

The Spiritual Armor Part 8

“All-Out Praying in the Spirit”

Eph.6:18a 5-1-2005

Most of us are unsatisfied with our prayer life. If you need some motivation to pray more, or more effectively, you may find this message helpful.

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

And pray ...

That word is not “pray.” It’s a participle – praying. So it should read: **And praying in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.** With this in mind, being alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. When you read it that way it’s clear that this verse is not a complete sentence. It is the second half of the sentence started in v.17. So the section on the armor didn’t end at the end of v.17. It continues into this passage.

A literal translation from the Greek: **Verse 17** says we are to take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit...**18** With all prayer and petition praying on all occasions in the Spirit, and regarding this, being alert in all perseverance and in petition concerning all the saints.

The very first word is “with” (dia). So it’s describing the way we put on the armor. And everything in the verse revolves around two participles – praying and being alert. So the message is this: “Put on the armor with all prayer, praying and being alert.” The other obvious feature of this verse that really stands out is all the “alls.” There are 4 of them in v.18. (The NIV translates the third one “always,” but it’s the same Greek word as the other three.) We are to pray and be alert with:

1. **all prayer**
2. **at all times**
3. **in all perseverance**
4. **for all the saints**

That is all out prayer. What should it look like when we put on the armor of God? All out prayer. If we are going to remain standing in this warfare, we are going to have to really be serious about prayer and alertness. Otherwise we will never get the armor on. We need supernatural help.

Last week I made the point that the armor is not beyond your reach. I told you it’s made up of the ordinary aspects of the Christian life, and so it’s accessible to every Christian. But don’t misunderstand that. When I say “ordinary” or “non-miraculous” I do NOT mean that it is natural. And when I say it is accessible, I do NOT mean it is humanly attainable. The armor of God is ordinary in the Christian life, but it’s anything but natural. And outside of a divine work of grace it is utterly impossible to put on. Every piece is completely spiritual and requires awesome power and enablement from God to be used. No matter what you do – no matter how many hours you spend in Bible study, no matter how hard you try to live out the principles you’ve learned... Unless the Holy Spirit makes a conscious decision to do a supernatural work in your heart, there will be no fruit.

And that became incredibly obvious last Sunday night at the prayer meeting. What we did last Sunday night was this: I printed up the list from last Sunday’s sermon of the benefits of our salvation in Ephesians. Remember all those things I divided into three categories – our *position in Christ*, our *provision in Christ* and our *potential in Christ*?

Putting on the helmet means understanding, utilizing and attaining to all those. And so that’s what we prayed about. I made copies of that list and passed them around. And then we divided into small groups and we

each picked something from the list that we really wanted more of. We were all looking at the list of the guaranteed benefits of our salvation and so when I asked each person “Which of these would you like us to pray for you to progress in?”

The answers were an amazing thing to hear. You would not believe the things we had the audacity to ask God for last Sunday night. We were reading that list like a menu at a restaurant, where the bill has already been paid ahead of time. And so people were just picking whatever they wanted. People were saying things like: “I would like to draw on the resource of my unsearchable riches in Christ.” And the next person would say, “For me, I would like to utilize more of the power to do immeasurably more than all I could ask or imagine.” And the next person would say, “I want to attain to the whole measure of all of the fullness of Christ.” Mine was from 3:17. I wanted my heart to be the dwelling place of God’s and His mighty presence to bless. I don’t know how everyone else felt, but I have to say I felt kind of strange asking for something like that.

The promises of Scripture are so grandiose, and so many times the Lord tells us to ask Him for huge, cosmic, eternal awesome things... - we can hardly bring ourselves to do it. If those things weren’t promised in Scripture, it would seem almost blasphemous or at the very least arrogant to ask for those things. “God, I want my heart to be your headquarters for operation in this place.” The texts of Scripture that promise those things have to be right in front of our faces before we will pray that way. Why do you suppose that is?

