



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V22 N9

March 1, 2020

DEAR TIMOTHY

"How to Influence Government"

1 Timothy 2:1-7

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Prayer

I pray to God to know him, to lay my requests before him and to find direction for my daily life.

"Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; but God has surely listened and has heard my prayer. Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!"
Psalms 66:16-20



How are we
to pray?

Over the past ten years I have had the opportunity to travel multiple times to two of the most heavily populated countries in the world. Sadly, both of these countries, in their own ways, are often dismissive and at times hostile to the good news of Jesus Christ. One of these nations has declared allegiance to atheism and has enforced laws against the spread of the gospel. The other nation is a democracy that promises freedom of religion, but in practice culturally eschews Christian missionaries and turns a blind eye to the abuse of religious minorities. To share the gospel openly in either of these countries is impossible without grave consequences. Foreigners doing so will be deported and natives doing so will go to jail.

If it is illegal to share the gospel of Jesus, how do Christians in these countries fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)? While visiting a church in one of these countries, a group of American pastors and myself asked the resident pastor to detail for us his plan for local evangelism. "How are you spreading the gospel to your village?" asked one of the American pastors. The question was full of western expectations regarding ingenuity, impact and efficiency. The pastor shared a simple and yet one of the most profound evangelism strategies I have ever heard. His plan consisted of one word — Prayer.

The American pastors were flustered by this terse answer. "Surely you must do more than just pray," was the response of us Western experts in

evangelism. The absurdity of our response did not dawn on us until after the pastor shared what he meant by "prayer."

The humble pastor detailed how "prayer" worked in his country. Each week, often multiple times during the week, Christians would gather in homes throughout the villages. They would gather in groups of six to eight people to worship and pray. During the week, Christians would ask their neighbors in personal and private conversations what needs they might have that the Christians could pray for. When God answered the prayers of the Christians, the lost neighbors would bring other prayers to the Christians. Often neighbors would ask to come to these cottage prayer gatherings to learn more about this God who answers prayers. Many had come to faith in Christ through this prayer strategy.

In a place where public proclamation is illegal, prayer may be the only option for spread of the gospel. Christians had the freedom to pray. Prayer is not illegal in this country. So prayer has become a method by which the good news of Jesus can be shared with individuals in each village. Each of us American evangelists were silenced by the simplicity and profoundness of this evangelistic strategy. I felt humbled by the fact that I had never tried such a strategy before.

Prayer is often an afterthought for western Christians. We would do well to include more prayer in our strategies and attempts at fulfilling the Great Commission — Eric Wright, guest author



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – 2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. 7 And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle – I am telling the truth, I am not lying – and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline the phrase that indicates priority in v. 1.
- Circle each occurrence of the word “all” in vv. 1-7.
- Draw a line from “people” in v. 1 to each word that is a synonym or a particular type of people.
- Box “that” indicating *result* in v. 2.
- Draw an arrow from “this” in v. 3 to “petitions” in v. 1.
- Double underline each occurrence of “God” in vv. 1-7.
- Draw an arrow from “this” in v. 6 to “ransom” in v. 5.
- Draw a line connecting “purpose” in v. 7 to “witness” in v. 6.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about _____.”



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. After commands to Timothy to confront false teachers (vv. 3, 18-20), what work does Paul want Timothy to promote first in the church at Ephesus? Why is this work first?
2. What problem was Paul addressing as he urged prayer for "all people"?
3. What should be the content of our prayers made for all people (see vv. 3-4)?
4. When we pray for "those in authority," should we pray for "peace and quiet" for ourselves or something else?
5. What is it that is "good and pleases God" (v. 3)?
6. Paul identifies God as our Savior (1 Tim. 2:3). List truths that expand this idea (see 1 Tim. 2:4-7)
7. God wants "all people to be saved" (v. 4). What clues from vv. 4-7, suggest that not all will be saved?
8. What timeless or "creedal" truths are included in vv. 5-6?
9. For what *purpose* was Paul appointed (1 Tim. 2:7)?
10. In a given week, when, where and what do you pray?

Commentary On The Text

After commanding Timothy to confront those who were promoting false teachings (1Ti 1:3, 18), Paul identified a number of directives for Timothy to implement in the church at Ephesus. Many of these topics are introduced in the book of 1 Timothy with Paul “urging” or “commanding” Timothy to address certain needs in the church.

The first of these directives given to Timothy is the charge to pray (v. 11). This charge is given to the whole church. Each believing member of the church at Ephesus should be active in the work of prayer. Seeking God and asking for His movement upon the affairs of our world should be a priority in the lives of followers of Christ. Unfortunately, prayer is often an afterthought rather than a priority in our daily lives.

The words used for prayer in verse 1 are similar in meaning with slight differentiations. Used together, these words emphasize that prayers should be a frequent activity of the church and its members. Christians are encouraged to pray privately (Mt 6:6) and corporately (Ac 4:24). The focus or content of prayer is perhaps more important than the type of prayers that are to be made.

