

## Ephesians 6

**Ephesians 6**  
**Tape #8175**  
**Pastor Chuck Smith**

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Ephesians, chapter six.

In the fifth chapter as Paul deals with the believers' walk, we are to walk in love, to walk as children of light and we are to walk circumspectly or diligently, accurately, carefully or perfectly, as we looked at that Greek word in its many shades of meaning. And having told us to walk in love and to walk circumspectly and to walk as children of the light, he then went into our inter-personal relationships. Telling us how we should walk in relationship to our wives, if we are husbands, or walk in relationship to our husbands, if we are wives.

As we enter into chapter six he is still dealing with inter-personal relationships. He turns first of all in chapter six to the children. The commandment is, *Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.* The "in the Lord" would seem to be a qualifying kind of a term. There are some parents who demand of their children things that are not godly. And if a child is ordered by his parents into an activity that is sinful, then the child has the obligation really to not submit to the authority of the parent if they are demanding some evil practice of the child. We read of parents who send their children out to steal. We read of parents who demand that their children submit to them sexually and things of this nature.

Obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>*Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)* <sup>3</sup>*That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.* In the giving of the Ten Commandments in the book of Exodus, you have the two tables of stone. The commandments are divided—four, that deal with your relationship with God and six that deal with your relationship with fellow man. The four that deal with the relationship with God were written on the first table of stone. On the second table of stone were the six commandments that dealt with our relationship with each other. The first of the six, that is in our relationship to each other, the second table of stone, was the law to honor your mother and your father, that it may be well with you that your days may be long in the land that is given to you. It is the first commandment it says with promise, that is, if you honor your father and your mother, you will dwell in this land that God has given to you. One of the basic foundations of society is the family and the family living in proper relationship with each other. And the parents submitting one to another in love. Husbands loving the wives as Jesus loved the church and gave Himself for it. And the wives submitting unto the husbands as unto the Lord. And the children then, in obedience to the parents, honoring their father and their mother. That's the basic family structure.

When that structure breaks down, society breaks down. We see this happening today. We see our society breaking down because of the breakdown within the family relation. We have a situation today where we have young people who are not honoring their parents. Many of them are from, actually, single parent homes. Many of them don't even know who their parents are. There has been a break down in the relationship between the husband and wife. The children are growing up in a society where they are in rebellion against their parents and against any kind of authority. And we see how that it is causing a tremendous breakdown in society.

I heard a statistic the other day that by the year 2010, there will be forty million children in the world without parents because of the AIDS epidemic. Can you imagine what that will be?

Today in South America, in some of the major cities, such as Buenos Aires, the children run in packs in the streets. They live on the streets. They survive by stealing. They are almost looked upon as sub-human. It's a great tragedy. But when a nation gets to the place where you have this kind of a

breakdown in the family relationship, that nation is not going to stand very long. And so the promise is to honor your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land in which the Lord your God has given you. If this kind of a relation breaks down, you can be sure that the society is in a state of collapse and it won't be long unto the nation will be conquered and overrun.

In two places in the New Testament, one in Romans, chapter one, as Paul lists a society that has been corrupted and is breaking down, one of the marks of the breakdown of society was the children were disobedient to their parents.

In the second letter to Timothy, chapter three, Paul said in the last days, perilous times will come. Men will be lovers of their own selves, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. As he begins to give conditions, they are unthankful, unholy. Disobedient to parents. So this breakdown within the family is a very serious kind of a sign of the breakdown of society.

So children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your mother and your father. Now if you have come from a Godly home, if you have a Godly heritage, as you count your blessings, place that somewhere close to the top of the blessings. I thank God for the Godly home that I was privileged to grow up in. The Godly parents who taught me the things of the Lord and what a blessing! And I thank God for that! Over and over, for the heritage that I had, growing up in a Christian home. Parents, provide your children that kind of a heritage. Provide them a loving environment where they may grow up and know that they are loved and they are taught to honor God and to respect the things of the Lord.

