

Ephesians 6:18 by Wayne Barber

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Ephesians 6:18:
SPIRITUAL WARFARE, PART 7
by Dr. Wayne Barber

I had the opportunity to talk to a high ranking official in the Rhodesian army once. He said, "In warfare the first wave that comes at you is not the one that gets you. It is what is behind the first wave that gets you. That is where your tanks and heavy artillery are." I got to thinking, that is the same way it is in spiritual warfare, isn't it? Satan always likes to come on as a roaring lion, but I've heard that lions that roar have no teeth. However, they love to make you think that they do. Satan will always put a person in your life to cause you trouble. It's funny. We don't war against flesh and blood, but flesh and blood seem to be the instruments that Satan uses. Why? Because he has been mimicking God for as long as you can remember. He wants to be like God. Do you think I am afraid of the one who comes in my house and shakes my windows and makes weird noises? Are you kidding? At least I know what I am dealing with. That is not the one I am worried about. I am worried about the one who comes on as a deceiving angel of light, making me think he is bringing truth when in reality it is all deception. He uses people, but people are not our enemy.

Satan will take darkness & deception and put it in any realm you can think about. He will put it in the realm of religion. Did you know that? As a matter of fact, Paul warned Timothy that in the last days people are going to be believing doctrines of demons (1Ti 4:1). It doesn't matter what pulpit Satan has. It can be the world or just your television set. It doesn't matter where he is. He is just trying to get our minds. Once he gets our minds, he turns us upside down and the rest is history.

Do you remember the story of the two disciples who were discouraged on Resurrection morning in Luke 24:13-36? They were walking down the road to Emmaus. Emmaus was in the exact opposite direction. They should have been in Jerusalem celebrating,

but they weren't. They were walking down the wrong road. Well, Jesus came alongside them and said,

"Hey, guys. What's going on?"

They said,

"You mean you don't know what is going on."

Well, yes, he knew about what was going on. But he said, "About what?" They said,

"About Jesus. We thought he was going to be the Messiah, the one who would come and bring in the kingdom. But now He is dead."

The Lord Jesus answered back and said,

"O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken." (Lu 24:25)

Do you know what He was saying? He was saying, "You have built your lives on a lie. You have listened to the tradition of the elders. You have never listened to what the prophets have said in God's Word." As a result they were going in exactly the opposite direction they should have been going. Disciples. Discouraged. Defeated. Why? Because they had not allowed truth to be the anchor of their life. I wonder how many of us are the same way. Maybe it is in your marriage or your family. Somewhere down the road, maybe ten years back, you departed from what God said. As a result it has been going downhill ever since. Satan is the mastermind of darkness and deception. That is an unseen enemy.

Let's read together the passage again to sort of keep it in our minds. Verse 10 says,

"Finally, be strong in the Lord & in the strength of His might 11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. [Remember, you can't stand unless you are dressed properly.] 12 For our struggle is not against flesh & blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Now we come to the structure of the whole teaching of spiritual warfare. Basically it is summed up in two things. One is found in [v13](#), which also comprises [v14-17](#). The second one is found in [v18](#). If you will look at it correctly, they all fit together. You can't disjoint verse 18 from what he is talking about here.

The first thing is that we [stand](#) and stand firm. The word in verse 13 means to stand firm in the face of all the aggression and the oppression of the enemy. That is the first thing we are to do to walk in victory. Then the second thing we are to do is to pray at all times and to pray in the Spirit. You cannot just stand there, you've also got to pray. The praying and the standing go together. You have to stand first because you cannot pray effectively until you are standing. Then you pray in the Spirit. Let's work our way through that.

Paul says in Ephesians 6:13,

"Therefore take up the full armor of God,"

Whenever you see a "therefore," always look to see what it is there for. It just hooked us up to verses 10-12:

"Therefore take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm

Alright, let's take it apart. First of all,

"take up the full armor of God"

You ask, "How can I stand in the face of the devil?" You stand being properly dressed. You've got to have on the full armor of God. The whole book of Ephesians is talking about how to get dressed in the righteousness of Christ, in the garment that we are to wear. That garment becomes our armor and enables us to stand.

Go back to **Ephesians 3:16** (click message):

that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love

The word "[dwell](#)" means to be at home, to settle in, to be comfortable, to have access to every area of your life. So it is very simple what he is saying here—just learn to surrender to God.

