

Prayers
for Victory
in Spiritual
Warfare

TONY EVANS



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*Dedicated to the prayer ministry of
Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship,
the unsung heroes of our church.
Thank you for your commitment
in doing battle in the spiritual realm
on behalf of so many in our body.*

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FOREWORD

by Priscilla Shirer

My dad, Dr. Tony Evans, is a man of prayer, plain and simple. My childhood memories of his praying are deeply ingrained—hearing his voice resonate with fervor and passion as he lifted up his requests and thanksgiving to God. Not just once a week on Sunday as he led the congregation. No, my father prayed as a lifestyle. He'd gather my siblings and me and our mom, ask us to bow our heads and close our eyes, and then, *then*, he'd talk to God. I admit sometimes I'd peek, opening my eyes just enough to peer up into his face. That's when I *knew*. I knew for sure this discipline was not one he took lightly. His expression was tender and yet serious, compassionate and yet somehow still intent and purposeful. He didn't just pick the usual words and phrases that most easily came to mind. He wasn't hurried or rushed, hoping to quickly return to more important endeavors. This *was* the important task. And as a result of his belief in the power of prayer, I saw God's answers and responses. His Spirit-filled prayer life encouraged our faith as a family and has helped to shape my own personal prayer life as an adult. I'm grateful to call this godly man my pastor...and my father. Grateful, too, that he's sharing some of his wisdom with you in this important book.

In *Prayers for Victory in Spiritual Warfare*, Dr. Tony Evans gives you

a jump start in praying for the various needs in your life. In each of the 30 topics covered, he provides you with prayers based on the six pieces of armor outlined in Ephesians 6:10-17. You can pray these prayers verbatim, paraphrase them, or simply let them provoke your thoughts as you craft your own prayers related to these 30 topics—or any other topics you wish to add. The key, however, is to pray. Like my daddy did and still does. Don't just think about prayer, talk about prayer, or learn about prayer. *Actually pray*. Our great God is looking forward to hearing from you and me as we seek His face for victory in the battles we are fighting in our lives.

I will be joining you in claiming the spiritual victory that is ours because we are already more than conquerors in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. And as you pray, remember that no matter the struggle you are facing, greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

Sincerely,

Priscilla Shirer

INTRODUCTION

If you're a Christian, you're in a battle whether you realize it or not. The battle is for your mind, your spirit, and ultimately your life. The apostle Paul warned us about this ongoing conflict in several of his epistles but perhaps most importantly in his letter to the believers in Ephesus, where he also spells out our strategy for winning the battle. That strategy has to do with the armor we wear as we enter into warfare with the enemy of our souls.

Take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with [put on the belt of] truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints (Ephesians 6:13-18).

In my previous book *Victory in Spiritual Warfare*, I wrote extensively on how we're to engage the enemy with our armor in place. Now, in *Prayers for Victory in Spiritual Warfare*, I'm offering some powerful prayers that address some of the major battles we face. For each of the topics listed, you'll find prayers based on each piece of our armor. Because there are six pieces of armor, I've chosen to draft prayers based on the theme of each piece. Feel free to pray the prayers word for word, to use them as a starting point for crafting your own prayers, or to simply paraphrase them. The main thing is that you pray.

My goal is that these prayers will act as a starting place for you each day and that when the prayer I've written ends, you will go on praying in your own words about your situation. Remember as you pray that you do not pray as a beggar, but as a warrior for the King of kings. If you need help discovering what I mean by that and how critical it is that you approach prayer in a sense that you are claiming your legal rights, listen to my online sermon on the subject at go.tonyevans.org/prayer. You have power in prayer over your enemy. You probably have more power than you realize. Your task is to stand firm in your God-given authority, and you do that through prayer. Before you begin, let's take a brief look at each piece of armor.

Armor You Wear All the Time

The first three pieces of the armor of God are to be worn all the time. The “to be” verb—translated “having”—indicates “at all times.” You need to be well dressed for warfare every day because the enemy attacks without warning. We are to always put on the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes of the gospel of peace.

The Belt of Truth

Wearing the belt of truth involves realizing that truth is fundamentally God-based knowledge—His viewpoint on a matter. These three principles help us put on the belt of truth.