Prayers are “to be made” for “all people.” Our prayers often focus upon our own needs and desires. We are encouraged to pray for our own needs (Mt 6:11), but our prayers should also include the needs of others. Our prayers for “others” should include prayers even for those who are not followers of God. Paul encouraged Timothy to direct Ephesians believers to include “kings and authorities” in their prayers (1Ti 2:2). These rulers were most likely Gentile (not Jewish) and ungodly and unsympathetic toward Christians. Often the rulers of the ancient world demanded they be petitioned as gods. The Caesar at the time of Paul’s writing to Timothy was most likely Nero, a most cruel and unjust emperor to both Jews and Christians. When most Christians would be inclined to resist and react negatively toward the political leaders of their day, Paul encouraged believers to lift up their antagonistic leaders to God in prayer. This directive mirrors Jesus teaching of praying for our persecutors (Mt 5:44).

What should we pray for when we pray for “all people” including “kings and all authorities”? Some would suggest that we should pray for peace and harmony while dealing with hostile leaders. This reasoning comes from the last phrase of verse 2, “that we may live peaceful and quiet lives.” Is this phrase the content of our prayers or is it the effect of our prayers? Prayer often does more to change our point of view than to change the mind of God. A person praying for the welfare of his enemies often drains enmity from his own heart. Living peacefully is often determined more in my heart than in the heart of my enemy. We

should pray for peace with enemies, but our prayers should not stop there.

Verses 3-7 focus on the saving work of God. This section says more about salvation than it does about prayer. God is “our Savior” (v. 3). Verses 3-6 may have been an creed or hymn used by the early church in its worship of God. This description of salvation is one of the most profound theological statements in Paul’s writing.

False teachers who focused on Jewish myths, genealogies and law (vv. 3-7) sought to exclude Gentiles. They saw political powers as oppressors who should be opposed rather than prayed for. Paul emphasized that God desires that all people, even Gentiles, and even the oppressive leaders of Gentiles should be saved (v. 4). As we pray for all people, even leaders and authorities, we should be praying that they come to salvation. Paul listed a variety of elements involved in salvation in 1 Timothy 2:4-7. God’s salvation is intended for all people (v. 4). Salvation involves a change that involves embracing the truth (v. 4). Salvation’s source and mediation is singular (v. 5). The means of salvation is not found in ourselves but comes at great cost to Christ and is for all people, including the worst of God’s opponents (v. 6). This salvation has many witnesses, including Paul who understands his specific charge to be one of reaching out to Gentiles. If we are to pray for “all people,” we should be praying for their salvation.

What does it look like to pray for the salvation of lost people? First, prayers for people assume that we know the people for whom we are praying. Learning names, finding out needs, and showing concern for others is the foundation of effective prayers for lost people. Asking lost people how you might pray for them is another way to apply 1 Timothy 2:1-7. Even the hardest of atheists will often oblige to the prayerful petitions of genuinely concerned Christians. Prayers for lost people can often be a means of effective evangelism. Non-Christians pray to their own gods, often with great futility. God is not obligated to answer every prayer of a Christian, but often an answered prayer offered by a Christian stands as a witness to the power of the One True God.

Prayers for the lost should also include prayers for opportunities to share God’s goodness. Paul saw himself as a herald of the gospel (1 Timothy 2:7). He was looking for opportunities to share the good news with all people and for the right words to share with them. When we pray for the lost, we should ask God for opportunities to share, for boldness to share and for the right words to share with those for whom we are praying (Ephesians 6:19-20).

For faithful followers of Christ, prayer should be a priority. Prayers to the end that “all people be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth” are close to the heart of God and can bring peace for ourselves and our enemies.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *prayers*

“Though Paul used several synonyms for prayer in urging its practice, the words he chose are not significantly different. This is a Semitic literary device that groups synonyms to enhance the basic concept, namely, that Christians should pray all types of prayers for all people. ‘Entreaties’ (Gr. *deeseis*) emphasizes the earnestness with which we should make requests because we feel a need for what we ask (cf. Luke 18:1-8). ‘Prayer’ (*proseuchas*) is a general word covering all types of prayer communication with God. The emphasis for all prayer is on a spirit of reverence toward God (cf. Matt. 6:9-10). ‘Petitions’ (*enteuxeis*) are confident requests for others and self (cf. Luke 11:5-13). ‘Thanksgivings’ (*eucharistias*) is the most different word, and served as a reminder that we should express gratitude, not just need, in public praying. By using these synonyms, Paul was emphasizing the importance of praying all kinds of prayers for all people, as well as distinguishing its varieties” (Thomas Constable, *Notes on 1 Timothy*, sonlight.org, 38-39).