What is your problem? "Well, I have a family problem." Alright, take it to the Word of God. Take it to the will of God. Put it at His feet. Find out what God says and be willing to surrender that whole area of your life to Him and then you turn Him loose in your life and He begins to strengthen you in the inner man with His Spirit. Now, this is going to affect your lifestyle, and that lifestyle is like a garment (click message).

Ephesians 4:24 says, (click message)

and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Some people get confused here. When you look at Colossians 3:9, 10, 11 (notes) it says we have already put off the old man and we have already put on the new man. If you look at [Romans 6](#) it says the old man is dead (click for in depth exposition of Dead to Sin). But you look at Ephesians and it says put him off and put on the new man.

"Well, I thought I had already put on the new man."

Here is something that might help you. Let's say you have a factory, and this factory is filled with workers. On the top floor of the factory you have the management. Every day for 30 or 40 years the management has sent down little memos to tell you how to do your job. Therefore, you are used to listening to what the memos have told you. Some people have been on the job 30 years and are going to do it a certain way. One day somebody buys the factory and moves out the management. They are no longer there. They come in and completely renovate the floor with different offices, different carpet, everything. A brand new management moves in. Well, all of a sudden they start sending their memos down, and it is different than the way they used to do it. The workman down at the end of the factory is saying, "Are you kidding me? I have been doing this for 30 years of my life. I am going to do it my way!" Uh oh. Look out. There is going to be a conflict somewhere. He has been so trained to do it one way and is not listening to what the new management has to say.

Colossians 3 is talking about the management. The old management has left and the new management has walked in. Romans 6 is the management. The management is dead. It ceases to have power over us. But in Ephesians it is talking about the factory. Paul states that you need to take off your old manner of living and put on a new manner of living. The thing that bothers us is we still have the flesh to deal with. All the lusts of the flesh of the unredeemed body are still pulling us to do it the old way. The Spirit is telling us, "No, no, no! You do it this way."

So to me, sin could be said not to be of an unregenerate nature, in the sense that we have a new nature in Christ. It could be of an unrenewed mind. We have not learned to line up. Now obviously, perfection will not be reached down here, but sanctification is lining up our minds with the new management that is in our life. That may fall short, but that might give you a little bit of difference here. Each passage talks about something different. We are talking about a manner of life.

Okay, so I put on this new garment. Now, underneath this garment, underneath this new lifestyle, are the armored attitudes of [6:14-17](#). It is a person who is standing. How do you stand? (Ephesians 6:14) (click message)

"Stand firm (Aorist Imperative ~ often expresses note of urgency ~ the idea is to definitely, decisively do this now! Stand firm!) therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH AND HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, "

That is the only way you can stand. The armor and the garment are the same. One is the underlying attitude which affects the garment on the outside. It is Christ in us, strengthening us in the inner man.

So look back at **Ephesians 6:13** (click for expository notes on Ephesians 6:13):

"take up the full armor of God," The full armor means until Christ has taken the areas of your life and is walking and ruling and reigning in them. It goes on, " so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."

Our SUBMISSION to Christ
is our
RESISTANCE to the devil

Here is what I want to share with you. Our submission to Christ is our resistance to the devil. Look at what it says: "take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist." I cannot resist until I have submitted to Him. How do I put on the full armor? It is inward, not outward. It is something that is a relationship. It is surrender. It is obeying Him.

[James 4:7](#) says,

Submit therefore to God. resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Why? Because he can't handle the presence of the One living in you. My submission to the Lord is my resistance to the devil.

In verse 13 he uses the term "in the [evil day](#)." "Evil day" basically refers to the time period. We know that is limited and temporary because one day God is going to come and take all that away from him. But while we are living in a day that is evil, we know that he surrounds us in the universe. We know he works in people. We know he is the mastermind of deception. While we are doing that we need to stand and to stand we have to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. We have to be clothed in the armor and the garment.

Paul goes on in verse 13 and says,

"and having done everything, to stand firm.."

"Having done everything" means having accomplished putting on the full armor of God, having accomplished being surrendered in the inner man, strengthened in the inner man. Having accomplished that, now he says, "[stand firm](#)" The term "[stand firm](#)" means immovable in the face of everything Satan can throw at you. In other words, if I am going to walk in the victory which I already have in Jesus, I had better get dressed in His righteousness. That righteousness of Christ within me becomes my armor against the devil. The Word of God is so much implied there.

