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“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant...”

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

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## Spiritual Warfare

### A Cosmic Battle Over Your Soul between God and Satan

#### Part VII, The Full Armor of God – Praying in the Spirit

By Robert C. Benson, President

*“Prayer does not equip us for greater work – prayer is the greater work...prayer is the battle.”* Oswald Chambers

#### A. Situational Analysis Summary

Like Pastor Shafer Parker, Jr. of Hawkwood Baptist Fellowship, *“I’ve been concerned that none of us take the reality of Satan, or the personal inspiration behind the evil of this world, as seriously as we ought.”* Therefore, I have been writing this series of articles on Spiritual Warfare to encourage Christians to update their awareness of the Cosmic Battle they are engaged in and the enormous power God has to protect them in their daily lives. The Bible tells Christians they can be protected from and overcome Satan and the forces of darkness by putting “on the full Armor of God” because *“each piece has divine power to demolish strongholds.”*

Remember that Pastor Parker reminds Christians *“that we believe in a personal God.”* He continues with *“The Bible also teaches that a personality lies behind the evil in this world. The devil is as real as God, although he is not the same as God...he, like us and like all the angels, is a created being, dependent on God for his continued existence. But for all that, never forget he is also a personal being. He communicates with us, after a fashion...he can develop special strategies for individuals. There are people in which he takes special interest. And he is constantly seeking out those whom he can devour, metaphorically speaking.”*

**To battle Satan, the Apostle Paul instructs Christians to “put on the full armor of God, so...you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand”** (on its divine power).

**To date we have published Spiritual Warfare articles on the following topics:**

Part I, What You Need to Know About Satan and his “Schemes”

Part II, How to Take Your Stand Against the Devil's Schemes

- The Belt of Truth
- The Breastplate of Righteousness
- How to Stand Firm After You Put on the Armor of God

Part III, The Armor of God - The Gospel of Peace

Part IV, The Armor of God - The Shield of Faith

Part V, The Armor of God - The Helmet of Salvation

Part VI, The Armor of God – The Sword of the Spirit

If you didn't have a chance to read them, you can find them at [www.ABAdvisors.com](http://www.ABAdvisors.com), at the eNewsletter link.

**The purpose of this article is to help you understand how to “pray in the Spirit” and use prayer effectively** so Satan can't derail you from becoming a mature Christian or being effective with building Christ's Church - The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). And for those who desire to build and lead a Kingdom business you would be wise to know the enemy and how to defend yourself against Satan or he will make your life miserable.

## **B. Prayer and Spiritual Warfare**

### **Why did Paul Include Prayer in the Armor of God?**

*“Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints...”*

Ephesians 6:18

RSV

The information in this Section B is taken from Bible Study Guides at <http://www.freebiblestudyguides.org>).

God's armor is comprehensive... However, right on the heels of his description of the armor of God, Paul adds that we should be "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18).

If we equip ourselves with God's armor, we must also be determined to keep a steady line of connection with Him. He is the commander of His spiritual army, and He alone knows how to lead it to victory.

**What is supplication?** The Greek word translated supplication in both Ephesians 6:18 and Philippians 4:6 is transliterated deesis by Strong's Concordance and means a petition or a special request of God.



“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God...” (Philippians 4:6).

**What role does the Spirit play in a Christian's prayers?** Since we don't always know how to pray as we should, if we have the Spirit in us and are led by that Spirit (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:14), Paul says "the Spirit" will make intercession for us. This means that although we do not always know exactly what we should be praying for, God knows our hearts by living in us (John 17:23).

*“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit [itself] makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because [it] makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God”* (Romans 8:26-27).

No matter how clumsily Christians present their requests and no matter how jumbled and confusing they are, God will always know what they are trying to say. Through His Spirit working in us, He has intimate knowledge of our hearts and minds. He understands us and will always work things out for the best in the long run (Romans 8:28).

### **Who or what should we be praying about?**

*“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”* (Matthew 6:9-13). NKJ

In what has become known as the "Lord's prayer," Jesus Christ lays out for us a framework for praying to God. It is not a strict, inflexible format to which we must adhere every time we come before God (Matthew 6:7), but rather an excellent checklist of things we do need to take the time to pray about. We should be praying on a regular basis for, among other things, God's will to be done, our needs to be taken care of, the forgiveness of our sins and deliverance from Satan.

