Trench warfare was used only sparingly in military craft throughout most of modern history. By the time of the American Civil War in the 1860s, some of the Union and Confederate generals began employing it as a defensive strategy. The increased range and velocity of firearms had reached a high enough level that armies could no longer afford to merely march at one another in columns, taking huge casualties on both sides.

But the heavy, rapid-firing machine guns of World War I left no other option. Digging in and climbing down into trenches became the standard method of survival. Throughout battlefields along the Western Front in Europe, a series of networking foxholes began to emerge on either side of the fighting. From 1914 to 1918, Allied forces dug in against the armies of Germany and the Central Powers. And ugly war slogged on with no end in sight.

The strength of the trenches was protection, but their benefit came at the expense of mobility. When advancing troops would try to make a run on their opponent, the barbed-wire barricades and fortified walls proved difficult to penetrate. Long, arcing shots were about the best they could do. Any attempt at gaining the element of surprise seemed nearly impossible. There was almost no defeating the enemy under these conditions. Just endless fighting. Until . . . the tank.
Great Britain, under Winston Churchill, developed the first military tank in history by engineering an armored car onto the chassis of a farm tractor. Almost like a ship on land. The combination of steel with off-road capability immediately turned the nature of ground fighting from an almost purely defensive operation to one of offensive mobility . . . and eventually turned the whole tide of the war. The prospect of being able to move actively and thunderously toward the enemy, while being protected during the ride, spelled the end of merely digging in and hoping for the best.

Prayer is our armored tank. And when put into action by God’s people, “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”. (Matt. 16: 18 kjv) Prayer is our major assault weapon in battle.

The apostle Paul certainly used it in that manner. After listing the various pieces of equipment known as the “full armor of God” (Eph. 6: 13), he mentioned prayer as being an equally essential element of spiritual warfare, just like the shield, sword, and helmet. “Pray at all times in the Spirit,” he said (v. 18). Prayer, to him, was a forward moving force, a battering ram that powered him ahead in pursuit of God’s will. “Pray also for me,” he said in the next verse, “that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel”. (v. 19 hcsb) Prayer was the battle strategy he needed to propel him on to victory.

He was actually writing this request from prison, as an “ambassador in chains” (v. 20). Think how many layers of stone-cold reality stood between him and anything resembling the continuation of his ministry. And yet from inside his confined situation, prayer was still blowing holes into every obstacle that stood between him and his next assignment. To be locked up hand and foot, yet be bold enough to consider yourself free and ready to engage in whatever God has in store . . . that’s NOT how normal people think. Unless we’re people of prayer.
Prayer can do anything. Because with God, “all things are possible.” (Matt. 19: 26) It can reach out and address any issue that anyone is facing anywhere on the earth. It can be silently engaged without the enemy ever hearing the life-changing conversation going on in our heads and hearts with our Commander in Chief.

So this is not just a harmless little church ritual we’re talking about. Nor a pitiful beggar asking for a handout he’s almost sure he won’t receive. There’s raw power here. There’s access to God Almighty. There’s a certainty of His sovereignty. There’s a boldness that no amount of enemy resistance can steal from us unless we give it away. And that only happens when we don’t pray.

“The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5: 16). The prophet Elijah, as this same passage in James says, “prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months. Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit” (vv. 17– 18). Prayer means that God’s miracle-working power is always a possible solution to whatever challenge stands before us.

Prayer provides an unlimited spiritual data plan, meaning we never need to worry we’ve drifted out of range from the signal tower. We can “pray without ceasing,” the Bible says (1 Thess. 5: 17) and know we’re being heard with crystal clear accuracy at all times. Prayer is privileged access to the God of the universe, bought and paid for by the blood of His Son on our account for all those who freely receive Him as Lord.

Paul said making our requests known to God “by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving” (Phil. 4: 6) results in an incredible exchange of energy. Instead of staying burdened and overwhelmed by the fear and worry of it all, we’re given instead “the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension” (v. 7). This kind of impenetrable peace operates like an armed guard around our hearts and minds—a peace officer, you might call it—preventing our torqued emotions
from making us do things out of fear or desperation. Prayer enables us to rest and trust.

Prayer is like a standing counseling session, 24/7, no appointment necessary. Just walk in. And expect to find your Counselor — which is one of the ways Jesus described the Holy Spirit (John 16: 7) — always fully understanding your situation and ready to impart timely wisdom. Even when the truth means confronting us with our sin, the truth also means reminding us of Christ’s righteousness, which covers it all with His grace and mercy, as well as the truth about our enemy’s certain demise (John 16: 8–11). So in prayer, there’s no need for any secrets. There’s perfect honesty, perfect freedom, perfect forgiveness, and perfect confidence.

Prayer is all these things and more — as we know and will come to see. And because of this, the first observation about prayer is: Why do we so rarely do it? With everything that prayer can be to us, why would anyone choose not to pray?

