

## **Bow Before The Battle**

### **Ephesians 6:18**

### **Pastor John Miller**

I want you to look at Ephesians 6:18. Paul says, "Praying always," that's the theme of that verse, and then he tells us how to pray always, "with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Someone said that satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees. I believe that's true. When he sees a believer turned to God in prayer, he knows that he is doomed because that's where the power of God lies when we are in the battle facing satan. The best way to face the enemy is to face him on our knees in prayer. Can you imagine the soldier? He puts on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness. He picks up the shield of faith, and he grabs the sword of the Spirit. He puts on his sandals of peace and his helmet of salvation and then the enemy approaches him. What does he do? He drops to his knees...in prayer!

There are three things that we've learned through this series Equipped that we need to stand against the enemy. The first is we need to know who the enemy is. The Bible is very clear there. I want you to look at verses 11-12 as you back up with me for just a moment. Paul says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand," here's the enemy, "against the wiles of the devil." The word "devil" means slanderer. He is also known as satan, who is the adversary. Then notice verse 12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Paul first introduces us not only to the battle but to the enemy that we are battling. We need to know our enemy. He is called the devil. He's wily and powerful. He is the enemy of God and he is the enemy of the believer, and we're not ignorant of his devices.

The second thing we need to be victorious in the battle is the armor that God has provided. So, we know the enemy and then we put on the armor. Again, look at verse 11. He says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand," and jump down to verse 13, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." So, we know the enemy, and we wear the armor that God has provided. Thirdly, we rely upon God's power. Those are the three things. We rely upon God's power. I want you to back up to Ephesians 6:10. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power," the dynamis, the dynamic power, "of his might." It's not our might, it's His might; and we're relying upon His strength to stand against the enemy.

Remember when David went out to meet Goliath? He went out to meet him with just a sling and with stones. Goliath was mocking and laughing at David saying, "I'm going to feed your flesh to the birds! I'm going to destroy you!" David basically said, "Look, you come to me with swords and spears, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts," the Lord of all the armies of the angels. David's confidence and trust wasn't really in his sling or his stone. It certainly wasn't in his armor because he didn't have any. His confidence and trust was in the

Lord. When you are trusting in the Lord, you have the Lord's strength. When you're trusting in the Lord, He fights your battles. When you're trusting in the Lord, He is your shield and your deliverer and your protector. Do you know if you want to fight your own battles the Lord will let you do that, but you're a fool to try to do that. It's much better to say, "Lord, I need Your strength. I need Your power. I'm not sufficient or adequate or able to stand against the devil, so, Lord, give me Your power. Give me Your strength."

How do we rely upon God's Power? I believe the answer is our text tonight, verse 18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." The way that we put the armor on is through prayer. The way that we stand in the power of His might is through prayer. When you put the belt of truth on, you pray, "God, let me live the life of integrity and not duplicity or hypocrisy." Also, when you are putting on the breastplate of righteousness, you're praying, "God, help me to live a righteous life." When you put on the feet of the preparation of the gospel of peace you're saying, "Lord, fill me with Your Spirit and empower and help me to be swift and beautiful for You. May my feet be ready to always proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ." When you take up the shield of faith, you do that by faith and you're trusting in God, praying in dependence upon God. When you also take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, you do that through the power of prayer. The Spirit of God and the Word of God work together, but you must pray and ask God to transform your life by the power of His Spirit through His Word. If you just read the Bible and you don't pray and rely upon the Holy Spirit, it's going to be ineffective. You need to pray and ask God to change and transform you.

When you sit down to do Bible studies, you should pray before you study the Bible. When you're studying the Bible, you should be praying and asking the Holy Spirit to guide and direct you. When you close your Bible, you should get on your knees and pray that God will help you to put it into practice in your daily lives. We're "Praying always with all prayer and supplication," but what kind of prayer exactly do we need? It's one thing to say, "You need to pray," it's another thing to specify what kind of praying we need to pray. There are five aspects of prayer that we need in victory over the power of satan. I want to draw them from verse 18. (If you're taking notes you can write them down.)