So, that it may be well with you that you may live long on the earth.

Now, going to the fathers. <sup>4</sup>*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:* I have observed with great pain, foolish fathers who got some kind of ghoulish delight in teasing their children until they came to a point of distraction. Holding out maybe a candy and then as a child reaches for it, then pulling it back, and doing this over and over again until the child begins to just scream, totally frustrated. Somehow they think it's cute to see this child just losing it. And that's a very sad, pathetic thing to do to a child.

Don't provoke your children to wrath. We can provoke our children to wrath by making unreasonable demands on them. That is, unreasonable, in the light that as they say, well, why daddy? It should never be, because I'm daddy and I say so. Explain to them the fears that you have or the concerns that you have when you have prohibited them from certain activities. Sit down and talk with them, explain to them why you are not allowing them to do a certain thing or why you don't want them to go to a certain place. Explain it to them. Don't just use an authority that is not reasonable, but be able to reason with your child and let them know your love for them, your concern for them, and the dangers that you can perceive in certain activities or certain friends.

And don't provoke them to wrath by making unreasonable demands on them. Sometimes we set standards that are higher than they are capable of obtaining. We often times see parents who want to relive their youths vicariously through their children. And thus they want their children to be able to do things that they were not able to do and to excel in places where they didn't excel. They often are pushing their children beyond the child's capacity. And again, so often frustration is the result. When a child is being forced to try and do something that is beyond their capacity. And so it brings them to a state of frustration and provokes them to anger.

So fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, *but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Oh, what a glorious thing! As you bring your children up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord!

David said, oh God, Thou has taught me from my youth. And hitherto have I declared Thy wondrous works. Now, also when I am old and gray headed, oh God, forsake me not, until I have

showed Your strength unto this generation and Your power to everyone that is to come. Lord, I'm old and growing gray headed, but let me stick around long enough to show to the children, this coming generation, Your power. And what a glorious privilege that is--to bring the children up in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord.

In Psalm seventy-eight, he said, we will not hide them, that is God's truth, from our children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and His strength and His wonderful work, which He has done. For He established the testimony in Jacob, He appointed the law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children. That the generation to come might know them, even the children that should be born who should arise and declare them to their children. So the glorious truths and the works of God are to be passed from one generation to another generation.

In the Hebrew culture, God established many different types of memorials that were intended to cause the children to question the parents, why are we doing this? And it gave the parents the opportunity to share with the children, the wonderful works of God in the history of their nation. How God had been with them and delivered them out of Egypt, had God preserved them in the wilderness.

So the annual feasts were memorial feasts, the Feast of Passover. And at the Feast of Passover, the child asked what makes this night different from all other nights? And the father then explains to the children how we are observing the night when our fathers were delivered out of Egypt and how God preserved the first born by the blood of the lamb that was over the door post on the lentils of their houses. It gave them a chance to rehearse how that the nation was born by the hand of God. Then as they came through the Jordan River into the Promised Land, the priests were to take twelve stones out of the river and pile them up in a pile next to the river. And in time to come when your children say, what is that pile of stones there? Again the father is able to relate to them how that God had stopped the Jordan River and their fathers were able to cross the Jordan River even at flood time in order to come into the land that God had promised to give to them. And so all the way along there were these things that would give the parents an opportunity to explain the hand of God and the power of God in the nation, so the children were brought up in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord. Actually David tells the reason that they might set their hope in God and not forget the work of God, but keep His commandments.

Solomon said, for I was my father's son. Now, that's too wise. He's supposed to be a wise man, but I think we can all say that. I was my father's son or daughter. But he said, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother. He taught me also and said unto me, let your heart retain my words. Keep my commandments and live. So David sat down with Solomon. And he taught him. That is what we fathers are to do, not to provoke our children to wrath, but to bring them up in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord, sharing with them the things of the Lord.

Then turning to servants. This would in these days be employees. So usually you are either an employer or you are an employee. <sup>5</sup>*Servants (employees), be obedient to them that are your masters (employers) according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;* Now we are exhorted in the Scriptures that whatever we do in word or deed we should do all to the glory of God. We should things as unto the Lord.