Certainly there’s wisdom in working hard and planning and trying to be personally responsible. Those are all good ways of attacking life. But without the addition of prayer to animate these noble qualities with the might and wisdom of God, they don’t do much. Prayer is what infuses all our efforts and the genuine concerns of our hearts with God’s boundless ability. Prayer is what frames our pressing, short-term issues with God’s eternal perspective, showing us just how temporary — and endurable, and winnable — even our most intense battles truly are. Prayer means hope. Prayer means help. Prayer means relief. Prayer means power.

And a lot of it.

**PRAY:**

Lord, I ask that You forgive me for the times when I haven’t valued or believed in the power of prayer that You’ve offered to me. I’ve tried making things happen in other ways. But that hasn’t often proved so effective. Father, I want to learn to pray in faith. I want to
grow closer to You. I want to experience this kind of confidence and freedom to believe You, rely completely on You, and go into battle with You. Guide me, I pray, as I try to trust You more. Train me. Equip me. Make me a mighty warrior in prayer. Be glorified through me as I trust in You. In Jesus’ name. Amen.


HOMEWORK:
1. The “TRENCH WARFARE” is:

2. In W.W.I., just endless fighting until...the tank. Great Britain, under Winston Churchill, developed the first military tank in history by engineering an armored car onto the chassis [the frame, wheels, and machinery of a motor vehicle, on which the body is supported] of a farm tractor. Almost like a ship on land. The combination of steel with off-road capability immediately turned the nature of ground fighting from an almost pure defensive operation to one of offensive mobility and eventually turned the whole tide of the war. The prospect [an apparent of probability of advancement, success] of being able to move actively and thunderously toward the enemy, while being protected during the ride, spelled the end of merely [simply] digging in and hoping for the best.

3. PRAYER is your ______________ tank. And when put into action by God’s people, “the gate of hell shall not prevail against it [the church].” (Matthew 16:18) or “The church will reign triumphant even at the gates
of hell.” (VOC) or “A church so expansive with energy that not even the gates of hell will be able to keep it out.” (MSG) or “And the councils of the unseen world shall not overpower [overcome] it [the church].” (WUE)

4. TRUE FALSE: PRAYER is your minor assault weapon in battle.

5. After the listing the various pieces of equipment known as the “_________________________________”. (Ephesians 6:13) Paul mentioned ‘prayer’ as being an equally essential [100% necessary] element of spiritual warfare, just like the shield, sword, and helmet.

   Paul said, “Pray at all times in the [Holy] Spirit”. (Eph. 6:18) or “Ask God for anything in line with the Holy Spirit’s wishes.” (TLB) or “Keep each other’s spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.” (MSG). Prayer, to Paul, was a backward or forward moving force, a battering ram that powered Paul ahead in pursuit of God’s will.

   Paul said, “Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.” (Eph. 6:19)

   PRAYER was the battle Paul needed to propel him on to victory. He was actually writing this request from prison, as an ‘ambassador in chains’. (Eph. 6:20)

6. If you are in a jail, to be locked up your hands and feet with the chains, your prayer CAN or CAN’T do anything.

7. Because WITH or WITHOUT God, ‘all things are impossible’.

8. Your prayer __________ reach out and address __________ issue that ________________ is facing ________________ in earth.
9. Your prayer can be ________________ engaged without the enemy ever _______________ the life-changing conversation going on in your head and heart with your Commander-in-Chief Jesus Christ.

10. Your prayer is a raw [brutally or grossly frank] ________________. Your prayer _______________ to God Almighty. There’s a certainty [100%] of His SOVEREIGNTY. Your prayer is a ________________ that no amount of enemy resistance can steal from you ________________ you give it [prayers] away. And that only happens when you ________________ pray.

James 5:16 NLT: “The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”

11. PRAYER means that God’s miracle-working power is always a possible solution to whatever ________________ stands before you.

12. PRAYER provides an ________________ spiritual data plan, meaning you never need to worry you have drifted out of range from the signal power. You can pray ‘without ceasing’ (1 Thess. 5:17) and you know you are being heard with ________________ clear accuracy at all times.

13. PRAYER is ________________ access to the God of universe, bought and paid for by the ________________ of His Son on your account for all those who freely receive Him as Lord.

14. PRAYER enables you to ________________ and ________________.

15. PRAYER is like a standing counseling session, _____/____, no appointment necessary. Just walk in. And expect to find your Counselor—Holy Spirit (John 16:7) who always fully understanding your situation and ready to impart timely wisdom.
16. **PRAYER** is what __________ all our efforts and the genuine (true) concerns of our hearts with God’s boundless ability.

17. **PRAYER** is what frames our ______________, short-term issues with God’s eternal perspective, showing you just how temporary—and endurable, and winnable—even your most intense battles truly are.

18. **PRAYER** means ____________.

19. **PRAYER** means ____________.

20. **PRAYER** means ____________.

21. **PRAYER** means ____________.

22. **YN NS:** Is your church called “the people of prayer”? 