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Conducted by  
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*"Paul in Eph. 6:18 talks of 'praying always and watching thereunto.' What does 'watching' mean and involve."*

It will be as well to quote Eph. 6:18; **"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."**

The Greek word used here is *AGRUPENO* (literally meaning 'to chase away sleep'), and it is used metaphorically in Eph. 6:18 and also, in other places. This verse also has the idea of being alert, and persevering in the state of alertness. While we are doing this, we are to be praying and humbly petitioning for all the saints. Paul must have considered such watchfulness and wakefulness to be extremely important when he wrote this letter.

When I read this question my mind went back to Nehemiah as he and others strove to repair the walls of Jerusalem. In Neh. 4:17 we read, **"They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought**

**in the work, and with the other hand a weapon."** They had to be vigilant while they were doing the Lord's work, and the message of Paul is that we also have to be.

### THE CONTEXT

From verse 10 of Eph. 6, Paul exhorts the saints to be strong in the Lord. It is the *Lord's* strength which is going to win the day; we cannot stand in our own. To fight the 'war' which he envisages, we have to put on '**the whole armour of God.**' This is not carnal armour, because we are not engaged in carnal warfare; it is a war against an enemy we cannot see, but we know that enemy to be extremely strong.

Who is the enemy? Paul indicates that "**we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.**" A very formidable force arrayed against us, intent on destroying God's work and God's people. The figure which Paul uses is Homeric in proportions; wrestlers standing face to face, intent on hurling their opponents to the ground and holding them there. Consider for a moment our opponents; world rulers of darkness, supernatural beings led by the Adversary himself, Satan. In John 14:30 Satan is called "**the prince of this world;**" in 2 Cor. 4:4, Paul refers to him as "**the god of this world.**" He also speaks of "**spiritual wickedness in high places,**" and seeing the world today, who can doubt that evil is rampant in the world? Christ, of course, has hurled Satan to the ground already, but the power of evil will remain until Satan and his hosts are finally cast into the abyss; Peter says that Satan, "**goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**"

Both Peter and Paul, however, are concerned to warn us of the ever-present danger of sin; Paul exhorts us to "**be strong in the Lord . . . Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**" What are the non-carnal weapons with which we are to fight the onslaught, of sin? *Truth, righteousness, the Gospel, faith, salvation, and the word of God.* With these weapons to hand, what has the Christian to watch for?

### WATCH AND PRAY

Ever since the advent of Christianity, men have striven to establish righteousness, unfortunately, many have striven in vain because they have tried to establish **their own** righteousness. This is not the slightest use because in Rom. 3:10 Paul concludes, "**There is none righteous, no, not one.**" This, of course, includes both Jew and Gentile.

Paul then introduces the only kind of righteousness - the God kind. This kind of righteousness is not a new discovery so far as Paul is concerned: he asserts that it is outside the law, but has been witnessed by the law and the prophets. It is by faith in Christ Jesus unto all that believe. Therefore we must watch and refute any doctrine which does not have God's Christ manifesting God's righteousness. I don't need to tell you where such doctrines are to be found in the world.

Ever since the infamous Pilate asked the question "What is truth?" men have sought the truth of certain matters all through history. Someone appears in a court of law and pleads 'not guilty' when he may be 'guilty'; the truth has to be sought and many times cannot be found simply because the evidence has been effectively hidden. Children may lie to parents, or vice versa, concerning important matters; the truth may only appear much later, perhaps when it is too late. So we can appreciate that finding the truth can be a very serious matter, especially when it concerns the salvation of the soul.

Happily the sincere seeker of the truth concerning his soul's salvation need not be confused. Jesus said, "**I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.**" Now that is a very comprehensive statement. It means that by

accepting Jesus - what He taught and what He did - not only shall we find the way to God, and know the truth about Him, but in the process we shall secure for ourselves eternal life. So Jesus is the Key that opens the door of truth, and He is the only infallible Way for us to learn the truth.

The Christian must jealously guard the teaching which Jesus gave so that it cannot be corrupted in any way. It must not be diluted to serve our own ends. Unfortunately, many churchmen, who should know better, have seen fit to ignore this, and in the process have confused people to such an extent that they have given up seeking the truth. Let us stand for Jesus. Let us be counted for Him. Most of all, let us uphold Him as the Truth.

So far as I am concerned, the word of God, the Bible, is sacrosanct. It is God's revelation of Himself. I despair when I hear Christians say that its message is contradictory in some places, and that some of its teachings don't apply to us today. I don't know what they mean, because once we begin to doubt the authenticity of any part of the Bible, where do we draw the line? It has been give by holy men of God moved by the Spirit; by the Lord Himself; and by the Apostolic authority. If it is God's revelation of Himself; would He have given a contradictory message? Surely, it is our lack of understanding which produces so-called contradictions.

I would refer you to Paul in 1 Tim. 6:20, "O Timothy, guard the deposit; that which is committed to thy trust." Do you ever marvel that we today - sometimes wayward, sometimes indolent - have been entrusted with God's revelation? God help us to be worthy of His great trust, and to guard this instrument of salvation with every fibre of our being. I believe the Bible to be inerrant in what it teaches, and I trust that you will never think it a contradictory document.

Faith must always be our shield. It must be a shield which can quickly be turned in any direction, for the multiplicity of destructive 'missiles' coming our way seems to be never-ending. We must, however, not fall into the trap of standing still just to ward off the missiles of the wicked; we have to journey on to claim the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. Guarding all the while, but always seeing as our goal the Lord Christ Himself as He beckons us on to the end of the road. We can almost hear Him saying, "Keep your eyes on Me, fearful saints; see the glory which is at the end of the road. Press on; I trod the road before you, and you have not yet resisted unto blood." No; we dare not walk without our shield of faith. It is our passport to Heaven. It is our means of victory in Christ. We must guard the faith at all costs.

#### PRAYER

Oh, yes; I must pray, I listen to B.T. and the Cable companies extolling the sophistication of their respective means of communication, but they haven't even begun to see the communication given to the saints. We can get down on our knees and talk to the Creator of the universe. Distance is no object; we can talk as long as we want and there is no charge, He presides over the whole cosmos, and yet He finds time to talk to us. Someone has said,

"Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees."

Well he might, because he knows his end. His wickedness, however, makes him want to take others with him, especially the saints. So, dear brethren, *watch*, pray stand guard, and don't forget to wear the whole armour of God.

(All questions please, to Alf Marsden, 20 Costessy Way,  
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