You know, I wonder why Paul doesn't stress the Word of God. I think I know why. He spent three years with the Ephesians driving that into their heads. In [Colossians](#) he said,

"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you" (Click exposition of Col 3:15-16)

They know that. They know the Word has to be there. You don't know the will of God if you don't know the Word of God. Therefore, how am I going to stand? Monday morning rolls around too quickly for me. What is the first thing I need to do? Make sure my heart is surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ. That is all. I don't have to worry about getting up and saying, "Oh, do I have my breastplate on? My loins girded? My sandals? What else?" That is not it. Put Christ on. Christ is our warrior, and He will take care of all the rest of it. The full armor of God is all in one piece. It is all in the Lord Jesus Himself. As I put Him on I know I can stand firm, immovable, unshakable. By the way, it does not say that I wake up tomorrow morning and go after the devil. Have you ever heard somebody say that? "We need to get on the offense." I hear that all the time. "We need to get on the offense. Let's go down and crash hell's gates." I don't see that. He tells me just to stand immovable and when the conflict is over and all the hurtful cries of battle have finished, I will still be standing in the presence and in the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Just stand firm. That command to stand firm takes us all the way down through verse 17. Look at the last few words of verse 13: "having done everything, to stand firm." Now watch v14:

"Stand firm therefore"

Then Paul tells you how to stand firm. We know that to be the full armor of God. Go down to verse 18. They are all connected. The first thing in spiritual warfare is to stand. That involves the armor, the garment.

The second thing is to pray at all times in the Spirit. Standing and praying, that is the way we walk into the battle that we are in every single day. Verse 18 says,

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, ([Click devotional](#) by Spurgeon)

Wow! First of all, when he mentions prayer here, he is saying, "Trust God in everything." The word "prayer" is **proseuche**. That is not the word for petition. That comes up next. The word "prayer" is the word that means to make a vow to. It is an attitude. It is an attitude of trusting Him. "Well, I don't always trust Him." That is right. You don't unless you are standing. Remember, standing comes first. Standing is being strengthened in the inner man. Once I am standing I can pray. My attitude must be, "God, I am going to trust you whatever comes my way. I am going to trust you. It doesn't matter. I know you somehow are in control and I am going to put all my trust in you."

**A man can always know
how much he is trusting God
by his prayer life**

A man can always know how much he is trusting God by his prayer life. As much as you pray is as much as you trust. If you don't pray, then you must not trust. If you are not praying, you must not be standing because if you are standing, you can't help but pray. It is that constant communication with God by the means of prayer in the Spirit.

Well, he mentions the word **petition** (Greek = deesis). The word petition means exactly that, request. He says, "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit." Now what does he mean, pray at all times in the Spirit? I don't have any trouble with "at all times." The word "**times**" (Greek = kairos) means every opportunity. It means to seize the opportunity as it comes up. This does not mean just having a prayer time in the morning with a long list of things to bring before the Lord. Pray at every opportunity.

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY...
NOT...JUST...A PRAYER TIME IN THE MORNING...
PRAY AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY

So many people have that messed up in their minds. You ought to start your day that way, but make sure you are standing BEFORE you are praying because the way you pray is in the Spirit. It is not just a random, throwing everything before God with your grocery list and hope that He will do it before the day is over. Pray at all times. Every opportunity. Then Paul says, "in the Spirit." Now what in the world does he mean by that? "in the Spirit." simply means that you are in touch with Him, under His control (cf "Be Filled With the Spirit") and you've got a prayer partner who is leading you at every opportunity in prayer.

"Well, I have never experienced that before."

Well, maybe you are not standing. I keep telling you that standing has got to be before praying. You can't pray in the Spirit unless you are controlled by the Spirit. That kind of thing hinges together.

Pray in the Spirit. Let the Spirit lead you in how to pray. That is probably the weakest area of any Christian's life. It is the weakest area in my life. One of the reasons is I have had so much difficulty understanding it. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? We used to think that getting requests from everybody in the church was the answer. I remember one night someone was praying and he was saying, "Lord, bless ah..." That is what we were doing in our prayer time. This is really the way a lot of people do it. That is why they are so discouraged. That is why they are so defeated.

"Well, I will get up early in the morning."

That is okay. Get up early in the morning. But once you get up, it starts a process all day long. You've got to be standing before you can pray in the Spirit. Please see this. The Spirit will lead you in how to pray. Then you enter into an adventure of praying that you've never been in before.

