

Spiritual Warfare-4
“Ballistic Training”
Ephesians 6:18 (NIV)

Hey Newsong! I want to take a moment to welcome all of our first time guests, welcome back our second-time guests and let's welcome our church family watching with us online today!

We're finishing a series all about spiritual warfare...don't worry...if you missed any of the messages in this series, you can go back and check them out...just go to the app!

What we've been learning is that every single one of us (whether you believe in God or not) is involved in a spiritual battle...It's a battle between the forces of good and evil, light and darkness, Heaven and hell...

It's a battle for our soul...

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 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.

Paul's informing us that we have a very real and powerful enemy...

The devil wants to keep you blind...

The devil wants to keep you ignorant...

The devil wants to keep you distracted...

And he's constantly planning an attack to take you out!

We learned that he will attack us through temptation...He'll try to trap us into sin by using our own likes and desires against us...

He'll use the world...it's philosophies, and arguments that go against the word of God...

And we learned that most of the time the battlefield is in our mind...our thoughts. He's constantly bombarding us with lies and deception...

But we've also learned that we're not alone in the battle. The Holy Spirit in us empowers us to stand firm in the fight. We have three powerful weapons to use in the battle...

The Name of Jesus

The Blood of Jesus

The Word of Jesus

And with these weapons we can overcome temptations, we can break down strongholds and we can take every thought captive and make them obedient to Christ!

In week three we had our weapons training and we dove into the spiritual armor that we have in Jesus...

13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Now as we close today, we're going to have some ballistic training. In the military, ballistic training is learning the art of firing your weapon so that the bullet or missile hits the target.

It's one thing to have a weapon, it's another thing to know how to shoot that weapon with accuracy...What weapon are we talking about? The powerful weapon of prayer!

18 And pray 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 Lord's people.-Ephesians 6:10-18

Prayer is the power behind all of our armor! 18th century poet and hymn writer William Cowper wrote...

"Satan trembles when he sees, the weakest Saint upon his knees"

In his book "Pilgrim's Progress" John Bunyan writes about Christian who's on his way to the celestial city when he finds himself in "The Valley of the Shadow." As he's walking along with all of his armor on...he finds himself in front of the mouth of hell facing Apollyon (the devil).

He pulls out the sword of the Spirit but he gets frustrated because he realizes that Apollyon isn't afraid of it. So he puts his sword back into its sheath, and he drops to his knees and begins to pray...

As he's using this mighty weapon the forces of hell are driven back...God drove them back through the power of believing prayer!

We can't fight with our power...we need God's power to stand against the enemy...

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.-Ephesians 6:10

It's not our power or our strength it's God's power and God's strength...Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:10 "...For when I am weak, then I am strong. In other words...we find our strength by relying on God's power!

Remember when David faced Goliath? Goliath was wearing all of that armor and he had like a 12 foot spear...David didn't have any armor on...he was dressed like a shepherd and he just had a sling and 5 stones...

Goliath starts trash talking and David said

...“You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.-1 Samuel 17:45 (NIV)

The power is God's...

The Prophet Zechariah said

...‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty.-Zechariah 4:6 (NIV)

If we want to experience victory in our battles against the enemy we need to be people who pray!

Paul gives us 4 aspects of prayer that win the battle...

We should pray in the **SPIRIT**

18 And pray in the Spirit... In other words, we're praying under the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit...

"Let the Spirit be the atmosphere in which you pray." -*William Barclay*

Remember, our battle 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...where are they? In the heavenly realms... So our prayers should be influenced, and directed by the Holy Spirit...

When our prayers are influenced and directed by the Holy Spirit they will always be according to God's will and God's Word.

The Holy Spirit helps us to pray and is the power behind our prayer

26 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 through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.-Romans 8:26-27 (NIV)

Here's how the Holy Spirit helps us pray in the battle...He prays for us in our weakness...He helps us carry our burdens in prayer

He inspires us to pray...He gives us the desire to pray...and then He empowers us to pray!
We'll get back to this idea of praying in the Spirit in a second because there's another aspect of praying in the Spirit that is very powerful...

But the idea here is that we want our prayers to be Spirit-led not self-led...

So if we're living our life in such a way where we are resisting the Holy Spirit in a certain area, or we're disobeying Him, we're grieving Him in some way...It hinders our prayers...We'll miss or ignore His leading...and it ultimately weakens us in the battle!