1. Truth is comprised of information and facts, but it also includes God's original intent, making it the absolute, objective standard by which reality is measured.
2. Truth has already been predetermined by God.
3. Truth must be accepted internally and then acted on externally.

When you wear the belt of truth and use it by aligning your mind, will, and emotions underneath God's view on a matter—His truth—He will empower you to overcome the lies of the enemy and fight your spiritual battles with divinely authorized spiritual authority.

The Breastplate of Righteousness

The breastplate of righteousness has already been given to us. Our job is to wear it and use it with the truth of God so that it surrounds us with the protection in warfare we so desperately need.

When you got saved, God deposited deep within you a new heart containing all the righteousness that belongs to Jesus Christ. Righteousness is the standard that pleases God. But you can't benefit from its restoring abilities unless you're willing to dig down with the shovel of truth so that God will release in your decisions and actions a brand-new you, surrounded by the secure protection of the breastplate of His righteousness.

Wearing the breastplate of righteousness involves walking securely in your imputed righteousness by virtue of the cross, coming clean with God in your practice of righteousness, and feeding your spirit with the Word of God so that the Spirit will produce the natural outgrowth of right living from within you.

The Shoes of Peace

A Roman soldier's shoes were called *caliga*—sandals studded heavily with nails. These nails, known as hobnails, were firmly placed directly

through the sole of the shoe for increased durability, stability, and traction. This kept the soldier from slipping and sliding, much like cleats help a football or soccer player today. It gave him sure footing, making mobility in battle easier while also making it more difficult to be knocked down.

So when Paul instructs you to have your feet shod, he is talking about placing yourself in a stationary position to stand firm. This creates traction so that when Satan comes, he can't knock you off your feet. In fact, you are able to stand firm because the nails coming out of your "peace shoes" have dug deep into the solid ground beneath you. Paul is telling us that we don't have to slide or move with every hit or trial that comes our way. Having our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace creates a stability that even Satan cannot undo.

God offers us a peace that reaches beyond what we can comprehend. When we receive and walk in that peace, it settles in as a guard over our hearts and our minds. This is the peace that cradles people who lost their jobs so that they don't also lose their minds. This is the peace that produces praise when there is no money in the bank. This is the peace that restores hope in the face of failing health. This peace is so powerful that we're instructed to let it control us. We are taught to let it call the shots, make the decisions, and dictate our emotions.

Putting on peace shoes means aligning your soul under the rule of your spirit. When you choose to do that, God will release peace into your life because the peace of Christ is now ruling your thoughts and actions. When worry creeps back in, you remind yourself that it's lying to you because God has promised that He will provide.

Every attack on peace in your life needs to be taken straight back to the spiritual realm and countered with God's truth on the matter. When you do that, you will wear shoes unlike any others. You will wear shoes that remind the spiritual realm, yourself, and others that you are covered by God's armor. You will walk without becoming weary, and in those shoes you will find the calming power of peace.

Armor to “Take Up” When You Need It

You are to have the next three pieces of armor at hand, ready to pick up and use when you need them. Paul switches verbs for the next three pieces of the armor, telling us to “take up” the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit.

The Shield of Faith

Faith is critical to achieving victory in spiritual warfare.

Faith accesses what God has already done or what God plans to do. The shield of faith can also be called the shield that *is* faith because the shield is made up of faith itself.

The Scripture is full of verses that speak to this weapon of faith and where we are to find it. Hebrews 12:2 tells us that Jesus is the “author and perfecter of faith.” In Galatians 2:20, Paul explained that he lived by faith in Christ: “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” First John 5:4 says, “For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.”

Faith is a powerful weapon, rooted in Jesus Christ. Jesus embodies all the ingredients of faith, from its creation to its perfection. The key to winning in warfare is this faith.

I define faith in practical terms like this: Faith is acting like God is telling the truth. Another way of saying it is that faith is acting like something *is* so even when it is *not* so in order that it might *be* so simply because God *said* so. Your faith must always be directly tied to an *action* done in response to a revealed truth—otherwise, it is not faith. If you are not willing to *do* something in response to the truth—even something as small as simply being still in your soul rather than worrying—then the faith you claim to have is not real. Faith always involves your walk, not just your talk.

