

THROUGH THE BIBLE

EPHESIANS 5-6

In the Bible "**the way we walk**" means more than how we move our feet. It refers to how we live our lives!

It's not about our gait, but our lifestyle.

In Ephesians 4 Paul tells us how to move through life as believers in Jesus. Tonight, in chapter 5 the theme continues. We're to **walk in love, walk in the light, walk in wisdom, and walk in submission to one another...**

Chapter 5 begins, "**Therefore be imitators of God...**"

If you adore and worship God - if He's your hero - you'll want to be like Him. Paul says, "**be imitators of God,**" and then he adds, "**as dear children.**"

Kids are especially prone to mimic their heroes.

When I was a kid my hero was my dad. I'd sit in the bathroom and watch dad brush his teeth. Dad wore dentures, so he'd pull out his plate and scrub them with his toothbrush. Mom says she'd walk in on me, and I'd be brushing my imaginary dentures - *mimicking dad...*

God wants us to mimic Him - we're to walk as Jesus walked. *And here's how...* verse 2, "**walk in love...**"

My Psychology book in college defined the word "*love*" as "an agitated state of psychological arousal."

That's too technical for me. Imagine, gazing into your honey's eyes, and whispering, "*Baby, you agitate my psyche!*" Love is more than a burning brain wave.

It's more than a feeling or emotion. For the true definition of love you have to look to its author. On the cross Jesus showed us the true meaning of real love!

Verse 2 tells us, "*And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling aroma.*"

According to Jesus, genuine love consists of giving, offering, and sacrificing - it's all about commitment.

Amy Carmichael wrote, "*You can give without loving, but you can never love without giving.*" Jesus laid down His rights, His security, His comfort. Jesus sacrificed it all to save us. Sacrifice chalks the plumb-line of love.

Verse 3, "*But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints...*" Notice, Paul clumps three evils together... "*fornication, uncleanness, covetousness.*"

Love is all about *giving* - lust is all about *getting*.

Two stray dogs in an alley like each other enough to have sex - but that's not love. Real love respects and looks out for the other person's highest good. It never

dishonors, or dirties, or defiles the one it loves. Love lays down what I want and lives for God's best!

And Christians are called to walk in love.

It reminds me of the two lovers. The woman asked the man, "*Do you love me?*" The man replied, "*Yes, dear.*" She asked again, "*Would you die for me?*" To which he replied, "*Sorry, mine is an undying devotion.*"

And here's the moral of the story... love that won't die to self-centeredness and selfishness is not real love.

Paul continues describing what love avoids, "*neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*"

You can tell a lot about a person by what makes them laugh. Neither *crude humor*, or *borderline banter*, or *sexual innuendo* should fall from a Christian's lips.

Our vocal cords should vibrate most often with praise, and always with speech that glorifies God.

Verse 5, "*For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*"

Here're three guys who won't go to heaven... neither are capable of restraint. Often they're the same guy...

When it comes to sex, thoughts, and money he's out of control. It's all about him -

his glands, his perspective, his wallet. His life lacks moral principle.

But it's not just a moral problem, its a spiritual one. For notice, Paul refers to this man as *"an idolater."*

Most of today's Americans would never bow before a statue or trinket - but they worship sex, or things, or money, or their own independence. When you value something supremely - at all costs - it becomes an idol.

It reminds me of the young businessman who flipped his car over the guardrail and went down a steep embankment. The twisted metal severed off his arm.

When the hero units finally reached him, the guy just kept whining, *"Oh, my BMW. Oh, my BMW."*

The paramedics were appalled that this guy was so materialistic all he could think about was his car.

One of the EMTs told him, *"Buddy, you've got more to worry about than a silly car. Your arm was chopped off."* The man suddenly gets this panicked look on his face, and starts crying, *"Oh, my Rolex. Oh, my Rolex."*

Verse 6, *"Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience."* Some so-called Christians speak *"empty words."* They *profess* what they don't possess. Don't be taken in by mere words.