So if I am an employee, I am to be diligent. I am act as though as I am serving the Lord in doing my job, in doing the work. I am to do it as unto the Lord. Obedient to those that are my employers, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.

I, for many years, worked for Alpha Beta Markets in order to provide for the needs of the family, so that I could remain in the ministry. The churches that I pastored were not able to pay a salary adequate to maintain the needs of the family, so Alpha Beta Markets were very gracious to me. They employed

me for several years. They paid me a very good salary. But many times when I would go to a store, I found that, at times, I would need to do the work of a janitor. If the store was not in order, and the janitor was off, I would often dust the floors, or do other work. I would clean up the papers, dump the garbage cans and so forth. And I thought if they want to pay me the wages they are paying me to empty trash cans, I'll not too great to empty trash cans. I mean, I still got the same high wage. This is great you know. It's a no brainer, yet they are paying me well for doing it. I didn't say, you know, my dad was from a wealthy home. He said, Smiths never scrub floors. He, I mean, he sort of lived that. Well, he was sort of a poor aristocrat in a way because he grew up in an aristocratic home. But, it didn't pass on to me. If Alpha Beta wants to pay me those high wages and they need a box-boy. I'll go up and box. I would do whatever needed to be done because they paid me well. So why should I be concerned if it seemed like a very menial type of a task? It doesn't matter. You do it as unto the Lord. You expect to receive your reward really, from the Lord.

<sup>6</sup>*Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers;* Now you know if you are working around in a place, you know that there are those that are always polishing the apple, you know. They slough off until the boss comes around and then, ooooh, they look like they are really, you know, diligent and all. But I mean they are doing it all for a big show. And here you are steady and you are working, and they are sloughing off until the boss comes around and then, oh boy. We shouldn't be doing it that way. We shouldn't be men pleasers, with eyeservice.

*but as the servants of Christ,* Again, relating it unto the Lord. I need to think of it as serving the Lord, working for the Lord, being really a witness for the Lord.

But as the servants of Christ, *doing the will of God from the heart;* And so whatever you do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God! Thus you do it diligently. You do it honestly. You do it fervently.

<sup>7</sup>*With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:* And that needs to be our constant attitude. I'm doing this as unto the Lord and not to men. I'm doing it to receive from the Lord. Now, if I am doing it as unto the Lord, I should not gripe about doing it, because the Lord really hates griping servants. A lot of times when people have done something special, but then they go about and they are complaining about what they did and all, I often feel, look, I'd rather you not do it at all, than to do it and then to complain about it. It's better that you don't do it. It's good to do things with a cheerful heart. In doing them as unto the Lord. Knowing that from the Lord, ultimately, you are going to receive from the Lord the reward.

The parking lot here at Calvary Chapel is a place where of course we have high school students. They come and they park here. So often they drop by one of the convenience stores and they buy the large sized sodas or whatever. When they get to school, they have a tendency to just, rather than just bring their cups in and dropping them in the trash can, just set them in the parking lot next to their car. In the afternoon when the students have left the parking lot is generally pretty trashy. We have considered different ways by which we might train these young people. And they are not the only ones. There are people that come and eat their lunch here at Calvary. They park out under the shade trees. And then they leave all of the papers and all as they drive off. They don't bother to take their trash with them, but they leave the trash in the parking lot.

But with the students we have considered maybe giving them a parking fee so that we could pay someone to clean up the parking lot when they leave. And maybe if they had to pay a parking fee of five dollars a month or something, that they would realize that we are serious about wanting the parking lot clean.

But I've developed quite a skill driving in my car. I can open the door and reach down as I am going along and pick up the trash and then I head to the big trash can in the back. I can clean up the parking lot in just about five or ten minutes. But you see the church pays me a great salary, so if they

want to pay me for cleaning up the parking lot, who am I to complain? But I do it as unto the Lord.

