

---

ECCLESIA CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

Pastor Luther H. Holmes, Jr.

December 15, 2021

Bible Study Lesson

---

# OVERCOMER

Overcoming Everything With Prayer

## **KEY VERSE: Ephesians 6:17-18 King James Version**

**<sup>17b-18</sup>..... and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:<sup>18</sup> Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;**

## **Ephesians 6:17-18 The Message**

**<sup>17-18</sup> God's Word is an *indispensable* weapon. In the same way, **prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare.** Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Life is tough. Sometimes it feels like the world is ripping apart at the seams. Sometimes it feels like our hearts can't take any more hurt. But no matter what the world throws at us each day...anxiety, fear, confusion, temptation, etc., we have a choice on how to respond. We can either concede defeat or

live in the victory God has promised. It's easy to choose victory, but how many of us are prepared for it? How do we overcome the world? This lesson is adapted from the book entitled *Overcomer* by bestselling author Dr. David Jeremiah. He uses Paul's instructions in Ephesians 6 – his command for us to overcome the forces of evil by putting on the armor of God – to lay out a pathway for spiritual victory. God knows what we need, and He provides us with His power so we can face life's challenges assured of success. In John 16:33, Jesus says, "these things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, **I have overcome the world.**"

### **LEARNING TO PRAY LIKE AN OVERCOMER**

Studies find that most people don't pray as they should. So, with the understanding that our prayer lives are probably an area we can all improve on, let's join in this quest. Instead of examining what we don't do, let's look at what we can do by the grace of God.

God sometimes answers prayers in unexpected ways! In fact, He finds great delight in surprising us with His answers. But regardless of how the answer comes, He hears our prayers and responds to them. For this reason, prayer is the overarching key to being an Overcomer.

Merriam Webster defines the word **overcomer** as a person who succeeds in dealing with or gaining control of some problem or difficulty.

In Ephesians 6, Paul made it clear that we're in an ongoing war. Our enemy is Satan aka the devil, who has usurped our rightful dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28) and claimed the title of prince of the world. As a result, we who follow God are now part of a resistance movement living in enemy-occupied territory.

However, our Lord and Commander is determined to lead us in the struggle to take back what's rightfully ours. This means we're engaged in a titanic battle against invisible powers and principalities determined to cut us off from God and force us to draw on our own meager resources. Prayer is our line of communication - our secret lifeline that connects us to our Father, giving us His strength and direction every day. **We don't get that without prayer.**

In verse 18, we come to the postscript of this famous passage of scripture: ***“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”***

Paul devoted this special space to prayer following his discussion of the believer’s armor. These implements of warfare are described almost in passing – in a few words or a simple phrase. But then Paul slowed down and gave us a robust doctrine of prayer in twenty-four words in that verse and we have perhaps the most important passage of prayer in the Bible. If you have any doubts about the importance of prayer, please consider its high place in the life and ministry of Jesus. Here is how the prolific author and Evangelical Minister S. D. Gordon described it:

**Prayer.... was not only His regular habit, but His resort in every emergency, however, slight, or serious. When perplexed He prayed. When hard pressed by work He prayed. When hungry for fellowship, He found it in prayer. He chose His associates and received His messages upon His knees. If tempted, He prayed. If criticized, He prayed. If fatigued in body or wearied in spirit, He had recourse to His one un failing habit of prayer. Prayer brought Him unmeasured power at the beginning and kept the flow unbroken and undiminished. There was no emergency, no difficulty, no necessity, no temptation that would not yield to prayer.... How much prayer meant to Jesus!**

Even though Jesus is no longer physically on the earth, prayer ---that is, communication with the Father, is still important to Him. Do you know what Jesus is doing right now in heaven? He is at the right hand of God interceding (praying) for us (Romans 8:34)!

If the Lord Jesus considers it important for Him to pray, and He has been interceding for us at the throne of God for the last two thousand years, maybe those of us who are less than diligent in our prayer life should stop and ask ourselves – are we missing something? Ponder that.....

In this lesson, we will unfold Ephesians 6:18 in seven expanding segments to consider the *critical characteristics or the 7Ps of prayer that enable us to be **Overcomers*** in our warfare against Satan. ....Persistence, Possibilities, Petition, Power, Precision, Perseverance and Purpose.

## **1) The Persistence of the Overcomer's Prayer**

*"Praying Always"*

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul told the believers in that city to "pray without ceasing" (I Thess 5:17). Jesus said it this way, "Men always out to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1).

What does it mean to "pray always"? Do we walk around like zombies, oblivious to our surroundings, mumbling mantras under our breath? No! It means we're in constant contact with God, like soldiers on the battlefield connected to their commander via radio. This is how we learn to live in fellowship with him. If we live this way, we won't have to begin each prayer with an introductory announcement, like a knock on His door: Lord, we come into Your presence.... If we live in an attitude of prayer, we're always in His presence.

## **2) The Possibilities of the Overcomer's Prayer**

*"Praying ...with all prayer..."*

For such a tiny word, the term "all" has an expansive meaning. It means everything that can be placed in the basket. No limits. No exclusions. The entire gamut. The whole enchilada. Here, describing the word prayer, it means every kind of prayer you can think of. But Paul goes further. He tells us that there's nothing that cannot be prayed for and no situation in which prayer is not helpful. Christian Author, Stuart Briscoe wrote, "When our children were small and we were trying to teach them to pray, we had three kinds of prayer: "Please prayers, "Thank you prayers," and "Sorry prayers." Into those kinds of prayers –prayers of petition, prayers of thanksgiving, and prayers of confession – can fit every time, place, and need that you have.