Verse 7, “Therefore do not be partakers with them.”

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.” Notice, we didn’t just walk in darkness, we were darkness. And now that we’ve come to Christ we don’t just walk in the light, we are the light! Something changes deep inside a Christian. We don’t just change environments - we become a new person in Christ.

The light of God’s purity and presence - His brilliance and beauty - begin to shine *from and through* your life.

There once was a cathedral lined with stain-glass windows. In each window was a mosaic of one of the saints. A little girl who attended the church, was one day asked in Sunday School, “What is a saint?”

She replied, “*A saint is a person through whom the light shines through!*” That’s Paul’s definition in verse 8.

In Christ we're all saints, so “walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.” Here are the components - the three divine rays that make up God's light... *goodness to others, right-ness before God, and truth in all things!*

Verse 11, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”

During the winter northern cities use salt to clear the roads of ice and snow. After a

time a mixture of exhaust, salt, and snow gets plastered onto the sides of the cars. All the cars end up looking a murky-gray.

But on the first warm, spring day some fellow will wash his car and restore it to its original color. When everyone else on the block sees the one clean car they realize how dirty their cars have become.

And as Christians we're called to be the one clean car. Without putting on the white glove - without being condemning or judgmental - we expose the darkness in others by simply being a reflection of God's light.

Verse 12, **“For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.”** If doing a thing is shameful, then talking about it is also shameful.

We drive out the darkness not by studying the darkness, or discussing the darkness, or even fighting with the darkness - but by simply turning on the light!

“But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.” What a dark world needs most is for us to walk in light.

“Therefore He says (he being Isaiah): “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.” You and I need to be wide awake spiritually.

Christian musician, Keith Green, use to sing, **“The world is sleeping in the dark, that the church just can't fight, because its asleep in the light. How can we be so dead, when we've been so well fed. Jesus rose from the grave, and we can't even get out of bed.”**

A battle rages around us. We need to *tune in* to the issues that matter to God. The devil has lulled the world to sleep. It's the church that needs to wake up!

“See then that you walk *circumspectly*, not as fools but as wise...” “*Circumspectly*” means “to walk gingerly, to be careful where you plant your feet.” I learned to walk “*circumspectly*” when my kids were toddlers...

One night I heard a strange noise and went to check it out. I was stumbling through a dark house. Zach had been playing with his Leggos that day. They were still scattered across the floor. But Dad forgot that detail...

When you step on a Leggo building block it hurts. They have sharp edges and no give. I hit the first one - grabbed my foot, and was hopping in the dark - then I hit another, and another... I stepped on a dozen *Leggo land mines* by the time I found the light switch.

I learned to walk *circumspectly* that night. When the world is dark be careful where you step. Use your feet as feelers. Take it one step at a time. Be careful...

Satan is notorious for throwing banana peels on the sidewalk. One false move can produce years of pain.

I recall after Jim Bakker's infamous fall and affair, he stated, “It's amazing how fifteen minutes can ruin your life.” What a warning! To walk worthy of our calling we need to be careful how we step. *Walk wisely...*

And here's how... First, “redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” If you live to be 70 years old, and during those 7 decades you work 5 days a week, 8 hours a day... sleep eight 8 hours nightly... travel 1 hour each day... spend 2 hours eating... and an hour grooming... it means, if you're 25 years old, you only have 11.5 years left of discretionary time.

If you're 35 it's 9 years of free time. If you're 45 it's 6.5 years - 55 it's 4 years - and if you're 65 you've only got 15 months of life outside work. *Time is running out!*

If you want to count for God's Kingdom you've got to redeem the time. You can't waste a single second!

“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” And here it is, “do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” At Pentecost the disciples were filled with the Spirit, but onlookers accused them of being smashed.

