

**Chapter 11**

# Two Big Guns— Prayer and the Word!

. . . and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:  
Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit. . .  
—Ephesians 6:17b–18a

## **Prayer**

There are two offensive weapons in the Christian arsenal. The first is prayer. This is perhaps the most potent and important element that we initiate ourselves. It is the mainstay, the unseen force that undergirds all we are as believers. Without it, we are anemic and undirected by our Commander and certainly sitting ducks for our enemy. There is an old saying that goes, “Seven days without prayer makes one weak.” How true. More so, prayerlessness not only weakens our spirit-man, but the void it creates becomes fertile ground for the enemy to wreak havoc, attacking our lives and homes without resistance. From experience we can tell you that though we Christians might recite all the right things and be in church every service, if we haven’t taken time to develop a strong and personal communication with the Lord, not only are our lives comparatively shallow and empty, we also are

no threat to the Devil. Rather, it is the other way around.

Prayer is the hedge against running aground in the storms of life; and it is during those intimate moments with Jesus that we see clearer His mission and goals for our lives. Often, He speaks to our hearts or through His word as we simply make the time for Him. People make the excuse that they don't have the time to pray. Their lives are so busy and have often become a picture described by the classic tract, "The Tyranny of the Urgent." Instead, in a world so fraught with problems, where evil forces encroach on our homes from all sides, we simply don't have the time NOT to pray. Don't expect to be a winner in Spiritual Warfare just because your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Victory against a focused, vicious foe doesn't come easy, and a major price to pay for it is the time, study, and effort spent in prayer.

### **The Weapon of Prayer**

Many people do not recognize prayer as a spiritual weapon, but it most certainly is. Communication with our Lord is certainly a threat to Satan. If we pray correctly, in pattern with the Bible, our prayers, through the power of God, (often called "warfare prayers") accomplish amazing things. Captives are set free and bondages are broken off our lives and the lives of those around us by the power of God through prayer. Let's illustrate.

Perhaps the first thing that modern armies attempt to do is neutralize the communications centers of their adversary. Without communication, an army is in disarray. Commanders have no control over directing battles and also have no insight as to where their enemy is or what he is doing. This is what the Devil attempts to do to us. He tries to knock out our communications center—and that center is prayer.

Have you ever tried to pray for an hour? It's tough, isn't it? Besides the natural adversity our flesh displays, a myriad of roadblocks seems to stifle our prayer lives. In our busy lives today,

interruptions seem to come from every side. When you go to prayer, the children act up, the doorbell rings, your mind wanders to the other cares and chores that need attention, and all sorts of other distractions take place. Sound familiar?

David Benoit describes it like this:

Ladies, this is how your prayer might go:

"Okay, Lord, I'm going to pray for an hour.

"Dear Lord, I thank you that you are the bread of life. Bread . . . and I need milk, too. Oh, and I've got to bake a cake for that church social next week."

Have you ever done that, ladies? And men aren't any better. Let me show you what men do.

"Okay, Lord, I'm going to pray for an hour.

"Dear Lord, I thank you that you are the light of the world. Light . . . you know the light in the garage has been burned out for about two weeks now, and now that I think about it, I haven't seen my tools. God, I'm going to tan my boy's hide when I get home!"

Now granted that may be a little more scattered and comical than what actually happens during your times of prayer, but we know that anyone who has attempted to begin an active prayer life can relate.

There is no doubt that when you go to pray, Satan goes to work trying to scramble your communications. His objective is to cut you off from God completely if he can. He wants to disable us at all cost. Our enemy knows that prayer is an offensive weapon, one that presents the gravest of threats to his kingdom. We had better realize it as well.

Eric testifies that until he got a plan for prayer straight in his mind before commencing, prayer times were maybe fifteen minutes followed by a nap! Just as with Spiritual Warfare in general, it really helps to have a plan, a formula for prayer. Before you can

go to battle in prayer you need to first establish a strong “beach head” of regular communion with God. There is none better than the example the Lord gave us in Matthew 6:9–13, known commonly as “The Lord’s Prayer.”

