

# Praying at All Times in the Spirit

by Tim Conway

---

*This sermon emphasizes the importance of praying in the Spirit and being in step with the Spirit in our daily lives. It highlights the power and access we have through the Spirit, the seal of God's ownership, and the guarantee of our salvation. The sermon encourages a devoted prayer life, unity in the church, and intercessory prayer for one another.*

**Scripture:** Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 3:16, Ephesians 2:18, Romans 8:26, Galatians 5:25, Ephesians 4:30, Ephesians 2:22, Isaiah 62:6

**Topics:** "Praying in the Spirit", "Unity in the Church"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of praying in the Spirit and being in step with the Spirit in our daily lives. It highlights the power and access we have through the Spirit, the seal of God's ownership, and the guarantee of our salvation. The sermon encourages a devoted prayer life, unity in the church, and intercessory prayer for one another.

---

## Transcript

Ephesians chapter 6. Paul is really bringing the letter to completion here. But this this portion of Scripture that deals with the armor of God, there is a spiritual battle. The devil is real.

Pick up reading in verse 10. Finally be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Now if you don't know this, maybe you do, maybe you don't. This isn't true everywhere, all the time.

But a lot of reformed folks are uncomfortable about speaking about angels, about the devil, about demons. They just are. It's a matter of fact.

We don't want to be. Now look, we don't want an unhealthy obsession, but these truths are very much a reality in Scripture. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood.

There are these rulers. And again, I want to just stress to you, we need the army of God because we're up against fallen angels. And it doesn't just say, you know, the lower level, lower tier, the demon that barely passed his exam kind of devil.

It's not that. These are rulers. These are authorities.

These are cosmic powers over this present darkness. These are spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. We're talking about strength of darkness, strength of a demonic realm.

Therefore, that's why we take up the whole armor. There really is an enemy. And it's not flesh and blood.

It's not men and women. And the reason we need to take this up is so that we would be able to stand, be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.

In all circumstances, take up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Now, here's the text we're dealing with today.

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. Now, this is the finale. This is the end of this portion of Scripture that deals very specifically with our spiritual warfare.

And here he ends on this note. It's the note of prayer. Just this week and next week, I want us to occupy our attention with this.

But I want you to see two things right off. Notice how verse 18 starts. No matter what translation you have in your lap, they all start this way.

Praying at all times in the spirit. So, or you've got that maybe the New King James, some of you praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit. But here's the question.

When do we use a verb with ing? Anybody? When do it? What what is that? It's, well, yeah, verbs. Verbs themselves bring out an action. But when you put an ing, we call that a verb participle.

Verb participles modify something. Praying. I could call you a praying man.

You recognize right away that is a verb that is actually being used as an adjective. Praying man. When you put an ing on it, you can you can make it into a modifier of a noun.

Praying man. But you can also make it into a modifier of another verb. And that's what's happening here.

See, if I came up to you and I said, you pray all the time. Yep, that's a good sentence. If I just simply came up to you out of the blue and I said praying at all time, you'd look at me like, what are you talking about? Because all by itself, it doesn't make any sense.

An ing, it means verb participle. What we have here is we have a participial phrase. And praying at all times is that phrase.

And you know what? It modifies. Notice the text. You know what it modifies? It's reaching backwards.

It's modifying the primary verbs that come before this. So basically what you have is this. Stand, verse 14.

Stand, therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, praying at all times in the Spirit. You see, it's modifying that. You stand with this belt of truth, praying.

The breastplate of righteousness. Stand with the breastplate of righteousness, praying. You see, it's what this is, is it reached back.

It modifies all these verbs. Take up the sword of the Spirit, praying. That's the idea.

Every single piece of the armor, this modifies back. It's looking back to all of these. Now here's the next thing I want you to notice.

Verse 18 does not bring in any of the soldier's armor. You know, there's basically what we've had here, isn't it? We've had an illustration. We've had Paul using the Roman soldier to basically be an analogy from which he was drawing.

And so you've got a breastplate, you've got a helmet, and you've got a sword. But you know, do you recognize in verse 18, you've got none of that. He doesn't say, and lastly, put on the battle axe of prayer.

That's not what he says. Why am I stressing both of these realities? I'm stressing this. My point is this.

Praying in the Spirit, it's not another part of the armor that you put on. It's a participial phrase that modifies taking up every single piece. It's basically a blanket statement that you, as you, remember what the armor is.

It's truth. It's righteousness, like the doctrine of imputed righteousness, the doctrine of practical righteousness, living it out, versus Christ living a righteous life and imputing it to us. Both are real.

We need to be very straight on both of these. Feet. Preparation of the gospel of peace.

We've got a helmet of salvation. We've got a sword of the Spirit. We looked at all this.

This is studying our Bibles. This is knowing truth. This is knowing who our God is.

This is knowing what the gospel is. This is knowing the all-essential doctrine of being made righteous by faith and then being practically made righteous by sanctification. That's what we're looking at here.

And you know what he's saying? He is saying that in every piece of that armor that you put on, you need to be praying. You need to be praying at all times with all prayer and all supplication. That it's all times, every circumstance.

We've got to be men and women of prayer. And then, brethren, our lives in this life, we don't want to look past this. We've got to keep on praying.