There are ways being filled with the Holy Spirit is like being drunk. Spiritual intoxication occurs when the Spirit permeates our spiritual bloodstream. The Spirit suppresses natural inhibitions, impacts thinking, effects our disposition. *He ultimately influences our behavior.*

The difference is that wine causes “*dissipation*” or *disorientation*. It clouds my perspective and deadens my senses. While the Spirit does just the opposite. He brings clarity and heightens my awareness of God.

Distilled spirits will spin me out of control - whereas, the Holy Spirit will help me gain

and maintain control.

The Spirit creates a spiritual buzz, a holy high, an inexpressible joy. When you're filled with the Holy Spirit a person is prone to erupt in uninhibited worship...

This is why Paul adds in verse 19, “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

If you never have, you need to ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit!

Verse 21, “submitting to one another in the fear of God.” To walk worthy of our calling let's walk *in love, in light, in wisdom, and in submission to one another.*

When I'm filled with the Holy Spirit my needs are met by God, and I'm able to focus on the other person.

Now most of you have skipped ahead. You know what's coming - thus, the wives are squirming, and the husbands have perked up. Some of the men haven't heard a word I've said, they're waiting on verse 22...

But notice first, verse 21 - before Paul mentions a single word about wives submitting to their husbands there needs to be a mutual humility and submission.

We all can learn from one another.

But once we've taken to heart verse 21, then verse 22 applies, “Wives, submit to

your own husbands, as to the Lord." I'm reminded of the man who asked the librarian to help him find a book titled, "**Man - Master of His Home.**" She told him to look in the "**fiction**" section.

Indeed, Paul's instructions for husbands and wives won't win any awards for political correctness. Today, very few marriages are ordered biblically. But here's a footnote - today, very few marriages last! *Before you toss out God's wisdom you might take a second look...*

Before we go further, let's first realize what Paul is not saying... He's not suggesting a wife has to act like a harem girl, and cater to her husband's every whim.

Being head of your house doesn't mean you can act like the Sultan of Morocco and boss around the wife.

The Greek word Paul translates as "**submit**" is "**hupotasso**" - "**to arrange under, or to line up behind.**"

Biblical submission doesn't mean *a wife* can't have *a life*. But she's to arrange her life around her husband's.

The man establishes the parameters and sets the pace. The wife organizes her lifestyle accordingly.

You could say the husband sketches out the lines of the picture, then the wife colors in those lines. Both parties contribute equally to the painting, but they play different roles. **Their equality is an ordered equality.**

If someone says, "you're running around like a chicken with its head cut off" - it's not a compliment.

God knows that all bodies need a head - *not two heads, not no head, but one head.* That's why God establishes a single head over each family. The man's role is provide leadership, the woman lends support.

Billy Graham's wife, Ruth, once commented, "The best advice I can give to unmarried girls is to marry someone you don't mind adjusting to. God tailors the wife to fit the husband, not the husband to fit the wife."

"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

Notice, roles in a marriage aren't assigned arbitrarily.

In marriage, God is painting a picture of realities that go far beyond the arrangement of a man and woman.

The reason your marriage is such a big deal is that God has given it a universal, eternal, mystical meaning that transcends you and your spouse. *Marriage is a spiritual snapshot.* God has chosen to illustrate Christ's relationship with the Church through your relationship with your spouse. That makes a marriage sacred.

Kathy and I are co-stars in a heavenly production.

I'm the leading man and she's the leading lady, and together we're portraying to our friends and family the greatest love story ever told, the Gospel of Christ.

That's why its important we play our parts!

And in my opinion the most difficult role in the drama belongs to the husband. Ladies, you think its tough to submit. Well, just look at what's required of him...

Verse 25, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for her.”

A wife should love her husband enough to live for him, and a husband should love his wife enough to die for her. And not just once - in a gallant act - but in a million daily ways he should be willing to lay down his rights to protect, and nurture, and minister to his wife.