Keep in mind, though, that the shield of faith is not just faith in

anything. It must be faith in God's truth. Faith is only as valuable as the thing to which it is tied.

For example, if your faith is tied to your feelings—how much faith you feel—your faith will be empty. You might feel entirely full of faith but take no actions in response to that faith because you really don't believe in what you say you feel. True faith is always based on your feet—what you do in response to what you believe. Faith is a function of the mind that shows up in your reactions, responses, and choices to life.

The shield of faith has been given to us to protect us from the deceptive strategies of the enemy. When you use it properly, this shield will enable you to advance against the enemy because you will be confident that what God has said about your situation—in His Word and through His promises—is true.

Pick up the shield of faith, and with it, grab the victory that has already been gained.

The Helmet of Salvation

With the helmet, Paul has once again used a physical example to illustrate a spiritual truth. He demonstrates that just as the brain is the control center for the rest of the body, the mind is the control center for the will and emotions. The mind must be protected with a helmet that's able to absorb the shocks of being hit by the enemy and even knocked to the ground in the spiritual realm.

One reason God wants us to wear a helmet is that the enemy is trying to stop us from accomplishing the things God has for us to do. God wants to speak truth into our minds. He is above all things—seated in the heavenly places—and views the scene below. He can see the field of life much better than we ever could. He can examine the opposition's strategy much better than we can. He has studied the game film much longer than we have. And because of all this, God has a few secrets He wants us to hear. They are secrets because often what God has to say to you is meant only for you.

Satan wants to keep us from wearing the helmet of salvation so that

what he whispers to us through his own headset becomes the reality through which we interpret and respond to life.

Everything God is ever going to do for you has already been done. Every healing He will ever give you in your physical body has already been provided. Every opportunity He is ever going to open up for you has already been opened. Every stronghold God is ever going to break in you has already been broken. Every victory you are ever going to experience has already been won. The joy you're desperately seeking already exists. The peace that you stay up at night praying and wishing that you could enjoy is already present. Even the power you need to live the life God has created you to live is already yours. This is because God has already deposited in the heavenly realm "every spiritual blessing" you will ever need (Ephesians 1:3).

Wearing the helmet of salvation means living in that reality now, securely.

The Sword of the Spirit

This piece of armor stands out from all of the others. It's unique because it's the only offensive weapon in the arsenal. Everything else is designed to hold us steady from what the enemy is seeking to bring against us "in the evil day." But after God outfits you for battle in order to stand firm, He gives you an additional weapon with which you can attack and advance.

When Paul instructs us to take up the sword of the Spirit, he's letting us know that in this battle, the enemy will sometimes seem to be close—in fact, right in our face. This can be compared to an opponent trying to block a shot in a basketball game. The opposing player will often stick his body, face, or hands in the offensive player's face so that the offensive player will become disoriented and unable to advance. Satan doesn't want you or me to send the ball through the net for two points, so to discourage this, he brings his battle—your particular stronghold—as close to you as possible. Oftentimes, that means your battle is being waged within you—in your mind, will, emotions, and body.

Paul tells us that this is the sword *of the Spirit*. It's not your sword. It's not the church's sword. It's not the sword of good works or even religion. It's not the preacher's sword. This is the sword of the Spirit, and in fact, it's the only weapon we're told that the Spirit uses in the spiritual realm.

When you learn how to use the sword of the Spirit—which is the Word of God—as you go on the offensive against the enemy seeking to destroy you, it doesn't matter how old you are or how weak you seem. All you need to know is that the sword in your hand is capable of doing more than you will ever need. As Jesus demonstrated in the wilderness, using the sword of the Spirit means communicating to the enemy specific Scriptures that relate to your unique situation.

The Battle in the Heavens

Paul ends his discussion on the armor of God with a clarion call to prayer (Ephesians 6:18). Why? Because prayer is how you get dressed for warfare. Prayer is how you put on the armor. I define prayer as relational communication with God. It is earthly permission for heavenly interference. The reason why prayer often seems difficult to us is because Satan seeks to direct us away from it. He knows how important it is. He will use every possible avenue to keep you from seriously communicating with God because he knows what prayer does—it activates heaven's response on your behalf in accordance with the will of God. Prayer does not force God to do what is not His will, but it does release from God to us what *is* His will. And it is definitely His will for His people to wage victorious spiritual warfare.