There are five characteristics of the kind of praying we need if we're going to be victorious in our battle with satan. The first kind of praying we need is continual prayer. There are different ways to describe it, but this is what Paul is conveying in this statement. I want you to notice it in verse 18. "Praying always," it means that you should continually, ongoingly, habitually be praying. Some translations have, "...on all occasions." It's conveying not only that we continually pray but that we pray in every occasion of life. Do you know as a Christian, no matter what is going on in your life, you ought to be able to pray and talk to God. When do you usually pray? You say, "Well, I pray at breakfast. Lord, thank you for these Cheerios." I've been on kind of a Cheerios tear lately. I've just...I don't know what it is. You can't outgrow Cheerios, right? They're just awesome! I've been loading fruit on em, a little honey and milk, you know, and it's like, "Oh, thank you, Jesus, for Cheerios!" So, I'm a man of prayer! I pray every morning, "Thank you for my cereal, Lord." Then, a few hours later it's lunchtime and I'm

praying over my lunch—I'm a mighty man of prayer! "Lord, thank you for this food." Then it's dinner time and I pray again, "Lord, thank you for my dinner." You say, "Yeah! That's when I pray too! I pray for my food and that's about it." That's not good enough. We need to pray all the time without ceasing. Isn't that what the Bible tells us to do?

The Bible tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to, "Pray without ceasing." That's not talking about the habit of prayer. That's not talking about having to fold your hands, close your eyes, get on your knees, and pray. You say, "Well, if I did that all the time I wouldn't be able to eat my Cheerios. I wouldn't be able to drive. I wouldn't be able to work. I'd just have to pray 24/7." That's not what he's talking about. When he says, "Pray without ceasing," he's talking about a constant attitude of prayer. Do you know you can be talking to God in your thoughts? You can be talking to God from your heart. Prayer doesn't have to be articulated in words. You can be thinking about things that you need, and you can be telling God you love Him, and you can be talking to God about your hurts and your fears and your needs in your life. You're always lifting your heart continually up to God.

In Luke 18, there's a whole chapter in the gospel of Luke about prayer, which is no surprise because Luke's gospel is the gospel of prayer. Jesus says in Luke 18:1, "...men ought always to pray," he didn't stop there. He says, "and not to faint." I think what happens is that we don't pray and so we faint. If we prayed, we wouldn't faint. We need to pray and not faint, or not lose heart or give up. We have to always pray and not to faint in good times and bad times. Isn't it funny that people think prayer is for when things are really bad? I heard about an ocean liner that was sinking. A woman went to the captain and asked, "Captain, how bad is it?" He answered, "It's really, really bad. I think it's actually time to pray." The woman asked, "Is it that bad?" "Yes, it's that bad." It's funny. Prayer works so well in a time of need, we ought to try it when we don't have needs. Prayer works so well when we're in desperation, think about how wonderful it'd be when everything is fine.

Have you ever thought about just spending time talking to God even though you don't have any needs and there are no pressing problems? I think some of us have constant problems because that's the only time we pray. "Oh, God, I need You!" It's like, "Whoa! Good to hear from you." The Lord lets these things come into our lives because it's the only time that we really pray and seek Him and really turn to Him. That's something that I've been so painfully aware of in my own life. Oh would to God that I would learn to have a constant communion with God and not only run to God in an hour of need or tragedy or some horrible situation where I have to cry out to God but that I would just be in fellowship with God constantly and continually.

In James 5:13 it says, "Is any among you afflicted?" Do you know what it says? "Let him pray." Then it says, "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." So, whether you're afflicted you pray, whether you're happy you sing psalms and you praise the Lord. Prayer should be continual not sporadic. It should be a habit not an isolated act. We should live and breathe in an attitude of communion and fellowship with God. Amen? When we do that, we're walking in fellowship with Him, then we're going to have strength to be able to stand against the wiles of the enemy.