We've got to all the time. When we when we concern ourselves with truth, be praying. When you go read scripture, be praying.

When we're trying to figure out the gospel and to be able to declare it, be able to believe it, you want to be praying. Every one of these. It's the sword.

It's the helmet. It's the breastplate. It's the shod.

Your feet shod for the preparation. It's every bit of this. The loins girt about with truth.

At every step here, we need to be praying at all times in the Spirit. Christian, put on the gospel armor. That's what we've been looking at.

But each piece put on with prayer. Our lives need to be bathed with it. That's what praying at all times means.

That's all prayer. All of it. I mean, the heart and soul of prayer.

What is it? I mean, let's think here, brethren. You may remember some of you that are attending the prayer meeting. Not this last Wednesday.

I think it was Wednesday before that. A suggestion came up to sing Sweet Hour of Prayer. I kind of knocked that down.

I made a comment about it. What could possibly be wrong with the with the song Sweet Hour of Prayer? I would just say this. I believe that the focus is all wrong.

Think with me here. If I should talk to my wife and I came out of the house and you recognize the song ends this way. It's like the person is ascending to glory and he's looking back and he's saying farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer.

Can you imagine if I was talking to my wife and you came to my house to pick me up and I came out and I got in the car with you and all I kept talking about, I spoke with my wife. Oh, sweet hour of speaking. That's all I kept talking about over and over.

I keep saying sweet time of speaking. And as I'm going out the door, it's like, oh, farewell, farewell, my time of speaking. You're going to look at me like, what is wrong with him? I mean, why is he even talking like that? You see, if what happens is when I'm talking to you about talking to my wife, what's going to happen is the time frame, the hour that I do it or the time that I do it is going to be quickly lost.

And I'm going to tell you about my wife. And that's right. That's that's the object of my attention and my attraction.

My adoration is all going to it's going to go to her. And so it is with prayer. You recognize prayer.

We want to think when it says praying all the time with all prayer and supplication. Do you do recognize when we start talking about prayer, the idea of prayer just disappears because what we're really talking about is speaking to the Lord. We're talking about fellowship with the Lord, communion with the Lord.

It's it's kind of like people using the verbiage saying a prayer. It's like, oh, doesn't that grate at you saying a prayer? What are you talking about? I mean, do I talk that way about talking to my wife? I'm going to say whatever. I'm going to it's it all sounds so so mechanical.

It sounds so cold. It's artificial. Do you recognize this prayer is about knowing God? Prayer is about talking to him, connecting with him.

It's walking with God. Do you recognize when Jesus came along and he's wanting to teach us about prayer, like like in Matthew, like in the Sermon on the Mount, he may use the term prayer. He said to them,

this is actually in Luke 11, not not in Matthew.

But when you pray, say and you see pray when you pray. But then what do you do? Immediately prayer falls away. You didn't even get the word again.

Jesus is saying when you pray, this is what you do. Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done. Give us each day our daily bread, forgive us our sins as we forgive.

But you see, you see, the moment we actually engage in prayer, you know what happens? Prayer disappears. We don't go on thinking about, you know, saying the prayer or there's a formality in that. You recognize that when you find the hypocrite in Scripture and when you find the Gentile in Scripture, you know what they're concerned with? They're concerned the fact that they pray, that they have their hour of prayer, or they're concerned in how they pray.

There's vain repetition. Brethren, you want to get past that. The idea, don't get into this thing about, oh, we have to say our prayers before we eat.

That, I grew up as a kid. God is great. God is good.

Let us thank him for our food. By his hands we all are fed. He gives us not our daily bread.

My brother and I could say that. We could say it fast. We, in fact, we knew how fast we could say it before it would agitate our mother.

We would say it as fast as we possibly could without setting her off. And we knew the speed because if you said it too fast, she was gonna let us have it. But brethren, sometimes that's how we talk about prayer.

Don't talk that way. Don't think that way. You need to recognize this.

This isn't just some mechanical thing. This isn't like, oh, you know, I have to say my prayers today. Oh, brethren, what we, eternal life is knowing God and knowing his son.

And we don't ever want to forget about that. You can talk about prayer. Yes, we know what prayer is.

But you, we have to recognize it for what it is. Prayer is talking to the Lord. It is communing with him.

And that's where we want to go. That's, that's what Paul is saying. Paul is saying, do you recognize what he's saying? He's saying you can't put on a single piece of this armor and do this properly unless you're in communion with God.

That's the real issue in all of this. What happens is when we go to true prayer, suddenly, suddenly the aspect of prayer altogether disappears. And we're speaking to God.

We're gripped by him. We're gripped by interaction with him. I mean, listen to another song in prayer.

This is probably my favorite one. We, we've sung it once or twice since we've been here, but this is John Newton. Listen, Newton does exactly what needs to happen.

You talk about prayer, but then it disappears. And then your eyes are just on the Lord. That's how, that's how.

Come my soul, thy suit prepare. Jesus loves to answer prayer. He himself has bid thee pray.

So there you have it. But then it's lost. I mean, in other words, it disappears.

And Newton rightly, therefore will not say thee nay, thou art coming to a king. You see what happens? The eyes, he's no longer thinking about the fact that I'm praying. It's not, oh, I'm praying, I'm praying, I'm praying.