v. 1 *all people*

“The one clear concern that runs through the whole paragraph has to do with the gospel as for everyone ('all people,' vv. 1, 4-6, and 7). ... The best explanation for this emphasis lies with the false teachers, who either through the esoteric, highly speculative nature of their teaching (1:4-6) or through its 'Jewishness' (1:7) or ascetic character (4:3) are promoting an elitist or exclusivist mentality among their followers. The whole paragraph attacks that narrowness” (Gordon D. Fee, *Understanding the Bible Commentary, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 42).

v. 2 *Kings*

“The pious practice that the Pastor urges upon the community is similar to Jewish practice and radically different from Gentile practice. The community was to pray for the emperor and not to the emperor, as was then the case in the cult of divinized emperors. The community's practice was also different from various pagan forms of prayer in which offerings were made to the emperor through the medium of statues or images, similar to the idols used in the worship of civic deities. The Pastor's list of four kinds of prayer to be offered (2:1) excludes the kind of idol worship that pagans might employ in the cult of the emperor” (Raymond F. Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary*, 53).

v. 4 *knowledge*

“Come to a knowledge of the truth (v. 4) was a formula that described conversion

as a rational decision about the gospel. This statement qualifies how the universality of God's will to save is to be understood. We do not have here grounds for saying that all people will be saved regardless of their disposition toward the gospel. Rather, the emphasis is on access: the gospel is to be preached to all nations. Certain references such as this one reveal that God's will is as broad as his entire plan of redemption and yet can be expressed in terms of specific standards of behavior (compare 1 Thess 4:3, 18; 1 Tim 5:4; Tit 3:8). Of course, unlike the human will, God's is unchanging and accompanied by his imperturbable [persistent] power which makes its ultimate accomplishment certain” (Philip H. Towner, *IVP New Testament Commentary, 1-2 Timothy, Titus*, 65).

v.6 *ransom*

“This clause, of course, makes explicit what was only implicit in the first two clauses, revealing Paul's reason for citing the whole. God's desire for all to be saved is evidenced in the creed itself with its statement that Christ's death was for all people. The gospel, therefore, potentially provides salvation for all people, because Christ's atoning self-sacrifice was 'in behalf of' all people. Effectually, of course, it ends up being 'especially [for] those who believe' (1 Tim. 4:10). The clause is very close in concept but not so in its actual language, to Mark 10:45 and probably reflects a Hellenized form of that saying. To give himself up for us is a typically Pauline way of referring to Christ's self-sacrifice on the cross (Gal. 1:4; 2:20 ; Eph 5:2). As a ransom translates a noun, *antilytron*, that can mean either a 'ransom' (involving 'payment') or 'redemption' (in the Exodus sense of delivery from bondage), In both Mark 10:45 and here, the latter is to be preferred (as well as in Titus 2:14)” (Fee, 45).

Other Texts to Consider

Ephesians 6:18

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.”



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Pray. Before you do anything else, pray. As you pray, include prayers for the salvation of lost people. Ask God to make you a faithful and true witness to those who need Christ.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

One of the most important things we can do as a parent is pray for our kids. However, in this never-ending whirlwind of life, protecting our time alone with God is one of the most difficult things a parent can face. When I first had kids, I would try to steal 15 minutes of coffee, Bible and prayer before the precious angels woke up. Wouldn't you know the moment my big toe hit the ground they would realize I was up and cry for attention. Consequently, most of my prayers were arrows shot up throughout the day. When my kids were preschoolers, I would try to pray while running. Something about picking up thrown sippy cups, keeping them buckled in the stroller, or answering the tenth "Why?" question was a little distracting, so prayer was sporadic at best. For many years I prayed super early before everyone woke up. I would be on my knees in the kitchen and my youngest would come fall asleep next to me. By virtue of contact, he got the most devoted prayer. Today, I could spend hours journaling my prayers on the back porch while the crew sleeps like teenagers. Prayer is a parent's lifeline to God. It reminds us that, not only is He powerful and awesome, He loves our kids way more than we do. Daily prayer is the best thing you can do to strengthen and uphold your child. This week pray a different character trait for your child. God is faithful to hear our prayers, and will He do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine!

What Does The Bible Say?

What does the Bible say? Read 1 Timothy 2:1-7.

1. Why should we pray?
2. Who should we pray for?
3. Why type of person does God want to be saved?

What Do You Think?

Why do you think Paul mentions prayer first in his letter to Timothy?

What Do You Do?

Create a prayer jar with your family. Write names of missionaries, teachers, leaders, friends or family on a popsicle stick or pieces of paper in a decorated jar. Also include favorite verses, things to be thankful for, or an attribute of God. Each night at dinner choose a stick and.

CORE COMPETENCY: Prayer

I talk to God so I can know Him, ask Him for things and find out what He wants me to do.

MEMORY VERSE: James 5:16b

The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME _____

GRADE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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