Along with praying for others, it is vital to also pray for ourselves. Our lives are filled with reminders that we can't make it on our own. It would be inconceivable to refrain from asking God for the help we so desperately require. *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened”* (Matthew 7:7-8).

Our God stands ready to provide us with the strength, wisdom and courage we need to stand against our enemy, but He wants us first to come before Him and ask for it. Will we? *“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.”* (Luke 21:36)

When Jesus prayed fervently before His crucifixion, He knew what He wanted to happen. But He always remembered that His Father was in charge and had the eternal best interests of everyone in mind. It is important for us to pray for God's will to be done too. He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, *“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will,”* (Matthew 26:39).

As this is the case, we should be sure to keep God's servants in our prayers — and not only His ministers, but all His people. We are in this battle together, and prayer is one of the most effective ways we can support each other, care for each other and fulfill the God-inspired command given to us in Philippians 2:4.

### C. Praying in the Spirit The Power of Prayer

*“No matter how complete the armour; no matter how skilled we may be in the science of war; no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated. God alone can give the victory; and when the Christian soldier goes forth armed completely for the spiritual conflict, if he looks to God by prayer, he may be sure of a triumph”*

*Albert Barnes, American Theologian*

**American theologian Albert Barnes teaches us that** “No matter how complete the armour; no matter how skilled we may be in the science of war; no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated. **God alone can give the victory**; and when the Christian soldier goes forth armed completely for the spiritual conflict, if he looks to God by prayer, he may be sure of a triumph.”

**Pastor Shafer Parker teaches us that in spite of the fact that “Satan is determined to stamp out the good” in the world “Christ’s victory over Satan is sure.** Our Lord won an eternal victory over him at the cross... We cannot stand if we do not pray because it is prayer that connects us, person to person, with our Great Savior...” Orthodox theology teaches that the Son of God is still both God and man, our great high priest, who is seated at the right hand of God the Father. The Bible teaches us several powerful principles about prayer that can help us in Spiritual Warfare.

1. **Since Jesus experienced life as a human, you can approach Him with confidence because He understands our difficulties in living life in this world.** *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need,”* (Hebrews 4:14-16).
2. **Prayer is inseparable from spiritual life** because, as you can see below, the Holy Spirit, our “counselor” and “the Spirit of sonship” is also the “Spirit of prayer.” **“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory,”** (Romans 8:15-17). Pastor Parker explains further “If you call yourself a Christian, let me ask you this. Do you find yourself almost inexplicably, even automatically crying out to God in prayer? That’s the presence of the Holy Spirit.”

3. **The Bible also teaches us that the Holy Spirit helps us pray and intercedes for us in our communications with the Father,** *“And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will. And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them,”* (Romans 8:26-28 NLT).
4. **Jesus promises power to those who have faith in him. I know the following Scripture is hard to “get your mind around”, but think about it. Christ has proclaimed it to be the truth.** *“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it”* (John 14:12-14).
5. **“Prayer does not equip us for greater work – prayer is the greater work... prayer is the battle” (Oswald Chambers).** When our son, Barry (Bear), was about 24 we went to a Promise Keepers Christian conference for men. Bear had been out of fellowship with the Lord for several years and didn't want to go with me to the conference. But one of our best friends from MN was coming with his son Todd who was a friend of Bear's. So reluctantly, he came with me, frustrated and angry. His body language sent a clear message that he didn't want to be there. At the opening night service he had sun glasses on. During the praise and worship time of singing he just looked straight ahead and didn't sing a note. **The late Pastor E.V. Hill was the key note speaker and he was speaking on “How to Make the Enemy Run.”** I started to pray for Bear during the service, asking God to give him “ears to hear with” and “eyes to see with” (to give him understanding and insight into what he was hearing.) Pastor Hill was teaching us how to use the Word of God to battle with Satan. The message was very powerful. **All of a sudden tears started to roll down Bear's face from under his sun glasses.** The Holy Spirit was opening his eyes and softening his heart. Bear made a 180 degree turn in his spiritual life during that conference and he remembers it as a turning point in his life. In recent years he has taken (as a layman) several seminary courses and heads up the Discipleship Ministry at his church. **Click on this link to hear E.V. Hill's five minute video, its powerful,** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YDSgZ5c3iw!>

**Apostle Paul makes it clear who is in control and where the power lies when you pray,** *“What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe — as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building”* (1 Corinthians 3:5-9).