Why do you think we are so prone to only asking God for tiny things? We see the things we can do on our own (or at least it seems like we can do them on our own). And then we pray and ask God for just a little extra boost around the edges. Instead of asking God to strengthen me in my inner being so I can be the dwelling place of God on earth, I’m praying “Lord, please help me get all my emails done today.” Instead of praying that I would be able to draw more heavily on the unsearchable riches of Christ, I’m mumbling some prayer about “Lord, please take this backache away.”

Why are most of our requests for such miniscule things? Maybe it’s because it’s so hard for us to remember that most of reality lies beyond this natural world. And so we almost become naturalists in our prayers – praying about temporal, physical, earthly things all the time. And if we take that naturalistic approach into a spiritual war with a powerful, spiritual opponent, we will get flattened. And so God gives us armor that forces us to think in spiritual terms. He gave us the kind of armor that forces us to realize that the entire matter is completely beyond our power. And so we are driven to prayer. If the way we fought this war was with some physical thing – if He gave us some button to press, it would be very easy for us to forget that the battle is the Lord’s, and we are in desperate need of His power. But when the armor is spiritual – when the only things that can protect us are things that only come from the Holy Spirit (righteousness, truth, peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God), we realize our desperate need for prayer. This is typical of what God does. He requires things of us that are totally outside of our own power, so we will be forced to look to Him.

Just think about any ministry. Did you know every point in my job description is outside of my own power to accomplish? As a pastor, God calls me to do things like equip the saints for the works of ministry and the building of the body. That means if I find some saint who is not equipped spiritually to do that, God expects me to change that. The problem is, I don’t have the power to change a person. I can do every procedure humanly possible. I can prepare sermon after sermon, do one-on-one discipleship, exhort him, teach him, and be an example for him. But if the Holy Spirit doesn’t decide to do a supernatural work in his heart, nothing will happen. Now, the Holy Spirit does use those other things to do His work, but He doesn’t in every case. Sometimes, the Word of God penetrates a person’s heart and brings change. But sometimes it doesn’t. Unless the Holy Spirit makes the decision to soften that person’s heart and open his eyes, it won’t happen.

The Holy Spirit is a person with His own, sovereign will. He cannot be manipulated like a machine with our ministry techniques. When Rick Warren says that anyone can be made to be a Christian, if we just find the right technique to reach his heart, that’s dead wrong. I am dependent upon the Spirit to accomplish everything He has called me to do. And the same goes for your job description. According to Ephesians 4 God expects you to:

1. Do the works of the ministry
2. Build up the body of Christ
3. Reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God
4. Become mature

5. Attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ

That's your job description for your ministry.

Guess how many of those things can happen if the Holy Spirit doesn't decide to bring them about? None. God has offered to do a whole lot of amazing things. But He doesn't want to do any of them outside of our praying for them, so it will be clear that it was He who did them. So if we don't pray, He will let them go undone. I think that's why God made our resources so staggering. If He gave us tiny little resources, or natural pieces of armor, we might think we could put those on without any help. If the breastplate was education and the helmet was getting some program up and running, we wouldn't feel the need for prayer. Even unbelievers can go get a degree or set up some program. And so He gives us armor that no human could possibly put on by himself. He gives us a breastplate that's 10 miles thick and tells us to put it on. Once you get it on you're really, really safe, but it's obvious from the sheer magnitude of the thing that we aren't going to even begin to get it on unless the Holy Spirit enables us. So how are we to go about putting on all this armor we've been studying? It's going to take all-out prayer in the Holy Spirit. I've heard people say we need to put on the spiritual armor every morning. I'm not sure what they mean by that exactly. If they mean you should think about these things on a daily basis, and make progress each day, then I fully agree. But if they mean you should sit there on your bedside and just imagine putting on shoes and a helmet and breastplate that's not going to do anything. Putting on the armor doesn't mean imagine putting on armor. It means actually attaining these things, which can only be done by the gracious mercy and power of God. I really think v.18 and v.10 serve as perfect bookends to this whole section. The message of v.18 is basically the same as v.10. He started this whole section telling us to be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. And he ends by reminding us again that this all comes from the Lord and His power.