No. He says, yes, we use the term, but what happens is his eyes, they're not looking back and saying, oh, farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer. The eyes aren't even there.

Can you imagine that even happening? Can you imagine people being saved and being caught up? And what they're doing is they're looking back and, oh, sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer. Through here, we look through a glass dimly. You're, nobody's talking that way.

As we're going up, we're thanking God. We no longer are going to be dealing with God through a glass darkly. Now face to face, the beatific vision.

That's what we want. That's what our hearts are after. And this, this is exactly, in this life, Newton is capturing this.

The idea of prayer just disappears. Thou art coming to a king. You see where the eyes are all of a sudden? You're enamored with him.

That's, this is, this is how true prayer is. And we could go on with that song, but, so the connection with our text is this. It means that every piece of the armor of God, none of it, you got to get this, none of it can be effectually put on and used except to the degree that we are in fellowship and communion with the Lord.

And that's what prayer is. It's striving to find our God. It's, doesn't scripture say, draw near to him? Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

That's what prayer is. It's a drawing near to him. It's striving to come.

It's, it's, it's a yearning. You recognize how the psalmist says that his soul pants after God. It's, it's trying to answer to a desire within us to find him, to come as close as possible to him.

That's, that's it. I don't, I can speak for myself. There are seasons when my prayers are dry.

I don't like that. That, that is not what I want. I want to be able to find him.

I want that prayer to be rich. I want prayer. Paul is saying each piece of the armor, it must be put on in the presence of God.

That's the idea. With your spiritual eye gazing Christward, Godward. Remember, it's a participial phrase, praying at all times with all prayer and supplication.

It covers all of this. If you're going to do battle properly, if we're going to fight the devil properly in this world, we've got to be a church of prayer. You need to be individuals of prayer.

Listen, to think that you're really going to get anywhere in this Christian life, that you're going to achieve any measurable degrees of sanctification, that we're going to actually be soul winners in this world, that

we're going to really be dangerous to the devil. Prayerless people are powerless people, and oftentimes they're lost people, just plain and simple. All times, all prayer, all times, look to the Lord.

That's what's being said. Talk to the Lord, cry to the Lord, cling to the Lord, commune with the Lord, sigh after the Lord, weep before the Lord, even complain. You know, the psalmist, there's places where it talks about him bringing his complaint before the Lord.

You know what? You don't want to complain in front of other people, but there is a place to complain before the Lord. And then oftentimes you see it in scripture. Listen, talk to him, get familiar, say, oh, I could never do that.

Well, you're doing something. If you say you can never complain to the Lord, you can never bring the difficulties in your life to him and actually complain to him. You're doing, you're taking a position that others, that our forefathers have gone before us didn't take.

Now, look, you want to speak to the Lord with reverence, but you know, there are times things come in our life that we don't like. And you know, there are, look, I'm just, I think we need to shoot straight with the Lord. If I see something that looks like it's not according to one of his promises, I want to, I'm going to tell him why, because he wants us to plead his promises.

If you see something in your life that does not look to be in accord with one of God's promises, then take it to him and you tell him about it, tell him over and over and over. Why would you not? That's not disrespectful. That's faith because he gives us promises to be believed.

That's the reality. All the armor without this prayer, it's no good. Notice the terminology.

Look at this all prayer. That means every type of prayer. That means every facet of prayer.

What does that mean? It means this. You know what? Do you know that it's very common for people in this world, you know about the, I mean, we know that I was this way. We pray when we're in trouble.

There's the foxhole mentality, right? The bombs are coming in. You know, many soldiers, Lord, I'll do this, that, and the other thing. Lots of people, when they get into dire situations, they make all sorts of promises to God.

They talk to God. Brethren, we don't want to be people that just pray when they're in trouble. You know what all prayer is? You know what? Praying all the time with all prayer and supplication, it's the idea that you pray when you're in trouble and you pray when the sun's shining.

It means that you pray when the bank account's full and you pray when the bank account's empty. You pray when you're sick. You pray when you're well.

You pray in public. You pray in private. All prayer.

That's what it says. Every kind of prayer. It means you pray out loud.

It means you pray in singing. You pray in fast. You pray silently.

You pray early. You pray late. You come to the prayer meeting and you pray.

It's church. When we gather together as a church and we're praying, we're praying then. It means in your closet, you're praying there.

When you're out walking the fields, you pray there. You pray yourself. You pray for yourself.

You pray for others. You pray in the crowd. You pray at work.

You pray in bed. You pray in just endless ways. You pray.

There are times we're careful. We're strategic in how we pray. We're like order and argument in prayer.

We're trying to think, what promises should I plead before God? There's other times we just, you need to burst out. That ejaculatory prayer where it's just, bang, you fire your arrow off at God and it's over and it's done. There's outcries like that.

There's more premeditated. You may pray at times that are designated, like when you've got a prayer meeting at seven, or there's other times you're not praying when anything is designated. It's all happening as it happens, as the need arises.

You recognize that when we pray, we can pray for ourselves. When we pray, we can intercede for others. When we pray, there can be worship.

When we pray, there can be praise. When we pray, there can be confession. There's all prayer.

That's what's being said here. All. You pray in general.

You pray for particulars. You just keep going hard after the Lord. You seek him early.

You ask. Isn't that what Christ said? Teach us to pray. Ask.