We find one of the greatest illustrations of prayer in the book of Daniel. Daniel has been studying God's Word, and now he responds to God in prayer based on what he has discovered.

In the first year of his [Darius's] reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the LORD to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek

Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes (Daniel 9:2-3).

First Daniel heard the truth of God. Then he talked to God about it. Anytime you talk with God about His Word, you are praying. You don't have to do it on your knees. You can do it while you are working, hanging out with others, washing dishes...whatever. Prayer in your private room is critical, but try not to neglect the ongoing need for prayer throughout the day as well. Notice what happens next.

Now while I was speaking and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God in behalf of the holy mountain of my God, while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. He gave me instruction and talked with me and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you insight with understanding" (Daniel 9:20-22).

While Daniel prayed, God responded. He sent an angel to help him understand his situation even more. Notice that God did not send the angel to give Daniel understanding *until* Daniel prayed in response to what God had already said. We read, "At the beginning of your supplications the command was issued, and I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed; so give heed to the message and gain understanding of the vision" (verse 23). When Daniel began to pray, God gave Gabriel the directive to go to Daniel to give him more understanding.

The following chapter gives us greater insight into this occasion.

Then behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said to me, "O Daniel, man of high esteem, understand the words that I am about to tell you and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood

up trembling. Then he said to me, “Do not be afraid, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart on understanding this and on humbling yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to give you an understanding of what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision pertains to the days yet future.”

When he had spoken to me according to these words, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless (Daniel 10:10-15).

When Daniel prayed to God in response to God’s words revealed through Jeremiah, God sent a messenger to help Daniel. Twice we read in these two chapters that God sent the angel on the day that Daniel prayed to God with regard to God’s already revealed words. When you are praying according to God’s own words, He hears you and responds. The delay in receiving that response was due to spiritual warfare in the heavenly realm. Gabriel had been dispatched to go to Daniel with a message of understanding from God, but the prince of Persia—a demon—blocked Gabriel from reaching his destination for three weeks.

Your battle is fought in the spiritual realm. You must not fail to realize that. If you do, you will not fight for the win. As we have seen, when Daniel first offered his prayer, God heard it and responded immediately. Yet because there is a battle taking place in the invisible, spiritual realm, there was a delay in God’s response reaching its intended destination. In fact, another angel—Michael—was needed in order to eventually remove the demon from acting as an obstacle for Gabriel. Ultimately, the prince of Persia was double-teamed so God could deliver His message to Daniel.

Rarely is a battle overturned and won in a minute. That is why I want to encourage you to continue in prayer. You may not receive God's response immediately because battles are taking place in the heavenlies.

Taken individually, each piece of armor has a specific use in our warfare against Satan. Taken all together, they present a mighty defense and offense against his tactics. As you pray the prayers on the following pages that are relevant to your needs, my hope is that you'll develop the fighting spirit that warriors need to win the battle and that you will join the mighty army God is raising up as overcomers. Your part in carrying out spiritual warfare can change the course of history for you, your family, your church, your community...even your nation.

RECEIVING THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

*Walk by the Spirit, and you will not
carry out the desire of the flesh.*

GALATIANS 5:16

Have you ever been to a gas station to fill up your car? I imagine you have. One thing you know for sure—when you fill up your car, the gas is not going to last forever. Eventually, the fuel gauge on your dashboard is going to remind you that you are nearing empty and you need to find a gas station again. If you want to continue driving your car, you must keep gas in the tank. No gas, no trip.

Many believers today don't realize that even though we received the Holy Spirit when we trusted in Christ for salvation from our sins, the ongoing dwelling of the Holy Spirit's presence is something we need to seek on a regular basis. Just as driving your car is difficult if it's running on fumes, living the victorious Christian life is impossible without the flame of the Spirit burning bright.

