

COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
II. PAUL'S CHALLENGE TO THE EPHESIANS

14.

F. BE EMPOWERED TO WALK THE WALK
EPHESIANS 6:10-20

Paul gave the Ephesians magnificent advice about how to live worthily of their high calling, but he realized that simply giving advice was not sufficient to enable them to practice what he recommended. They needed power from God to be able to lift their lives to that level. Therefore, before closing his letter, Paul encouraged them to receive power from God and told them how to receive that power.

F. *Finally, my brothers, be empowered* (6:10-20)

1. [The source of power] (6:10b-11a)

a. *By the Lord and by the power of His strength* (6:10b)

b. *Put on God's battle equipment* (6:11a).

When Paul challenged the Ephesians to be empowered to live as they should, he first told them where they could receive that power. He mentioned two sources for power.

Verse 10b. The power of the Lord's might.

The first and primary source for power was the Lord Himself. He is all powerful, and He shares His power with those who trust in Him. According to Paul, the Ephesians were not to try to live worthy lives through their own strength. They could never cultivate that kind of power for themselves. They were to draw on the power of God's strength. He trusted that they knew how to contact God through prayer and trust Him in faith, so God could supply to them the power they needed.

Verse 11a. God's battle equipment. The second source for power was the battle equipment God provided for them. In referring to that battle equipment, Paul used a Greek word that described all the equipment a Roman soldier wore into battle. It included his uniform, his armor, and his weapons. We do not have an English word that is an exact equivalent to that Greek word. "Uniform" does not include armor and weapons. "Armor" does not include uniform or weapons. "Weapons" does not include uniform or armor. "Battle equipment"

includes all three and is the best English equivalent to the word Paul used.

KJV tries to convey the meaning of the word Paul used with the translation "whole armour." RSV, ASV, and NKJV modernize the spelling and use "whole armor." NASB, HCSB, NEB, and ESV use "full armor." Douay simply uses "armour," while NIV and NLT modernize the spelling and use simply "armor." NLT uses "every piece of God's armor." None of those translations reveal that Paul was referring to more than just a soldier's armor or protection devices. Apparently none of the translators ever were soldiers and went into battle, so they are ill-equipped to understand the word Paul used. The translation above renders the word as "battle equipment," because that word is the simplest way to convey the whole idea accurately.

In verses 14-18, Paul described the battle equipment in more detail, but first he explained the reason why a believer needs to be fully equipped. All believers need to use the same sources of strength that Paul recommended to the Ephesians. All Christians everywhere can find that the sources of strength Paul recommended are adequate for every time of need and testing today and every day.

2. [The need for being empowered] (6:11b-12)
 - a. ***In order to have power to stand up against the tricks of the devil*** (6:11b,
 - b. ***Because we are not wrestling against blood and flesh, but*** (6:12)
 - (1) ***Against the rulers*** (6:12b),
 - (2) ***Against the authorities*** (6:12c),
 - (3) ***Against the cosmic rulers of the darkness of this age*** (6:12d),
 - (4) ***Against the evil spirit beings in the heavens*** (6:12f).

Verse 11b. To have power to stand up against the tricks of the devil. Paul declared that believers need to draw on God's power because they are fighting against forces that are mightier than they are. He specifically mentioned the devil, the mighty angel who led a rebellion against God among the angels before God created the physical cosmos. The devil still is present in the world today and seeks to use people to advance his continuing rebellion against God. He especially takes aim at God's people. He is not open and honest in his efforts to enlist believers in support of his cause. Instead he uses trickery and deception.

No believer is adequate in his own strength to stand against such a powerful, hidden opponent. However, Paul assured the Ephesians that, if they were empowered with God's strength, they would have all the power they needed to stand when they were tested by the devil. The word translated "to have power" is usually rendered in English versions as "to be able" or "that you may be able." That translation is not strong enough to express Paul's thought. The word he used means "to have power." It expresses much more than capability. It expresses might, strength, and authority. Empowered with God's strength, believers are equipped with a mighty force that is not only adequate to resist the devil's devices but even superior to all of his temptations and deceptions. When believers depend on God's strength, they have power enough to defeat the devil every time.

The word translated "to stand up" means more than simply to remain standing. It means to take a stand and hold it. It means to resist and remain unmovable. No matter how strong the attack, the believer who is drawing on God's strength will not have to yield or retreat. He will stand up to whatever test he has to face and remain victorious.