Seek. Knock. It's all those.

Every time. You keep on doing it. Give him no rest.

That's what Isaiah says. Give him no rest. Pray now with all prayer.

That's what Paul's saying. Now, brethren, we've got to see this for what it is. As excellent, as important, as truth may be, as the gospel may be, as righteousness may be, all these all these different single pieces of the armor is important as it all is.

It's no good unless you're in this vital living communication with God himself. I'll tell you this. The devil takes the battlefield against you.

It is not. Do you recognize? Think about truth and the word of God. What do we associate with that doctrine, theology? Those things are absolutely necessary.

But, you know, there is such a thing as dead orthodoxy. We can have. Oh, there is dead Calvinism.

Believe me, it's no good unless you've got this. The devil takes the battlefield against us. It's absolutely essential.

One of the reasons that I had Para read from Second Corinthians chapter three is just this. Do you know what Second Corinthians three is about? It's about Moses having his face veiled. Do you know why his face was veiled? Because his face was shining.

Why was his face shining? Because he had been in the presence of God. And when he would come out of that tabernacle after having been face to face with God, his face shown. And so he would put a veil over it.

Do you recognize what Second Corinthians is saying? Listen to this. We all, we Christians with unveiled face, we're not like the Jews whose faces are veiled like Moses's was. It's covering the glory.

But when we come to Christ, the veil comes off. And what happens is we are face to face with God. And with unveiled face, we behold the glory of the Lord.

And what happens? We take on the shine. Glory to glory. The glory comes on us.

And you see, it's the same truth. And I'm telling you this, when you take the battlefield, the glory better be on your face. The glory of those who have spent time in secret with their God, who have dwelt in his presence, because if that is lacking, it doesn't matter how much truth you put on.

It doesn't matter how much you take up that sword. It is going to be ineffectual. And you will not be fruitful and you will not be victorious.

That is what Paul is saying here at the end. I mean, look, let's just speak plainly. Orthodoxy is not enough.

You can't fight the devil with dead orthodoxy. It doesn't work. You cannot fight the devil effectively just because you can spit out certain doctrines and you can correct other people who may be wrong.

That isn't it. It's this. Praying always with all prayer and supplication.

Oh, I can tell you this. I have pastored long enough and I've run around in different circles of churches. I know this.

There are many churches in the reformed Baptist circles, in reformed circles. They may put a high premium on theology, systematic theology, the Puritans, their Calvinism. But I'll tell you this.

There is a sad, sad neglect. Now I know there are exceptions. So I'm not going to stereotype.

But I've seen this. There are many reformed churches. They do not put high priority on the prayer meeting.

I remember my fellow elder John Zeitzman. He was traveling to Nicaragua. There was a reformed group down there that had gone down to Nicaragua and they were working with people.

We were working with a group. There was another group down there. They were working with a group.

They'd been down there for years. Do you know in all the years that they've been down there, they've been teaching these Nicaraguans lots of truth, no prayer meeting. And John came back and he recognized, here's this group.

It's working. Do you know that is not uncommon? That is not uncommon. Do you know a lot of reformed churches, what they'll do midweek? Bible study.

No prayer meeting or they'll tack five minutes of prayer onto it. Brethren, that is not what Paul's talking about here. Tacking five minutes of prayer onto a Bible study.

Spurgeon had it right. I totally believe. He said, do not have a midweek Bible study and try to tack a prayer meeting on to it.

He said, you will do neither well. And I'm all about that. I mean, the reality is we sadly find certain people, oftentimes who are the most orthodox and often they're the very people who seem to least realize the importance of prayer.

Brethren, I'll tell you, prayer is for desperate people. Prayer is for people who want to find their God, not just find the truth. Brethren, that truth, that orthodoxy that we lay hold of, that ought to drive us to want to be in God's presence and to talk to him in communion.

Why? I mean, this is like finding the doctrine that's really the teaching of the description of a person of the opposite sex. You're single. This is describing the perfect mate, everything about it.

But in the end, you don't want to run off and find that person. That's crazy. You just stick there.

You're so happy and content and smug in your understanding about what you're intellectually achieving through understanding what this person looks like and their beauty that you're content to stop there. Look, that's to be ineffectual on the battlefield here. You don't want to stop there.

What's going on in a church and in people's minds who hear this kind of preaching and this kind of reformed doctrine, but they don't come to the prayer meeting. It's craziness. What does that say? And I recognize you could say, well, you know, prayer meeting.

No, no, no, no. Don't run. You say, I pray at home.

I pray in my closet. Well, listen to Paul. Paul doesn't say, yes, that's good.

I hope you do. But what he's saying is praying all the time and all prayer. And undoubtedly, you find in the New Testament that in the book of Acts that they came together and they prayed corporately.

And I'll tell you this, there's something about corporate worship when we gather together and we're united and we can pray with a unified voice. There's something to that, which that's not my agenda right now to prove that from scripture. But I think you can prove that.

In fact, I'll tell you this. If there's something you really want God to answer in your life, you ought to be asking as many people as possible to pray for it in as many different places as possible. If you really want something, there's something to that.

Now, brethren, as excellent and necessary as each one of these pieces is, you see what's being said. As essential as the truth is, as essential as all of this is, you can have the sword of the spirit in your hand. You can quote scripture all day long.

