

Mighty Mouth!

Ephesians 6:18

Main focus of this series: This series is a formulation of key teachings and understandings from the book of Ephesians. In an effort to decipher each statement of Paul in Ephesians we believe we will learn how to successfully operate in the three positions of the believer: to **sit** (Ephesians 1-3), to **walk** (Ephesians 4-6:9) and over the next few weeks we will address the thought... **stand** (Ephesians 6:10-24) .

The importance of this message today: Today we will begin a few weeks of teaching on the power of prayer. It is so important that we become deliberate in utilizing this seventh weapon of our warfare. The fact is, if we are not using it, it is certain that we will not have the victory over the powers of the air" as promised by Paul. We cannot fight this war without this equipment. To do otherwise is to be suicidal and deceived. Today our desire is to establish a full understanding of the tactics of Satan, the provision of God and the Response of man. In doing so, we can experience results in our efforts as a warrior and confidence as a believer.

"And praying 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."
Ephesians 6:18

Intro: Today we are going to talk about the last weapon that Paul defines in Ephesians 6:18. It is a weapon that we cannot just talk about, it is a weapon that we must utilize on a daily basis. Here is an interesting question, "Why would God provide a weapon for us?" "Why would God want to give you something for if it did not have purpose?" God has provided for us a tool, a weapon, that by using it properly, it will absolutely have dynamic results, because it is God provided and **ultimately successful**.

The weapon today is PRAYER. Why would God want to give you the weapon of prayer? Because He wants you victorious. Because He wants you have dominion on this earth, over your finances, over your marriage, over your job, over this community! He wants you to know His will, to hear His voice, to respond against Satan with a force greater than himself. He wants you to think like God, where your thoughts are not your thoughts and then your ways will not be your own but His.

Today, there is a weapon waiting to be picked up. It is sitting there and it offers to you the opportunity to be the dragon slayer. Why? Because God wants to supply you with what you need to succeed in this life with your family, on your job and as a community leader. **It's sitting there, and it has to be picked up. For you to have a complete understanding of this weapon, I believe there are three things that you must understand:**

1. **Satan's Attack**
 2. **God's Provision**
 3. **Our Response**
- I. **Satan's Attack**

We know that all the people that have never accepted Christ as Savior are held captive by the enemy. Satan holds people captive through their unbelief. They are captive to the strongholds that are robbing their life on a daily basis. But there are strongholds in

a Christians life too. These are strongholds that God wants to set them free from. As a matter of fact, we are actually susceptible to fall back into a stronghold or bondage that Christ has already set us free from. The Word of God is very practical. It never addresses anything to anybody that is insignificant.

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be **burdened again by a yoke of slavery.**"

Galatians 5:1

Why would we fall back into that slavery?

1. Because it is the behavior that we are most familiar with. (Habit)

- **Have you ever tried to break a habit?** A habit is a pattern that has been established in your life that becomes your natural default setting. **It is the sin nature that has attached itself to your MIND.** (Example: Have you ever moved to a different location in town and found yourself driving to where you used to live or used to work?)
- It is how we used to talk
- It is what we consistently and confidently did

2. Because it is the behavior that we are mostly attracted to. (Addictions)

- **Have you ever tried to break an addiction? What do you think is harder, a habit or an addiction?** See, a habit is a pattern that has been establish in your life and rehearsed over and over so many times that there is not only a path, but there is a trench that deposits you on the old path of life. But an addiction is having someone in the trench who is constantly attempting to pull you in. When addictions complicate habits you have a double challenge to overcome. At times it can be an overwhelming challenge of being yoked again with slavery. **It is the sin nature that has attached itself to your FLESH.**
- I really am not tempted to drink. I never opened up that door in my life and now in my life I just don't go there. But I can honestly say that the doors I had opened up myself to in the past continues to challenge me and call me back into slavery. Well if you deal with it why should I think I could change? Because you can, and it is worth it.

"Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

II Timothy 2:22

- I can honestly say that I've met very, very few people, (maybe one or two) in their 40's or older who is dealing with a temptation that was not entertained before their 20's.
- **Youth/young people, you will never regret refusing to open doors of sinful opportunities that later in life you will have to work so hard to keep shut.**
- Older people do not deal with sin as a new occurrence, but they will deal with it as an old one.

