

Sunday, September 29, 2013—The Battlefield of the Mind—Victory is a Prayer Away, Part 2

Introduction/Review

- Last week we began working on drawing this series of studies to a close by looking at the role prayer plays in the battlefield of the mind.
- To do this we went back to Ephesians 6 to consider verse 18 under the heading of Prayer the Forgotten Piece of Armor. We reviewed the context of Ephesians 6 being careful to point out the role prayer plays in our spiritual struggle.
- Ephesians 6:18—we observed the following regarding the verse:
 - *Praying always*—in the midst of the battle we need to constantly praying. Prayer should be an active and ongoing activity in the life of every believer. (I Thess. 5:17, Rom. 12:12)
 - *Supplication*—equals making requests (Phil. 4:1).
 - *In the Spirit*—not only is this in keeping with the nature of our spiritual warfare but prayer is the point of contact in the life of the believer. Prayer is what activates the word of God in the believers life.
 - *Watching Thereunto*—prayer serves as the watchman of our minds. The guardian or protector of our inner man as it were. Prayer working in conjunction with the word in the believer's inner man warns of danger. Prayer alerts us to improper thinking. Prayer exposes attitudes and actions that are not being taken captive to the obedience of Christ. Paul instructs us to be actively “watching thereunto” because of the important function prayer plays in our spiritual warfare.

Prayer the Forgotten Piece of Armor, Cont.

- *With all perseverance*—despite the enemy continuous attacks we are to persist in prayer and supplication.
 - Perseverance—persistence in anything undertaken; continued pursuit or prosecution of any business or enterprise begun; applied alike to good or evil.
- Colossians 4:2
- *And supplication for all saints*—this lifestyle of continues watchful prayer that Paul is expounding upon is not to be a selfish personal fleshly endeavor but one that makes supplication and requests for all saints.
 - I Corinthians 12:25-26

- As members of the body of Christ we are all locked in the same spiritual struggle. We are all subject to the same victories and defeats. When one member wins all the members win. When one member suffers defeat all the members are affected.
- What would happen in the life of this assembly if we made it an intentional point to be watchful and persistent in prayer for each other?
- Philippians 2:3-4

The Example of Paul

- Ephesians 6:19-20—Paul says I need your prayers. I need you the Ephesians to persevere in watchful pray for me that I might continue to do that which I was called to do.
- Ephesians 3:1—Paul was in bonds for being faithful to do what God had called him to do.
- In chapter 6 the wiles of the devil and Satan’s policy of evil against the body of Christ had Paul incarcerated in a Roman prison. Paul pleads with the Ephesians to pray for him that me might not be discouraged and thrown in to towel and give up the good fight of faith.
- We need to pray for all the saints.
- Think for a moment about how many people and how many churches Paul had to pray for. Paul’s habit must have been that as he thought of someone, he would instantly make mention of them to God. It may have been a short one-sentence prayer or perhaps more, but it seems certain that Paul didn’t stop and pray an hour or so for each person every day.
- Philippians 1:3—upon every remembrance of you
- II Timothy 1:3—remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day
- Romans 1:9—make mention of you in my prayers
- Ephesians 1:16—making mention of you in my prayers
- I Thessalonians 1:2—making mention of you in our prayers
- Philemon 4—making mention of thee always in my prayers
- Paul’s epistles confirm that Paul did not pray for people only when they needed prayer. Throughout his letters we see Paul praying for the members of Christ’s church each time he heard reports of their love and faith, good reports, reports that they were doing well. He didn’t wait for prayer requests; instead he prayed a short prayer, “making mention of them” whenever they came to mind. **To think of them was to pray for them.**

- How greatly would such an approach to prayer for others and our church revolutionize our lives and our assembly?

Philippians 4:6

- *Be careful for nothing*—two weeks ago we spent a considerable amount of time talking about the meaning of this expression. In doing so we discussed the relationship between your emotions and your thoughts. Paul is instructing us not to be anxious and troubled with cares.
- *In everything*—the teaching is simple and straight forward. Have a concern pray about it. Whatever is causing you stress, anxiety, or worry should be taken before the throne of grace. Yes, this includes physical things as well as spiritual things.
- One of the problems with how Grace Life teachers have taught on the subject of prayer is that we have made people scared to death to pray the wrong thing. In our explanations many have perceived us to be taking away their personal relationship with Christ. This has been particularly true with some of the female members of the body of Christ.
- In time past Israel was physically very close to the presence of God. The glory of God dwelt between the cherubims on the top of the mercy seat in the tabernacle and later in the temple. Yet, spiritually Israel was far from God. The high priest was only allowed into the presence of God in the holy of holies once a year under penalty of death for violating priestly protocol. How much closer to God are members of the body of Christ to God compared to Israel under the law! Rather than living in the holy of holies, God has chosen the saints as his habitation during the church age.
 - I Corinthians 3:16-17
 - I Corinthians 6:19
 - II Corinthians 6:16
 - Ephesians 2:20-22
- Rather, we believe in a God who established the most intimate relationship possible with his children and actively works in their lives through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit working in conjunction with God's written word in the believers inner man.
- Romans 8:26-27—what the Holy Spirit does in these verses is like something else He does for believers.

- Romans 8:16—there is a communion, point of contact, or relationship in your inner man between the Holy Spirit and your spirit that bears witness to the fact you are a child of God. How do you know? Besides reading it in the verses how do you explain this?
- Philippians 4:6—the issue in verse 6 is that God says it's okay to pray about anything that is bothering us. We're not supposed to be worried about improperly doing the very thing God gave us to combat our worries, cares, and anxieties.
- Grace gives us the freedom to be vulnerable and candid before our heavenly father. The real issue is not what you pray for but what you expect God to do for you when you pray.