

Eph 6:18 Persistence in Prayer through every prayer and petition

Having commanded believers to take up their helmet of salvation and sword of the Spirit, Paul now describes the attitude that they should continually maintain. He emphasizes prayer and keeping alert. When we take up the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit to do battle, it's not like we imagine a helmet and sword sitting next to us, and symbolically put them on. It's that we take up the helmet of salvation, remembering who's children that we are, and that we've been bought by the blood of Jesus. The helmet of salvation is donned when Jesus is the central reality of our lives, and our thoughts, words and deeds are focused on glorifying Him and gaining ground for the Kingdom of God. Then His covering our minds with His salvation makes perfect sense. Acts 4:12 **As And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.** John 14:6 **Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.** Our minds are battlefield. The outcomes of those battles determine the course of our lives. Romans 12:1–2 **Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.** These verses instructs us to renew our minds by allowing the truth of God's Word to wipe out anything contrary to it away from us. Now, to do that, we're going to have to be continually in our Bible and in prayer, since our flesh is always going to try to drag us back into our old life-style, and we can drift away from following our Master closely if we are not continually in prayer and in the Word.

through every prayer and petition expresses the means by which we pray.

A.C.T.S. PRAYER MODEL

Adoration-During this time, focus directly on God, adoring Him for Who He is—His names, His character, His roles, etc. Worship and praise God with your heart, mind, and voice. I Chronicles 29:10-13--Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name (Psalm 63: 3-4, Rev 4:8, Rev 5:12, Psalm 25:8, etc.).

Confession-When you acknowledge Who God is and adore Him for all that He is, confession is a natural follow-up. For, we cannot stand before the throne of a holy God with sin between us and our Savior. Thank God, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins! Ask God to search your heart for areas that displease Him. Psalm 139:23-24-- Search me and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! Allow God to cleanse your heart from unconfessed sin. Psalm 51:10-13-- Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Confess and repent of specific sins. I John 1:4-9, Jeremiah 31:34-2 Cor 7:9-10, Psalm 25:11.

Thanksgiving--This is a time for prayers of thanks for what God has done. Thank Him for salvation, the many blessings in your life, protection, provision, open doors, opportunities, and His gifts to man. I Chronicles 16:34--Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! I Thessalonians 5:16-18--Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Philippians 4:6-7- Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Psalm 100:4-5- Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the LORD is good; his

steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

Supplication--Paul encourages us in supplication, but in intercessory prayer for others, and for requests for our own needs. We ask God for His divine help to meet needs, solve problems, and work in the lives of those we love. Philippians 4:6-- Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Ephesians 6:18-- Praying 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. The word for supplication here is *deesis*, which in classical times connoted "need, lack, want—but since God is the Great I AM, becoming whatever He knows that we need, in the Bible it developed the meaning of "request, petition, entreaty." And so it means "that which is asked with urgency based on need—"request, plea, prayer."—supplication. Our prayers for help allow God to demonstrate His faithfulness, and increase our trust in Him. He encourages us to pray at every opportunity or occasion. Not just when we have time for long prayers, but even those short ones where we're just in continual communication with God.

Struggling in Prayer

We must set aside time for prayer, and not only adore, Confess, Thank, and make Supplication to God, but listen to His direction. As we read the Word, we must listen for where God is highlighting the passages, principles and precepts that we must apply to our lives. Most Christians desire to pray better. The disciples came to Jesus with that very request, and what he gave them was not a sacred set of words to pray verbatim nor a schedule of special times of prayer, but a flexible formula to guide them in their regular daily conversations with God (see Luke 11:1 and parallel **It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, when He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples." 2 And He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil (or the evil one). For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, Forever!** We pray to the Father in the Name of the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit. And Jesus, as well as Paul emphasizes persistence in prayer. God knows what we need before we ask it, and the gifts from Him are all wonderful and perfect. James 1:17 **17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or [p]shifting shadow.** So, we can count on the fact that God will do what is best for us and others. And that means that sometimes the answers to our specific requests will be "yes", sometimes "no", and sometimes "wait".

So, Paul gives no formula or fixed agenda, such as you would find in many religions. Rather he tells them (and us) four things that are to characterize all prayers: we are to pray "at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication," and we are to do so "with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18). This is much more than a technique for prayer or a magic formula to make life go well. It is prayer as the natural outworking of a life lived in utter dependence upon God, who is the true master of our fate and captain of our soul.

in the Spirit.

This does not refer to the human spirit but the Holy Spirit because it alludes to prayer in the midst of spiritual battle (cf. v. 17). There are other instances of instruction to pray in the Holy Spirit, for example, Jude 20. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer (Rom 8:15–16; Gal 4:6) and is a vital part of the believer's spiritual well-being. He gives strength in weakness and intercedes on behalf of the saints (Rom 8:26–27). Thus, prayer is directed to God in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is in keeping with the rest of this epistle with regard to the Trinity in that through Christ both believing Jews and Gentiles have access to the Father in the one Spirit (2:18). In the immediate context, praying in the Spirit may well be connected to the sword of the Spirit. The sword of the Spirit is, on the one hand, God's spoken word to put his

enemies to flight and, on the other hand, the believers' utterance to God in prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit to aid in the struggle against the evil powers. In the larger picture, however, this context relates prayer to the taking of the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, the last piece of defensive armor and the only piece of offensive armor respectively. It is the believers' cry to God on the occasion of assault. Trust in God's wisdom is necessary, for he provides the helmet of salvation and enables them to use their swords effectively in defense against the hosts of the wicked one.