

and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, (6:18b)

As we “*pray at all times in the Spirit*” (Ephesians 6:18a), we are to “*be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints*” (Ephesians 6:18b). The Greek *agrupeno*, from which we get “*be on the alert*” (Ephesians 6:18b), is also translated “*keep watch*” in Hebrews 13:17. It means “to be wakeful or sleepless.” This same word is used in association with prayer in Luke 21:36:

“But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Luke 21:36)

The believer is to remain alert in prayer by thanking God for His Person and provision:

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; (Colossians 4:2)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6)

Thanking and praising God serves to restore perspective in any and all circumstances. Hence, prayer is essential if the outfitted warrior is to stand!

When we pray we are to “*be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints*” (Ephesians 6:18b). “*Perseverance*” is from a Greek word that can also be interpreted “to be intently engaged in, to attend to constantly.” A close relative of this word is employed in Colossians 4:2 and interpreted “*devote*”:

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; (Colossians 4:2)

As we learned in Ephesians 6:18a, “*petition*” (Ephesians 6:18b) points to specific requests. Coupling this fact with “*for all the saints*” (Ephesians 6:18b), we can conclude that believers are to pray specific requests on behalf of all of Christ’s body. Should this possibility become a reality, God would work amazingly through and for His people regardless of what Satan sent their way! Thus, Paul practiced and promoted intercessory prayer (Romans 1:9; 2Corinthians 9:14; Ephesians 1:15-19a; 3:14-19; Colossians 4:3; 12; 1Timothy 2:1-2; Philemon 1:22).

I am realizing, as Samuel discovered years ago, that to cease praying for others is sin (1Samuel 12:23). In fact, when I am negligent in praying for my family, friends, and specific needs of others, I sense I am by-passing and short-circuiting God’s best for all concerned. Prayer is sometimes exhausting (Exodus 17:8-13; Colossians 4:12), for it is warfare fought on our knees. What a wonderful opportunity to apply the principle of the cross! To pray for what others might receive through God honoring our petitions is one of the greatest acts of selflessness accessible to man.

Ephesians 6:19—and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel,

Paul, recognizing that God honors the prayers of the intercessor, encouraged the Ephesians to intercede on his behalf. He had only one request: *“that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel”* (Ephesians 6:19). As far as ministry was concerned, Paul’s chief desire was to speak boldly as he shared *“the mystery of the gospel”* (for more input concerning *“the mystery,”* review Ephesians 3:3). To make certain that Satan’s assault did nothing to cloud his focus or thwart his vision, he requested that the church at Ephesus stand in the gap through prayer.

Ephesians 6:20—for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

The words, *“in chains”* (Ephesians 6:20), confirm that *Ephesians* is one of Paul’s prison epistles. Even though imprisoned, his greatest concern ministry-wise was that he speak truth with boldness. *“Boldly”* (*parresia*) means “freedom, confidence, clarity, openness, and frankness.” Only speech of this sort could captivate the audience addressed in Paul’s environment.

Ephesians 6:21—But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you.

Paul desired that the Ephesians *“know about”* his *“circumstances”* and how he was *“doing”* (Ephesians 6:21), so he sent *“Tychicus”* to *“make everything known to”* them. It would stand to reason that Tychicus, an Asian (Acts 20:4), would carry Paul’s letter to Ephesus, a seaport city of the Roman province of Asia. Not only would the epistle bring encouragement to the church, but Tychicus could provide additional input concerning Paul’s wellbeing. Tychicus had delivered other Pauline epistles such as the letter to Colosse (Colossians 4:7-9). Based on 2 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 3:12, he often functioned as Paul’s messenger. He was a *“beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord”* (Ephesians 6:21) who could be trusted.

Paul must have been comforted that a man of such caliber would deliver this epistle. Tychicus knew Paul’s heart and soul; so in a sense, Paul was sending his very heart through him (as was the case with Onesimus in Philemon 1:10-12). Friends of this caliber are hard to find; but once found, their value and worth are immeasurable.

Ephesians 6:22—And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.

Paul’s purpose in sending Tychicus was that the Ephesians might be comforted, so again the apostle makes a decision based on the needs of others rather than his own. Evidently the church had become burdened over Paul’s imprisonment in Rome.

Ephesians 6:23—Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 23-24 make up Paul’s benediction. In using the phrase, *“peace be to the brethren,”* Paul evidently references the believer’s *peace with God* (Romans 5:1) as well as *the peace of God* experienced by the Spirit-filled saint (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:18)—both of which combine to

establish relational “*peace*” among “*the brethren*” (Ephesians 6:23). Paul has addressed these subjects previously in this epistle, so his saying “*Peace be to the brethren*” in his benediction would likely have been well received.

“*Love*” (Ephesians 6:23), a “*fruit of the Spirit*” (Galatians 5:22), has also been a recurring theme. The Ephesians could walk in God’s “*love*” (1John 4:8, 16) because it had been poured into their hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). They could love because God first loved them (1John 4:19) and so prove to be Jesus’ disciples (John 13:34-35).

“*Faith*” (Ephesians 6:23), which grows as we absorb truth (2Thessalonians 1:3), is more than believing that God exists. True “*faith*” applies God’s Word in the daily affairs of life, so Paul made sure to mention it in his benediction.

Ephesians 6:24—Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible.

In closing, Paul prays that his readers walk in God’s “*grace*.” As we discovered earlier, “*grace*” is “*unmerited favor*.” God’s “*grace*” also empowers His people (1Corinthians 15:10). Thus, Paul prayed this prayer realizing that saints are saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9) and kept by grace (Acts 20:32; Romans 5:2; 1Corinthians 15:10; 2Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 4:16; James 4:6; 1Peter 5:10). Such grace, however, is not supplied to everyone. Only individuals who “*love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible*” (Ephesians 6:24) receive and display it. May we never forget that loving God with all our heart and soul is the essence, substance, and core of a life worth living.

Having now finished this remarkable epistle, may we love and enjoy Jesus as never before. May we, through the power of the Holy Spirit, live by His life for the good of others!