

Studying the Letter to the Ephesians

Ephesians is about learning to let who we are in Christ, shape how we perform in life.

Ephesians Study 13



Warm Up

1. Greeting / Welcome
2. Prayer Requests
3. Testimony Sharing



Overview of Today's Study

Text: Turn to Eph. 6:18-24

Lesson Title: *Protecting One Another Through Prayer*

Lesson Theme: Spiritual warfare is a reality. After Paul's in depth instruction on battle preparation, he points believers to a specific activity to diligently perform: *praying for each other.*

🔑 Today's Key Question 🔑

What is the letter to the Ephesians all about?

Our Purpose is to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.



Connecting the Studies

In chapters 4, 5 and the beginning of 6, we studied the renovation of the conduct of the growing Christian. We have looked at how believers can become freed from their individual flesh habits and model a godly lifestyle. We've studied how Christians are to relate to one another and how families can stay close within family life. We studied how godly employee / employer relationships can be maintained. Last week we saw why it is so important to let our behavior be transformed by who we are in Christ: we are at war. In a nutshell, we *really* need each other.

This need for each other leads to our final instruction from Paul to the Ephesians and to us. Today, we will discuss how to watch out for each other and guard each others backs in the battle.



Bible Passage Study

Read Eph. 6:18-24



Study Topic 1 – Praying for Each Other

The Apostle Paul repeatedly instructed believers to be watchful in praying for each other. Paul led and taught by example. Many of his letters to the early churches commanded believers to pray for each other and for him and those working in ministry with him. ***Listen to these verses:***

Phil 1:3-4 I thank my God upon every **remembrance of you**, always in every prayer of mine for you all making **request with joy**,

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Col 1:3 We **give thanks** to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying **always** for you,

1 Thess 1:2 We **give thanks** to God always **for you all**, making **mention of you** in our prayers;

2 Thess 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would **count you worthy of this calling**, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:

1 Tim 2:8 I will therefore that men pray every where, **lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.**

And then our verse in Ephesians, Eph 6:18

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

A. What does this verse tell us? Eph. 6:18

Based on the reality of the warfare mentioned in the first part of Ephesians chapter 6, the command to pray for each other is an urgent one. Soldiers of Christ must look to protect one another.

B. What does this verse mean? Eph. 6:18

1. praying always – continual communication with God

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Group Question

 1

What does “continual communication” require? Continual communication with God requires first that we are in good **fellowship** with God and second that we maintain **awareness** of His constant availability to answer our requests made for others.

If we forget about His constant presence then we are not tapping the infinite resource that He is. We wind up handling life on our own, by our own strength and relying on our own understanding for solving life’s problems.

2. with all supplication – means a humble seeking, asking, pleading, appeal to God for specific items.

 2

3. in the Spirit – The phrase “*in the Spirit*” from the original Greek is usually taken to mean *in communion with the Spirit*. Making requests “in the Spirit” means the request is made in **close agreement** with the Lord’s will for the person and not shaped so much by **personal** preference.

 3

4. and watching thereunto with all perseverance – “Watching” is a military word in the original language. Watching means maintaining a **guarded, alert** level of prayer with the intensity we have in **protecting** our own homes and our families.

5. and supplication for all saints – Everyone is needed in battle so everyone is to be lifted up in prayer. Soldiers of Christ who are not performing as they should are not as effective in spiritual warfare as they need to be. Our withholding prayer for them because we’re irritated with their lack of performance is not going to help them improve as a soldier nor will it help the overall cause of our group in Christ.

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Group Question

What are some reasons we don't pray more for each other?

- **Unaware of the gravity of our situation here on earth (enemy territory) and don't believe it is really necessary *or* don't believe it will make any difference**
Solution? Do a little reading on spiritual warfare and its impact on unaware believers also do a topical study on prayer. Not only did Jesus instruct us to pray, He practiced it.
- **Don't know how to or have a system for doing so**
Solution? Written prayer lists are a great tool for helping us become consistent and effective in our support for others in prayer.
- **Don't have time to** *Solution?* If you don't have enough time to pray for others, then ask God to help you have a burden to pray for others. As He raises your desire to pray for others, you will do what's necessary with your schedule to carve out the time.
- **Don't want to** *Solution?* Whether it is due to broken fellowship with another believer or personal distaste for another believer or just couldn't be bothered to spend the time all of those are related to selfishness. Recommendation: get right with God and get praying!
- **Forget to** *Solution?* Sometimes we have to use the assistance of others when establishing a new habit pattern. Ask a growing fellow Christian to help hold you accountable in this area. Have them check with you once or twice a week to see how it's going.

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C. How should this verse impact my life? Eph. 6:18

Because we need each other, we have the responsibility to pray for each other regardless of personal preference.

Self Evaluation Questions

- ✓ How often do I pray for others?
- ✓ Who am I supporting in prayer? Family, friends, fellow Christians, fellow church members, church leadership, missionaries?
- ✓ How can I improve my prayer for others?



Study Topic 2 – Requesting Prayer

Paul's example in making requests for prayer is based on the spread of the gospel. Eph. 6:19-20

A. What do these verses tell us?

Eph 6:19-20 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

And listen to Paul again in,

2 Thess 3:1 Finally, brethren, **pray for us**, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:

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Paul is not shy in asking others to pray for him. His request for prayer however is based on God empowering him to better spread the good news of eternal life in Christ.

B. What do these verses mean? Eph. 6:19-20

The Bible teaches that God is concerned with the details of our lives including both physical and spiritual needs. But the examples that have been preserved for us in the Bible of Jesus' prayers and those of the Apostles focus heavily on spiritual matters and increasing heaven's citizenship.



Paul's personal prayer request in Ephesians 6 is that he would be able to better communicate and relay the not so apparent truths of the gospel. Paul's requests for prayer focused less on **physical** needs or comforts and more on his effectiveness for **eternal** results.

C. How should these verses impact my life? Eph. 6:19-20

Evaluation Questions

- ✓ When I am requesting prayer from others do the requests focus more on temporal issues or more on eternal things?
- ✓ How often do I ask for prayer support to improve my ability to talk to others about Christ?



Study Topic 3 – What Have We Learned?

The first 3 chapters of Paul's letter to the Ephesians teach Christians about who they become the moment they trust in Christ for their salvation. Paul compares what our spirits were before Christ to what we are once we accept Christ and the tremendous potential that exists because of the Holy Spirit's sealing to our spirits.

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This “fusion” of spirit and Spirit causes a unique ability for Christians to actually alter ungodly, worldly habits and behaviors they have practiced. The physical brain in the Christian’s body can actually be altered by the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit residing in them. Non-material altering material – no wonder Paul praises the One who is able to do exceedingly above and beyond what we can imagine.

The last 3 chapters of Ephesians encourages Christians to tap the internal power of the union of their spirits with the Holy Spirit. Unlike the lost soul, Christians have the ability to match their physical behavior to the holiness of their born again spirits. Paul addresses Christians’ behavior toward each other, toward spouses, parents, children, employers, employees and toward the enemy, Satan.

If Christians aren’t seeing lasting transformation taking place in their lives, simply put, their thought processes aren’t being stimulated enough with the truth – God’s Word and they are not inviting God into their lives to have free reign to develop them as He sees fit.

Christians have all we need to succeed as He defines success. We have His Spirit empowering us from within, we have His Word inspiring holiness of thought, word and deed, and we have each other for support.

🔑 Today’s Key Question 🔑

So what is the letter to the Ephesians all about?



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