So the first thing we need to know is that we need to pray in the Spirit...He's the power source!

We should **ALWAYS** be praying

18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions

Paul tells us to pray on all occasions. This means that we should be getting into the habit of talking to God not just on a regular basis, but we should talk to Him in every situation.

It's okay to have a set time to pray...maybe it's in the morning or late at night...nothing wrong with that, but did you notice that attacks from the enemy don't always come at set times?

Stresses, worries, anxieties, doubts, temptations...they come throughout the day...sometimes rapid fire...

What would happen if we started to look for other opportunities within our 24 hour day to pray? This is a theme we see throughout the scriptures...

In Romans 12 Paul says

12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. -Romans 12:12 (ESV)

And again in 1 Thessalonians he says

17 pray without ceasing, -1 Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV)

We read that and we think...that's impossible I can't be praying all of the time! I have to go to work, I have to go to school...

Paul's not speaking about the act of praying, he's talking about having an attitude of prayer...A heart that's ready to talk to God at any moment because we're sensitive to the Holy Spirit...

Like Philip in Acts 8...

He's serving in the early church...just like you
He's filled with the Spirit of God...just like you

He's sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and he has a heart that's ready...

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."

27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian[a] eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”-Acts 8:26-29 (NIV)

And what happens? Philip ends up leading this high-ranking and influential man to Jesus...who then brings the Gospel to Africa. All because He has a Spirit-led readiness to talk to God at all times!

I read a Linked In article this week that said the average person speaks between 7 & 10,000 words a day...the article was about making your words count when you're communicating to people in the business world...

Now what if we took that same mindset but instead of using most of our words to communicate to people, we used more of them to communicate to God?

You're thinking I don't have the time...

No, no you're thinking you only have those few minutes before work, or before you go to bed...

I'm saying you have other opportunities to take advantage of...

Pray in the shower

Pray when you're getting ready

Pray when you're walking to the train or bus

Pray when you're on the train or bus...

Pray while you're at work

Stay at home Mom's pray on those 1 minute pee breaks that you get...

Take every opportunity you can to talk to God!

18 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. -Luke 18:1 (NIV)

What situations could you pray about?

How many people could you pray for?

Is it possible that God would want to use you to lead your friend, or your family member, or your co-worker, or that person on the train to Christ, but we're not talking to Him enough to hear Him?

Okay so if you want to be victorious when the enemy strikes...We've got to have our armor...we've got to be praying in the Spirit, and we need to always be praying...always talking to God in any and every situation!

Here's where a lot of people get stuck because they're like...what do I say to God? What prayers should I pray?

I only know the dinner prayer from blue bloods...

“Bless us Oh Lord for these gifts that we’re about to receive from Your bountiful hands in Christ our Lord Amen”

We should pray **ALL KINDS** of prayers
...with all kinds of prayers and requests.-Ephesians 6:18

We don’t just pray one kind of prayer...We pray different kinds of prayer for the situation that we’re in...

Prayer isn’t just asking God for things...

God I need a job...

God I need a spouse...

God I need healing...

It’s okay to ask God for things, but that’s only one kind of prayer...

The NIV calls them requests...
Some translations call them petitions...
It's where I'm asking God for something

There's times where we're called to pray for someone else...In other words, someone else is in the battle...someone else needs a blessing, needs a healing...

This kind of prayer is called intercession.
By the way...when you're going through it...when you're in the battle and the enemy is lying to you, tempting you, shooting those fiery darts your way...

Remember that you have two powerful intercessors...

Romans 8:24 tells us that The Lord Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God and what's He doing? He's praying for us...Interceding on our behalf...

Romans 8:26 tells us that The Holy Spirit lives in us and is praying for us...He's interceding for us...

There's Prayers of confession. We're confessing to God that we've sinned...We're going about our day and the Holy Spirit checks us...Hey that's gossiping...

We simply say Lord forgive me for those words, Lord forgive me for how I handled that situation, Lord forgive me for giving in to that temptation, Lord forgive me for not doing what You asked me to, when you asked me to!
David wrote...

1 Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 2 Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

4 For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.[b]5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin.-Psalm 32:1-5 (NIV)

John writes...

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. -1 John 1:9 (NIV)

If we're walking with the Spirit of God we're always praying prayers of confession because He's always leading us closer to Jesus!

There's prayers of Thanksgiving...

Prayers of Praise...

