pray instead? The desires of your flesh! (Gal 5:16 – you're either in the Spirit or in the Flesh!)

6. So –
 - a) If the battle belongs to the Lord
 - b) If we are to be “6:10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might”
 - c) If we are fighting a supernatural battle against Satan
 - d) THEN why pray ANYTHING ELSE BUT WHAT the SPIRIT WANTS US TO DO???
7. Have to ask yourself IF YOUR LIFE and YOUR PRAYERS are ALIGNED with CHRIST and the HOLY SPIRIT!
8. Reminds me of Ben at the age of 8 playing goalie in soccer
 - a) Game raged on at other end of field
 - b) Ben stood there doing karate kicks and punches into the air
 - c) What game are you in Ben?
9. I think that’s how us Christians look to God!
 - a) We’re in the middle of a battlefield in Iraq PRAYING for a NEW HOUSE, NEW CAR, whatever BACK HOME!
 - b) God: “GET YOUR MIND, YOUR HEART, YOUR PRAYERS INTO THE BATTLE!”

H. Come up for air

1. V.18 = WITH EVERY PRAYER –
 - a) PRAY in all SITUATIONS with ALL kinds of PRAYERS
 - b) PRAY at EVERY OPPORTUNITY – especially CRITICAL times
 - c) PRAY ACCORDING TO THE WILL and NATURE of the HOLY SPIRIT – Pray for His BATTLE PLAN!
 - d) But for what purpose?

VI. The Purpose of Prayer: Watching / Being on the alert

and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

A. God expects your prayer to lead to alertness / watching

and with this in view,

1. = PRAY for the purpose of / to the end that...
2. = PURPOSE for why we are praying above

B. God expects you to be on the alert

be on the alert

1. Your prayer above IS FOR THE PURPOSE of INCREASING YOUR ALERTNESS in the BATTLE!
2. alert = to be watchful, vigilant, not drowsing
 - a) Comes from “to remain without sleep”
 - b) Includes effort = watching with effort!
3. PAUL: Continual PRAYER LEADS to CONTINUAL ALERTNESS
4. Matter of FOCUS – where you set your mind!
5. What is one of the primary responsibilities for an elder? ALERTNESS!

Heb 13:17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over [alert] your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

- a) What’s my part of the battle?
- b) BEING ON THE ALERT FOR YOU!
- c) I will GIVE AN ACCOUNT for HOW WELL I DO!
- d) That shows how serious this is!
6. Eph 6:19 – God EXPECTS YOU to BE ON THE ALERT – as a RESULT of CONTINUAL PRAYER!
7. What does “be on the alert” look like?

C. God expects you be alert with ALL perseverance

with all perseverance and petition

1. Perseverance = compound word with root “to endure”

and preposition to add emphasis

- a) = PERSEVERANCE
- b) = to hold out / never quit
- c) Does perseverance DESCRIBE your WATCHFULNESS?
- d) DOES your ALERTNESS – never end – always on?

D. God expects your alertness to lead to more prayer!

be on the alert with all ...petition

1. Petition = SPECIFIC PRAYERS – just saw before
2. Here's the key mentioned before
 - a) Praying leads to watching / being alert
 - b) Watching / being alert LEADS TO PRAYER
 - c) Again – IF YOU'RE WATCHING – YOU'RE GOING TO SEE THINGS TO PRAY FOR!
3. What are the two best examples of persistence and prayer?
 - a) Luke 11:5-10
 - (1) Storeowner asleep with family
 - (2) Man bangs on door for food
 - (3) Persists UNTIL man gets up and gives him bread
 - (4) What do you think a loving Father will give to a son who has a need?
 - (5) This famous verse is in this parable!

Lk11:9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.
 - b) Luke 18:1-8 Unjust judge
 - (1) Woman keeps coming and begging
 - (2) Finally – judge gives her what she wants
 - (3) If this is what an UNJUST judge will do in the face of PERSISTENCE, what do you think a Just GOD will give to His own child who PERSISTS in prayer?

(4) Listen to Christ's words at the end of this parable!

[Lk18:7](#) now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? [8](#) "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

4. So – I have to ask
 - a) Do you pray with SUCH PERSISTENCE
 - b) Do you pray with SUCH ALERTNESS / WATCHING?
 - c) DO you find yourself in an ever-increasing cycle of Prayer
 - d) OR is prayer a seldom thing in your life and this sounds like a foreign language to you?

E. God expects you to pray for all the saints!

[for all the saints,](#)

1. Many times / Many places Paul tells us to pray for others!
 - a) For unbelievers
 - b) For Government leaders
 - c) Etc.
2. BUT in SPIRITUAL WARFARE ONLY other Christians are INVOLVED with you!
3. No surprise then that Paul's focus is "[saints](#)"
4. What's the challenge here? A: ALL!
5. You have to be ever-expanding your prayer list and looking for other Christians in the heat of battle to prayer for!
6. SO – EXPAND THAT LIST! NOW!

VII. CONCLUSION: That's A LOT about Prayer in just 2 verses!

1. None of it a surprise
2. Most of it VERY CONVICTING! Why?

- a) We're Prayer failures
 - b) We'd rather bathe Spiritual warfare in Self-effort than in prayer
3. We don't pray
- a) Enough
 - b) In the Spirit
 - c) Different prayers
 - d) With Perseverance
 - e) With increasing alertness
 - f) We plain old DON'T PRAY

B. We're going to finish the book next week

- 1. THIS WEEK – BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR PRAYER LIFE
- 2. COMMIT yourself to renewing / restarting / rejuvenating your prayer life!
- 3. COMMIT to DAILY, STRUCTURED PRAYER and come back next week and tell me how the week went!

C. I think we should be able to finish the book next week too!