

# Experiencing Power Through Prayer

## “Power for Warfare”

(Part 1)

**Intro:** For the next 3 weeks we are going to talk about prayer. Do you know why this topic just doesn't excite most followers of Christ? I believe it's because of what the Christian community has made prayer into over the years that has bored us out of our minds. We've made prayer passive / somber / serious / only for the highly spiritual / complicated it / I think we've even feminized it. Why do more women tend to pray than men? For the next 3 weeks I want to shake up your concept of prayer! I want to change not only how you think about prayer, I want to change how you pray! I hope that you will see prayer as dangerous / edgy / radical / life altering; and one of the most powerful activities God has ever given us the privilege to participate in! (Series: Experiencing Power Through Prayer)

- One of the key reasons we need additional power in our lives is because we are in the middle of a spiritual conflict. There is a spiritual war that rages all around us. The Bible tells us that we are not victims and prisoners in this war. We are more than conquerors. If that is going to be a reality, then we need to learn to pray with power in this war.
- 3 keys to experience power in prayer for the spiritual conflict we find ourselves in.

### I. Pray Accepting The Reality Of The Conflict

- How? (Many followers of Christ live in denial of this conflict. There is no spiritual power as long as we live in spiritual denial.)

#### A. Pray acknowledging the spiritual conflict

- The Bible is VERY clear on this issue

*Eph. 6:10-12 “A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.” (NLT)*

1. Where is the fight? Where does the Bible say the real conflict is at? It's not with people. The battle is NOT with flesh and blood! The real conflict is against the strategies of the devil. It is against unseen rulers / authorities / mighty powers of the dark world / evil spirits in heavenly places.
2. There are supernatural powers at work against you, your family, your children, your church, and against your community. You can live in denial of these forces all you want but it doesn't change the fact that they are actively at work against you!
3. These demonic forces are real / active / organized / strategic / they have geographic assignments / they have supernatural powers / and they oppose the purposes and the people of God.

4. The Bible gives us a window into this struggle in Daniel 10. (Explain) Daniel prays and after 21 days an angel shows up to give him an answer but the angel was taken captive by an demonic power for 21 days until Michael came and rescued him.
  5. When we pray, we need to be mindful of the spiritual conflict that we are involved with. Too often we are stuck in the natural / physical / the flesh and blood / and never acknowledge the spiritual dynamic that is taking place around us!
  6. When you see a broken marriages / drug and alcohol abuse / domestic violence / conflict and divisiveness / is all you see are the people who are involved in these behaviors? OR, can we see the demonic influence behind these things?
  7. Jesus said that the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. He was referring to Satan. When we see ourselves or others being robbed of what God promises, it's time to recognize the enemies involvement.
- When was the last time you prayed acknowledging the spiritual conflict you're in? "Lord, I know I'm in a conflict that I have no power for, without You. Would you help me be strong in You and in Your mighty power today."

#### B. Pray in order to stay spiritually alert

*1 Peter 5:8-9 "Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith..." (NLT)*

1. The only way to stand firm against our great enemy is to stay spiritually alert. The only way to be spiritually alert is to pray! Prayer increases your spiritual sensitivity to what is going on around you in the spirit realm.
  2. When we pray consistently, God develops in us a spiritual perception / spiritual vision. We begin to be much more aware of the spiritual dynamics playing out around us. We become spiritually alert.
  3. It's like seeing things in 2 dimension Vs 3 dimension. Remember those 3-D pictures called stereograms? If you stare at them long enough, you see the 3 dimension picture emerge. (Show slide – Do you see it?)
  4. There is a spiritual dimension that God wants us to be alert to...He wants us to see. It is in this realm where our enemy operates. Unless we pray accepting this reality we will never look for it and never see it. We will live in spiritual 2 dimension world. It is prayer that keeps us spiritually alert.
- Will you pray accepting the reality of this conflict you are involved in?

## II. Pray Embracing Your Role In The Conflict

- How do I embrace my role?

#### A. Refuse to be an observer of the spiritual battle

*Eph. 6:13 "Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything to stand." (NIV)*

*II Cor. 6:7 “in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left.” (NIV)*

1. These scriptures do not indicate a casual observers’ role. We have not been given armor and weapons to just admire and look at. We have been given spiritual armor and weaponry for battle.
- Let me briefly explain the spiritual armor Eph. 6 talks about so that it makes sense to all of us. (Helmet of Salvation / Breastplate of righteousness / Belt of Truth / Feet prepared to share the Gospel / Shield of Faith / Sword of the Spirit – Word / With all prayer!)
- These are all conscious choices we make – explain – Prayer holds them all together!
  2. We have to put away fatalistic attitudes that our response doesn’t matter / defeatism that believes we can’t win / fear that keeps us paralyzed and absent from the fight and finally decide to embrace our role in this.
  3. What is our role? Our role is to follow Jesus embracing His purposes in our generation, and engage the enemy as we move ahead. Our purpose is not to engage the enemy. We are followers of Christ. That’s our primary purpose.
  4. BUT, we must understand that as we follow Christ and His Kingdom purposes the enemy will try everything in His power to try to stop this. This is when we must stop being observers and become active participants in the battle.
  5. We must realize that it’s not the job of a few spiritual people to fight this battle but all of us as we all follow Christ. The way we engage the enemy is through prayer! They way we experience spiritual power in the conflict is through prayer.
- This is the decision that some of you need to make...stop being a spiritual observer.

