

Watch and Pray

(Ephesians 6:18)

Pre-Session Warm Up

When the space shuttle leaves the launch pad at the Cape, do the astronauts stop talking to the flight director? Of course not! The members of the space crew have been specially trained and they wear a special suit of protection, just like a soldier. Still, the astronauts find it necessary to talk to mission control. They stay in contact throughout the entire mission, and if communications break down, everyone is very uneasy.

While the shuttle is traveling in space, the team members go about the work they have to do each day, but they keep in touch with the ground command, talking over problems that arise. They share the routine things that may be happening. And when something goes wrong, the astronauts and mission control work it out together.

Today we're going to learn how very important it is for us to stay in communication with our Commander in Chief. Does anybody know Who I'm talking about? (God!)

Opening Prayer

Lord, it's a wonderful thing that we can come right into Your throne room and talk to You at any time. Even though You are the King of the universe, You always have time for us. It's such a shame that we don't always take time for You, O Lord. This morning, help us discover how critical it is for us to not only *talk* to You, but to *listen* to You as well. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

"...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints..." (Ephesians 6:18)

Lesson

Let's begin by reading Ephesians 6:10-13

A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. (11) Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. (12) 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. (13) Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

The past few weeks we've been studying the pieces of a Roman soldier's armor and how they relate to our spiritual walk with Jesus.

Let's do some review. Let's talk about the pieces of the soldier's armor that he can put on. We call those his "defensive" weapons because they protect him from enemy attacks.

Verse	Piece of Armor	How You Put it On
14	Belt of Truth	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. By learning as much as we can of the Bible's truths2. By always being truthful in everything we do
14	Breastplate of Righteousness	By choosing to do the right things... things God approves of
15	Gospel of Peace Shoes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. By making peace with God by receiving His gift of salvation2. By making peace with others by forgiving them as God has forgiven you

Verse	Piece of Armor	How You Put it On
16	Shield of Faith	By believing and trusting in God's promises
17	Helmet of Salvation	By guarding the thoughts that come into your mind
17	Sword of the Spirit	By remembering Bible verses.

What did the Roman soldier use when he attacked his enemy? (His sword) We call that the "Sword of the Spirit" or the word of God. Do you remember how to use the sword? (By remembering Bible verses.)

Remember that our battle with Satan takes place in our minds — in our thought lives. A Christian's warfare is against more than natural temptations. There are powers in the unseen world against which we are powerless except through the help of Jesus. Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Faith, Salvation, and the Word of God are the weapons that ward off the darts of the unseen enemy.

Do you see how remembering God's promises helps in our fight against Satan?

Now we have our soldier in complete armor with sword and shield. But we've got one more offensive weapon to give him.

No battle is ever won by a single soldier fighting alone. The thing that makes an army powerful is that all soldiers work together. They fight as a unit, each following the commands he is given by his commanding officer. If the commander shouts, "*Attention!*" all the soldiers stop marching and stand straight and tall. If he says, "*March!*" all the soldiers march in step.

The Christian soldier, dressed and ready for battle in his spiritual armor, has a Commander and some commands he must follow, as well. And each member of God's army must do his part. We can find two of the commands for Christians in Ephesians 6:18.

Ephesians 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.

The Christian's First Command is to Pray Always

A good soldier is always in touch with his commander. He doesn't act on his own. As good soldiers in God's army, you and I need to be in constant communication with the Lord. We need to ask for His direction and follow His orders. "*Pray...at all times and on every occasion*" means we should keep in such close communication with God that at any moment He can relay to us life information we need, and we can communicate our needs to Him. Prayer is something that should come naturally to us.

The Christian's Second Command is to Stay Alert

An army commander knows the importance of being alert to danger and posts a guard, whose job it is to watch while others sleep. A guard on duty is alert, ready to meet whatever challenge he faces, and sounds the alert if one is needed. He never leaves his post as long as he is on duty. He just keeps on watching and waiting. That's his job. Others depend on him.

In the same way, the Christian soldier must stay alert — watching for an attack by the enemy, alert to dangers that would keep us from being a good follower of Jesus.

A Christian who is alert to obstacles that Christians must face can think not only of himself but of how to alert others. He can sound alarms and help keep other Christians from danger as well.

We are soldiers in God's army. God has given us everything we need to be victorious. We must put on each piece of our armor every day so that we are not caught with a weak place exposed for Satan to wound us. Then, if you watch and pray, you will be so closely connected to the power of God that you will never lose your strength.

Here's a Bible verse to learn. Who can find Mark 14:38 first? (*Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation.*)

Closing Prayer

Lord, we don't want to be caught unaware of the sneaky ways of Satan. He's always trying to make us stumble and fall. He wants us to get our eyes off of You and to do things that displease You. I pray that You will help us to always have an eye peeled so that we see when Satan is putting temptations to sin into our thoughts. And, help us to remember to always keep the communication lines open to You. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Let the children work on the *Armor Crossword*, or send it home as a "take home" paper.

Sword Drills. The first one to find the Bible verse gets a piece of candy:

Matthew 16:6

2 John 1:8

Matthew 5:44

James 5:16

Luke 22:40

Matthew 6:6

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Armor Crossword

The puzzle below is taken from Ephesians 6:10-18. Read the clues and fill in the missing words in the puzzle. If you need help, look up the Bible verses.

Across

1. _____ of truth (verse 14)
2. _____ of faith (verse 16)
6. _____ of the Spirit (verse 17)
7. _____ fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace (verse 15)

Down

1. _____ of righteousness (verse 14)
3. _____ of salvation (verse 17)
4. _____ of peace (verse 15)
5. Put on the full _____ of God (verse 11)