I have to confess when I first started doing it, I was griping. The Lord spoke to me about that. He said if you are going to gripe about it, don't do it. Leave it trashy. Well, I don't like to see it trashy so I said, okay, Lord, I'll do it as unto You. So I get a reward from the Lord. I feel good about it. I'm just doing unto Him to please Him. It's amazing the different attitude that you can have in doing the things that you are doing. If you think that you are doing them as unto man, you can get angry. You can say, oh those dirty children. Why don't they keep this clean? Or you can do it as unto the Lord, Praise the Lord! This is Your place. I want it to look clean, Lord and I'm doing this unto You. So that when people come onto the grounds, they don't see a lot of trash, but they see a place that is neat and clean, you know. That's good! To learn to do things as unto the Lord because you'll do them with a totally different attitude. It's amazing how that your attitude affects the way you do things. And how it affects you in how you do them. You are either doing them with anger and it's poisoning your system, or you are doing them with joy and you are being blessed because you are doing it as unto the Lord. That's basically what Paul tells the employee to do your work as you are doing it unto the Lord.

Then for the employer, <sup>8</sup>*Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, He is the One that's going to reward you, whether he be bond or free.* <sup>9</sup>*And, ye masters (you employers), do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.* When you stand before the Lord, there is no respect of persons. Well, I was boss. And that will mean nothing to Him. Or, I was rich. That will mean nothing to Him. He has no respect for person. You will be judged according to what you have done not according to what position you may have held.

<sup>10</sup>*Finally, my brethren, (He is coming now to the end of the letter.) be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.* In the first part of the letter, the first three chapters were devoted to the believer's stand, what you are and what you have as a believer. The believer's standing in Christ, all of the blessings that God has bestowed, all of the power that God has made available to you to live the Christian life.

Having spent the first three chapters, telling what you are in Christ and what you have through Christ, he then tells us in chapter four, five and in the first part of chapter six, here, of how we should walk.

Now he enters into the final section of the Book, finally brethren. He is talking about how we should stand. The believer's warfare. It starts out with the wealth of the believers, chapter one, two and three. The walk of the believers in chapter four, five and part of six. And then the warfare of the believers, if you want it in the "w's"—the wealth, the walk and the warfare of the believer. Or sitting, walking and standing.

And so finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might! Not in the power of your might. We stand in the power of His might! Our strength is not in ourselves. Our strength is in Him. We don't look within ourselves for that inner reserve or that inner strength. We look to Him to strengthen us in our weakness.

Paul said, when I am weak, then I am strong. For His strength is made perfect in my weakness. If I look for my strength to come from my inner self, that may get me through a small trial, but I tell you, when you get to the big ones, you'll find that this is not sufficient. You have to reach out beyond yourself and find your strength in the Lord. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might!

And then, <sup>11</sup>*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* Satan is a wily foe, and to stand against the wiles of Satan. There are many Scriptures that speak to us of standing against this subtlety and the wiles of Satan.

The gospel of Mark, for false christs and false prophets shall rise and shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

In Second Corinthians 2:11, Paul said, lest Satan should get advantage of us for we are not ignorant of his devices. But that is one of the problems, many times we are ignorant of his devices.

In Second Corinthians 11:3, for I fear lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your mind should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. But the subtlety that is in Satan.

In Second Corinthians 11:13, beginning with thirteen, for such are false apostles. They are deceitful workers transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel for Satan himself, is transformed into an angel of light; therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.

In Second Thessalonians, speaking of the antichrist, he said, even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish because they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

So, subtleties, and deceit. He speaks about how he will deceive the nations and deceive the people and the wiles of the Devil. We have a very powerful foe. We have a very wily foe. He is out to trip you up. He desires to destroy you! It is a spiritual battle and therefore God has given to us, spiritual armament, wherewith we can stand these attacks of the enemy against us. Physical weapons have no value in this battle.