Verse 12. To fight against evil spirits. Paul enlarged the number of enemies the Ephesians needed to be empowered to resist and overcome. To the devil, he added evil spirits, who are allied with the devil and who are his helpers in advancing his struggle to overcome God and take control of God's world. When Paul described those powerful beings, he definitely was talking about evil spirits, because he mentioned them in connection with the devil and because he specifically said they were not blood and flesh. His meaning was that they are not material beings. They are spirit beings. They are real, personal beings; but they are composed of spirit, not physical elements. The spirit beings to whom Paul referred are in rebellion against God and totally committed to evil. Paul definitely believed in the spirit world and in the existence of evil spirits. He did not describe them as fallen "angels," but other Scriptures reveal that they actually are angels who are in rebellion against God. He also did not describe them as "demons," but that term is used in other Scriptures to refer to them. Paul referred to them by using four other revealing and frightening terms.

The first term Paul used to refer to evil spirit beings was "***the rulers***." He meant they have power in the world to control nations and individuals. He was not talking about human rulers, because he said they did not have blood and flesh (v. 12a). He also was not talking about good rulers, because he said they used trickery to get their way (v. 11b); and he specifically called them "evil" (v. 12f). Paul was warning against evil spirit beings who have been able to take charge over much of the world and become its rulers. Paul was not stretching the truth when he called the evil spirits "the rulers," because evil spirit beings in Paul's day and in our day have succeeded in taking over most of the power centers of the world. They are having their own way and are directing the world and life in the world into the rebellious patterns they desire. They have power

everywhere in the world to promote their dark and evil purposes. They are fearful enemies, but believers who draw on God's power have all the resources they need to resist their deceptions and overcome their powerful attacks. They are powerful rulers over nations, institutions, and many people all over the world, but they do not have power to rule over or defeat the believer who draws on God's power to live a life worthy of the calling God has given him.

Paul also called the evil spirit beings "***the authorities.***" Evil spirits not only have power all over the world. They also have influence and control over people who occupy positions of authority throughout the world. Those positions of power are in government offices, educational institutions, businesses, professions, and even in churches. Throughout history, evil spirit beings have used people in positions of power to oppose, persecute, harass, and kill God's true believers. Many vicious men in authority even today use their power in that way under the influence of evil spirits. However, the actions of believers through the years have demonstrated that God can give His followers all the strength they need to resist and overcome every device evil spirits might use against them, if they will trust completely in Him. Many who have suffered from imprisonment and torture inflicted on them by powerful authorities under the control of evil spirits have shown that they were the true victors, because they suffered without denying their faith in Jesus. Through the years in many parts of the world believers have even had to die under the persecutions of men controlled by evil spirits, but even then they showed themselves victorious, because they died praying for their persecutors and singing praises to God. In spite of the success of evil spirits in taking authority all over the world, they never have been able to defeat the believer who draws on the awesome power of God to face his trials. They never will.

In addition, Paul called the evil spirit beings "***the cosmic rulers of the darkness of this age.***" The word translated "the cosmic rulers" is one Greek word. It is composed of the Greek word for "cosmos" and another Greek word that means "powerful ones." The combined word was used by the Greeks to refer to emperors who ruled large

portions of the world, but the literal meaning of the word is even more inclusive. It means beings who have power throughout the whole cosmos. Paul's expression means that the power of evil spirits extends far beyond the earth. It reaches even into the heavens and damages the whole creation, out to the farthest galaxy and star that astronomers have not yet discovered.

The ruling power of evil spirits is not only universal in that it touches every part of the cosmos. It also is evil in nature. Evil spirits rule ***the darkness*** of the cosmos. The darkness is the evil power of demons to do damage to God's cosmos and to influence people to follow an evil way of life. They rule over the dark forces in the world and seek to advance the realm of darkness as far as they possibly can. However, their dark authority is effective only in "***this age.***" They have authority over long stretches of time, but a new age is going to come in the End from which they will be excluded and in which they will have no authority. Until then, believers who draw on God's power have all the strength they need to resist and overcome evil spirits and their dark deeds. Whether a believer lives in comfort or dies under the heel of oppression, through God's power he is able to triumph in victory.

Finally Paul described the evil spirit beings as "***the evil spirit beings in the heavens.***" The word translated "spirit beings" was sometimes used to refer to spiritual persons, that is, to persons devoted to God's Spirit. Paul did not use the word in that sense in this verse, because he called the spirit being to whom he was referring "evil." He used the term "spirit beings" to describe their nature. He used it to mean they are composed of spirit and do not have physical bodies. "***Evil spirit beings***" is another way of saying "evil spirits." They cannot be seen or touched by humans because they do not have bodies or any form of physical existence. However, they are real and powerful and have amazing abilities to influence the world and people in the world.

