

## II. PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRAYER (1 Timothy 2:1-8)

### A. The Command to Pray (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

1. The command stated (1 Timothy 2:1)
  - a. The giver of the command—"I"
    - (1) In both this case and in 1 Timothy 2:8, the apostle Paul is passing a charge to Timothy concerning prayer.
      - a) I exhort therefore (1 Timothy 2:1)
      - b) I will therefore (1 Timothy 2:8)
    - (2) While the charge is from Paul to Timothy, it must be remembered that the charge was to be given to others beyond Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2).
  - b. The manner of the command—"exhort"; Note: The word *exhort* or *exhortation* speaks of an urging or an encouragement (see Acts 2:40; Acts 11:23; Acts 14:22; Acts 27:22; 2 Thessalonians 3:12).
  - c. The cause of the command—"therefore"
    - (1) The word therefore often suggests a cause and effect relationship.
    - (2) In order to find the cause, one must be willing to go back to the previous chapter and consider how it closed.
      - a) Timothy was charged to war a good warfare (1 Timothy 1:18-19).
      - b) Some put away faith and a good conscience, departing from the truth of God's word and a sound walk (1 Timothy 1:19-20).
      - c) Because of Timothy's responsibility and the failure on the part of men around him to bear the same responsibility, Timothy (and others) needed to make prayer a priority in hopes that God would move upon the hearts and lives of those in power and authority who would hinder or help the saints' ability to serve the Lord.
  - d. The priority of the command—"first of all"
    - (1) In order to gain a scriptural balance here, one must consider the use of the phrase "first of all" in its intended context.
    - (2) The chapter contains two great exhortations.
      - a) That men pray (1 Timothy 2:1-8, especially vs 8)
      - b) That women adorn themselves modestly in appearance and with good works in practice (1 Timothy 2:9-15)
    - (3) That being said, the phrase "first of all" was not used to suggest that prayer trumped or trumps all other exhortations. Instead, it was intended to open the first exhortation in the chapter. This exhortation was followed by a second which opened "In like manner also" (1 Timothy 2:9).
    - (4) All that being said, this in no way undervalues the importance of prayer. In fact, the latter charges are invalid without the fulfillment of the call to prayer.



2. The command unpacked (1 Timothy 2:1)
  - a. Supplications
    - (1) The word *supplication* has as its base the word *supply*.
    - (2) In other words, the request is for supplying that which is lacking.
  - b. Prayers
    - (1) The word *prayer* has as its base the word *pray*.
    - (2) This is often connected to making request (Genesis 12:13; Luke 14:18-19).
  - c. Intercessions
    - (1) The word *intercession* has as its base the word *intercede*.
    - (2) This is typically the idea of one person going to the Lord (or at times another person) on behalf of another individual.
  - d. Giving of thanks
    - (1) This one should be the most obvious and yet the most perplexing of all the words.
    - (2) The clear meaning is that we are to give thanks to God for all men.
    - (3) Yet, it might strike us as odd to think that we are to give thanks for all men (in the context this certainly points to rulers, but also broader).
  - e. Note: While there is most definitely overlap between these words, it would appear that God intended for the words to offer (at least) a fourfold approach in our prayers FOR others.
3. The subjects declared (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
  - a. All men (1 Timothy 2:1)
    - (1) While there is no doubt that the phrase *all men* means just what it says, it should be understood that the passage develops the phrase in context as kings and those in authority.
    - (2) This position seems to be strengthened by the allowance of believers to “lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Timothy 2:2).
  - b. Kings (1 Timothy 2:2)
  - c. All that are in authority (1 Timothy 2:2)
4. The purpose set forth (1 Timothy 2:2)
  - a. The beneficiaries—“that we”
  - b. The benefits
    - (1) We can lead a quiet and peaceable life
    - (2) In all godliness and honesty
  - c. Note: If the reader of scripture is not careful, he will miss the truth being taught herein.
    - (1) The assumption is that we pray for others for their benefit; however, the beneficiaries of this prayer is found in the lives of those who participate in the praying.
    - (2) In other words, the provisions of liberty to live for the Lord Jesus and to spread the gospel of Christ to an unsaved world is dependent upon the prayers of the saints.



5. Note: While we are dealing with one of the greatest passages on prayer, it would be wise to get a foundational understanding of prayer.
- a. What is prayer (Philippians 1:4)?
    - (1) Simply stated, prayer is talking to God.
    - (2) Most Christians think of prayer as simply asking and receiving from God, but the Bible points out that prayer also involves the making of requests.
    - (3) Both Philippians 1:4 and Philippians 4:6 mention making requests.
    - (4) Yet, considering the whole counsel of God indicates that prayer is not merely asking and receiving nor is it simply limited to making requests.
    - (5) This is why the Lord taught that prayer should include a time of praise.
    - (6) When asked by His disciples how they should pray, the Lord began by speaking of the greatness of the Father's name (Matthew 6:9).
    - (7) Prayer often includes a time when requests are made and praise occurs.
    - (8) Yet, the overall purpose of prayer involves portraying the greatness of God while testifying to man's inherent frailties.
  - b. To whom do we pray (John 16:23)?
    - (1) The 2,000-year history of the church reveals that there have been teachers and whole religions who have rejected the biblical teaching of the coexistence of a Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
    - (2) Others have accepted their existence but rejected the fact that these three are one with each being fully God (1 John 5:7).
    - (3) Some have simply been unable to comprehend or unwilling to accept that God could exist as one God in three persons.
    - (4) Regardless of man's intellectual inadequacies, the Bible reveals that each member of the Godhead works together on our behalf in prayer.
    - (5) The Lord told us that every believer should pray to God the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus (John 15:16).
    - (6) The prayers are directed toward the Father with the Son acting as the mediator (Hebrews 7:25).
    - (7) The book of Romans further reveals that the Spirit of God makes intercession for us in our prayers (Romans 8:26).
  - c. What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus (John 14:13-14)?
    - (1) Many believers have made it a practice to end their prayers with the phrase "in Jesus' name."
    - (2) They do so because of the Saviour's command to pray in His name.
    - (3) However, the command carries a far deeper relevance than simply a formula habitually added at the end of one's prayers.
    - (4) This phrase added at the end of the prayer serves as a reminder that we are performing the action in the name of another.



