

THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

I. Ephesians: Nurture In Living Focused On God's Eternal Purpose For Christians

C. Nurture In Applying The Believer's Positional Truth To Live And Ministry

10. Nurture In Specific Steps In God's Personal Empowering For Victory In The Angelic Conflict (Ephesians 6:13-20)

I. Introduction

- A. When Paul wrote the "Prison Epistles" of Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon, the fact that he was in prison troubled believers, Philippians 1:12-13; Colossians 2:1-2; 4:7-8 and Philemon 22; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1672, "Introduction to the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians."
- B. To nurture his readers, and for them to nurture others, Paul urged them to apply their positional truths in Christ to a godly walk, and Ephesians 6:13-20 applied this to specific steps in gaining victory in the angelic conflict:

II. Nurture In Specific Steps In God's Personal Empowering For Victory In The Angelic Conflict.

- A. Though Paul in Ephesians 6:10-12 wrote of the general spiritual victory we believers are to gain in the angelic conflict, he explained specific steps we are to take in gaining that victory in Ephesians 6:13-20 (as follows):
1. Paul had directed believers in Ephesians 6:11 to put on God's "full armor of a heavily-armed soldier" (*panoplia*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 612) so as to "hold (their) ground in battle" (*histemi*, Ibid., p. 382-383) against the "wiles, stratagems" (*methodeia*, Ibid., p. 500) of the devil.
 2. Since he discussed the parts of this "armor" in Ephesians 6:13-17, and continued in Ephesians 6:18-20 with directives on the angelic conflict, Ephesians 6:13-20 offers specific steps for victory in that conflict.
- B. Hence, we note the following specific steps in God's personal empowering for victory in the angelic conflict:
1. First, we must put on the belt of truth, and the "truth" in this context of the armor discussion is not the Bible's revealed truth, for in Ephesians 6:16, 18-20, Paul clearly speaks of one's *walk*, the "subjective truth" of the "believer's integrity and faithfulness," Eph. 6:14a, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 643. Hence, the first step in victory in the angelic conflict is to think, act and speak the complete, absolute truth!
 2. Second, we must accordingly experientially put on the breastplate of righteousness, "the sanctifying righteousness of Christ (1 Cor. 1:30) practiced in a believer's life," Ibid.; Ephesians 6:14b. We must thus make sure our sins are fully confessed, that we are experientially right with God, cf. 1 John 1:9.
 3. Third, we must accordingly experientially put on the shoes of the preparation of the gospel in "stability . . . from the gospel which gives him peace so" that we "can stand" under Satanic attack, Eph. 6:15; Ibid. We must focus on the truth of Christ's salvation offered in the Gospel for assurance of its truths that Satan likes to attack so as to unsettle us and make us insecure in our thinking as to the truths regarding salvation.
 4. Fourth, we must experientially take up the shield of faith, the shield that "consists of faith," a "resolute faith in the Lord" that quenches "all the flaming arrows of the evil one" that attack us, Eph. 6:16; Ibid. This faith is obviously exercised in trusting Scripture's revelation against Satan's unbiblical errors.
 5. Fifth, we must experientially take up the helmet of salvation, and since "a helmet gives a sense of safety" when facing "impending danger" (Ibid., p. 644), we are to hope in God's practical deliverance from the angelic conflict attack that we then face, Ibid.; Ephesians 6:17.
 6. Sixth, though Paul does not have any additional Roman soldier article of armor to use, he adds that in the angelic conflict, we must experientially practice all kinds of "prayers and requests," Ibid., Eph. 6:18a.
 7. Seventh, Paul adds that we must experientially practice "watching" (Eph. 6:18b KJV), or "being alert" (Ibid.) "in all persistence" (*en pase proskarteresei*, Ibid.). We know from the context of Jesus' call for His disciples to "watch and pray" in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:40-41) that this exercise involves praying while observing events in life that signal the evil one's movements so we know how to pray intelligently relative to his attacks. In this regard, Paul explained that we must watch for angelic conflict issues that rise among all believers (Ephesians 6:18c), that affect our opportunities to give the gospel (Ephesians 6:19a) with courage (Ephesians 6:19b) as we ought to do even in times of duress (Ephesians 6:20).

Lesson: *The steps of gaining victory in the angelic conflict in reliance upon the Holy Spirit involve (1) committing ourselves to truth in living, (2) staying or getting right with God, (3) focusing on gospel truths, (4) trusting Scripture's revelation over Satan's error, (5) hoping in God's rescue from Satan's attacks and (6) practicing all kinds of prayer and requests (7) while watching so as to pray intelligently about Satan's movements that oppose us.*

Application: *May we take these specific steps in dependence on the Holy Spirit for victory in the angelic conflict.*