So how do you fill yourself with the Spirit's presence? There are a number of ways. One is to regularly acknowledge and confess your sin because the Holy Spirit is holy and does not dwell intimately in the presence of sin. Another way is by reading God's Word and singing spiritual

songs and psalms. Praying and meditating on the character and attributes of God, keeping your mind set on truth, engaging in an atmosphere of communication and communion with God...these things draw you into His presence.

Walk by the Spirit, and you will fully live out the plan God has for you. But remember—to walk by the Spirit, you need to intentionally remain tethered to Him.

Put On the Belt of Truth

Dear Lord, You remind me, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth” [John 16:13]. So many voices and perspectives surround me—coming from friends, the media, or even my own thoughts—that seek to compete with or counter Your truth. I realize that my history and the things I have experienced may sometimes cloud what I believe to be true. Please let Your Holy Spirit guide me each and every day into all truth. Guide my thoughts and my decisions. Reveal to me where I am thinking wrong. Correct me where I have gotten off track. And grant me the grace to apply the truth You show me through the Spirit to my words and actions so that I reflect Your image more fully in all I do. In Christ’s name, amen.

Put On the Breastplate of Righteousness

Father, Your Word tells me that You have “made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” [2 Corinthians 3:6]. The law is not my righteousness because on my own, even on my best day, I can only claim like Paul that I am unrighteous [Romans 3:10]. Give me the grace to live according to the newness of the Spirit, pleasing You in all that I do, and may I do this out of a heart filled with gratitude for all You have done for me. In Christ’s name, amen.

Put On the Shoes of Peace

Lord, one of the evidences of a Spirit-filled life is peace [Galatians 5:22]. You have given me the Holy Spirit so I can speak to the chaos around me or in me just as Jesus spoke to the storm on the sea, “Be still.” Thank You, God, for empowering me to wear the shoes of peace. Holy Spirit, I pray I may know and be protected by Your peace—peace that passes comprehension [Philippians 4:7]—so that I will respond calmly when other people disappoint me or when circumstances seem to be against me. In Christ’s name, amen.

Take Up the Shield of Faith

Dear God, in times of doubting, fear, or anxiety, I might try to turn to a crutch to get me through that moment or that day. Whatever that crutch is, Lord, if it is not faith in You, I am choosing to fill myself with something other than Your Holy Spirit. Help me in those times to remember that I have access to Your presence and the Spirit’s power. Remind me to whisper a simple prayer, turning my thoughts to You, and not to seek something else to cover my fears and doubts or distract me from them. In Christ’s name, amen.

Take the Helmet of Salvation

Lord, I am secure. I am secure because of the work of Christ on the cross and because He sent the Holy Spirit to remain with me all of my days on earth. I thank You that whatever I face, nothing will separate me from Your love. The Holy Spirit is a constant reminder of that promise. I bless Your name because “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set [me] free from the law of sin and death” [Romans 8:1-2]. I want to live as if I believe that fully, Lord. Take my guilt and hesitation over things I have done wrong so that I may boldly walk in the confidence of my relationship with You. In Christ’s name, amen.

Take Up the Sword of the Spirit

Lord, as I take up the sword of the Spirit today, give me wisdom through Your Word to align my thoughts, words, and actions under You. Where I am struggling, Lord, direct me to Scriptures that reveal the truth so I can apply it to my own mind and repel Satan's attacks. Jesus, You used the Word of God when Satan tempted You in the desert. You countered Satan's lies with the truth by saying, "It is written..." and then proclaiming the truth. Show me where I have been duped by the devil, and guide me to the correlating truth to counteract it in each of these areas I am bringing to You in prayer. In Christ's name, amen.

Victory

Pray and ask God to reveal any of your misguided thoughts, beliefs, or words about the Holy Spirit or your relationship to the Spirit. Ask Him to show you how you have tried to cope with difficulties in life instead of turning to the filling of the Spirit. For each untruth, look for a countering truth from God's Word. When you write down the countering truth, be sure to cross out the untruth and pray, in Christ's name, that it will no longer affect your life and the lives of those around you. Then thank God that the power of His truth has been let loose to do its work of healing, empowerment, and grace in you. Here's an example.

- *Untruth*: I have coped with pain through [overspending, drinking, yelling...] for so long, I could never stop it now.
- *Truth*: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).