1. **Because it is the behavior that we are most familiar with. (Habit)**
2. **Because it is the behavior that we are mostly attracted to. (Addictions)**
3. **Because it is the behavior that we are most tempted by. (Lust)**

- There is another level that we are challenged with. This behavior has its claws deep in our lives. It remembers what you are most susceptible to and what your weaknesses are and constantly calls you back to them. This is where your temptations and evil desires lay. **It is the sin nature that has attached itself to your HEART.**

*"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."
Proverbs 4:23*

"When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed."

James 1:13-14

- There is a lean in us. Temptation is always gravity pulling us in the wrong direction. It is a small, sometimes unknown potential of an appetite that is waiting to be satisfied. It is stirred up by enticement, which here is called temptation. We are susceptible to different things in our lives, it appeals to us and draws us in a certain general direction. All of us have our own "evil desire."
 - Some of us would never consider stealing. To you, there is no lower thing you can do. You consider them a coward and unfit for society. But then lying is another story. That is your temptation. Sometimes it gets so bad that you lie and you are not even in a predicament or in a corner that would make you feel like you need to preserve yourself, you just lied. How about gossip or strife, is that a temptation that keeps pulling you in.
- James says that there is something that lies dormant within us, but when it is awakened it does a few things to us:
 - **Dragged away and enticed-** Picture two little lines in the sand that lead to a cliff. They are the toe marks of an individual who is being dragged away, the enticement of that encounter cause there to be no resistance. In other words, you are not going there intentionally, but you are not fighting the direction either. That's the danger of channel surfing or surfing the internet, it is a store room of enticement that can carry you to the threshold of sin. That is the danger of idol talking, it is an endless opportunity that can carry you to the threshold of sin.

"Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

James 1:15

- **Desire has conceived-** It's when I stop allowing myself to be dragged into it and I take my own steps in that direction. The

picture here is one person under my shoulders leading me in the direction of my lust or temptation. Then I pull off of their shoulders and open the door in front of me. This is when SIN begins! This is the impregnation point. And the reality is, when SIN begins, it grows and it gives birth to death.

What does it give death too?

1. **Open and honest relationships-** It hurts them, or you have to hide from them because someone will know your little secret. It causes you to distance yourself because of people who are good for you want to walk in the light with you.
2. **Confidence as a believer-** It causes you to perform your walk before people because you are not confident as a believer. It brings guilt and frustration.
3. **Power to believe-** It drains your judgment and wears on your strength. Not only is your confidence weakened but now the power you walked in is no longer there. You are falling prey to the attack of the enemy.

We fall back into that slavery because...

1. **Because it is the behavior that we are most familiar with. (Habit)**
 - **It is the sin nature that has attached itself to your MIND.**
2. **Because it is the behavior that we are mostly attracted to. (Addictions)**
 - **It is the sin nature that has attached itself to your FLESH.**
3. **Because it is the behavior that we are most tempted by. (Lust)**
 - **It is the sin nature that has attached itself to your HEART.**

I. Satan's Attack

"And praying 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."
Ephesians 6:18

II. God's Provision

Two Important Points Concerning Our Spiritual Weapons

Paul is making two important Observations concerning our spiritual weapons:

1. **This weapon is only useful in the hands of a believer.**
2. **This weapon is the only means by which certain warfare can be done.**

If we don't utilize these weapons, no one else can. If we don't utilize these weapons nothing else can be done. These are the weapons of our warfare to accomplish what they were set out to do. Any other means of fighting is futile and fatal. So Paul makes our seventh weapon something that all believer's can have in common and have active in their life. **Prayer.**

"...praying in the Spirit..."

Prayer (4335) (proseuche from pros = toward or immediately before + euchomai = to

pray or vow) is the more general word for prayer and is used only of prayer to God. The prefix "pros" would convey the sense of being immediately before Him and hence the ideas of adoration, devotion, and worship. The basic idea is to bring something, and in prayer this pertains to bringing up prayer requests. In early Greek culture an offering was brought with a prayer that it be accepted. Later the idea was changed slightly, so that the thing brought to God was a prayer. In later Greek, prayers appealed to God for His presence.