Paul described the evil spirit beings as being "***in the heavens.***" The term "the heavens" means all of the created cosmos above and beyond the earth. Evil spirits are active working for their evil designs throughout the heavens. They are present

and working their evil designs throughout space and on the galaxies, stars, and planets stretched throughout space to the farthest limit of the created cosmos. Only in our day when people have begun to travel to other heavenly bodies can we understand the full extent of Paul's declaration that evil spirits are "in the heavens." When people have traveled to the moon, they did not escape the influence of demons. Instead they found on the moon dramatic examples of the damaging and destructive effects of the demons' works. They found a globe covered with rocks and dust, without air or water, and with deadly extreme variations of temperature. They found a world where life is impossible without imported resources. They found a world full of destruction and emptiness, which surely was the result of the vicious work of rebellious evil spirits. When people someday will travel to other planets and beyond, they will find that the work of evil spirits has preceded them there also, and it will confirm that the results of the work of the demons is emptiness and disorder everywhere. Nevertheless, in spite of the frightful damage evil spirits have been able to do throughout the cosmos, they are not able to overcome the believer who draws on the power of God to withstand them and to be victorious over them

"The heavens" can also mean the realm where God dwells outside of and beyond the created cosmos. It is possible that, when Paul said the evil spirits are in "the heavens, he also referred to that realm and indicated that evil spirits even have power and daring enough to enter the realm out

beyond the physical cosmos where God sits in majesty on His eternal throne. Both Job 1:6-12 and Job 2:1-6 describe Satan as being present in the councils of God, along with "the sons of God." In 1 Kings 22:21 and 2 Chronicles 18:20, the prophet Micaiah told about a lying spirit who attended a similar council and stood before Jehovah's throne with the heavenly host. Those passages indicate that, even though Satan and the evil spirits have lost their positions of authority in heaven and are limited in their ability to act toward people without God's permission, they still are able to enter heaven and communicate with God. Revelation 12:7-17 even tells of a time when the Dragon (Satan) will marshal his forces and attack heaven one last time in one more effort to take God's throne away from Him. Revelation reveals that he will fail once more, but he will only move his forces to the earth to persecute God's people on earth with one last furious assault. On the strength of those passages, when Paul said evil spirit beings are in heaven, he may have been referring to their ability to continue to enter heaven to challenge God's power. However, they will not have that kind of power forever. In the End, they will be fastened in chains and cast into hell, never to escape again (Rev. 20:10).

In spite of the breathtaking power that Satan and evil spirits continue to exercise, their power is not enough to defeat a child of God who draws on God's power to walk worthy of the calling to which God has called him.

3. ***Because of this*** [war] (6:13-20),
 - (1) ***Take up God's battle equipment so that you will have power to resist in the evil day*** (6:13b),
 - (2) ***And having prepared everything to stand, take a stand, therefore*** (6:13c-17),
 - (a) ***Strapping truth about your waist*** (6:14a)
 - (b) ***And putting on the breastplate of righteousness*** (6:14b)
 - (c) ***And covering your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace*** (6:15)
 - (d) ***Above all, taking up the shield of faith*** (6:16a-16c)
 - [1] ***With which you will have power to put out*** (6:16b)
 - [2] ***All the fiery arrows of the wicked one*** (6:16:c)
 - (e) ***And take the helmet of salvation*** (6:17a)
 - (f) ***And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*** (6:17b)

- (3) **Praying** (6:18-20)
 - (a) ***With all [kinds of] prayer and petition*** (6:18a)
 - (b) ***At all times in the Spirit***(6:18b),
 - (c) ***And in the same way, being watchful with all perseverance*** (6:18c),
 - (d) ***And intercession for all saints*** (6:18d).
 - (e) ***And for me*** (6:19-20)
 - [1] ***That I may be given words when I open my mouth*** (6:19b-20a),
 - [a] ***With boldness to make known the mystery of the gospel*** (6:19d),
 - [b] ***For which [purpose] I am an ambassador in chains*** (6:20a),
 - [2] ***That I may speak freely, as I ought to speak*** (6:20b).

Paul then challenged the Ephesians to get involved in the warfare with the devil and the demons. He said that, because the battle existed and was real, they should take part in it. His challenge included three aspects of getting involved in the fight.