- (5) It is also taking place at the request of and under the authority of another person.
  - (6) By coming to the Father in the name of the Son, believers are approaching the Father under the Son's authority and at His request.
  - (7) One's understanding of this truth can be bolstered by considering the book of Esther and how something was done in the name of a king (Esther 3:12; Esther 8:8, 10). Obviously, the phrase suggested doing something under the authority of another.
  - (8) Because of Christ's request and authority, believers can approach the throne with boldness (Hebrews 4:16).
  - (9) Without Christ's request and authority, our boldness would be turned into presumptuousness.
- d. What is the proper form of prayer (1 Timothy 2:8)?
- (1) Prayer is an important subject that has unfortunately been tainted by men's traditions.
  - (2) Some teach that in order to truly pray, you must bow your head and close your eyes.
  - (3) Others have added that you must also kneel in order to pray properly.
  - (4) The problem with both of these practices is that the Bible does not demand either.
  - (5) In fact, in Bible times, prayer was often made by the lifting up of one's hands (Psalm 141:2).
  - (6) In other Bible passages, we see that believers might both kneel and lift up their hands (1 Kings 8:54).
  - (7) The Bible also teaches that the bowing of the head was an act of worship (Genesis 24:26).
  - (8) The most important aspect of prayer is not the position of the body but the condition of the heart.
- e. For whom should we pray (1 Timothy 2:1)?
- (1) We know that believers should pray for others, but should we limit our scope of prayers?
  - (2) The apostle Paul admonished the believers of Thessalonica to pray for him but also wanted those who served the Lord by his side included (1 Thessalonians 5:25).
  - (3) He admonished the believers in Ephesus to pray for all saints (Ephesians 6:18).
  - (4) Then, he instructed Timothy, the young preacher, to pray "For kings, and for all that are in authority" (1 Timothy 2:2).
  - (5) In verse one of the same chapter (1 Timothy 2:1), Paul gave Timothy a much broader scope when he said "that . . . supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks" should "be made for all men."
  - (6) If believers fail to pray for others, who will take up the slack to pray for those in need?



- f. When should we pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17)?
- (1) Some Bible teachers have suggested that there are specific times of the day in which believers ought to go to the Lord in prayer.
  - (2) In Psalm 5:3, David vowed to present his prayers before the Lord in the morning. In the 88th psalm, the psalmist acknowledged that he prayed to the Lord day and night (Psalm 88:1).
  - (3) Of course, many know about the pattern followed by Daniel, even in the face of persecution, when he sought the Lord three times a day (Daniel 6:10).
  - (4) From these passages, one might suggest that there are specific times of prayer, but according to 1 Thessalonians 5:17, believers are to pray without ceasing.
  - (5) In other words, believers ought to always be in a constant state of prayer before the Lord.
- g. Where should we pray (1 Timothy 2:8)?
- (1) Should prayer be kept private or can it be done in public?
  - (2) For various reasons, some believers have grown increasingly concerned about the appropriate places to call upon the Lord.
  - (3) In Matthew 6:5-6, the Lord rebuked the public prayers of the hypocrites and suggested that His people should enter into their closets to pray.
  - (4) The Lord Himself followed this pattern by seeking a “solitary place” in which to pray (Mark 1:35).
  - (5) Does this mean that the Lord opposed all public prayer? It is important to consider the whole counsel of God.
  - (6) Obviously the Lord was not displeased with the public prayer meeting held by believers in the early church – He answered their prayer by freeing Peter (Acts 12:12).
  - (7) Furthermore, the Lord expressed His will – for men to “pray every where.”
- h. What are the hindrances to prayer (1 Peter 3:7)?
- (1) The Bible clearly proclaims that believers have full access to the throne of God through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - (2) Yet, the Bible also identifies circumstances that can and will hinder a believer’s prayer life.
  - (3) According to James 1:6-7, a lack of faith hinders the Lord’s response to a person’s prayer.
  - (4) According to 1 John 3:22, disobedience can also be a hindrance to prayer.
  - (5) In 1 Peter 3:7, the Bible declares that the prayers of a troubled home will be hindered.
  - (6) In addition to this, the Lord acknowledges the benefit of praying according to His will (1 John 5:14).
  - (7) It is important to pray but also important to ensure that your prayer life is not hindered by your personal walk and ways.