6. **Prayer can be used to protect and encourage each other** while we are being sanctified, while we are coping with “the world,” and banding together in spiritual warfare, *“Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,”* (Ephesians 6:18).

7. **Pray in the Spirit.** To be “in the Spirit,” you must have your “*minds set on what the Spirit desires,*” (Romans 8:5). This includes allowing yourselves to be controlled by the Holy Spirit instead of the “*sinful nature*” and to be obedient to Christ’s teaching. See John: 14, Romans 8, and consider the following Scriptures:

*“Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you. **But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. **Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid,**’” (John 14:23-27).***

*“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age,’” (Matthew 28: 17-20).*

*“You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. **So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.** For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law,” (Galatians 5:13-18).*

**The Bible also gives us the following instructions to maximize the power and influence of our prayers:**

1. **Pray continuously and about everything, without anxiety.** This does not mean with your eyes shut. It means to stay in a state of prayer on all occasions and in all circumstances as you go through each day. Talk to God in your mind with thanksgiving, seeking his guidance and help continuously, “*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*” (Philippians 4:4-7). **I once prayed for grandchildren while driving to work one day.** Ten months later our first grandchild was born – on my birthday! (Sometimes God answers prayer in a dramatic way to make it obvious to us that He is a personal God, involved in our daily lives – such was the lesson I needed to learn at the time in my life. I have never forgotten this dramatic answer to prayer.)
2. **Pray according to God’s will.** Study the Bible to understand what God’s will is concerning your life on earth. God cannot lie, so his teachings and promises are reality and absolute truth. And He is faithful to His Covenant to fulfill His Promises to His children (those who believe in Jesus Christ and live according to His teachings). So pray according to His will, “*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if*

*we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him,”* (1 John 5:14-15). What is God’s will? Read and learn the Bible and you will know God’s will (His principles, instructions and promises.) In studying the Bible back in the mid 1990’s I found that God does not want us to be in debt. In fact, Deuteronomy 28 teaches us that if we obey God’s commands we will be a lender and not a borrower. **So Ree Ann (my wife) and I prayed that God would show us how to get out of debt.** Today we have no debt, including our home. How does He do it? Ask Him to help you get out of debt, obey Him, and he will show you.

3. **Be persistent and patient.** *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets”* (Matthew 7:7-12). I have been taught that “in the Greek” these words mean “keep on asking,” “keep on seeking,” and “keep on knocking.” **My wife made me a framed cross-stitch of these verses in 1989, and it has been hanging in my office ever since.** It has always been a great encouragement for me to be persistent and patient.
4. **Always remember and accept the fact that God has absolute sovereignty over your life.** As children of God we are encouraged in the Bible to always remember who we are, and conduct ourselves accordingly. And remember who you are not. God has absolute sovereignty over us. He rules with love, justice and “ways” that we don’t always understand. Sometimes his answer to your pray is no. I have also found that sometimes it takes Him years to answer our prayer(s). We do not always have the big picture. In 1973 in a conversation with the late Dr. Vernon Grounds, former President of the Denver Seminary, about why God led me into a job that was obviously only going to last four months, his replay was **“God is the great chess player.”** Looking back on my life now I better understand what He was doing at the time. Do not question His judgment about anything! By this I mean don’t defy His judgment and wisdom. Just “trust and obey” it. However it is okay to ask Him why questions, He wants us to have “complete understanding” (Colossians 2:2-4). And consider the following teaching of Paul:

*“What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.’ It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: ‘I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.’ **Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. One of you will say to me: ‘Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?’ But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? ‘Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why did you make me like this?’”** “Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use” (Romans 9:14-21)?*