One thing that's been helpful for me in keeping this sense of dependence is to use the phrase "only You" a lot in my prayers. For each thing I pray – whether it be praise or petition or thanksgiving or affirmation, if I begin by saying "Lord, this is something only You can do..." That does two things:

1. It changes my prayers.

When I find myself praying at too low a level, that becomes obvious when I use that phrase: "God, only You can help me get caught up with my phone calls." That's not even true. A human being could do that. And so when I hear myself start to pray that, it makes me think deeper to pray for things only He can do. Like:

- Use the phone calls I make for His eternal glory.
- For Him to use the phone calls I make to bring about His purposes in sanctification.
- For me to have wisdom in determining when and how many, and to whom and what to say and how to say it.

Wisdom in all those things so that the result is that His name be glorified in me to the greatest possible extent. Only He can grant that kind of wisdom. So using that phrase changes my prayers.

2. It refocuses my attention off myself, and off what I'm praying about, and on to God.

The whole reason why He wants me to pray is because He wants me to look to Him and see Him as the provider of that which no one else can do. And using that phrase helps remind me of that.

So the putting on of the armor must be done with prayer. You will never make progress in understanding, accepting and loving the truth unless you beseech God for that. You will never become a more honest person unless you seek that virtue from the Lord. You will never become more righteous unless you cry out to God to give you His righteousness. You will never achieve the purpose of the Gospel (peace), unless you bang on the doors of heaven for it. You will never be strong and steadfast in your faith unless you plead with the Lord to achieve that in your heart. You will never even begin to appropriate the blessings of your salvation (understand your position, utilize your provisions and attain your potential in Christ), unless you implore your Father in heaven for that. And you will never have any success wielding the Sword of the Spirit unless you pray in the Spirit with all prayers and petitions. Every piece of the armor is totally dependent upon prayer.

I recently heard this illustrated with the game of football. The guy said we are like football players, and God is like the coach – telling us what to do. And this guy knew some of the players who played under Tom

Landry. And they said it was fairly common, after the Cowboys lost a game, for Landry to come into the locker room and say, “Gentlemen, I told you what you had to do to win the game. You didn’t do it, and so you lost.” And he would turn around and walk out. That’s a terrible of this passage. That makes it sound like God is standing on the sidelines with a clipboard sending in plays, but it’s entirely up to us to carry them out. God is the one who supplies 100% of the power necessary to win in this war. And it’s so important to Him that He do this in answer to prayer that He will actually allow it to go undone if we fail to pray.

In this passage, Paul gives 6 marks of warfare praying. He uses the 4 “alls” as a picture frame to showcase the two things he says in the middle. He starts with all prayer and all occasions. And he ends with all perseverance and praying for all the saints. And in between is the crux of the issue – pray in the Spirit, and be alert.

1. All prayer
2. All times
3. In the Spirit
4. Alert!
5. All perseverance
6. All the saints

Six Marks of Warfare Praying

1. All Prayer (Every kind of Prayer)

The phrase “all prayer” means “every kind of prayer.” If we are going to stand in this warfare, if we want God to respond to our prayers for these things, then we are going to have to utilize all kinds of prayer. There are a lot of different kinds of prayer.

1. Praise (marveling in what is good about God)
2. Thanksgiving (expressing love back to God in response to His love) Petition (asking God for things)
3. Confession (acknowledging your sin to God)
4. Intercession (praying for other people)

Some prayers are intense and focused. You go somewhere alone for a period of time and get down on your knees or your face and shed tears. Other prayers last only a few seconds and you are barely conscious of them; they are just the momentary reflex of your constant awareness of God throughout the day. Some prayers are public – where you are thinking about what you are saying to God - but at the same time also thinking about how to say it in a way that is edifying to the people you’re praying with. Other prayers are very private. Some prayers are the very intentional, reasoned detailing of theological truth. Other prayers are mostly just the gushing forth of emotion as you pour out your heart to God.