Before we attempt to interpret this statement fully, let's look at the statement in Ephesians 6:17,

"Take the *helmet of salvation* and the *sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*"

Ephesians 6:17

Do you see the Spirit mentioned there? **The word of God is the sword of the Spirit.** We talked last week about two key words when it came to the Word of God,

1. **Logos**- the written word of God
2. **Rhema**- the spoken Word of God.
 - The Logos Word of God was Inspirationally written by man.
 - The Logos Word of God is Interpreted by the Inspiration, Rhema of God.
 - The Rhema Word of God is Inspiring His Word in us in a Rhema Word

Now in verse 18, Paul is telling us to **allow the Word of God, or the sword of the spirit, to influence our prayers. It is hearing the Words of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, either the Logos or Rhema and repeating what you hear.**

"And praying 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."

Ephesians 6:18

The word pray in this scripture is a present imperative, which means to pray continually, without ceasing (1Thes 5:17) ("Keep the phone off the hook at all times.")

Many people who attempt to interpret this scripture do so without feeling a need to address the glaring word "**Spirit.**" There must be something to this "Spirit" thing or we wouldn't be asked to be praying in it. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? I'll tell you what it is not:

1. **It is not praying a memorized prayer**- It is speaking words out of your mouth that are motivated by inspiration, desperation and dedication to God. It is a prayer formulated in the passion center of your heart and beyond that, generated by the "Spirit" of God.
2. **It is not listening to someone else pray**- Praying in the "Spirit" is not listening to other people pray. Being sincerely silent is not prayer, it is honoring toward God but it is not prayer. Prayer is the active participation where your lips convey your heart. It is also where your words connect with God.
3. **It is not carelessly tossing out words**- Praying in the "Spirit" is not giving your Christmas list to God or becoming "spooky" or "mystical" in your relationship

with God. It is not saying a few things as if a neighbor is out on the lawn who you never talk to and he makes contact with you in which you kindly return. It is not about being polite with God. It is about being intimate with Him.

Praying In The Spirit- Prayer Language or Gifts of Tongues

Jesus is a primary example of the work of the Holy Spirit within and upon us. Jesus' life was conceived by the Spirit, and the Spirit working within Him brought forth the fruit of good character (Luke 2:52). Later the Spirit came upon Jesus to bring about a ministry of power (Luke 3:22-4:18).

The distinctive purpose of the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts is to empower the church for ministry.

- **Acts 1-** The beginning
- **Acts 8:14-19-** Apostles laid hands on people. What happened when they laid hands on them? How was this evident? Notice that Simon offered money for the gift when he saw this happen?
- **Acts 19:1-6-** These were already believers. They had received Christ but had never received the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

"While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied."

Acts 19:1-3

"Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied."

Acts 19:4-6

The above scriptures tell of people receiving the Holy Spirit after they were saved, a separate experience.

It's For Everybody!

- **Acts 10:44-48-** This is the first incident where Gentiles, non-Jewish believer's, were allowed by God to hear the Gospel message and then have the experience of the Holy Spirit falling upon them and they spoke with tongues and were water baptized as well. Note, Paul mentioned they received the Holy Spirit just as they had- Paul was not at all surprised they spoke in tongues!

Prayer Language and Gift of Tongues

When we read Ephesians, we must realize that later in Paul's public ministry, before he was imprisoned, he had gone to Ephesus where he met with people in the local synagogue and left Priscilla and Aquila, (Acts 18:18-21), to share with them about the Holy Spirit so that they might be able to understand what Paul is now addressing. Paul's writings were of no confusion to the Ephesians, they knew what he was talking

about when he said the "Spirit."

Three Deterrents To Operating In The "Spirit."

1. **Non-biblical or Inaccurate Teaching-** It is possible that you have been taught "NOT" how to believe in it, receive it or taught it away.
2. **Abuse-** It is possible that you have seen the gifts, especially tongues and the people who operated in it, to respond in all kinds of odd, even to weird manifestations. They have also seen it as an authoritative source to control and manipulate people or themselves.
3. **Fear-** If bad teaching or abuse has been part of your past, of course there is fear in your life when it comes to prayer interactive with the "Spirit." But there is a natural fear.
 - **Fear of letting go of control of your tongue.**

"We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check."

James 3:2

We have a natural and cautious fear of letting go of our tongue because that has caused more trouble in our life than anything else. We are used to keeping a close watch over it at all times.