The second aspect of this prayer I call varied prayer or different kinds of praying. In verse 18 it says, "...with all prayer," or some have, "all kinds of prayer." He says, "Praying always," which is the habit of prayer, "with all prayer," that's the general idea of different forms of praying. Prayer is not just asking God for things. We get this idea that prayer is just, "Okay, God, I need some money. Oh God, I need a job. Oh God, heal my marriage. Oh God, I pray that you would touch and heal my body. You know, I just have these needs." When the Lord gave us His form prayer (it's called The Lord's Prayer but not really the Lord's prayer, it's the disciples' prayer), before He got to, "...give us this day our daily bread," it's "Our Father," it's a relationship, "which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." Prayer should start with a relationship with God. God is your Father, you are His child, and you're worshipping and praising God, just communing with God. It isn't for some time until He gets down to, "Give us this day our daily bread," and by the way, you notice in the Lord's prayer there are no personal pronouns. It's not, "Give me my," it's "...us, we, are." There are no personal pronouns in the Lord's prayer. We need to remember there are others out there that we need to pray and intercede for. It's all kinds of varieties of prayer not just asking God. I heard of a girl that was praying and said, "Lord, I'm not going to pray for myself anymore." She said as she was praying she came to the end of her prayer and said, "But would you give my mother a handsome son-in-law?" She said, "I'm not going to pray for myself but, Lord, just give my mom a real handsome son-in-law." That's usually our focus, "Lord, bless me for that's as far as I can see." It's always praying for our needs.

Let me give you a little acrostic that you can use to remember varied kinds of prayer using the word "acts." Just write it down in a column. The A stands for adoration. When we pray it should be worship and praise to God. Try it sometimes. When you're going to pray just say, "Look, I'm not going to ask anything. I'm just going to worship God. I'm just going to tell Him, thank you. I'm going to worship His attributes. I'm going to extol His grace, mercy, and His holiness. I'm going to tell Him how wonderful He is." You're praising God for who He is and for what He has done—you're praising and worshipping and giving thanks.

The C in the acrostic "acts" stands for confession. In 1 John 1:9 it says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Don't forget when you pray that you should ask God to forgive your sins. "Lord, forgive me for these thoughts that I've had that are sinful. Lord, forgive me for this attitude that I've been having lately, God, it's sinful. God, forgive me for the way I spoke to that person the other day. Lord, forgive me for doing that thing. God, I'm sorry. You were right, I have sinned." The Bible says that God is "... faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That's one thing Satan doesn't want you to do. He doesn't want you to worship and he doesn't want you to confess your sins.

The T in the acrostic "acts" stands for thanksgiving. Just say, "Lord, I just want to thank You. I just want to thank You." There is power in saying, "Lord, thank You for saving me. Thank You for what You've done," and begin to specifically name things that God has done for you and begin to give Him thanks. Too many times we focus only on what God has not done. We look at other people that have blessings we want and we get down in the mouth and get bitter and angry at God because God hasn't done these things for me instead of just counting your

blessings and thanking God for all the blessings that He gave you. Remember when Jesus healed a group of 10 lepers? He healed all of these lepers and only one out of the ten came back and said, "Thank you." Jesus said, "Weren't there 10? Where are the other nine?" I think as Christians sometimes we're like those ungrateful lepers that God has forgiven and cleansed and we don't stop to thank Him.