Jesus has a wide variety in His prayer life – everything from His one-liners to His all-nighters. Jesus talked about praying in your closet with the door closed and yet He also expected the Temple to be used as a place of public prayer. (Mt.21:13) The Church in Acts was constantly going out of their way to come together for corporate prayer. Daniel prayed with his door closed but his window open. Some prayers are written and read. Others are spontaneous. Some prayers are out loud; others are silent. And when you pray, make sure you have the right posture. It should be something biblical. That means whenever you pray you should be bowing (Ps.5:7) or kneeling (Eph.3:14). And the only other options that are truly biblical are standing (Mk.11:25), sitting (Mt.26:36), lying in bed (Ps.63:6), with uplifted hands (Ps.134:2) or flat on your face before God (Josh.7:6). Now, of all those different kinds of prayers, which should you use (according to this verse)? All of them. The point of this phrase “all prayer” is that there is to be a richness and a depth and variety to our prayers.

Our tendency is to settle into a routine that requires minimal thought and creativity. There are some people who are striving to pray without ceasing and so they go all through the day with a God-consciousness – every few seconds breathing a quick prayer of thanks or request for help, or a word of praise. That is wonderful. That’s exactly what we should be doing. But if that’s all there is to your prayer life, something’s missing. If doing that kind of thing were enough, why did Jesus bother waking up while it was still dark, getting dressed and walking off someplace to pray? Why bother going somewhere special to pray when you’re only going to

pray for 2 minutes? Some people are great about praying in their closet with the door closed, but they aren't particularly interested in coming together with the body of Christ for corporate prayer. Some people are real long on requests, and real short on praise. Some people are big on emotion and skimpy on truth. Or the other way around – some people can give God a great theology lesson, but their prayers have all the passion and warmth of a stone.

If we are going to get this armor on, it's going to require all-out prayer... Which means we need to expand the breadth and depth and variety of our prayers.

2. All Occasions

The second mark of true warfare praying is to pray on all occasions or opportunities.

With all prayer and petition praying on all occasions

Pray on every kind of occasion. Whenever you get a chance. Before you start anything, after you finish something when you're waiting for something, on your way to go somewhere, when a big event is coming up, after a big event is past. And make sure when you pray you always pray during the best time of day for prayer. Do you know when that is? I've heard some people say the best time for your prayer time is in the morning, because that gives you a good start to your day. Others say it's better at night, so you aren't distracted with getting your day started. So I looked to the Scriptures and found what the Bible teaches is the best time of day to pray.

Ps 141:2 May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.

Ps 5:3 In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

Acts 10:9 About noon the following day ... Peter went up on the roof to pray.

Ps 55:17 Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice.

Ps 22:2 O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent.

Ps 63:6 On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.

Mark 1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Luke 6:12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God

1 Timothy 5:5 The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.

So I would say that for the most part, the only times when you should really be praying are early morning, later morning, noon, evening or night. Although, there is something to be said for 3:00 in the afternoon as well:

Acts 3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer — at three in the afternoon.

Cornelius had pretty good luck with that time too – he prayed at 3:00 and got a visit from an angel. And not only is there a variety of times that are good for your regular prayer times, there are a variety of occasions

that are appropriate for prayer. For example, before a big decision. Jesus prayed all night in Lk.6 the night before He selected the 12 disciples. Or in times of great anguish. When Jesus was at the absolute low point of His whole life, the night before the crucifixion, He went off alone for an extended time to pray. Or in times of great joy. When Jesus was being baptized and the Father spoke from heaven and the Holy Spirit descended on Him, He prayed. Jesus prayed before eating, to thank God for the food. When He was in the middle of a speech about the wickedness of Korazin and Bethsaida, He had to interrupt Himself for a moment and pray a prayer of praise to thank God for His perfect wisdom in keeping the truth hidden from those people. After a long, hard, grueling day of ministry to the crowd of 5000 men plus women and children, Jesus found the perfect way to unwind.

Matthew 14:23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.

It wasn't too hard for Jesus to find an excuse to go off and pray.

Luke 5:16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

He prayed while contemplating the cross. He prayed while hanging on the cross. He prayed for little children that people brought to Him and rebuked His disciples for trying to take that burden off His plate. (Mt.19:13)

The book of Acts is the story of how Jesus carried on all the things He was doing in the Gospels through the *Church*. So just as you see Jesus constantly praying in the Gospels, you see the Church doing that in Acts. Here are some of the occasions the people found to get together for prayer in Acts. When they were threatened with beatings and death:

Acts 4:24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God.