YOU'VE GOT TO BE STANDING
BEFORE YOU CAN PRAY IN THE SPIRIT

Paul goes on to say, "for all the saints" I think the reason he says that is because when you are being led of the Spirit to pray, it is not about everything you need. God is going to start putting people on your heart for the first time and you will start seeing people and you will start praying for them. You have no clue what God in His sovereignty is doing in that person's life.

In 1987 on a trip to Romania, I got so sick. I had the highest fever I have ever had. I was delirious at times. I was in a hotel and was so sick. I remember laying there thinking, "God, I don't know what to do." I was so sick. My fever was so high. It was 1:00 in the morning and I remember God impressed on my heart, "Wayne, while you are praying now, remember it is 6:00 back at home. At 6:15 church is going to start and they are going to pray for you, Wayne. They are going to pray for you." Between 6:15 and 6:18 that evening my fever broke. It broke. During the night I got better and better and better. When I got home I told that story to the congregation. An Associate Pastor came to me and said, "Wayne, that night in choir we were trying to get ready to go upstairs. We were running late and we couldn't leave because we felt so impressed to pray for your healing at exactly the same time your fever broke in Romania!" Oh, folks. We haven't tapped prayer yet! When I am filled by the Spirit, then I can pray in the Spirit. The Spirit of God will lead me in my praying. What is the difference in the sovereignty of God and prayer? Why do we pray if God is sovereign? Because He told us to, that's why. Whatever degree of difference is in your mind, you had better just shut it down and let the Spirit lead you. Pray in the Spirit.

Then Paul goes on and says,

"and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.."

The word "**perseverance**" (Gk = [Proskarteresis](#)) is not your normal word for perseverance. It basically has the idea of staying awake, to lie sleepless, to be watchful, to be vigilant. He says, "**be on the alert**" (Gk = [agrupneo](#)) The word "alert" there means exactly that, be on the watch, on the guard.

Let me draw a picture for you. How are we to walk into battle? Standing firm. How do you stand firm? You have to have on the full armor. How do you put on the full armor? Strengthened in the inner man by the Spirit of God with the underlying motivations of everything that is armored found in verses 14-17. You have to stand first. Now pray in the Spirit. Do you know why? We war not

against flesh and blood. You and I are not our enemies so we need to learn to let the Spirit lead us in praying for each other. The next time you have a problem with somebody, the next time you want to vent a little bit of flesh, ask yourself the question, "Has the Spirit led me in this? Am I standing? I may not have prayed for this person therefore I have no right to open my mouth towards anybody about this person until I have prayed in the Spirit concerning him."

**If you are standing, praying is a natural.
You can't have one without the other.**

Led by the Spirit of God. Standing firm. Praying at all times in the Spirit. If you are standing, praying is a natural. You can't have one without the other. But you have to have standing before you have the praying, armed with the garment and the armor of Chris

Spurgeon's Devotional on
Ephesians 6:18
(See also Spurgeon's Gems on Prayer)

What multitudes of prayers we have put up from the first moment when we learned to pray. Our first prayer was a prayer for ourselves; we asked that God would have mercy upon us, and blot out our sin. He heard us. But when he had blotted out our sins like a cloud, then we had more prayers for ourselves.

We have had to pray for sanctifying grace, for constraining and restraining grace.

We have been led to crave for a fresh assurance of faith, for the comfortable application of the promise, for deliverance in the hour of temptation, for help in the time of duty, and for succour in the day of trial.

We have been compelled to go to God for our souls, as constant beggars asking for everything.

Bear witness, children of God, you have never been able to get anything for your souls elsewhere. All the bread your soul has eaten has come down from heaven, and all the water of which it has drunk has flowed from the living rock-Christ Jesus the Lord. Your soul has never grown rich in itself; it has always been a pensioner upon the daily bounty of God; and hence your prayers have ascended to heaven for a range of spiritual mercies all but infinite. Your wants were innumerable, and therefore the supplies have been infinitely great, and your prayers have been as varied as the mercies have been countless. Then have you not cause to say,

"I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication"?

For as your prayers have been many, so also have been God's answers to them. He has heard you in the day of trouble, has strengthened you, and helped you, even when you dishonored him by trembling and doubting at the mercy-seat. Remember this, and let it fill your heart with gratitude to God, who has thus graciously heard your poor weak prayers.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."