You can quote the Puritans. It's all good. It's all orthodox.

But as you take up these pieces, you need to be a people that are praying all the time with all prayer and supplication. Brethren, we are utterly, utterly dependent on the Lord. And look, I can only speak for myself.

I can't speak for every one of you. I don't know where all of you are at. I don't know where some of you are saved.

Some of you are not. Some of you are in different places in your Christianity. I want miracles.

And I'm not talking about a lot of this garbage in the charismatic circles. I'm talking about people being born again. That's a miracle.

I'm talking about God doing things that really amaze us. I'm talking about God showing us that he's our God. I have come here.

I was just as I was just as impotent over there. And I've come over here and I can't do this. You can't do this.

We can't do this. We have to have the Lord. If we're going to take the battlefield against against fallen angels, and he's basically got, oh, we saw it.

Any of you that went out yesterday, you see it. You recognize we do not wrestle against flesh and blood. Do you recognize? I've seen it several weeks now.

Somebody takes a track. The ticket, I think, I think Gaynor was over, and last week it was Thomas, over away. And I would see people who already had received tracks moving through the area where Sonny was preaching, and they'd just be shredding the track.

You remember this. We don't wrestle against flesh and blood. These people are held captive by the evil one.

That's what Scripture says. He's got them bound. They're his.

He owns them. And you need one stronger than the strong man to come and take those goods away. You see, we need him.

We need it desperately. For one of you to grow from one degree of glory to the next, sanctification, it's by the Spirit. We need him.

Sanctification isn't, nobody's going to grow. We may have some people that have been sitting under the truth here for some time. You're beginning to recognize, ooh, I don't know if it's well with my soul.

What's going to help that? What's going to fix that? I can't fix that. I can try to tell you the truth, but I can't fix it, and I can't make your eyes see. We desperately need him.

Empty prayer meetings and reformed circles is, what is that? That is not people that are taking the battle seriously. And I know we can get lifted up with pride and having all of our teaching and all of our deep theological, and we need that. We need that.

We need to know our Bibles. We need to know truth. We need to know doctrine.

Doctrine is teaching. Teaching comes from the Bible. We don't want it.

We don't despise that at all. But the fact is, we're so utterly dependent. We've got to realize that if we don't remain in constant communion, constant fellowship with God the Father and the Son, his Son Jesus

Christ, in the Holy Spirit, whatever we might have done by way of putting on the armor of God, what do you think it's going to avail you? What do you think prayerless armor is really going to avail for us? I'll tell you this, prayerlessness, you take the battlefield, you are already defeated.

That's what's going to happen. Brother, sister, you've got to ever maintain this reality, this essential intimate relationship with God. We've got to have it.

Always pray or be defeated. Be ineffectual. You do recognize, look, if we've got people and you basically look at their life and it's not fruitful, it's not effectual, you can typically trace that back to they're not really, they're a stagnation.

It's to no avail. Okay, now I'm going to just finish this with this. He says praying at all times in the Spirit.

Now I do not want to just pass over that little prepositional phrase because that jumps out at me as much as anything here. Praying at all times in the Spirit. What is that? I mean, listen, I hope you ask questions when you read Scripture.

I'm afraid of this. I'm afraid we casually read Scripture, we hardly know what we're reading, we read across statements like that. A prepositional phrase just stuck in, in the Spirit.

I hope you are wired to stop and at least pray at all times, in all prayer, and say as I'm trying to handle the Word, because remember that's, this is the sword, and I'm reading it, and things like that, in the Spirit, it's found. If I'm gonna handle this sword, praying at all times. So I need to stop and ask, what does that mean and why is it there and why does Paul use, is that just some religious jargon that just gets, yeah, it doesn't, not really all that important, it's just kind of, if you're gonna write to a church and you're gonna say religious things, you need to throw little prepositional phrases like, don't, that's not true at all.

Anything that we find in the Word of God is there on purpose and God gives it to us and it means something and you don't want to, you don't want to just go past it. In the Spirit. Oh, so often, there's so many things in Scripture that just raise questions in my mind.

We ought to be asking, what is that? In fact, the question that I would ask is this, okay, Paul tells me, praying at all times in the Spirit, all prayer, all supplication, what I'm gonna ask is this, Paul, if I'm a Christian, is that automatic? I mean, why are you saying it? If it's automatic, why even say it? Are you just saying it to describe what happens when I pray? The thing is, you're telling me to do something here. Am I passive in this or is my will involved? Can I, as a Christian, not pray in the Spirit? I mean, those are the kind of questions that I, don't ever fear questions because questions will cause you to dig, it costs you to ask more and more questions and seek to dig them up and find out what's going on. Paul, tell me, is there a responsibility on my part in this? I mean, this is not just a random prepositional phrase.

So, I want Paul to teach me the significance. And so, what I'm gonna do is I'm gonna just take you right here at the end of this message, I'm gonna take you through kind of a running overview of Ephesians and the places where he talks about the Spirit. Because I'm thinking, you want to interpret Scripture? You interpret Scripture with Scripture.

And if Paul's telling me about the Spirit here, what else has Paul said about the Spirit in this letter? Maybe it'll help me to understand exactly what's going on here. So, Ephesians 1, look at verse 13 and 14. Let's move through this rapidly.