At the selection of deacons (Acts 6:6) At the appointment of missionaries (Acts 13:3) At the ordination of pastors (Acts 14:23) When they shared the Gospel (Acts 8:15) Stephen thought being stoned to death was as good an occasion as any (Acts 7:59). At Tabitha's funeral Peter prayed for a resurrection and got one. (Acts 9:40)

Acts 12:5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

Acts 16:25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God

And when all was said and done, and it was time for Paul to leave Ephesus, what better way to say goodbye?

Acts 20:36 When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. (21:5)

Pray at every opportunity. And remember what we learned about opportunities back in Eph. 5:16? The thing about an opportunity is that if you aren't watching for it, you'll probably miss it. Most opportunities are long gone before most people even see them, because they weren't watching for them. I'm a person who generally makes use of most of my time. But I was amazed this week at how many opportunities for prayer I have not even been noticing. Studying for this sermon raised my awareness and I couldn't believe how many chances for prayer I was missing. Be on the lookout for chances to pray.

Make sure there is a great depth and breadth and variety in the kinds of prayer you use. Pray at all times, at all opportunities. And then Paul adds this: Pray in the Spirit.

3. In the Spirit

In order for a prayer to be any good it has to be in the Spirit.

Jude 20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

This is not a reference to praying in tongues. That is not mentioned in the context, and we know that not all people have the gift of tongues. Not only that, but even those people who believe in praying in tongues will admit that praying in tongues is just one kind of prayer. They will admit that not ALL prayer is to be in tongues or some ecstatic utterance. But this verse is clear that ALL our prayers are to be in the Spirit. There is no reason to import anything mystical or ecstatic into this context.

The sword of the Spirit isn't anything mystical or particularly miraculous. It's just the Word of God – the Bible. The Holy Spirit has been referred to many times in Ephesians and none of them had any implication of anything to do with the miraculous gifts. And so there really is no reason to assume that here. Paul used the phrase "in the Spirit" 4 other times in Ephesians, and all 4 of those times it meant the same thing. The phrase means "by means of the Holy Spirit." So praying in the Spirit simply refers to prayer that is enabled by the Spirit. Throughout this book Paul has been reminding us that the Holy Spirit is the agent through whom all interaction between us and God takes place. It is through the Spirit that we have access to God, and it is through His Spirit that God communes with us. Whether we are going His direction or He is coming in our direction, it is all through the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:18 we both have access to the Father in one Spirit. (ἐν ἑνὶ πνεύματι)

Ephesians 2:22 you have] become a dwelling in which God lives in his Spirit. (ἐν πνεύματι)

The relational interaction between us and God take place by the Spirit. If you want to know God better, that can only come through the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

We need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to know Him more. And He will only dwell in me through the strengthening that comes by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 3:16,17 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

He is the one who enables our relationship with God. And so when you get to Eph.6:17,18 what you see there is two way communication between us and God. It's no surprise that both are by the Holy Spirit. In v.17 God speaks to us through the sword of the Spirit. And in v.18 we speak back to God by praying in the Spirit. So praying in the Spirit is prayer that is enabled by the Holy Spirit. So then the question is: how do you pray in such a way as to have that prayer be enabled by the Holy Spirit? What role do I play in seeing to it that my prayers are enabled and empowered by Him? What exactly do I have to do to obey this command? I think there are two answers to that question in Ephesians. Two ways to see to it that your prayers are Spirit-Empowered

1) Faith

What did we learn about approaching God in ch.3? For the first one, look back at ch.3.

Eph 3:12 In [Christ] and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

How is it that we can manage to approach God? It's enabled by the Lord, but our part is faith. Remember, in Ephesians faith is always the means by which we gain access to God's grace. So our interaction with God comes through the Holy Spirit and that enablement from the Spirit comes through faith.