The last is the S in "acts." It stands for supplication. That's mentioned there in verse 18, actually twice in that verse the word "supplication" appears. What is supplication? Generally, supplication conveys the idea of praying for your own needs with strong, earnest, fervent prayers where you come to the end of yourself and you're crying out for God. "God, I need You! Lord, help me!" You're crying from the bottom of your heart. That's a wonderful place to be. That's your place of power. When you come to the end of yourself and realize that your resources are inadequate and you cry out to God, "Lord, I need Your strength. I need Your help. I need Your wisdom." There are some of you here tonight that need to cry out to God. "Lord, I need Your help to be the wife You want me to be, to be the husband You want me to be, to be the worker You want me to be, to be the Christian You want me to be." I'll never forget as a young Christian stumbling and falling back into my old ways and coming home and getting on my knees and just crying out to God saying, "God, I can't do this. It's just too hard. I can't live the Christian life unless You do it through me. I can't do it." It was a real turning point. I came to the end of myself and cried out to God, and then I began to sense God's strength in giving me victory and power over the old sinful habits of the old life.

There is nothing wrong with praying for yourself too, by the way. As I said in the Lord's prayer, He eventually said, "Give us this day our daily bread," and God wants to provide your bread. God wants to meet your financial needs, your emotional needs, your physical needs. God will take care of you and provide for you; but when you are praying, you need to remember that God will answer your prayers as they are aligned with His will. You find out His will in His Word, you pray according to His will in His Word, and then God will answer. If it's not God's will, God will not answer it. Now, God may say yes, no, wait, or I've got something better. Those are the cool prayers—when you pray, pray, pray and God says, "No," and you get all disappointed, then God says, "But, I've got something better."

One of my favorites is 2 Corinthians 12 where Paul had a thorn in his flesh. He described it as a messenger of satan to buffet him. He said, "I prayed three times!" The great apostle Paul asked God to take away this thorn in his flesh three times, and guess what God said to Paul, "No. No. No." You say, "Wow, what hope is there for me? If God said no to Paul then what is He going to say to me?" He said, "No," but He said, "My grace will be sufficient for you. My strength will be made perfect in your weakness." So God was actually saying, "I've got something better for you—My grace, My all-sufficient grace." You might be praying that God is going to take away something that you feel is a weakness or a hindrance and God doesn't answer your prayer the way you want, but God says, "If you rely upon My grace, My strength will be made perfect in your weakness." How did Paul respond? He said, "Most gladly then I'll glory in my weaknesses," because he said, "it's then that the power of God rests upon me, for when I am weak, then am I strong." You see, it's the antithesis of the worldly concept of we

have to be strong, we have to really believe in ourselves. No, we have to come to the end of ourselves and cry out to God and find that God's grace is sufficient and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. It's not your strengths that God uses, it's your weaknesses; but you have to bring them to God and exchange your weakness for His strength and for His grace. God will heal, God will restore, and God will forgive. In Philippians 4:19 Paul said, "But my God shall supply all of your need," not your greeds, but your needs, "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Let me give you the third characteristic of prayer that's victorious over the devil; that is, Spirit-directed prayer. I want you to notice a little phrase in verse 18. It's the little phrase, "in the Spirit." "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." In the book of Jude, verse 20, Jude says, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." What does it mean to pray "in the Holy Spirit?" This is a whole topic in and of itself, but let me say a few things about the phrase that is often seen in the New Testament, "praying in the Spirit," by first of all telling you what it does not mean. I don't believe that it's praying in tongues. I believe that tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit. I believe it's available today. I believe it's a valid gift and a wonderful gift, but I don't believe that it's a gift that every Christian is given by God. I base that on 1 Corinthians 12:30 where Paul asks a rhetorical question of the Corinthians. He said, "...do all speak with tongues?" Again, it expected a "no" answer. It's clear that God doesn't give everyone the gift of tongues.