To love a wife Jesus-style it takes **a sacrificing love.**

It also requires **a sanitizing love.** Paul goes on, “that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word...” Are we loving our wives in a way that leads to greater purity, and holiness, and devotion to Christ. Is our love a *sanctifying, sanitizing love?*

Do we encourage our wives to embrace God's forgiveness - and see herself in Christ - or do we keep a record of her faults and failures? Do we treat her with God's grace, or do we grade her on her performance?

Do we show mercy, or give her only what we think she deserves? *Do I love my wife*

as Jesus loves me?

For here is the Lord's goal for His Church... "that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish." Notice too, the love of Christ is a sharing love. Jesus will one day take us to heaven and show us off to His Father.

We'll share in His glory! And here's my question to the husbands. *Does your wife share in your glory?*

If you expect your wife to arrange her life around yours, then when you succeed you better share with your wife the blessings of that success. Always remember, "Behind every successful man there's two people... a faithful wife and a surprised mother-in-law."

If I read verse 27 correctly, *Jesus brags on His bride!*

He loves us that much! And husband, what about you? *Do you praise your wife publicly? Do you carry her picture? Are you in the habit of building her up?*

Mr. and Mrs. Winston Churchill were at a dinner party when someone asked Sir Churchill, "If you could not be who you are, who would you like to be?"

The prime minister turned, reached for his wife's hand, and responded, "If I could not be who I am, I'd most like to be Lady Churchill's second husband."

Verse 28, "So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who

loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.” The love of Jesus is a *sacrificing, sanitizing, sharing,* and also **a stimulating love.**

A man nourishes his own body - and if I love my wife like Jesus loves me, I'm going to love her in a way that helps her grow as a person and as a Christian.

Here's the question every husband should ask himself... *has my wife gotten prettier or plainer since she married me? Has she flourished or floundered?*

The answer reveals how you've treated her! If she's *nourished*, she'll *flourish*? Its been said, **"Treat a wife like a thoroughbred, and she'll never be a nag."** A good marriage should enrich a wife, not smother or stifle.

This is why I'm saying, the husband's job is tougher!

Ladies, all you have to do is submit - build him up and let him lead. A husband needs to love his wife with **a sacrificing, sanitizing, sharing, stimulating love!**

Verse 31 quotes Genesis 2 and reiterates God's plan and purpose for marriage, **"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."** This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

Verse 33 tells us what men and women need most.

"Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and

let the wife see that she respects her husband.” *Women need love and men need respect.* This is why husbands should love their wives, and wives should respect their husbands.

This is how men and women best relate.

It has a snowball effect... The more a husband shows his wife love, the more she respects him - which prompts more love, which gains more respect. Wow!

But the snowball also can roll in reverse... If a husband feels disrespected he doesn't want to love... which fuels more disrespect... and the beat goes on.

Husbands need to love, and wives need to respect.

And what about parents and kids?

Chapter 6, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*” But note the qualification, *“in the Lord.”*

The Lord would never expect a wife or a child to submit to an ungodly or immoral demands.

It's been said, *“Godly submission never requires what God forbids, or forbids what God requires.”* But when good parents desire God's best for their child, those children need to obey and respect their parents.

Verse 2, *“Honor your father and mother,”* which is the first commandment with promise: *“that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”* You'll live

better and longer if you listen to your parent's wisdom.

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” The Greek word translated “*training*” means “discipline.” “*Admonition*” is “encouragement.”

Martin Luther use to say a parent needs both *a rod and an apple to raise kids*. A rod to spank the kid when he rebels, and an apple to reward his godly initiatives...

Raising children requires a healthy balance. Kids need both *a rod of correction and a nod of approval*.

As Christians we need to live out our high calling at home... AND how should we walk in the workplace?

Verse 5 tells us, “Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ...”

There are probably very few “*bondservants*” or slaves here tonight. You may think your boss treats you like a slave, but I doubt if you really are. But what Paul says to slaves also applies to modern day employees...

And he tells us to obey our boss. We should tackle our assignments as if Jesus Himself had explained them to us. We should work with a desire to serve - with sincerity - from the heart - not just for a paycheck.

