

Ephesians 6:18-20 - 18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. NASB

A. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, - In summing up this great section on spiritual warfare, Paul now leads us to the crowning jewel of all our battles, prayer. Here he says that we should pray “*with all prayer and petition.*” This is to say that we should pray for everything and everyone, and in every way, both public and private, and that these prayers are a “*petition*” to God.

Proverbs 3:5-6 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 **In all your ways acknowledge Him,** And He will make your paths straight. NASB

Our prayers have One to whom they are addressed and He alone has the power to grant our requests, therefore we “*petition*” Him.

Philippians 4:6 - 6 Be anxious for nothing, but **in everything by prayer and supplication** with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. NASB

God is disposed to answer prayer.

Proverbs 15:8 - 8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But **the prayer of the upright is His delight.** NASB

John 16:24 - 24 "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; **ask, and you will receive,** that your joy may be made full. NASB

Luke 11:9-10 - 9 "And I say to you, ask, **and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find;** knock, and it shall be opened to you. 10 "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened. NASB

James 1:5 - 5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, **let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.** NASB

Here Paul says we should “*pray at all times*” and that our prayer should be “*in the Spirit.*” To pray at all times means that we should constantly pray all day long, we should be on the alert in prayer and that we should not cease from praying. Since our struggles are with an enemy who never sleeps, we should be constantly in that state of spiritual awareness and ready to meet His schemes with trust in God’s power.

Luke 18:1 - 18:1 Now He was telling them a parable to show that **at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.** NASB

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 - 16 Rejoice always; 17 **pray without ceasing;** 18 in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. NASB

This prayer Paul says should be “*in the Spirit.*” This is to say that it should be in accordance with and consistent with God’s Word and will. To pray in the Spirit is to pray what God would have us pray, according to His will which He is therefore favorably disposed to answer.

1 John 5:14-15 - 14 And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, **if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.** 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, **we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.** NASB

B. be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, - Here Paul says to be “*on the alert with all perseverance*” and “*petition for all the saints.*” This is to emphasize the great importance of continual prayer but that this should be for all the saints, that is, for every Christian and all our beloved family of God. Christians have a great need to be on the alert in our spiritual lives as we have a tendency to slumber and are given to frequent wandering from our Lord precious care.

Colossians 4:2 - 2 Devote yourselves **to prayer, keeping alert in it** with an attitude of thanksgiving; NASB

Mark 14:37-38 - 37 And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 "**Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation**; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." NASB

1 Thessalonians 5:4-6 - 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; 6 so then let us not sleep as others do, **but let us be alert and sober**. NASB

1 Peter 5:8 - 8 Be of sober spirit, **be on the alert**. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. NASB

C. and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. – Here Paul entreats the church for their intercession for his labor in the gospel. He asks that they pray for God to give Paul bold words to **“proclaim the gospel.”** One would not think that Paul would need **“boldness,”** for he seems to us bold as a lion, yet this is the very thing the Apostle requests of God. There is much opposition in the world to the gospel and it is a heated and constant warfare to make known the truth of the gospel with clarity and conviction.

Acts 4:1-4 - 4:1 And as they were speaking to the people, **the priests and the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in jail** until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand. NASB

Acts 16:19-24 - 19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, **they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities,** 20 and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, 21 and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans. " 22 And **the crowd rose up together against them,** and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them, and **proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. 23 And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison,** commanding the jailer to guard them securely; 24 and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks. NASB

Let us never cease to keep praying for our spiritual leaders as they are many times the focus of intense warfare with the enemies of our souls. He who prays for his pastor prays for himself as well. Paul frequently sought the prayers of the church as in Rom 15:30, 2 Cor 1:11, Phil 1:19, Col 4:3, 1 Thess 5:25, 2 Thess 3:1, Philem 22, Heb 13:18.

Romans 15:30 - 30 Now I **urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,** NASB

Ephesians 6:21-22 - 21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. 22 And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts. NASB

A. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts – Here we get a glimpse into the heart of Paul and see with what tender affection he loves the church. He wants them to know of his progress as they labor together with him in the gospel and he sends his fellow minister Tychicus to them to comfort them and care for them. It was a common practice of Paul if he could not be with the church to send others to care for their needs. These were an expression of his

great love for the church, and more than this, an expression of the heart of God for the care of His church.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-3 - 3:1 Therefore when we could endure it no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone; 2 and **we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith,** 3 so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.
NASB

Ephesians 6:23-24 23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible. NASB

A. Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. – As is common with Paul, he closes with a benediction wishing his beloved hearers “*peace*” and “*love with faith.*” Here is an example for us all to follow, that we would have such a heart of love toward one another that our departures would be attended with expressions of that love. Further, that we Christians would live in these graces would surely fulfill the longing of God for us! Oh that the brethren would live in peace and that our faith would be fired with love! Let us look to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ from whom these benefits flow!

Galatians 5:6 - 6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but **faith working through love.** NASB

B. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible – Paul adds a further wish, that of “*grace*” to be with all who love our Lord Jesus. Here the Apostle wishes God favor upon his subjects. What higher privilege could we have? After all of the descriptions of God’s amazing grace that have been given us here in the book of Ephesians, to possess these is to be truly rich beyond our wildest imagination! These he wishes on those “*who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an incorruptible love.*” One would do well to consider if they be the one Paul wishes for. Do you have an incorruptible love for the Lord Jesus?

From William Birkitt.

Question. But when, and how, may a person know that he loves Christ in great sincerity?

Answer. If Christ be enthroned in thy heart as a chief commander; if he be esteemed by thee as thy chiefest excellency, and thy choicest treasure; if he be thy chiefest delight and joy; and if he be thy chiefest refuge, unto which thou fliest in all dangers and distresses; thou mayest conclude thy supreme love is placed upon him, that thou lovest him in sincerity.

And the more thou lovest him, the more lovely wilt thou be unto him, and the more will thy heart be let out in desires after him, and in fervent longings for the full fruition and final enjoyment of him; for those whom we love we long to be with. Come then, Lord! down to me, Or take me up to thee.