Eph 3:16-17 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

First he says through the Holy Spirit, then it’s through faith. The enablement comes through the Holy Spirit, and we gain access to what the Holy Spirit offers through faith. That’s the pattern in the book, and I don’t see any reason to assume it’s broken here. So the way to pray in the Spirit is to pray in faith. The more you trust God in prayer, the more spiritual your prayers will be. Ro.8 talks about the Holy Spirit interceding for us when we don’t know what to pray. If you want that to happen, pray in faith. That doesn’t mean believing that God will answer in a certain way. He hasn’t told you how he’ll answer a specific prayer, so there is nothing to believe about that. Faith is not believing He will answer your prayer a certain way... Faith is believing all the promises God has made about prayer. There is a huge difference between saying your prayers and really believing that prayer makes a difference.

When you are too tired or too weak or too confused or too depressed or too angry or too dull to pray... The heart of faith will believe Jesus’ words:

Matt 11:28 Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

John 7:37-38 If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.

The heart of faith believes promises like that more than it believes the way things seem, or the way it feels. When you feel like your prayers are worthless, the heart of faith will pray all the harder, because it believes what Scripture says about prayer. God promises to: listen to our prayers, answer them, bless us in response to them, bless others in response to them, and achieve His greatest works through them.

And if you pray because you believe those things, that’s faith. And if you pray in faith, you’re praying by the Spirit which means your prayers are enabled and energized and even translated by the Spirit, so by the time they get to heaven they are perfect. That’s why they are pictured as a pleasing aroma and sweet incense to God in Rev. So that’s one key to praying in the Spirit – pray in faith. The other one is in the near context. All we have to do is back up one verse.

2) According to Scripture

In 6:17 he just got done saying that the power of the Holy Spirit comes through the Word of God. Which is nothing new. He made that point earlier in the book as well. The primary way the Holy Spirit works is through the Word of God. And so if he tells us that, and then in the very next verse tells us to pray by the Spirit, it seems like the obvious conclusion is that our prayers must be in accordance with the Word of God. We learn from Scripture how to pray.

One of the best things you can do is pray through the Scriptures. And if you want help doing that, just pick up one of those “Face to Face” books. If you are not used to praying the Scriptures, those books will revolutionize your prayer life. But having said that, I should also say that praying in accordance with the Word of God is a lot more than just praying the Scriptures. It also means to pray in accordance with the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures. When I find out from God’s Word that His own glory is uppermost in His mind and that nothing is more important than His name being hallowed and so I begin to desire that, which results in me praying for that, I am praying in the Spirit. When I pray for the lost, or pray for the spiritual growth of believers, or pray for my enemies or express any kind of desire that has arisen in my heart from what the Holy Spirit has revealed in Scripture about God’s will that’s when I’m praying in the Spirit. So you pray in such a way as to be energized by the Spirit when:

1. you pray in faith
2. you pray in accordance with Scripture

If we really believe the promises of God’s Word, why would we neglect prayer? If it’s true the prayer is the slender nerve that moves the mighty muscle of omnipotence... If it’s really true that God answers prayer... And if Jesus really meant what He said when He said, “Without Me you can do nothing” Why would we neglect prayer? Why would we persist in pouring so much of our time and energy and resources into what Jesus called “nothing”? Why go to work for 8 or 10 or 15 hours a day if it’s going to amount to nothing? If you’re not

praying, you're cutting the heart and the power and the eternal significance out of everything you're doing. Why put so much work and effort and energy into whatever it is you're putting your energy into if it's not going to be blessed by God? And it's not as if you're not praying. Satan would like to lead you down the path of a completely wasted, worthless life. He wants to destroy you. And your only defense is armor that you can't put on. So pray, with all-out prayer – every kind of prayer on all occasions. And pray in the Spirit, with faith and trust in Him, praying according to His Word.

Benediction:

2 Thes.1:11-12 With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

Review questions

1. How does v.18 relate to v.17?

Verse 18 describes how we are to put on the armor (with all-out prayer).

2. What is praying in the Spirit?

Prayer that is enabled by the Spirit. We achieve that through faith and prayer that in accordance with the Word.

Discussion questions:

1. What kinds of prayer are lacking in your life?
2. What opportunities for prayer are being missed in your life?
3. What specific steps could you take to do better at praying in the Spirit?