Verse 6, “not with eyeservice, as menpleasers...”

I’m sure we’ve all seen this firsthand. The boss walks in and everybody is as busy

as a beaver. Then the moment he exits the room the whole office slacks off.

That's *“with eyeservice, as menpleasers.”*

Once a guy was asked, *“Are you looking for work?”* He answered, *“Not really, but I would like a job!”*

We need to do our work *“as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men...”*

For me the real measure of spiritual maturity is the ability to do whatever we do to God’s glory... whether it’s turning a wrench, or programming a computer, or servicing a customer - can we do it as unto the Lord?

We should all be able to turn *work* into *worship!*

Verse 8, *“knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free...”* The eternal paycheck you receive won't be signed by your employer, but by God Himself.

Ultimately, we’re all working for the Lord anyway.

And verse 9 has instructions for the bosses. *“And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”*

A boss should always remember he has a boss. He should treat His workers fairly and compassionately.

At first we don't recognize the revolutionary impact of Paul's instructions for marriage, parenting, and labor.

All ancient cultures taught wives to submit to their husbands - and children to obey their parents - and bondservants to work hard for their master. That was nothing new. But Christianity was the first and only faith to introduce the principle of **reciprocal responsibility**.

Husbands also had an obligation to love their wives. Parents shouldn't provoke a child. Bosses shouldn't bully their workers... The Christian ethic transformed both home and work. It altered every dimension of life!

This brings us to the third section of the book. We've learned that we're *seated in Christ*, and we're to *walk worthy of our calling*, now we need to *stand against the devil*. A Christian learns to **sit**, then **walk**, then **stand**.

Verse 10, “**Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**” Whenever it comes to dealing with the devil, human beings are prone to make two mistakes...

Some folks **underestimate** him. We think he's a little imp in red leotards, horns, tail, and pitchfork. Perhaps the devil's greatest feat is in making so many people think he doesn't exist. We don't take him seriously...

Yet other people **overestimate** him. Satan is not God's equal. He's *inferior*. He is a

created being gone sour - a angel booted out of the choir because of a runaway ego. 1 John 4:4 tells us, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world."

Always remember, Satan is a defeated foe. Jesus' victory over sin and death stripped the devil of his authority. 1John 5:18 tells us, "We know that whoever is born of God... the wicked one does not touch him..." or literally, "cannot attach himself to him." The only time the devil can hassle a Christian is when you let him.

Today, Satan wields his power only because he's tolerated. He's still robbing banks - ripping Christians off, stealing their blessings in Christ - but he's doing it with a sinister-sounding bluff and a harmless pop gun.

We need to rise up as James 4:7 tells us, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." On our own we're no match for the evil One, but Paul says, "*be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*" Let's be strong!

Here's the irony, no one knows Satan's limitations better than he does. That's why seldom does he mount a full frontal assault. He knows if he does, you'll run straight to Jesus - and it'll be curtains for him.

Thus, Satan prefers a bag of tricks. Paul calls them "*the wiles of the devil*" - doubt, fear, compromise, jealousy, condemnation, discouragement, dissension.

Satan will do all he can to divert your attention from *who you are* and *what you have* in Christ.

The devil's deceptions are intended to undermine faith, and rob you of your blessings in Christ. That's why we need protection - some armor and weapons.

Paul tells us in verse 12, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Never forget it's a spiritual battle.

You don't fight a modern war with swords and spears, and you don't fight a spiritual war with fleshy techniques. This is why we need spiritual weaponry!

And God has given us armor and firepower.

Paul tells us in verse 13, “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” In Christ we have five pieces of *armor*, and a two-fold *arsenal*...

Paul begins with the armor, “Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth...” Understand, while Paul wrote this letter to the Ephesians one hand held a pen, and the other hand was chained to a Roman soldier.

And he had plenty of time to inspect their armor.

In fact, Paul uses the gear issued by the Roman Legion as analogous to our spiritual armor...