We have to be using the spiritual weapons that God has made available to us because as he tells us in verse twelve, <sup>12</sup>*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* It is a spiritual battle! And the weapons, Paul said, of our warfare are not carnal or fleshly, but they are mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of the enemy.

So the first thing is to recognize that the real conflict is spiritual. I think that many times Satan is using his wily tactics against us and is subtly hiding behind the physical things, but he is manipulating them to draw us into a physical conflict with him. If Satan can draw you into the flesh, into a physical conflict, he has the decided advantage over you. But if we war against him, in the Spirit with the spiritual weapons that have been made available to us then we have the decided advantage over him! So often as we get under an attack we react and we respond in the flesh, not recognizing the spiritual nature of the conflict.

And so first one of the “Rs” (there are three “Rs”), and the first is to recognize that this is an attack of the enemy. Now it may take many forms. It may be coming from someone at work. And they are subtly attacking us. We think, well, who do they think they are? That’s not right. And you know, we immediately fall into the trap. We get involved in a physical kind of exchange. We need to recognize this is an attack of Satan, especially when the charges are so totally spurious and wrong. We get righteously indignant! I’m going to defend myself and all.

I’ve found that if you defend yourself, the Lord will let you. But if you let the Lord defend you, He’ll do a much better job than you could ever do.

So you need to recognize that this is an attack of Satan. That’s not always easy because of the wily way in which he attacks you. It isn’t always easy to recognize that this is a Satanic attack. But once you do recognize it then you can deal with it. Until you recognize it, you are going to really get hurt. I mean he is really going to work you over. But the minute you recognize that this is an attack of Satan, then you start to respond and to react to it, by refusing it. I don’t have to take from Satan any kind of guff. I can refuse the attacks!

And then the third “R” is to rejoice that God has given to us the power of His Spirit. And He has given to us the Spiritual weapons whereby we can repel the attack!

Jesus said concerning Satan, the prince of this world cometh and he has nothing in Me.

In John, he tells us that whosoever is born of God doesn’t practice sin because the Lord’s seed is in us. And we do not practice sin, actually Satan cannot touch us! So I rejoice in my position of victory in Christ Jesus!

<sup>13</sup>*Wherefore* (because this is a spiritual battle) *take unto you the whole armour of God*, Now so often we get caught up in trying to describe the various bits of armor and how they covered the Grecian or the Roman soldier. But we are to take the whole armor of God. And it isn’t the breastplate that the Grecian’s had. It’s the righteousness that I have in Christ Jesus. That’s the spiritual armor. I am covered by the righteousness of Christ! And Satan’s attacks are often against you in condemning you.

And as Paul said, who is he who condemneth? It is Christ who has died? Yet He has rather risen again! And He is even at the right hand of the Father making intercession! And I am in the righteousness of Christ accepted by God because my righteousness is through my faith in Jesus Christ and is complete.

So when Satan comes and begins to condemn me and all, I am defended by this righteousness that I have through my faith in Jesus Christ.

We shouldn’t make a big emphasis on the physical aspects--as he makes analogies to the physical armament of the soldier--but we need to look at the spiritual because the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but they are mighty through God. And it is putting on the whole armor of God.

*that ye may be able to withstand* (That is, withstand the attacks from the enemy.) *in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.* <sup>14</sup>*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth*, So the first part of our Spiritual armor is truth!

Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the light.

Today philosophy has become a philosophy of despair because they have despaired of discovering truth. The philosophers have concluded that truth does not exist in a universal form. Truth is what you believe truth to be. It is a personal kind of experiencing of truth. If you experience it to be truth, then it is truth to you. But it isn’t necessarily true for all of us. And they despaired of discovering truth, the philosophy of despair.

Pilate, when Jesus said He had come to bear witness of the truth, he said in a cynical way, what is truth?

