

The Focus of the August 21st Prayer Conference Call

Spiritual Alertness

In 2 Timothy 2:3, Paul exhorts his disciple, Timothy, to discipline himself like a “good soldier.” In fact, the Bible often portrays the Christian life with wartime imagery. Why? Because a spiritual war is being waged for the hearts and souls of men. As God uses his people to draw others to Himself, Satan wars against Him in an attempt to stop the progress of the gospel. Christians, as God’s “soldiers” in this war, are commissioned to spread the message of salvation that comes by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ (c.f. Ephesians 2:8-9). Spiritual alertness is key to this endeavor. If we are going to be “good soldiers” for the cause of Christ, we must maintain keen awareness of what is taking place around us in the spiritual realm, so that we can have the right responses.

BE ALERT TO THE ENEMY (1 Peter 5:8)

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)

BE ALERT IN THE BATTLE (Ephesians 6:10-20)

The apostle Paul also exhorts believers to be alert:

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” (Ephesians 6:18b)

With what in mind? In the preceding context, Paul states:

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.” (Ephesians 6:10-12)

Discussion / Thought Question:

How can we, as “God’s soldiers,” be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power?

Communication is key in any battle. If the enemy can knock out our means of communication with headquarters, the battle will soon be lost. Christian “soldiers” are given two means of communication that will keep them alert in battle: The Bible (God speaking to us) and prayer (us speaking to God).

A. With God’s Word

In Ephesians 6, we are exhorted to put on the armor of God. A necessary component to this “armor” is the “sword of the Spirit” which is the Word of God, the Bible. When Satan tempted Jesus three times in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), how did Jesus fend off the attacks? You guessed it! Each time, he quoted Scripture. Knowledge of God’s Word is essential to our spiritual alertness.

B. With Prayer

In *Let the Nations Be Glad*, John Piper provides an excellent description of prayer. He states that prayer is primarily a wartime walkie-talkie for advancing the gospel in the world (see Paul’s instructions in Ephesians 6:19-20). Prayer malfunctions when we attempt to turn it solely into a domestic intercom to call upstairs for more comforts in the living room! A spiritually alert Christian will be using prayer like a wartime walkie-talkie, praying God would use him or her in the great adventure of bringing others to Himself.

CONCLUSION

- I will be alert to the fact that I am in a spiritual battle with a spiritual enemy.
- I will be faithful to my God-given mission to tell others about Jesus Christ.
- I will memorize God’s Word so that I can fend off Satan’s attacks.
- I will consistently support my fellow believers in prayer.
- I will pray for those in my sphere of influence who don’t know Jesus Christ as Savior.