And the first item he mentions is **the belt of truth**.

The ancients believed the loins, or abdominal area, was the seat of the emotions. Even today we talk about **"gut feelings."** And Satan tinkers with our emotions. If he can cause us to walk by feeling rather than faith he can sink us. Thus, Paul says strap on *the belt of truth*.

Just because you wake up one day and don't feel like a Christian doesn't mean you aren't one. Bind your faith to God's immutable Word, not your fickle feelings.

Don't let your *devotion* be determined by *emotion*.

And then, **"put on the breastplate of righteousness..."**

The ancients viewed the heart as the seat of the desires. And for Paul the heart needs to be protected.

We need to nurture and cultivate godly desires.

Conversely, Satan is quick to inflame old desires. Be on guard. Remember you're not the same person you use to be - your deepest desires have changed.

Verse 15, **"and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace..."** The Roman soldier wore a unique kind of sandals. They had had long spikes so he wouldn't slip on the rocky terrain.

Paul is warning us there are times when we'll get blindsided - knocked off balance. A co-worker will attack our faith with questions we can't answer. We'll become confused and be tempted to doubt the Lord.

Paul is saying in those moments dig in with God's peace. **When your head gets confused, remember the peace in your heart.** No one can deny the presence of God you sense, and the miracle Christ has done.

Let God's peace steady your faith, until you have the opportunity to seek out answers for your questions.

And verse 16, **“above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.”** The Roman shield was big enough to protect a soldier from a shower of flaming arrows. He crawled under the shield and waited out the attack.

There are times when Satan stops fighting fair. Instead of single thrusts he lobs a volley of different evils all at once. In those moments you need to squat down under your faith - trust the Lord no matter what

Rest in your faith until the attack has passed.

It's also interesting these shields were gang-able. They interlocked so a group of soldiers could join shields and create a blanket of protection. Likewise, our faith get's stronger when believers lock shields.

“And take the helmet of salvation...” This fallen world spews negativity and cynicism that sours our outlook.

That's why we *mind protection* - a helmet! Safeguard your thoughts and vision with God's good news. A football player would never go into a game without a helmet, and

we need to constantly guard our thoughts.

Paul tells the Colossians, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." Where a helmet!

Before we leave our armor - notice the part of the body not covered? It's **the back**. God provides nothing for your back - *and why?* Because He never wants us to retreat. Stand against the devil - don't run from him.

The French Foreign Legion has a tremendous motto, "If I falter push me on, if I stumble pick me up, if I retreat shoot me." God has no armor for the back!

But we are given some weapons - some firepower.

"And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God..." Verses 17-18 point out two offensive weapons - *the blade* and *the bomb* - the Bible and prayer.

Here Paul mentions the Bible. It's powerful.

It's the sword of the Spirit. Under the Spirit's direction the Word of God slices to the heart of the matter.

In 2 Samuel 23:10 we're told one of David's mighty men, Eleazar, fought against the Philistines... "until his hand was weary, and (it) stuck to the sword." His hand froze to its handle. He couldn't put down his sword.

This should be our attitude toward God's Word.

And verse 18, “praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...”

Prayer is the heavy artillery. With it you can stand behind enemy lines and bomb the enemy's stronghold.

You can blast away excuses, and breakdown his defenses before you ever move in to share the Gospel.

Paul encourages the Ephesians to pray, and while they're at it, Paul asks, “and (pray) for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” Realize Paul is in rat-infested Roman prison, but he's not whining...

He sees his circumstances as opportunities.

If God has him in prison it must be to share his faith with someone he'll meet. He asks the Ephesians to pray not for *bail money*, but for *boldness* to witness!

Paul is winding down in verse 21, “But that you also may know my affairs and how I am doing, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and that he may comfort your hearts.” Tychicus was Paul's postman. He delivered this letter to Ephesus, and gave the Church an update on Paul's condition.

The Apostle closes with a benediction, “Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.”