B. Commit to a lifestyle of battling with prayer

*Eph. 6:18 “Pray in the Spirit **at all times and on every occasion**. Stay alert and **be persistent** in your prayers for **all believers everywhere**.” (NLT)*

*Col. 4:2 “Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.” (NLT)*

1. Where God is taking this church will require us to be a church devoted to prayer! The enemy has a very strong hold on our community. He’s had it for years and he’s in no mood to let it go easily.
2. The Lord has placed Foothills here to be an instrument of His transformation. There is a clash of Kingdoms going on right now for this community! We are in the middle of it! Our response as a church is critical!
3. We need to be a church that prays at all times / on every occasion / being persistent / and completely devoted . It is time for many of you to move past just a casual participation in prayer and commit to a lifestyle of prayer.
4. Men, it’s time for you to put aside your uninspiring / weak / boring perspective of prayer and embrace what it really is...it’s a fight! It is a fight for your family / your children / your community. I know that if anyone was threatening your family you would have no problem fighting to protect them. That’s prayer!
5. The reality is there is someone threatening all this and God wants us to “man up”

and fulfill our responsibility to protect our families and community. You do this on your knees! This type of praying becomes a lifestyle that we commit to.

- Each of us has a role in this conflict. God is calling us to embrace it!
- Maybe you're thinking, I'd like to commit to this lifestyle, but what does it look like? How do I pray in a way that engages the enemy?

### III. Pray Strategically In Response To The Conflict

How do I pray strategically?

#### A. Pray against demonic activity

*II Cor. 10:3-4 "For though we walk (live) in the flesh, we are not carrying on our warfare according to the flesh and using mere human weapons. For the weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds." (Amplified)*

1. The enemy has strongholds that must be overthrown and destroyed. What's a stronghold. Simply, it is repetitive, entrenched demonic activity. It could be divisiveness / drugs and alcohol / abuse / poverty / pride / It can be almost anything that is set up by the enemy to hinder God's purposes.
2. A stronghold can affect individuals / families / churches / and communities. (even states and nations)
3. As we commit to pray, God will open our eyes to recognize what is holding back the Kingdom of God in our lives / families / communities. When God shows us these issues, He is wanting us to pray for their removal.
4. We have to stop thinking that our lives will get better / our communities will get better through a political / economic process. That's natural thinking. That's flesh and blood thinking. We need to pray for the removal of the things that are holding back the blessing of God!
5. Is there divisiveness in your family? Pray against it! Is pride and selfishness destroying your marriage? Pray against it! Is there a darkness at your work place? Is there conflict and depression? Are you praying against it?
6. As followers of Christ we don't tolerate demonic activity. We pray against it until it is removed and transformed! This is strategic prayers.

#### B. Pray persistently for each other

*Eph. 6:18 "Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere." (NLT)*

*Luke 18:1 "One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up." (NLT) Explain parable*

1. Persistence matters to God! God has established His Kingdom so that our prayers matter in the grand scheme of things. Our prayers affect the spirit realm. Our prayer

affect outcomes! Amazing!

2. I have explained this before, but I want to use it again. It is the teeter-totter principal. (Have balance scales to illustrate) If I keep praying the scale will eventually tip. If you join me, it will tip faster.
- If we want to see something change we need to spiritually PUSH! Pray Until Something Happens!
    3. We need to persist in prayer but we also need to persist in prayer for each other. WHY? Because once we begin to engage in the spiritual conflict, praying for each other becomes much more necessary.
    4. We don't engage the enemy alone and without prayer protection. We must persist in praying for one another. I need your prayers. I can't be the pastor I'm supposed to be without you praying for me.
    5. We are a church that is taking enemy territory. (Point of the spear) That means the person with the biggest target on his back is me. BUT, if you're going to start engaging and praying, you will have one on your back too.
    6. This isn't to scare you so that you don't pray. It's to help you stay alert. If you're going to start shooting at the enemy, he'll probably start shooting back!
  - I'd love to challenge you to pray for the leaders of this church. There is a list printed. You can use this as a way to persistently pray for those on the front lines.
  - Who's praying for you? If you're involved in any ministry at this church, I want to ask you to find 5 people who will pray for you daily! "Will you pray for me and be my prayer covering?"

### C. Pray aggressively

*James 5:16 "The **earnest prayer** of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results..." (NLT)*

*Acts 12:5 "So Peter was kept in prison, but **fervent prayer** for him was persistently made to God by the church." (Amplified)*

1. Strategic prayer is aggressive prayer. It's earnest...it's fervent...it expects the miraculous from God! I don't believe prayers that are anemic / weak / faithless / generic /and passive please God at all.
2. Prayers that please God are ones that acknowledge who He is and what He can do. The phrase "go big or go home" should be applied to praying strategically. "Pray big or go home."
3. Let's have prayers that match the size and power of our God. You see, Jesus defeated Satan on the cross. Satan has no power over the people of God or the Kingdom of God. He cannot stop the advancement of God's Kingdom when God's people start living in the authority they have in Christ. He knows this! This is why he hates it when followers of Christ start praying.
4. This is why God tells us to pray. There is power for a war that we are promised to win! If we are willing to enter this conflict, we will see the miraculous power of

God like we never have. We will see strongholds fall and lives and a community transformed.

Will you be willing to pray and do battle in 3 areas? These areas become a lifestyle.

1. Will you spiritually fight for your family?
2. Will you spiritually fight for your church?
3. Will you spiritually fight for your community?
  - On your blue cars today if you're willing to, write the word FIGHT!
  
  - Close with video: Battle Cry?