The world has despaired of hoping to find truth. So what do you do? Well, according to the philosophy, you have to take a leap of faith into the second story, hoping there is something there when you land. You can’t be sure that there is, but you have to be told you can’t live in despair, so you have to take a leap of faith into what they call, unreasoned spiritual experiences, where you have some kind of a conscienceness of bliss or peace. This can be obtained through drugs or through certain types of meditation. You come into an altered state of conscienceness. Therein is you know, your answer, your search and your quest, in this altered state of conscienceness where you have an experience of feeling just a warmth and peace and love, you know. But you can’t explain it.

But Christianity is not an unreasonable, spiritual experience.

Peter said, be ready to give to every man a reason for the hope that you have. Christianity does not call you into a leap of faith into some kind of unreasonable spiritual experience. Come now, let’s reason together, says the Lord. The Lord never asked you to take this leap of faith into some kind of a unreasonable experience. But come and let us reason together.

So truth is a part of our defense against the lies of Satan. And how important is truth today? And Satan has lied and said, there is not truth. But there is! Jesus is truth!

*and having on the breastplate of righteousness;* The breastplate of righteousness. And as we talked earlier, this is again a glorious defense that we have against the attacks of Satan. He is constantly accusing us, pointing out our flaws, pointing out our failures, trying to drive us away from Jesus Christ by saying that because of our sin and our failure, we are not worthy to ask the Lord or to come to the Lord. He is seeking to drive you away from the Lord with His accusation. But thank God I stand in the righteousness of Jesus Christ! And as Satan comes and attacks me by showing me my weaknesses, my failures, then when he starts to condemn me, I just flee into the righteousness of Christ. I say, thank You, Father, that you account me righteous through my faith in Jesus Christ. It is a great armor against Satan's attack—the breastplate. The Greek word is *thorax*. It's the heart, and the covering of the heart, righteousness.

<sup>15</sup>*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;* So the next bit is the gospel of peace. And this the idea of the feet. It is in the Scripture, used in a symbolic way of bearing the gospel to others.

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of them who bear tidings of good things, who bring the gospel.

So that is the sharing of the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, the gospel of peace. It is possible for man to have peace with God. You don't have to be at war with God. You don't have to be at odds with God. You can have peace with God. Jesus Christ has made possible for us to have peace with God. And so that sharing of the truth of the gospel with others.

<sup>16</sup>*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.* And so we think now of this armor of faith. I've put my faith and my trust in Jesus Christ. And Satan cannot penetrate as I maintain and hold on to the faith in Jesus Christ. He may throw all kinds of fiery darts at me, all kinds of accusations, but thank God my faith in the finished work in Jesus Christ keeps me secure from all of these fiery darts of the wicked one.

<sup>17</sup>*And take the helmet of salvation,* And then salvation. I have been redeemed from a life of sin through Jesus Christ. I have been born again. Though Satan may assail me, thank God, He has redeemed me.

This knowledge of my salvation, this assurance of salvation, is a tremendous weapon against Satan, who tries to tell you many times, well, you're not really saved. How can you do that if you are a child of God? Look, what you just did! He tries to dissuade you from your salvation. But thank God, I can withstand those attacks because of the finished work of Jesus Christ and my faith in Him. These things all really sort of go together.

*and the sword of the Spirit, which is (of course) the word of God:* Now we get into a part of our armor which is both defensive and offensive. Now, I can begin to battle against Satan. I can begin to respond to his attacks. And what is my response? The Word of God. When Satan began to attack Jesus in the temptation, Jesus responded to the attack with the Word of God. It is written, man shall not live by bread alone. It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only. It is written thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. And so He answered the attacks of Satan with the Word of God.

David said, Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.

Jesus said now you are clean through the Word that I have spoken unto you.

The Word of God in your heart is a defense against the enemy and the attacks of the enemy. But it is also through the Word of God that we can begin to attack the enemy and his stronghold that he has in people's lives.

So often times as we are seeking to witness to someone, we find ourselves in arguments. We try to answer their questions and the difficulties that they suppose with the gospel. The Word, how it came

to life, you know, and these kind of things. We get involved in issues that are not important to the gospel.