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

—Matthew 6:9–13

Capsulated in these five verses are some of the most powerful, life-changing teachings in the entire Bible. Virtually everything we need in life can be seen in the transparency of Jesus’ words here. Fully absorbing what is taught in Matthew 6:9–13, has been the subject of many great and thorough books, so we won’t try to cover this in the space allowed here. Suffice to say that the subject of prayer is an important element in either our victory or our defeat. In fact, let’s take it one step further—without an ongoing, active, daily prayer life, is there really any proof of our Christianity? How can we claim to love Him, yet exclude speaking to Him and allowing Him full access to communicate with us for extended periods on a regular basis? Remember when you accepted Jesus as Savior of your life? How did you do it? You **PRAYED!** Now, examine your prayer life again. If it is nonexistent, you need to honestly search out the reasons why. The Bible exhorts us to examine ourselves to see if we are “in the faith” (II Corinthians 13:5). The old saying that goes, “there’s no time like the present” applies here. Spiritual battles in these last days will not be won by riding along on yesterday’s prayers, yesterday’s anointing, or yesterday’s good intentions. Satan is coming after the church with both barrels blazing and unless you are “prayed-

up,” you’re going to pay a price. Better to consider this question now than to wait until it’s too late. If a person is not engaged in intimate times of fellowship with God, there really is no tangible evidence that he or she has truly converted to Christianity.

### Afraid to Pray?

Being open to God’s direction through prayers and Bible study is a matter of lordship. It may be that many of us steer clear from getting too personal with God for fear that He might meddle in our lives. That may sound strange to some who commune with God regularly, but the closer you get to God, the more He speaks to you, and the more He speaks the more He directs your paths (Psalm 37:23). Sounds great, right? Definitely, UNLESS you aren’t willing to relinquish control of your life to God! We know it’s not popular to say in today’s society fraught with New Age relativism, but the truth is, man has always wanted to be his own “god” and things are certainly no different today. We want our own rules to live by, our own standards to meet. That’s what the rebellion in the Garden (Genesis 3) was all about, and it is still the central factor in Satan achieving his will in the lives of humankind to this day. For the world, it’s a matter of self and greed. Sadly, it’s the *same for the Christian*. That’s right—except we call it “lordship issues” when referring to brethren who have yet to allow the Lord to deal with issues of the flesh. It is nothing less than the “gospel of self” that keeps many Christians mired in the same muck as the world around us. It is the work of this powerful spirit that has captured many millions and made them captive to Satan’s old lie with fresh paint on it called the New Age movement.

We’re sure that there are Christians today who purposely stay **away** from intimate times of prayer, because it is during such times that God reveals His desired changes in our lifestyles and brings His conviction to bear on our hearts. But thankfully with God, change is good! He’ll never convict and convince

us of the need for any change that's not in our best interest. And He'll never ask us to surrender anything to Him that He won't replace with something so much better, complete with His blessing! How tragic that we Christians would attempt to live by our own means and try and keep God at bay just to hold on to some activity, practice, or life-style. This attitude always ends with us on the losing end. So to position us to win in Spiritual Warfare and in life itself, prayer *IS* the key.

### The Word of God

As vital as prayer is to the life of a Christian, it is obvious that prayer would be misguided at best unless we knew who we were praying to and how to pray. God, in His forethought, saw fit to make certain that mankind would have the opportunity to know who He is, what He did, and how to communicate with Him. Therefore, over a fifteen hundred-year period of time, using the mind and pen of over forty different individuals, many of whom never knew one another, God gave men His word. This wonderful, living document, captured within sixty-six different books, is bound together now as "The Bible."

Scripture tells us that the Word of God is a sharp, powerful two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). It is certainly a weapon of Warfare (Ephesians 6:17b)! However, it does even more than that. In the context of Spiritual Warfare, we sometimes think of the Bible as only a weapon against the enemy. But that is getting the cart before the horse. Our personal growth through reading, memorizing, and living out the truths of the Bible makes it possible for us to be effective warriors doing battle against the forces of darkness. As we study the Bible, letting it sink into our hearts, it acts as a supernatural medicine, not only to our spirit man, but to our mental and physical lives as well. Our growth in God is always in direct correlation with the amount of time we spend in the pages of the "Word." When we meet weak, confused Christians whose lives reflect no victory, the connection can always

be made that they have allowed their devotional life to fall into disrepair. In so doing, one's spiritual compass begins to read inaccurately, blurring his ability to navigate the treacherous seas of life without incident. You see, just as the Bible points out, it's a **two-edged** sword. One edge is always facing us, working on the rough edges, honing us into the powerful people God intends us to be, lighting our path, illuminating our minds and hearts. This is the real and original "soul food"! Satan is terrorized by the believer who knows the Word of God and constantly nourishes his soul with it. For the Christian to be effective in spiritual battles, it is certain that he has already gone through the basic training of the "Word."