Let me say something about tongues as well (and we're going to get a lot of this in our study of the book of Acts). Just because you speak in tongues doesn't mean you're a super saint. It doesn't mean that you're the president of the Deeper Life Club. It doesn't mean that you're tight with God and you've got something that other Christians don't, okay? Do you know it's possible to speak in tongues and to live in the flesh? The Corinthians were an example of that. They were speaking in tongues and he says, "You're a bunch of babies. You're all carnal. I couldn't even write unto you as unto spiritual. I wrote unto you as babies." I believe that the gifts of the Spirit are not synonymous with spirituality. I believe that you can have gifts and be carnal. I know that freaks some people out to think about, but I'm convinced that you can have gifts of the Spirit and be carnal. What you can have, they're mutually exclusive, is the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, kindness, self-control. Those things are evidence of the Spirit-filled life. That's Christ-like character, so don't get all hyped up because, "I speak in tongues. I'm wonderful." I'm not trying to put down that gift, I'm just trying to say that it doesn't make you a super saint—what does is when the Holy Spirit is filling you and you're walking in obedience to God's Word. Praying in tongues is not the same as praying in the Holy Spirit otherwise every Christian would have to have tongues to pray in the Spirit. The Bible actually commands us to pray in the Spirit, but not all believers have that gift of the Spirit.

Secondly, it's not loud or emotional praying. I grew up in a church environment where there was a lot of yelling, a lot of screaming, a lot of jumping, and a lot of emotion. It seemed to be that the louder you were the more spiritual you were. It's like, "You think God is deaf or something?" "Oh Goooooodah!" God is like, "Wait a minute, let me turn up My divine hearing aide. I can't hear you." I actually had a group of real loud people come in the church one time and they

were disruptive. I told them, "Hey, you're welcome here. We're glad to have you but you can't distract the service by being so loud." They go, "Well, we believe that we're supposed to be lively saints, and we believe that the louder you sing and the louder you yell, it's more pleasing to God." Nothing can be further from the truth. Do you know that God actually sees your heart? He hears your heart? He doesn't need volume. Sometimes it's just an ostentatious show.

Thirdly, I would say it's not long prayers. It's not the length of your prayer that has anything to do with are you praying in the Spirit? Do you know that Jesus actually warned us in Matthew 5 about the pagans when they prayed? They think that they were heard because of their much speaking. They thought that the more that they prayed the more God would hear them. That's not the case. You say, "Well, what does it mean to pray in the Spirit?" Very simple. I think so simple that we stumble over it. It means that we are praying with the Spirit's help. It means that the Spirit creates and directs and inspires and empowers our prayers. It means very, very simply that you ask the Holy Spirit to fill you and to guide you and to give you wisdom when you pray. He creates and He directs the prayer in your heart and He empowers you. When you pray, you're praying to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. All true prayer is trinitarian. It's directed toward God the Father. You say, "Does it have to be toward God the Father?" No. You can cry out to Jesus. You can cry out to the Holy Spirit, but generally you're talking to your Father, and you're coming through the merits of the Son, and you're doing it in the energy and power of the Holy Spirit. That's praying in the Spirit. Write down Romans 8:26-27. Paul says, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Sometimes you just groan in the Spirit. "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

When you're praying in the Spirit, you're praying by the Spirit's power and direction, you're praying in harmony with God's will, and the Spirit is praying according to the will of God. Have you ever been in prayer and just felt real burdened and you began to feel this quickening of the Spirit and you just begin to cry out to God, "Lord, do this," or "I need this," or "Lord, You're awesome." You just sense the Spirit of God quickening you when you pray and realize, "This is just supernatural. This is something from God." I believe that is what it means to be praying in the Spirit. John Bunyan, the man who wrote the famous allegory Pilgrims Progress, said, "In prayer, it is better to have heart without words than words without heart." I like that. It's better to have heart without words than to have words without heart, so I cannot pray without the Spirit's help. By the way, if you're grieving the Holy Spirit by sins of attitude or action, I believe that you cannot pray in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let me give you number four. Write it down. How should we pray to be victorious in our battle against the enemy? Persistent prayer. Look at verse 18. He says, "...watching thereunto with all perseverance," so praying watching with your eyes open—praying, persevering, not giving up. Satan wants you to give up and quit. Maybe you're praying right now for an unsaved loved one—maybe your husband or wife or kids or a family member—you're praying for them and