Again you don't have to worry about praying the "wrong prayer" because the Holy Spirit will help you to pray the right prayer at the right time!

Which leads me back to another kind of prayer that is included in praying in the Spirit and that is a beautiful result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit...

That is praying in tongues. When we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit we're given a powerful prayer language that enables us to communicate directly to God...when we don't know what to pray!

2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue[a] does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit.- 1 Corinthians 14:2 (NIV)

Praying in tongues actually builds us up spiritually speaking...

4 Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves...1 Corinthians 14:4 (NIV)

20 But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, -Jude 1:20 (NIV)

So the Holy Spirit prays in us, And He prays through us...He gives us a prayer language we can use...When the battle is raging...when we don't know what to pray...we can fire our weapon of Spirit guided prayer into the heavenly realms!

If you want to pray victoriously...
We've got to pray in the Spirit...
With His power and guidance...

We've got to always be praying
With all kinds of requests and prayers...

We should pray for **EACH OTHER**

18 ...With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.-Ephesians 6:10-18

Notice once again the readiness we're to have...We need to be alert...We don't want to be caught off guard by the enemy...

Remember he's always scheming against us...we need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading to pray...

He says it again "keep on praying"...

In other words...

Be persistent...

To many people give up after praying a couple of times...remember Luke 18! Jesus tells the parable of the persistent widow to show us that we should keep praying...

Persistence is the magic bullet. The only way you can fail is if you stop praying. 100 percent of the prayers I don't pray won't get answered.-Mark Batterson

Keep on praying!

Don't get discouraged...

Don't give up...

Keep praying until you get an answer...

We call these "Push" prayers...

We're going to "Pray until something happens"

God will answer your prayer...

His answer is always yes, no, or not now...

Sometimes God says no...and that's got to be okay, because we don't want anything that's not in His will...

And His plan is always better than our plan!

So we keep praying

Not just for our needs...or our situations...but for the needs and situations of others...

We see this all through the scriptures...

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.-James 5:16 (NIV)

2 I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—1 Timothy 2:1 (NIV)

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.-Philippians 4:6 (NIV)

We need to hold each other up in prayer...This means that we also need to ask each other for prayer...

Some people think...I shouldn't ask for prayer...Well why not? Paul asks for prayer and he wrote most of the NT...It's not part of the armor, look at what Paul says in the next verse...

19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.-Ephesians 6:19-20 (NIV)

Notice that Paul's prayer isn't coming from a selfish place...He's actually in prison when he's writing this letter...

He doesn't say "Pray for my release"

He doesn't say "Pray that I won't suffer"

He doesn't say "Pray that I won't be in pain"

He says pray for me that everytime I speak my words would be used to tell others about Jesus...

His main concern was that people who are far from God would be saved...

How does this connect with spiritual warfare?

The devil had Paul locked up in prison...
But the devil couldn't stop Paul from praying...
The devil couldn't stop Paul from encouraging
the churches...

The devil couldn't stop Paul from plundering
hell and populating Heaven

Which lets me know that no matter what battle
I'm in, the devil is powerless to stop my
prayers...

Now matter what I'm facing, the devil is
powerless to stop me from praying for others to
be saved and set free!

I may be limited in where I can go...
I may be limited in what I can say...
I may be limited in many different ways...

But my prayers are not limited by time or
space...

This means that we don't have to wait for attacks to come before we pray...

We don't have to wait for problems to arise before we pray...Our prayers are so powerful

What if we got on the offensive and we started preemptively shooting out prayers into the heavenly realms?

Prayers that are led by the Spirit and in alignment with God's Word...

Prayers of salvation, prayers of healing, prayers of deliverance, prayers of provision, prayers of blessing, prayers of revival, prayers of protection...

Pray for your family and friends...

Pray in the Name of Jesus...

Plead the Blood of Jesus...

Stand on the Word of Jesus...

If you're not married and you want to be married...This means that you can pray for your future spouse now...

You can pray for your future children now...
You can pray for your future grandchildren now...

You can pray that generations to come will love and serve Jesus with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength...They will be world changers in Jesus Name!

“Our prayers don't have an expiration date on them...They don't expire when we do...God will answer some of them long after we are long gone!”-Mark Batterson

I know that we just finished 21 days of prayer...But let's not stop praying...Let's put on the whole armor and keep on praying in the Spirit...and let's take ground for Jesus!

What's the Holy Spirit Saying To You?