- **Fear of sounding foolish, doing it wrong.**
- **Fear of- "Is This Me or God?"**

In 1 Corinthians 14, it covers many spiritual gift 'etiquettes.' But the main thing for today, is the difference between a personal prayer language and a 'gift' of tongues for use in the church. A prayer language is for your communication with God for three reasons below. The 'gift' of tongues within the church is to edify the whole body with an interpretation of what was said. **1 Corinthians 14:15 states that praying both in the Spirit and with your mind is necessary.**

"So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind."

1 Corinthians 14:15

To pray in the "Spirit" has many benefits but here are three:

1. **Spiritual Empowerment- Acts 1:8**

*"But you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

Acts 1:8

Power: delegated authority, great strength, especially physical, dominion authority. Energy, might, great force, great ability- all have Greek meanings for power. My favorite is used to describe divine power in overcoming a resistance. Compare: dynamic and dynamite. The Holy Spirit equips us the power to accomplish His command.

Shaping Aspects of Prayer

1. It reveals areas that need shaped like clay
2. It reveals areas that need whittled like wood
3. It reveals areas that need chiseled like stone

2. Spiritual Accuracy- I Corinthians 2:10-13

"¹⁰The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words."

I Corinthians 2:10-13

This Spirit allows us to know the thoughts and mind of God. The Holy Spirit always know the mind and the will of the Father, and that is what He prays. When you pray in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit prays through us. The shift in responsibility is from us to Him as He prays God's own will.

3. Spiritual Nurturing- 1 Corinthians 14:2-4, Jude 20, Romans 8:26-27

Praying in accordance to God's Word and/or praying in tongues builds you up. The edification of a spiritual strengthening. Building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit....

"For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church."

I Corinthians 14:2-4

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

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."

Romans 8:26-27

III. Our Response

"And praying 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."

Ephesians 6:18

Pray In The Spirit on ALL Occasions/Time:

Occasion/Times (2540) (*kairos*) **Kairos** is not so much a succession of minutes (Greek *chronos* 5550), but a period of **opportunity**. *Kairos* is a season, an opportune

time, an opportunity ("window of opportunity"). It is a fixed and definite time. It is a period possessed of certain characteristics. For example, a "season" is a time characterized by a particular circumstance or feature. Thus the time for bringing forth fruit [*karpophoros*] is the season (*kairos*) in which the tree bears fruit, in contrast to late autumn, when there is no more fruit.

Webster's defines "opportunity" as a favorable juncture of circumstances or a good chance for advancement or progress.

Here's how many people interpret that scripture

- I will pray to the Lord when I feel like it.
- I will pray to the Lord at church.
- I will pray to the Lord when I worship music playing or have the radio on.
- I will pray to the Lord when I like the how I woke up.
- I will pray to the Lord when I like the situation and circumstances of my day.
- I will pray to the Lord when things are going good.

Jesus urged His disciples to pray at all times

"Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up."

Luke 18:1

He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought (must) to pray and not to lose heart (to turn out to be a coward or to lose one's courage. In the NT it means to be fainthearted or to faint or despond in view of trial or difficulty. It means to lose one's motivation, become discouraged and give up because answers do not come immediately. In spiritual warfare we can either pray or faint!)

Pastor Bill Hybels uses a little outline, "God's Four Answers" he borrowed from a pastor friend of his in talking with people who are concerned because God doesn't seem to be answering their prayers,

- **If the request is wrong, God says NO**
- **If the timing is wrong, God says SLOW**
- **If you are wrong, God says GROW**
- **But if the request is right, the timing is right, and you are right, God says GO!**

Source: Bill Hybels, *Too Busy Not To Pray* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), p.74.

- **"To Be Little With God is to Be Little for God!"- E.M. Bounds**

*"...if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. **If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.**"*

Matthew 21:21-22

- Illustration: Early African converts to Christianity were earnest and regular in private devotions. Each one reportedly had a separate spot in the thicket where he would pour out his heart to God. Over time the paths to these

places became well worn. As a result, if one of these believers began to neglect prayer, it was soon apparent to the others. They would kindly remind the negligent one, "Brother, the grass grows on your path." Today in the Word, June 29, 1992.

Pray In The Spirit On All Occasions With All Kinds of Prayers and Request

Prayer in the Spirit and spiritual warfare go hand in hand.