I read of a Salvation Army lassie who was witnessing for Christ in one of the parks in Chicago, when a well-known man began to argue with her. He started bringing up some of these supposed discrepancies in the Bible and all. She would answer, well sir, I really don't know about that, but the Scripture says that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, will cleanse a man from all sin. He said, but I don't believe the Scriptures. It's a bunch of hogwash and all. How can you believe that stuff? She said, well, I don't know, all I know is that the Bible says, that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, will cleanse a man from all sin. And he would go on his tirade again. She would say, well, I'm really not sure, but I know that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, will cleanse a man from all sin. And finally he walked away, just fuming and raving as he was going down the park, you know, the stupid ignorance of these people who claim to be Christians.

But the next day as she was there in the park, he came up and he said, what did you say the Bible said? It will cleanse from all sin? And the Word of God got to him. And he accepted the Lord! He accepted the forgiveness. It was the Word of God that got through!

And so often, we are witnessing but we are not using the Word of God. And it's important that we use the Scripture because what you say will soon be forgotten, but the Word of God has a way of penetrating to the heart. So it is a sharp two-edged sword. It's able to divide between the soul and the spirit. So it is a glorious weapon that we have.

<sup>18</sup>*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit*, And then finally, praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. What a tremendous weapon, prayer is in our fight against Satan! This Spiritual weapon whereby we can join hands with God, so to speak, in the accomplishing of God's purposes here on earth. By prayer, we can drive Satan off of territory, that he is holding by usurped authority and power. By prayer we can open the eyes of people, whose eyes have been blinded by Satan.

The god of this world, Paul said, has blinded their eyes that they cannot see the truth. But by prayer I can open their eyes to see the truth. Satan holds people in darkness who can't see the light. But we can bring the light to them through prayer. When you really look at the gospel, it is the most reasonable thing that you could ever come across. The fact that God loves us and has sent His Son to die for our sin. He will redeem our souls from death by our simple believing in Him. And all of the prophecies of the Old Testament that were fulfilled by Jesus. When you start putting it all together, it's the most reasonable, glorious offer ever made to man. Any sound, sane, intelligent man would gladly receive it. But when their eyes are blinded by Satan, when they are kept captive and in bondage by him, they can't see it! That's the problem.

So through prayer we can bind Satan's power and open their eyes so that they can see the truth. And once a person has been delivered to see the truth, it's just natural to accept the glorious truth that God has made provision for man's sin through Jesus Christ. You don't need to perish but you can have everlasting life.

So this praying always with all prayer and supplication. Supplication is incessant, fervent, prayer. And that's in the Spirit.

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, said when I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prays though my understanding is unfruitful. Paul said in Romans, chapter eight, the Spirit also helps our weaknesses because we don't always know how to pray as we ought, but he makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. So praying in the Spirit. You can do it by praying in an unknown tongue, if God has given you that gift.

If he hasn't given you that gift and your heart is just burdened and heavy. If it's so heavy over a

situation that you find that you can't really articulate your requests and your spirit is groaning, God understands the groaning of your spirit as intercession, according to God's will. Or you can pray, now Lord, help me. I want to pray for this individual. Give me Your wisdom. Give me Your insight, Lord. May the Holy Spirit guide my prayer. I often as I am praying, at the beginning of my prayer, I'll ask the Lord by His Holy Spirit to bring to my mind the issues that I need to be praying about.

Many people say would you pray for me? I assure them that I will. And I always pray immediately. But then there are those times that I realize they really are needing special prayer. I say Lord, bring now to my remembrance those people who have requested prayer, that I might hold them up, Lord, before You. I allow the Holy Spirit to bring back into my remembrance the issues that are needing prayer. I trust the Holy Spirit to do that, to remind me of those issues for which prayer needs to be offered. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, the glorious help of the Spirit in our prayer life.

*and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;* Persevering in prayer. I think that many times we fail to persevere.

