

STAY DEPENDENT: PRAY!

Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 1:9-14

I met Pastor Leroy at a senior care facility in our community. I had come to visit another person but struck up a conversation with this man who was sitting in a chair in the community room. I had the privilege of talking with him several times that year. Leroy told me that during his ministry he had searched through the Bible and recorded every reference to prayer. He even knew the number of references in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. (I wish I had written that number down somewhere!)

Pastor Leroy was passionate about prayer. When I would leave, he would always ask if he could pray for me—and then he would storm heaven with a prayer for God’s blessing on me and my ministry. I always left his room feeling filled with the glory of God.

Group Discussion. When do you find it easiest to pray, and when is it hardest? Why do you think that is?

Personal Reflection. Is there someone in your life who prays regularly for you? How can you express your gratitude to them?

Soldiers in the spiritual battle are dressed in the full armor of God. Every piece expresses action and readiness. The belt is firmly tightened, the breastplate is fitted exactly right, and the shoes are laced and ready to move the soldier forward. The warrior has pulled his helmet down and taken up his shield; the sword of the Spirit is in his hand. The enemy approaches and the Lord’s troops are ready to stand in the attack. But then the Christian soldiers do something totally unexpected: fall to their knees in prayer! The battle will still be fought, but it will be done under the covering of prayer.

John Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Progress* calls the seventh piece of spiritual armor “All-Prayer.” Prayer is the first thing, the second thing, and the third thing—the supreme weapon available to us in the spiritual battle. *Read Ephesians 6:18-20.*

1. What phrases or words in verse 18 emphasize the priority of prayer?

Do any of these words surprise you? Why?

2. What does it mean to “pray in the Spirit”?

3. What are some of the various “prayers and requests” we might make to God?

4. Which kinds of prayer do you usually pray, and which kinds do you tend to neglect?

5. Paul also emphasizes the importance of perseverance in prayer: “always keep on praying.” Do you find yourself praying once or twice for a need and then giving up? What’s your perspective on this?

6. Some Christians have the idea that if we badger God often enough and hard enough, he will finally give in to our request! How would you explain why God delights in perseverance in prayer?

7. In verses 19-20 Paul asks those who read his letter to pray for him. What does Paul list as his prayer needs?

8. What spiritual leader or pastor could you begin to pray for using Paul's requests as a guideline?


Read *Colossians 1:9-14*.

9. Make a list of what Paul asks of God for these followers of Jesus.

10. How do the things that burden Paul's heart compare to the things you usually ask God to do in the lives of other Christians?

11. **Armor Assessment.** For Paul, prayer is critically important to using the armor of God. How would you evaluate your own prayer life? How has it changed over time?

12. If prayer is the first or primary thing in spiritual warfare, what specific steps can you take this week to strengthen this aspect of your spiritual armor?



Ask God to teach you to pray. Pray that in every battle, through every conversation, at every opportunity your heart turns to him.

NOW OR LATER

Write a prayer for others based on Paul's requests in Ephesians 6:19-20. Pray it regularly for a leader, pastor, or friend.

A FURTHER SUGGESTION

Once you have finished this study guide on the armor of God, carve out part of a day or go on an overnight retreat with your study group or in smaller groups of two or three. As part of the time set aside, ask the Holy Spirit to show you what your own personal armor from him looks like—not just pieces of armor in general but the armor he has prepared for you. As you wait on him in prayer, begin to describe what the Spirit brings to your mind. This is where a spiritual partner can help by writing down what you describe. Your personal armor may contain elements that are specific to the battles you are usually in. Try not to miss any aspect, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem. Use what the Spirit reveals along with Paul's description in Ephesians 6 in the days ahead as you focus on putting on and taking up the armor of God. God has designed unique armor for you! Use what he has provided by his grace to fight the spiritual battles that lie ahead.