We could spend a month of Sundays on verses like this, but Ephesians 1, 13 and 14. Because what Paul's done here is he's brought us face-to-face with the third person of the Godhead. I mean, we're supposed to be putting on this armor and all the time be praying, praying at all times, all prayer, all supplication, and we're supposed to be doing it in the Spirit.

So, what's the deal with the Spirit here? Okay, in him, that's verse 13, chapter 1, verse 13, in Christ, you also, now notice the order. You heard the word of truth. This is glorious as to how somebody, what happens in somebody's life.

Tremendous that we have the chronology here. You hear the word of truth, the gospel, that's what that is, of your salvation, and then what happens? You heard it, and then from hearing the truth, from hearing the gospel, you believe in the Christ of the gospel. And then, you see, sealing with the Spirit flows out of faith.

That's what it says here. You hear, you believe, and then you're sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory. Now, there's three words here that I think we ought to sit up and take notice.

Sealed, promised, and guarantee. They're the ones that jump out at me. Okay, promised Holy Spirit.

What was promised? Let me tell you, the new covenant promised the Spirit. Let me just tell you that promise. Ezekiel 36, don't turn there, but listen to it.

I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. Now, notice that. You know, when you come over to the New Testament, you go to Galatians chapter 5, you find the fruit of the Spirit.

What's the fruit of the Spirit? Anybody tell me? Love, joy, peace, patience. There's gentleness and faithfulness and goodness and self-control. That's not exactly the right order, but those are all in there.

Now, here's the thing. What is love? If you love, what is that? That's a fulfilling of what? The law. You love, you fulfill the law.

You see what the fruit of the Spirit is love. He says he's going to get, he's going to put his Spirit within us, and he's going to cause us to keep his statutes. That's love.

Okay, that's promised. Now, you know the other place I think of the promise is when Jesus said this. He said right at the end of Luke's Gospel, behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you.

Stay in the city, Jerusalem, until you are clothed with power from on high. You know what? When I think of the Spirit, what's promised? Righteousness in our lives, love, being true law keepers. That's not legalism.

That's spirit life, spirit-empowered life. You know what I think of when I think of the Spirit? What was promised? Power to be holy, power to love, power to keep his commandments. You're going to be clothed with power from on high.

That's the promise of the Spirit. Okay, let's keep going. This promised divine person is called a seal.

Do you see that? Sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. What is a seal? You put a seal on an envelope. It shows identity.

It shows ownership. It makes something official. It shows authenticity.

So that's what happens. When you receive the Spirit, when you're sealed, that means you're shown to be God's. Now, notice this.

Then there's a term guarantee. How can I be guaranteed that I'm real? How can I be guaranteed that my Christianity is real? Well, just this way. The Spirit.

Look for the seal. You know, I receive an envelope. How can I know that it's really from your government or from the council? Well, look for the identification on there.

You see, the seal tells you if it's actually official. Do you want to know? This is the guarantee. Now, notice this.

Nothing is a guarantee unless I can see it or feel it or sense that it's there. You recognize that. If I've got some kind of seal on me but I'm unaware of it, then that's no guarantee.

You see what he's saying here is the Spirit of God gets given to somebody. Well, what happens? I was living my life not concerned about God's law at all, basically doing my own thing, not loving others, selfish. And then what happened? The Spirit of God came in and then what happens? He causes us to keep his... See, my life totally changed in a Godward direction.

And I heard his word. Suddenly his word mattered in my life. I mean, the power of God, that is powerful.

Suddenly I'm loving God's people and there's joy. Remember the fruit? Love, joy. Oh, and I had a peace.

I was not at peace. Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden. I'll give you rest.

See, lots of people don't have rest. Well, they may have pleasure but they don't have rest. You see, something supernatural happens.

We get clothed with power that produces all sorts of things in our life. And you know what? If I want to know if I'm real, I want a guarantee of that, then I look at my life and I look for evidences that the Spirit there, the seal of God's ownership, that's what this is. It authenticates that I'm a Christian.

The very fact we possess the Spirit of God, that's God's testimony to us that we're his. The Spirit is the seal. And notice sealing is something that it follows faith in Jesus Christ.

That's important. Some people might be looking for evidences of the Spirit within. That's, you know where your eyes always need to go first.

You trust Christ. You trust what he did on that cross. That's where this thing begins.

The Spirit is a guarantee because if you've been sealed with the Spirit, the Spirit operates on you in ways that are powerful. And so it's tangible. That means it's real.

It's manifest. That means it's experiential. You actually can see it.

You can appreciate it. You can detect it. It's something that is, you have conscious expressions of a transformation in your life.

That's a reality. Brethren, one of the things is the Spirit of God came to glorify Christ. And I'll tell you one thing that happens.

All I have to do is ask somebody, what do you think of Christ? I can tell if the Spirit of God's in there. Why? Because if you have the Spirit, you know what? You can tell me there was a time when, oh, it's just like we heard in the testimony this morning. I can say the same thing.

Christ. Well, there was God, but then there was Christ. Who was he? Well, he was rather unimportant and I could use his name in vain.

That didn't really matter. You don't use God's name in vain. Cry like he's the Son of God.

He's just somehow some lesser thing and unimportant. Do you recognize that when the Spirit of God comes and begins to shine the light of truth into a person's soul, suddenly they see Christ altogether as glorious as the Father. They see him as wonderful, as beautiful, and altogether necessary.