Verse 13b. Take up God's battle equipment. The first aspect of getting involved in the battle was to obtain the necessary equipment. The equipment would be supplied by God. It could not be obtained by human effort. The Ephesians needed to turn to God to receive the equipment and be sure they received it all so they would be ready to fight.

Paul said they needed the battle equipment "to resist in the evil day." Those words implied that the Ephesians would not have to go after the devil to engage him in battle. The devil and his demons would come after them. They just needed to be ready to resist them when they attacked. The evil day was any day in which the devil and his demons might tempt them with sin or with suffering or with falsehood. If they already had the battle equipment, they would be ready when that day would come. The attack could come at any time, so they needed to receive the equipment in advance and be ready.

Every believer is constantly in the condition Paul implied to the Ephesians. We are either under attack by the devil or subject to his attack at any moment. When temptation comes, it is too late to get ready to fight back, so we need to be sure we have let the Lord equip our lives with all the resources we need before the attack comes. Then we will not be taken by surprise, and we will not have to retreat or surrender. Therefore, even in the day of pleasure and brightness, we need to be sure

we are fully equipped and ready to enter into battle at any moment.

Verses 13c-17. Take your stand. Paul urged the Ephesians not to just have their battle equipment at hand but to put it on and to stand at alert, ready to face any attack and triumph over every attempt to weaken or destroy us. To do so, we need to have every piece of battle equipment in place and ready for use.

Paul mentioned seven pieces of battle equipment needed by believers, and he compared each one to a piece of equipment used by Roman soldiers in that day. Believers today still need the same pieces of equipment in the continuing war against sin and error. The believer who lets the Lord equip his life with the seven characteristics Paul mentioned will be ready for any attack the devil might throw at him.

The first piece of battle equipment Paul mentioned was ***righteousness***. A believer needs two kinds of righteousness: righteousness imputed to him by faith in Jesus, and practical righteousness gained by obedience to God's commands through the power of the Holy Spirit. If a person receives righteousness through trusting his life to Jesus and then through practicing an obedient way of life, he will not find it difficult to resist temptations to sin or to be troubled with doubts. Paul compared righteousness to the breastplate worn by Roman soldiers. The breastplate was a part of the Roman soldier's armor. Some soldiers wore a solid metal plate that covered their chests. Others wore a covering formed by a wire mesh that was flexible to allow free movement but packed together enough to deflect blows from arrows or swords. The breastplate protected the soldier's heart, so that even

if he received an injury his life would be spared. Righteousness protects a believer's spiritual heart and easily turns aside any effort to turn his heart away from God or to bleed away its love for God.

The second piece of a believer's battle equipment that Paul mentioned was **truth**. Truth is as necessary as righteousness if a believer is to avoid being led astray. False ideas, philosophies, and theologies are as dangerous as sin in separating a person from God. The world is full of false beliefs, and more are being devised all the time. When a believer understands the truth God has revealed, he is able to recognize falsehood when he hears it. Immediately he is ready to turn away from it and practice the true way that God made to be the way His creation works. Paul compared truth to the belt worn by a Roman soldier in battle. The soldier's belt was neither armor nor a weapon, but it was highly useful to the soldier in battle. It was a part of his uniform, and it was used to fasten the soldier's weapons and personal necessities to his side. It also was used to fasten up any flowing garment he might be wearing, so as to allow him freedom to move and maneuver in the battle. When a believer understands the truth God has revealed, he can hang on it all the facts and insights he needs to face the falsehoods that are around him. It also enables him to have flexibility to deal with every kind of false idea the devil might use to trick him.

The third piece of equipment Paul mentioned was **the gospel**. He called it "the gospel of peace," because the gospel enables a person to be at peace with God, even when surrounded with human enemies. It even enables him to be at peace with his human enemies through the love that Jesus gives to his heart, while at the same time fighting against the temptations those enemies might throw at him. The gospel is a necessary part of a believer's equipment for battle, because it is the good news that teaches a person how to be saved and how to live a saved life. The changed life that the gospel brings to a believer is the best defense against the devil's temptations to both sin and falsehood. Paul compared the gospel to the equipment used by Roman soldiers to protect their feet, ankles, and calves. Their foot equipment resembled a boot but was made of metal to turn aside blows to their feet and lower legs. Yet it was constructed of overlapping layers, so that it allowed

the soldier to walk, run, or turn as necessary to face any attack that might come to him. Knowing God's truth gives a believer the same protection from any attempt to turn him aside into worldly and evil ways and to give him freedom of movement to maneuver as necessary and press forward to win victories for God.