here's what satan says, "Your prayers are a waste of time. They're never going to repent. They're never going to get saved. They're not going to believe in Jesus. They're so hardened they've rejected the Lord. You might as well just give up. You're wasting your time." Let me tell you something. That's satan talking. God is telling you not to give up, to keep praying and persevere. "Well, I've been praying for 10 years." Pray for 11 years. Pray for 21 years. My wife prayed for almost 40 years for her mother to get saved, and she was hard. She got saved just a day before she died and went into eternity. I'm sure there were many times that she was ready to give up and ready to stop and thought, She'll just never get saved. She got saved just a day before she went to be with the Lord. What an amazing thing that was! Don't give up.

The Bible says, "Be not weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Satan is trying to get you to give up. I mentioned Luke 18 earlier in my message tonight, and I want you to look at it when you get the chance, but the whole chapter is about prayer. It opens with a parable that Jesus gave. It's called the Parable of the Unjust Judge. It's what's called the parable in contrast. It means that God is not like the unjust judge. He says there was a woman who had been wronged. She went to the judge and said, "Avenge me of mine adversary." The judge kind of ignored her. "Go away. You bother me. I'm a busy man." She said, "Avenge me. Avenge me." She kept bugging and bugging him and kept pestering him. She was persistent. This judge (who was a bad judge, an unjust judge) said, "This woman wearies me." The Greek actually means, "She's going to give me a black eye." "She's going to punch me in the eye if I don't help her, and so I'm going to give her what she wants. I'm going to avenge her of her adversary." Then Jesus steps in and says, "Hear what the unjust said. If the unjust judge is going to help this woman who pesters him, how much more will your Father in heaven avenge you that cry unto Him day and night?" He says, "He will avenge you and I tell you He will do it speedily." Then Jesus gave a warning. He said, "But when the Lord comes will He find faith on the earth?" So, Jesus is not like an unjust judge. He stands ready to help you in a time of need, but you must call out to Him and not give up.

Write down Matthew 7:7. It's an amazing promise and prayer that Jesus gave. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." You have three things you need to do. You need to ask, seek, and knock. Did you ever notice that those gain in intensity? First, it's kind of an ask. By the way, that's asking of an inferior to a superior. It's asking humbly, not haughtily but humbly asking God. Then it intensifies a little bit, you begin to seek. You're pursuing God. Then, you're pounding on the door. You're knocking on the door. God says He'll open that door. By the way, all three are what is called present imperatives. We've been getting that Sunday morning in our study of Colossians, present imperatives. As a wife submits to her husband, a husband loves the wife, children obey their parents, parents don't provoke the children, and this Sunday morning we're going to talk about Christ in the workplace, how a Christian goes to the job. They are all present imperatives. They are commands in the present tense. You constantly, continually are to be seeking God, asking from God, knocking and the door will be opened. Don't be weary in well doing, God will answer your prayer.

Let me give you number five, last but not least. How should we pray if we're going to be

victorious over the enemy? Intercessory prayer, and I'll explain what that is. Notice it in verse 18. "...and supplication," then he ends the verse by saying, "for all saints," by the way, those are Christians. Saints are Christians. He's not telling us we pray for some people who have been canonized. We pray for our brothers and our sisters in Christ. We pray for others. He says, "Pray ..with all...supplication for all saints." All through the New Testament Paul writes to the believers and said, "I pray for you night and day." I'm praying for you without ceasing. When he talks about Epaphras praying for the believers in Colossae he says, "He labored fervently for you in his prayers." Paul realized there was power in prayer. We should pray for those who are doing gospel work, those who are in the ministry, those that are serving the Lord. Take a peek with me at verses 19-20. Paul says, "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, 20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak."