I was driving down the road this week and a man was leaning on the side of the building whose head was down as if he were praying. Immediately the Lord spoke to my heart to pray for him. I did not know how to pray, but I prayed for him, in words and in the spirit. God told me a few minutes later that I had agreed with him in prayer. I had agreed with that man as he had cried out to God in his simplest terms, I had completed his request in my specific, Spirit led prayer.

Request/Petition (1162) (*deesis* from *deomai* = to want, to beg, to pray) refers to making known of one's specific needs, even conveying a sense of an urgent request to meet that need. Webster says that to supplicate (from Latin *supplic-*, *supplex* = entreating for mercy) means to make humble entreaty.

Wake-up and Hear The Warning!

"And praying 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."
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Be on the alert (69) (*agrupneo* from *a* = without + *hupnos* = sleep) is literally without sleep and so to be sleepless or to be awake. **To chase sleep away.** To pass a sleepless night. To suffer from insomnia.

Aggrupneo means to exercise constant vigilance over something or to be vigilant in awareness of threatening peril (an image drawn from shepherds), be alert, be on the alert, keep watch over something, be on guard. To be vigilant means to alertly watchful especially to avoid danger. The English word vigilant suggest intense, unremitting, wary watchfulness. To be on the lookout for. To be circumspect, attentive, ready (Mk 13:33, Lu 21:36) *Aggrupneo* is the opposite of listlessness and expresses alertness. The idea of *agrupneo* is to stay awake in order to carry out a task.

Early cowboys guarding a herd at night sometimes took drastic measures to keep alert and hold fast to their work. They rubbed tobacco juice in their eyes to keep at their vigil and to stay awake when weary. They did it in the interests of their boss and for the safety of the cattle. Can we keep effectively steadfast in prayer for the sake of our Lord and for the benefit of others? (MacArthur, J., F., Jr, Mayhue, R., & Thomas, R., L.. Rediscovering Pastoral Ministry : Shaping Contemporary Ministry with Biblical Mandates. Dallas: Word)

- **Proverbs 8:34** (KJV)- "Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching (Lxx = *agrupneo*) daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts. (Comment: This speaks of keeping watch in an ethical sense.)
- **Mark 13:33** (KJV)- "Take heed (*blepo* - present imperative), keep on the alert

(agrupneo - present imperative); for you do not know when the appointed time is.

- **Luke 21:36** (KJV)- "But keep on the alert (present imperative) at all times (kairos - seasons, opportunities), praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Comment: Here agrupneo conveys the idea of making an effort to learn of what might be a potential future threat.)

Pray In The Spirit On All Occasions For All The Saints

We are to pray for all saints constantly; this being one of the great objects for which saints are gathered into the "one body" the Church, that they may be upheld and carried on, in warfare and in work, by mutual prayer, kept from slips and infirmities, and from deadly sins, and enabled one and all to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called." (The Pulpit Commentary: New Testament; Old Testament; Ages Software)

Always/Perseverance (4343) (*proskarteresis* from pros = direction - toward + *kartereo* = be strong, steadfast, firm) **means to continue to do something with intense effort with the possible implication of doing so despite difficulties inherent.** It pictures devotion of one's self to the task, keeping on it, persisting in it, being earnest towards (pros) it.

David Guzik writes that...

The idea is all kinds of prayer or prayer upon prayer. We should use every kind of prayer we can think of. Group prayer, individual prayer, silent prayer, shouting prayer, walking prayer, kneeling prayer, eloquent prayer, groaning prayer, constant prayer, fervent prayer - just pray.

The test of a person's character is what it takes to stop him. Some people retreat as soon as the first shot is fired, while others fight through battle after battle with no thought of giving up. Satan will try every means to discourage and deter us, reminding us of defeats and dangers and setting every possible object in our way to destroy our assurance in Christ. (MacArthur, J: Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press)

In this Spiritual warfare, I am only as good as my prayer life, it is what activates all the other weapons I may have equipped myself with. My strength is in the LORD or it isn't. I cannot deny that any longer, nor can I afford to...or those who are in need of my request to God for them. Many people want me to pray for them, but few realize that they have been given the responsibility to call out their names in the presence of the Lord. We have all been called to a prayer ministry, and in our response to that call we will have great faith and great effectiveness.

- 3. This weapon is only useful in the hands of a believer.**
- 4. This weapon is the only means by which certain warfare can be done.**

Good News: God will hear you today!