We read the story of Daniel, how that he realized by the prophecies of Jeremiah that the time of their Babylonian captivity was about over. So he set himself to fasting and prayer. And after twenty-one days an angel came. He said, Daniel, from the first day you began to pray, I was sent to bring you the answers. But the prince of Persia, the powers of darkness, the demon of forces that were governing Persia, they captured me. They held me until Michael, that great prince, came and set me free. Now I have come to tell you the thing. But it took twenty-one days! Now what if Daniel had not persevered in prayer? What if he had stopped and said, well, I guess God's not going to answer?

There used to be a phrase—they said praying through. I used to sort of make fun of that phrase, praying through what? But praying through to victory! Persevering until you get an answer. The answer may be no, but that's alright, at least you've got your answer. But you pray until you get your answer, perseverance in prayer. I wonder how many things that we have desired and have asked the Lord for, have we not received just because we quit before God had the opportunity to respond and to answer in His timing.

Persevering in prayer with supplication for all the saints. Praying one for another, bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

Paul said, and pray for me. <sup>19</sup>*And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,* Now Paul was in prison in Rome when he was writing this. Pray that God will give me the opportunities to witness for Him here, that I might be bold in my witness for Jesus Christ, making known to others the glorious mystery of the gospel.

<sup>20</sup>*For which I am an ambassador in bonds:* I'm an ambassador for Jesus Christ, but presently I'm in prison. In chapter three, verse one, Paul a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ. And also in chapter four, he declares that I'm a prisoner of Jesus Christ. And so now he says that he is an ambassador in bond.

*that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.* But his desire was to speak boldly the things that he ought to speak. This is a good prayer! God help us that we might speak boldly, that we might not cringe, but speak boldly the things that we ought to be speaking. That we might speak up—speak boldly!

<sup>21</sup>*But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:* Tychicus was with Paul, there in Rome, when Paul was in prison and Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. Tychicus was the one who took the messages of Paul, these letters, from Rome to the churches there in Asia. So he is a faithful, beloved brother, a faithful minister in the Lord. Paul calls him in another letter, a fellow servant. He'll let you know how things are going. He will give you an update on what's

happening here in Rome.

<sup>22</sup>*Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, (that is of letting you know) that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.* That he might comfort your hearts, sharing with you what God is doing.

<sup>23</sup>*Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Peace, love, faith—glorious!

<sup>24</sup>*Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.* And so Paul closes his letter to the Ephesians.

Next week we'll get started in the letter to the Philippians, which is another letter written from Rome, from the jail. It's great! Paul is thrown in jail. So it gives him plenty of time to do a lot of writing. Had he not been in jail, we wouldn't have these glorious letters that really are the basis for our Christian doctrine. It was because Paul was in prison that he had the time to write these letters. Thus, you can see the purpose and the hand of God in Paul's imprisonment. There he given that time to write the letters and to take care of these issues in explaining. Oh, how blessed we are from the teaching of Ephesians, from the teaching of Philippians, from the teaching of Colossians! These prison epistles of Paul, what a blessing they are to us! So God was working even the hardships that are brought to Paul, and yet God was wanting to bless all of us. And so He allowed Paul the hardship of prison in order to bless us even today with the clarity of doctrine that is given to us in these epistles.

Father, we give thanks to You tonight for these epistles of Paul, and for the strength and the help and the understanding that they give to us concerning our Christian walk and our Christian life. And Lord, we do ask tonight that You would help us as parents to have the proper relationship with our children. To bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord, teaching them Lord, of Your glories, of Your wonders, of Your truth. Help us, Lord, as employees to be diligent in our service to our employers, looking, Lord, at our jobs as something that You have provided for us. Thus doing them to best of our abilities, that we might be a witness for You. We do it Lord, as unto You. Lord, if we happen to be in a position of management, then help us to realize that we have a responsibility to You. May we use our position, Lord, with gentleness and with love. And finally, Lord, help us to stand in these evil days against the many and varied attacks of the enemies, the subtleties with which he comes against us. And Lord, may we just be thoroughly armed with the spiritual armament that we might see Your victories in this spiritual conflict in which we are engaged. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.