Do you know we ought to be praying for pastors? I just thought I'd throw that in. I know you do, and I so appreciate so many of you, "Pastor John, we pray for you every day." Thank you so much, but you need to pray for all of the pastors here and all the pastors in this valley, and all the pastors in America, and all the pastors in the world, and all the missionaries, and all the evangelists, and all the church workers. You need to pray for our Sunday school teachers and for our elders and greeters and for all those that are serving the Lord—everyone involved in ministry is a servant of Christ. We need to pray, one for another.

I wanted to take this opportunity and I wanted to ask you very, very, very specifically to make a new revived conscious effort to pray for myself and the pastoral staff here at Revival Christian Fellowship. I believe with all my heart that God uses us and God works through us, and God blesses this church as His people pray for the pastors of this congregation. Did you know that you're going to share in the spoils? When you pray on Sunday and I give an invitation for people to accept Jesus Christ and they come down the aisle and pray to receive Christ (third service this past Sunday we saw a huge crop of people come forward and give their hearts to Jesus Christ). Do you know that your prayers are being answered? Do you know that God is using you to anoint His Word that is going out?

Pray for me especially on the weekends, and pray for me on Saturdays. Satan shows up at my house every Saturday afternoon. DING DONG Oh, there's the devil again. Something is going to go wrong. Something is going to happen. Something is going to distract me. I'm working on my sermon. I'm trying to pray, get my heart ready to preach on Sunday, and it can be a spiritual battle. I've never felt spiritual warfare in my life like I have these last five years since I came to Revival Christian Fellowship. It's like, "Welcome, Pastor John, we're glad you're here." Intense spiritual battles, and I'm convinced that what has protected and kept me and how God uses me is because of you—because you pray. When you come on Wednesday nights, pray that God will bless His Word, that God will make you receptive, that God will help you to hear His voice. When you come on Sundays, pray. Pray for those that are parking cars, the parking lot attendants, greeters at the door, everything you do, praying, interceding for others. We have other people that need prayer in our church that are sick. We have the ministry of the quilts—people praying and interceding for others—and God has answered prayers in such an

awesome way. I wanted to mention that it just so happens that this Friday night at 7 p.m. there is an all-church prayer meeting. Every Monday night there's an intercessory prayer meeting here at 7 p.m. If you want to come and pray with a small group of people that meet just to pray every Monday night at 7 p.m. (and this Friday, once a month), we need to pray. Pray for others, and pray for pastors.

In the Old Testament there is a marvelous illustration of this, and then I'll close. It's in Exodus 17 where Amalech came out to fight with Israel. They just came out of Egypt, and Amalech (representing the flesh) was attacking the nation of Israel. Moses told Joshua to get some men of war and go down and fight against Amalech. Moses said, "I'm going to go up on the mountain. I'm going to have my staff in my hand, and I'm going to raise my hand. As long as my hand is raised, you're going to be victorious in battle." I can really relate to Moses here. Moses is standing on the mountain and he starts getting tired. His hands started getting weak, and they bring a big rock and put it under Moses. He sat down on the rock and then two men (one by the name of Aaron, his brother, and the other, Hur) came up beside Moses and actually held up his arms. They actually held up his arms, and as long as his arms were being held, Joshua and Israel were victorious against Amalech. If his hands dropped, the enemy was victorious against Israel. So, it says, until evening they were holding up Moses' arms and his arms were being held up. He looked down and they were victorious in battle. Do you know what you do when you pray? You're holding up someone's arms. Amen? You're holding up my arms, and my arms need all the holding up they can get! When we hold up one another in prayer, then we're victorious. It's so awesome after services to see Christians grouping up and praying for one another and encouraging one another through prayer. What a powerful, powerful weapon that is!

We have a belt of truth, a breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes of the gospel of peace. We have a shield of faith, a helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, but all of it has to be put on and then activated by prayer. It won't do any good if we do not pray. You can do more once you've prayed; but until you pray, you can't do anything. Amen?