## **3) The Petition of the Overcomer's Prayer**

*"Praying...with...supplication"*

Supplication means "to ask," as in asking God to provide for our needs. Of course, we come to Him with worship and thanksgiving and gratitude, but we also must come asking. The New Testament encourages us to offer petitionary prayers. Matthew 6:8-13; James 4:2

Charles Spurgeon wrote: “Asking is the rule of the kingdom .... It is a rule that never will be altered in anybody’s case. If the royal and divine Son of God cannot be exempted from the rule of asking, you and I cannot expect the rule to be relaxed in our favor. If you don’t pray boldly enough to ask for what you need, don’t be upset that God isn’t working in your life as you wish He would!

#### **4) The Power of the Overcomer’s Prayer**

*“Praying...in the Spirit”*

What power drives our prayer? It is the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us. The Holy Spirit within determines the character and the content of our prayer. He directs, shapes, and corrects the prayers of sincere believers who are fully committed to doing God’s will. So how can you know if what you are praying for aligns with the will of God? The Holy Spirit who wrote the Word of God is the same Holy Spirit who lives in your heart. He knows your heart, and He knows the Father’s heart, because He is one with the Father. Because of this, He knows your intent when you pray. He takes your fumbling prayers and reshapes them to reveal the deepest needs beneath the surface of your words. When you pray, the Holy Spirit within you knows what you intend. (Romans 8:26-27)

#### **5) The Precision of the Overcomer’s Prayer**

*...being watchful*

To be watchful means “to be awake, to be vigilant”. For us, it also means being precise in prayer as we identify and pray for strength to overcome specific challenges. As Paul transitioned from describing the believer’s armor to the subject of prayer, notice how he retained the military imagery. He did this because we face a very real enemy, which means we must maintain vigilance, stay watchful, and keep guard at all times.

To be up and awake means the battle is engaged. As an Overcomer, the enemy will attack you with distractions, doubts, and temptations to abandon prayer. Guard your prayer time and keep your prayers constantly flowing. **Prioritize prayer as you plan your schedule.** Encourage everything that feeds and fosters your prayer life. Focus your prayers as precisely as you can, but if you don’t know exactly what to pray for, don’t avoid prayer or hesitate to pray. Instead, trust that the intention of your

prayer will be hard and understood. “Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2).

## **6) The Perseverance of the Overcomer’s Prayer**

*“Praying.... with all perseverance....”*

If we’re not careful, prayer is a habit we can fall into and out of. If you’ve hit a snag and stopped praying for a little while, don’t let it throw you into a panic. It’s impossible to miss the point of these scriptures:

- “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42)
- “We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4)
- “Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer” (Romans 12:12)

Satan often uses two strategies to discourage you from your prayer life. The first, strangely enough, comes through success. If you’ve experienced two good days of prayer, he’ll convince you that your prayer will always be that powerful and clear. “You’re a natural”, he’ll whisper in your ear. Then on the third and fourth days, when the sparks don’t ignite and your prayers can’t seem to get out of your room, he’ll come and say, “Well, now we see who you really are! You may as well give up, there’s no use trying anymore.” When you experience what feels like failure, remember that *your momentary feelings are never a barometer of your spiritual life.*

Satan’s second strategy to discourage your prayer life is to convince you that prayer doesn’t work in general, or that your prayers don’t work specifically. For example, if your prayers aren’t answered the way you expected, Satan tries to convince you that you’re not a good enough believer to merit God’s attention—don’t have enough faith, or you don’t have what it takes to live a spiritual life. But many answers don’t come the way we want or expect because God has something better in mind! To pray effectively is to persevere, no matter how soaring or how earthbound your prayers feel. No matter how focused, failing, or frantic you feel. The more you pray in all circumstances, the more you align your will with God’s, which will mean more visible answers.

## 7) The Purpose of the Overcomer's Prayer

*"Praying...for all the saints"*

Young men and women enlist in the armed forces for different reasons. But once they are serving, their dedication to those who serve with them becomes one of their deepest commitments. So, it is in the believer's life as well. Our love for each other becomes a prime motivation for action. Therefore, Paul urged us to engage in supplication for all the saints. Pray for those who have needs, ask God for His help, thank Him for His provision, and intercede for others as Jesus intercedes for you.

When we pray for one another, everybody in the body of Christ is praying for everybody else in the body. Although I may be praying for you instead of for myself, I don't need to worry about my needs being met because while I'm praying for you, you're praying for me!

### **APPLICATION: The Practice of the Overcomer's Prayer**

Are you prepared to pray effectively? Do you feel confident in your ability to pray as you should? If not, don't give-up. Prayer is something you can learn. Professor Donald Whitney of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary offers excellent advice: "If you've ever learning a foreign language, you know that you learn it best when you actually have to speak it. The same is true with the "foreign language" of prayer. **There are many good resources for learning how to pray, but the best way to learn how to pray is to pray.**"

As you embrace the practice of prayer, you'll find many ways to fill your life with it. Pray in the ways that come naturally, then grow and mature your practice of prayer steadily. Fill your life with the joyful discipline of praying without ceasing. This is how to prepare yourself for communication with your Commander as you engage in life's daily battles. This is a key foundation to life as an Overcomer.

***The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power  
and produces wonderful results.***

***James 5:16 NLT***