Knowing what we've just said is true, if you were the Devil, wouldn't you do everything possible to discredit the Bible? Of course. Look around today and notice how often we hear the secular world attack the Bible as "antiquated," "a book of stories," as being "altered" and "unreliable." It is no wonder that Satan has manipulated fallen mankind to cast such ugly aspersions on God's Word. It is to his great advantage to bring doubt and question concerning the Bible, for if it is unreliable Christianity falls apart. New Agers say it's been doctored; atheists claim it's nothing but fairy tales. Yet God Himself has declared it as **ALIVE** and has proven so through the fulfillment of prophecy repeatedly. Many men have set out to disprove the Bible only to become its avid defenders in the process. Scientists have scoffed at it, only to then turn to it later for answers.

The Bible gives us the ability to know who the enemy is and everything about his forces that is needed to effectively wage Spiritual Warfare. It is **NOT** a book of philosophy. You cannot defeat the Devil with philosophy. He's always going to have the upper hand with anyone who does so. There is simply no reasoning with the powers of hell. Aside from utilizing what is taught in the Bible, there is only defeat—one way or another. Satan always begins by first trying to defeat you in your mind. This is

why the “washing of the Word” and the “renewing of the mind” through the cleansing process of Scripture study is so vital. Without it, can we really assert, “I can do all things through Christ” or “I am more than a conqueror”?

Many will ignore God’s precious and life-giving Word, but what about those who do read and still don’t place their trust in God? The reasons may vary, but two factors stand out. First, it is our fallen nature to want to guide our own ship and thus live our lives—as sinful as they may be—our way. Secondly, the Bible tells us that “the god of this world” has blinded their eyes (II Corinthians 4:4). Whether it’s to argue with the authenticity of Scripture or just to never read it at all, Satan wants men to be aloof of its real purpose and content. Dear Christian, he wants the same for **YOU!** He knows there is power and life within its pages and every human who reads it and receives the Savior revealed within it is a potential threat to his dark kingdom. Satan also knows that the Bible is a legal document—the most important one of all time! He understands perfectly that he is only able to do as much as the Father allows him. When going about “seeking whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8), one of the Devil’s main emphases is to work wherever man is ignorant. He is continually poised to take his step-by-step destruction right through the open door of unknowing. As previously mentioned, if we Christians do not know our own rights and authority in Jesus, and also, the abilities and rights that Satan has to kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10), then we are bound to live in jeopardy. More so, if we walk in spiritual blindness, we are destined to live incomplete and powerless lives reflecting less than the victory Jesus’ blood purchased for us. The result is that our homes and families are at peril and our witness is often anemic and ineffective.

Again, the Bible tells us that certain attitudes and actions can open us up to spiritual attack. For example, in II Corinthians chapter two, verse ten, the apostle Paul notes that unforgiveness could be an inroad for the enemy to use in his Warfare

against us. Paul goes on to warn the Corinthians in verse eleven that they are not to be unaware of the Devil’s devices and schemes. The King James Version uses the word “ignorant.” Now remember that Paul is talking to Christians and asserts that Satan **CAN** get an advantage on us if we are ignorant and disobedient to God’s precepts. No, we are not talking of demon possession, but we are talking about disabling some aspect of our lives through the sin of unforgiveness and through lack of understanding. We venture to say that millions of believers are suffering at Satan’s hand today from simple ignorance of God’s Word.

First, if we are going to please God, we must know His guidelines for life. And if we are to be any sort of challenge to Satan and his army of evil, we must know who we are as God’s ambassadors and know our legal rights in the spirit realm. We guarantee that Satan knows his. He is a legal expert and will consistently use our lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6) against us. When we wield the sword of the spirit, we must do so accurately and with the force of the sound doctrinal power reflected in the pages of God’s Word.

**Eric Barger** (Bar-jer) is a well known conference speaker, author and evangelist, with a no-nonsense message for today. His challenging, biblically based “Take A Stand!” Seminar series has been held in churches across North America since 1984.

Once lost in New Age mysticism and drug addiction as a secular rock musician and record producer, Eric is now a recognized author of several books including the Christian best seller, ***From Rock To Rock*** and the 2001 release ***Entertaining Spirits Unaware*** with coauthor David Benoit. He has written for *USA Today* and has been featured on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, “Point of View with Marlin Maddoux”, and “Truths That Transform” with Dr. D. James Kennedy as well as in hundreds of other electronic and print media interviews.

His evangelical teaching and apologetics ministry concerning issues such as the New Age Movement, the Cults, Spiritual Warfare and Current Events in the light of Bible Prophecy is headquartered in the Dallas, Texas, area where he resides with his wife Melanie.

To bring Eric Barger to your church, to receive his free newsletter or to request a materials list, contact Take A Stand! Ministries, POB 1485, Rowlett, TX 75030 or on the Internet at [www.ericbarger.com](http://www.ericbarger.com).