See, now what we're talking about is the Spirit. Because remember, we're supposed to pray in the Spirit. Now, look at chapter 3, verse 16.

Ephesians 3, 16. For the sake of flow here, you might actually want to look at 14. For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father.

So Paul's saying, for this reason, I'm praying to the Father, from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named. Notice this, according to the riches of God's glory, he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit. When we talk about the Spirit, we talk about power.

But notice what it is. Power in your inner being, your inner man, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. Notice this, that you being rooted and grounded in love may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

Do you recognize what it is that the Spirit does as he empowers you? Do you recognize it takes nothing less than the riches of God's glory to strengthen you with power by his Spirit, just so that you can begin to understand the dimensions of Christ's love? Don't ever think that's an easy thing to comprehend. What he is saying is you have to be...and that is one of the things that happens to us, does it not? When we get saved, suddenly we begin to realize what Christ did for us, how he loved us, what he sacrificed for us. That is an indication of the Spirit's power working upon you.

The light gets turned on. We were talking to a homosexual yesterday, and we're telling him, because he's kind of doubting. He's got legitimate questions, and we're telling him about things, but he's just saying, I don't believe that.

We're saying, we recognize you don't. There was a day when we didn't believe it either. But suddenly, what happens? The scales, it's like the blinder comes off, the veil comes off.

And when you come to Christ, the veil comes off, and suddenly you can see what you couldn't see before. And if we would have had Para read on to 2 Corinthians chapter 4, there it is, the God who said, let there be light. He does that very thing in our hearts.

Let there be light. And suddenly we behold this glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and it's like the lights come on. Do you recognize that? It's all together a phenomenal demonstration of the power of the Spirit of God.

That's what we're talking about. We're empowered to know things. In Ephesians 1.17, it calls the Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation and the knowledge of him.

What the Spirit does is he gives us a revelation of God. But then get this, look at Ephesians 2.18. Ephesians 2.18, this is one of the most important verses that I think Paul gives to us concerning the Spirit in Ephesians. Ephesians 2.18, through him, that's through Christ, we both have access.

That's Jew and Gentile. We both have access in one Spirit to the Father, praying in the Spirit. You see, in one Spirit we have access.

Pray in the Spirit. There's access there. We're told in Romans that the Spirit causes us to cry, Abba, Father.

You see, it's the Spirit of adoption, not the Spirit of slavery. And the Spirit comes into us. You know what happens? The Spirit comes into us and we cry, Abba, Father, because suddenly we realize this isn't Allah.

This isn't the deist God. He's not far and removed and distant and impersonal. The Spirit leads us to believe that there's no longer a quarrel between us and the true God.

The Spirit of God allows us to feel the sense that this is a smile of our God upon, not just any smile. This is the smile of our heavenly Father, a Father's smile, and that we are children of God. This is, I mean, we suddenly, with the Spirit, we have a boldness that we can draw near to God in prayer.

We can speak to Him. There's access. He hears us.

He's gracious to us. These are the blessed seals of salvation. This is the seal of God's smile upon us, praying in the Spirit.

If there's something for us to do, it's this. I would say this. We conspire with the Spirit.

You want to talk about praying in the Spirit? What does that mean? What is there possibly for you to do? Let me mention several things. One is conspire with the Spirit. You say, what is that? Conspire means you concur with Him.

You agree with Him. Now listen to this. Paul says this, if we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

You ever read that? That's in Galatians chapter three. You know what that means? If I'm going to live in the Spirit, I want to be in step with Him. I want to concur with Him.

I want to conspire with Him. That means, brethren, if we know that the Spirit of God is all about causing men and women to be born again, let's get the gospel out there so that men and women will be born again. If the Spirit is all about exalting Christ, then let's do that.

Let's exalt Christ. You see, if the Spirit of God is all about telling us who God is, then let us pray knowing who God is. Let's go to Scripture and find out.

Let that Spirit of revelation of the knowledge of Him fill us with an idea about the God we pray to. Do you recognize? You can go, you know, in the Spirit. In the Spirit is the idea of pray with power, pray with life, pray with vitality.

You do recognize that there's so often there's a deadness in prayer. God, we don't want to pray just mechanical. We don't want to just say our prayers.

Do you remember what was said? Do we worship here on this mountain or is it over in Jerusalem that we worship? Jesus says, no, no, no, no, no. It is not on this mountain and it is not in Jerusalem. You know what God's looking for? He's looking for those who worship Him in spirit and in truth.

That's what He's looking for. You remember what Paul said? We are the true circumcision. Who do what? Worship God in the Spirit.

We are those who worship by the Spirit of God. We glory in Christ. We put no confidence in the flesh.

Brethren, we don't say our prayers. This isn't about just basically some sweet hour of prayer. It's not form.

It's not the place. It's not on that mountain. It's not over in that city.

It's not the posture. It's not the liturgy. It's not mechanical.

That's not praying in the Spirit. It's being in step with the Spirit. It's being in step with the promises of God.

It's being in step with the person of God. It's being in step with what the Spirit of God is doing. It's not formal.

It's not necessarily eloquent. It's not just saying the right eloquent words. It's not that certain time.