The fourth piece of equipment Paul mentioned was **faith**. Faith is essential for a believer in his battle with the world. It includes faith in Jesus that brings salvation, but it also includes faith to trust God in daily life and to obey Him even when challenged, attacked, or tempted. Many times a believer is unable to know what the outcome of his struggles will be, and he may feel he must surrender to the world's way to survive. Faith in God will enable him to know that he does not need to despair. His faith ensures him that the Lord will rescue him at the right time and also will reward him in the end. Faith equips the believer to stand true and fight back against any temptation to turn away into sin or error. Paul compared faith to the Roman soldier's shield. A Roman soldier used his shield to deflect flying arrows and blows from an opponent's spear or sword when in hand-to-hand combat. He could use it to protect any part of his body that might be uncovered by other parts of his armor or to deflect any attempt to pierce a seam in his armor. He also could use it to smother fires set by flaming darts hurled at him or his surroundings. Faith gives the believer the same kind of protection from any weak spot in a believer's defenses and against any fiery trial the world may throw at him.

The fifth piece of equipment Paul mentioned was **salvation**. Salvation means forgiveness for sins through faith in the blood Jesus shed on Calvary's Cross for the sins of the whole world. Sooner or later everyone in the world loses the battle against sin and falsehood, because everyone in one way or another chooses to surrender to his inclination to go his own way instead of God's way. Jesus died to pay the penalty for that fateful choice. In so doing, He provided the way for people to be delivered from their defeat. All He requires is for people who have lost the battle against sin to call out to Him, surrender their fallen lives to Him, and allow Him to set them free. Only then are people able to fight against sin and win. That deliverance is true and

eternal salvation. Paul compared salvation to a Roman soldier's helmet. The helmet protected the soldier's head and deflected blows against it. Protection of the head in battle is the most important part of a soldier's armor, because if his head is damaged no other part of his body can fight. In the same way, salvation is the most important part of a believer's protection as he engages in the battle against sin and error. It protects his mind from desiring to return to sin, and it preserves his understanding from being deceived by false teachings.

The sixth piece of equipment Paul mentioned was *the Word of God*, the Scriptures. The revealed Word of God is the only piece of equipment a believer has that enables him to fight back at those who oppose him. The Scriptures give believers a weapon to use to fight back against sin and error. The Word of God is the believer's offensive weapon. It is God's revelation about how He ordered the world and how people must live to be in harmony with it. Therefore, it equips a believer to face sin and error and overcome them. Paul compared the Word of God to a Roman soldier's sword. A sword was a Roman soldier's weapon that he used to fight back at his enemies and gain victory. In that day, it was the only weapon he needed, but he had to keep his sword sharp and know how to use it skillfully. Paul said the Word of God is the believer's "sword of the Spirit." The believer's offensive weapon is not made of steel. It is made of the Spirit of God, because the Holy Spirit revealed the Word to people. The Word of God provides all that a believer needs to resist sin and answer falsehood, but the believer must sharpen his knowledge of the Word and gain skill in using it. The victorious believer is the one who spends time in the Word and keeps it in his mind and heart, ready for use every time he is attacked by the tricks of the devil.

Paul informed the Ephesians that they needed every piece of equipment God provides if they were going to win in their struggles with life. All believers have the same need for every piece of equipment God provides. God makes every piece available to everyone who believes in Him. We just need to take it up, strive to keep it in good

condition, and be prepared to use it as we face the world, the flesh, and the devil each day.

Verses 18-20. Pray. The third aspect of winning the battle against sin and error that Paul mentioned was prayer. Prayer means staying in touch with God, accepting His guidance, and drawing on Him for strength. Prayer is a resource believers have that has no comparison to a soldier's equipment for battle. It is a resource unknown to people who try to fight battles against sin and error in their own strength. It is the secret resource that enables believers to win every battle.

In describing the resource of prayer, Paul used the word "all" four times. By so doing, he revealed that prayer is an all-inclusive and complete activity. It is available for every occasion and sufficient to enable every believer to be victorious in every trial.

The first "all" Paul mentioned was "all prayer and petition." He meant a believer should use every kind of prayer to gain the strength he needs. He used two words for prayer to indicate that he was talking about using variety in a person's prayer life. The word "prayer" indicates a conversation with God, by which the believer discusses his questions with God and listens to God's guidance. The word "petition" indicates a request for help in facing the person's needs and in confronting the needs of others. A person might mention other words that emphasize other aspects of prayer, such as, thanksgiving, praise, intercession, and confession. By using the word "all," Paul indicated that, no matter how a person classifies different kinds of prayer, a believer needs to use every variety of prayer if he is going to have a well-rounded, fully developed, and effective prayer life.