Although, as His children, you have been given direct access to the creator and supreme ruler of all creation (seen and unseen), remember who your relationship is with and respect Him in all you do and say! **I have questioned God about many things**

concerning life on this earth, fell prey to some of Satan's schemes and made many mistakes in my spiritual growth walk, but my father on earth taught me to "keep your eyes on Jesus." So I have learned to always respect His position and go to Him for grace, "the way, the truth and the life" and His power. **He is King and Lord over all of Creation!**

#### **D. How to Stand Firm After You Put on the Armor of God "It is Written"**

*"Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."* Ephesians 10-12

**Note that Paul says "when" the day of evil comes, not if.** When the devil tempted Christ in Luke 4:1-13, Christ ALWAYS used Scripture, and ONLY Scripture, to take his stand against the devil. Knowing God is much more powerful than Satan and that Scriptures' *"divine power to demolish strongholds..., demolish arguments..., and...take captive every thought,"* Jesus simply stood His ground with only Scripture as His weapon! **And He begins with the phrase "It is written."**

**Why did Christ use Scripture? Because Christ knew Satan fears God the Father** and that if He stood on (had faith in and obeyed) the truth of God's word, Satan would give up and go away, *"When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time"* (Luke 4:13). "Is that it?" you ask. "Is that all I have to do?" Yes, that's all there is and that's all you have to do! Do not battle with people. Do not battle with your flesh. Just quote Scripture to Satan, believe the Scripture and then trust in God's power and obey God. *"I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the LORD,"* (1 Kings 20:28). **Click on the following link to hear E.V. Hill's five minute video on "How to Make the Enemy Run,"** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YDSgZ5c3iw>.

**Following is a brief Action Plan:**

1. **Pray about everything!** Following is a sample spiritual warfare prayer from *Transforming Your Prayer Life*, by Dr. Bob Beltz, pastor, speaker, author and spiritual advisor to billionaire, Phil Anschutz. You can pray it for your family and business.

"Father, lead us not into temptation today. Deliver us from all the schemes and attacks of the evil one. I pray that You would keep me away from the attractions and seductions of sin today. Teach me the lessons I need to learn in some other way. Clothe me in the spiritual armor of righteousness, truthfulness, integrity and humility. I ask You to build a spiritual 'hedge' around our lives and our home today. By Your power and Your presence, protect our lives from the destructive attacks of the evil one. Cover us with your presence and release the host of heaven to come and surround our lives today. You are my refuge and fortress. Protect me today. Help me to live out of the reality of my position in the heavenlies and to exercise the spiritual authority You have vested me with."

2. **Read** the Bible regularly so the Holy Spirit can “remind you” of what Scripture says during Satan’s attacks, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.
3. **Obey** Scripture in your daily life.
4. **Allow** the Holy Spirit to sanctify you and teach you obedience, 1 Peter 5:8-9.
5. **“Resist** the devil, and he will flee from you,” (James 4:7). Resist means to repeal, not to agree with, not to receive his thoughts into your mind and soul and not to entertain anything that is contrary to the Word of God!
6. **Quote** Scripture back to Satan as Jesus did. Memorize a few key verses for this purpose, such as 1 John 5:11-13, 1 John 1:9, Galatians 2:20-21, John 15, John 15:9-12 and others as the Holy Spirit instructs you to memorize.
7. **Focus** on overcoming the world and Satan, 1 John 5:4-5.
8. **Unite** with other Christians. Make a declaration of interdependence with true “believers” and work together. Satan uses the age old strategy of “divide and conquer.” See Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

**And remember that sanctification is a process, not an event!** *“For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him”* (Romans 6:5-8). **To succeed in sanctification rely on the power of Christ living in you,** *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body (of sin), I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing”* (Galatians 2:20-21)!

**If you don’t have a Bible,** you can go online to [www.netbible.org](http://www.netbible.org). And if you want someone to talk to about the things in this letter, call us at ABA!

**In the next issue of *The Spirit Led Business*<sup>™</sup>, we will share insights on Walking in the Spirit “Christ in you, the Hope of Glory” as you live life in your earthly body and in a world over which Satan has dominion.** *“I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,”* (Colossians 1:25-27).

Note: All Bible verses are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

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