It doesn't need to be that specific prayer meeting. We are praying at all times in the Spirit, all prayer. We're looking for and longing for that communion that comes, that Spirit is giving us access.

We want to pray in the Spirit with access to the Father. You want to pray as though you really recognize, I'm coming into the presence of a God who's smiling upon me. This is the God who did not spare His only begotten Son.

That is the kind of God you are praying to. And if He didn't hold back His Son, what? He's not going to withhold any other good thing. You see, you want to, this is how we want to pray.

And it's not just, it's not this doldrum thing. It's, it's, it's personal. It's fellowship.

It's access. Do you know another thing that's said in Ephesians? It says that this Spirit of God is doing something. In Him, in Christ, we also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

You want to recognize that. You're praying in the Spirit. You recognize this.

It's not just you have access to Him. It is that the Spirit of God is building us together into this dwelling place for God. And so I'll tell you this, you want to pray in the Spirit? He specifically says, do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you have been sealed for the day of redemption.

That is critical. And I'll tell you this, you know, there's only one thing that grieves the Spirit. And what I find is it's not so much just sin, because scripture, we get a picture of David.

He's confessing his sin. We get a picture in 1 John chapter one, that if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just, be confessing. But if you look at the context there in Ephesians chapter four, you know what you find where it says not to grieve the Spirit? What it specifically is talking about is our life.

There's a unity of the Spirit and it's talking about the way we talk. Let it be for building each other up. When it tells us about the thief, don't steal, but make money, work with your hands so that you can give to each other to meet needs.

You see, if you look there, it's about how we live with each other. Are we loving each other? Is the church knit with love? If there's something to grieve the Spirit, it's when we don't get along. It's when we fight.

It's when we have bitterness, we have jealousy, we have envy, we have hatred. If there's anything we need to cultivate in this church, it is a love for one another. You want to grieve the Spirit? Just live life selfishly and don't care about anybody.

That'll grieve the Spirit. Your prayers will be powerless. I'll tell you one of the... Brethren, if you just look at those... I know we've gone long, but maybe I'll end with this.

I just ask this question. What is prayer in your life? I mean, look, not to answer me, but if we're going to fight this battle, praying at all times in the Spirit, all prayer and supplication, or you know what it says there in Romans 12? It's basically be devoted to prayer. And I would just ask you this.

Does your life look like that? Does your life look like devotion to prayer? Be constant in prayer. Does your life like... Men always pray and not think. That's what Jesus said.

Does that characterize your life? We need to be honest about this. We need to be a praying church. And my desire is not... I don't want people to be overwhelmed.

I just... I want us, when we hear the Word of God, if things aren't right, to turn and make prayer come alive. Cause it to burst into flame. Be devoted to it.

Give yourself... Get in step with the Spirit, just like Scripture says. Be afraid of quenching Him. Be afraid of grieving Him.

Our ultimate position as Christians can basically be... We can weigh out who we are, what we are, and where we're at, by the character of our prayer life. You can't get away from that. That can be proven all over Scripture.

Isaiah said this. Give Him no rest. And it goes on to talk about until He makes Jerusalem perfect.

Brethren, we are the heavenly Jerusalem. The church is the bride of Christ. We are the true circumcision.

Remember what Scripture says. And you want to give Him no rest until He perfects this whole thing. Give Him no rest.

That's what He says. He wants you not to give Him rest. Don't give Him rest.

That means bothering all the time. For what? For your lost children. For your lost parents.

For lost Manchester. For the fact that you're not like Christ yet. And I'm not like Christ.

Pray for me. You see, that's where we're going next with this. It's for all the saints.

We need to be lifting up our voice. We need to be praying for each other. Brethren, one of the things is just getting people to pray and pray for themselves.

But oh, the sacrifice of praying for each other. Intercessory prayer. That's really the target.

We're not just praying all the time about our own needs. But we're actually learning how to worship, praise, confession, adoring Him, hallelujahs, yes, supplication, making requests for what I need. And also you making requests for me and me making requests for you.

We really need... Brethren, I hope you know all the people in the church. I hope you're praying for one another. We've got to do this.

I'll tell you what, there are victories to be had. And I trust we're moving in that direction. And I trust the days are coming when we will see such victories.

But we got to fight. We got to fight by the book. We got to fight the way that we're being bidden.

To fight. Father, I pray that you'd help us to do just this thing. I pray, Lord, that you would help each one of us to more fully understand and recognize, come to that reality in our own lives where we're praying in the Spirit and really coming to recognize what that is and embrace that, know that reality, to know what it is to pray in step with the Spirit, to not grieve the Spirit.

But to have access by way of the Spirit, to be made into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit, that guarantee, the promised Holy Spirit. Lord, we want every bit of what was promised, all the power. We want to be clothed with power from on high.

We want that power, that strength to be able to recognize and embrace and grasp all the full dimensions of the love of Christ, that we might be filled with all the fullness of God. We want that, the love of Christ that cannot be, it's beyond knowledge. And yet there are dimensions to it that we might have the strength to be able to comprehend.

Lord, I pray for the joy of this church. Unleash your Spirit so that we could comprehend more of the glories and the depths of the love of Christ for us. Oh, help us.

We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/pgWnqYwa3H0.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/tim-conway/praying-at-all-times-in-the-spirit/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**