The second "all" Paul mentioned was "at all times." Prayer needs to be a constant, unceasing part of a believer's life. Paul was stressing a mysterious aspect of prayer that is emphasized throughout the Bible. Prayer needs to be an unrelenting activity that never ceases. Jesus taught His followers "always to pray" (Luke 18:1; 21:36). Paul urged the Thessalonian believers to "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). When Paul urged the Ephesians to pray "at all times," he obviously considered prayer to be more than simply speaking

to God. Prayer is much more expansive than the usual concept of asking God to meet our needs. It encompasses much more than just asking for help. Basically prayer means to be in contact with God. A person cannot be speaking a prayer at all times, but a person can stay in contact with God at all times, ready to speak when it is needed and ready to listen when God speaks to him. A person can stay in contact with God no matter how busy he is or how occupied he might be with many concerns, in that he can remain aware of God's presence even when he is occupied with many busy activities. He can even stay in contact with God while he sleeps, by surrendering to God when he retires and asking God to watch over him while he sleeps. In that sense, prayer should be the constant companion of every believer, regardless of where he is or what he is doing.

The third "all" Paul mentioned was "with all perseverance." He encouraged the Ephesians and all believers to be watchful, that is, to stay alert to dangers from sin and error and to take advantage of every opportunity to witness and to serve. Prayer is the means by which a person can remain watchful at all times and can persevere through every trial and in every circumstance. God always has urged believers to be consistent, persistent, and persevering. He does not admire service to Him done in spurts and spasms. He encourages us to serve Him faithfully without wavering or turning aside to distractions. Prayer is the resource that enables us to persevere in our service to Him through whatever may arise in our lives.

The fourth "all" Paul mentioned was "for all saints." He stressed that true prayer is not selfish. It reaches out to touch all who believe. Christianity has never been a private faith, in spite of those who have sought to make it such. True Christianity cannot be practiced in isolation. God always has encouraged His people to band together, help and encourage each other, and unite in active service to Him and to others. If serving Jesus is a community affair, our prayers must encompass all those with whom we serve. Therefore, true prayer must extend to the needs and challenges of all who share with us in service to Jesus. A believer's prayer should stretch out to include all those who have become saints through faith in Jesus.

Then Paul took time to urge the Ephesians to include him also when they prayed for all saints. He made them aware that praying for all saints should not become impersonal. It also needed to be directed toward individuals who had particular needs, and he wanted the Ephesians to include him as one of those who had a particular need. He needed and wanted the benefit of their prayers, as much as they needed his. He particularly asked them to pray that he would be given the ability to witness faithfully and strongly for Jesus. He recognized that he was an ambassador for Jesus, appointed to speak for Jesus to a foreign and hostile world. His activities were severely restricted at that time, because he was under house arrest in Rome awaiting trial before Caesar. However, those restrictions did not remove his responsibility to fulfill his purpose. He wanted to use the opportunities afforded to him while on house arrest to fulfill his calling and share the gospel with everyone he could. In Paul's letter to the Philippians, which he wrote about the same time that he wrote his letter to the Ephesians, he testified that he had been successful in that responsibility and that the result was that even members of Caesar's household had received the message and trusted Jesus (Phil. 4:22). If he had never been made a prisoner, he never would have had opportunities to reach people who lived in Caesar's palace. His success in introducing the gospel even to members of Caesar's family no doubt was made possible because many had prayed for him to have that kind of boldness and commitment. He wanted the Ephesians to keep praying for him to have boldness and courage as he witnessed, so that he would never fail to use even the most unusual circumstances as a means of turning problems into opportunities. He urged them to continue praying for him in that way, so that in every circumstance he would be made strong to share the truth with all who would listen.

All believers need to pray for each other to have the same kind of alertness and commitment in the midst of every experience in life. That kind of praying and serving is what keeps the gospel spreading in spite of the fierce opposition of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Praying for each other molds believers together into a conquering

army and brings unexpected victories to the kingdom of God. We all need to practice expanding our prayer lives to include all the acts of prayer

Here is the three-fold secret to power in the believer's life: (1) Put on every piece of God's battle equipment; (2) Stand up and fight; and (3) Bathe every moment in prayer.