



First Baptist

M A D I S O N

The Praying Church

Personal Study Guide

May 2022



First Baptist MADISON

The Praying Church

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PRAYING FOR OTHERS

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-8

MAY 1, 2022

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- 1 **Who do you most often find yourself praying for?**

- 2 **Have you ever prayed for someone you were angry with and, through the process of prayer, your heart and attitude toward that person changed? If so, explain what happened.**

- 3 **How do you generally respond to those who are opposed to the gospel?**

UNDERSTANDING

> Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4.

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.

2:1. Paul didn't write 1 Timothy as an exhaustive treatise on church organization. Instead, he wrote to give Timothy confidence to face those who spread false doctrine and undercut the church's commission to evangelize. Therefore, Paul's first line of defense was prayer. In this verse, the apostle mentioned four different words for prayer. Petitions included requests individuals made of God. The term prayers was the most general word. Intercessions included prayers for other believers. The thanksgivings Paul mentioned probably included gratitude for God's blessings. The apostle may not have intended any sharp distinction among the four terms. The use of all four terms emphasizes the importance of prayer in overcoming the false teaching in Ephesus and in winning the lost to Christ. The subject of these prayers included everyone—indicating the breadth of Paul's concern.

2:2. Paul encouraged Timothy to pray for governmental authorities who could help provide an environment conducive to evangelism.

2:3. A quiet life of dignity and godliness pleases God. God is also pleased when believers express concern for the salvation of others.

2:4. Paul directly connected evangelism with pleasing God in this verse. Prayer for the lost pleases God because God wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. The false teachers promoted lies, but Paul encouraged Timothy to pray that those lies would be exposed. "Come to the knowledge of the truth" is a way of referring to being converted. "The truth" is often used in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus as a synonym for the gospel.

The Greek word translated "saved" can convey various meanings, including "to deliver, preserve, protect, heal," and "make whole." In the context of 1 Timothy 2:4 the word refers specifically to conversion, to the transformation that occurs when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior. Paul understood salvation in the believer's

experience as embracing the past, present, and future. The initial moment of salvation, occurring when an individual accepts Christ as Savior, is sometimes referred to as justification. At that moment a believer enters into an eternally secure relationship of peace with God. Salvation, however, also continues in a process called sanctification or becoming more like Christ. The believer is enabled to progress toward spiritual maturity through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Ultimately the believer's salvation will culminate in a future glorification, or deliverance from the power of sin. Such is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed with Christ. These various aspects of salvation motivated Paul to share the gospel with unbelievers.

- **Who did Paul urge Christ followers to pray for (v. 1)?**

 - **In what manner did Paul say to pray?**

 - **Glance back at verse 2. Who did Paul specifically name we are to pray for in that verse? With what intended result?**

 - **Do you find it difficult to pray for political leaders with whom you disagree? If so, how does this text speak to that issue?**
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- **It's often tempting to complain about government officials. Do you pray for our leaders as often as you complain about them?**

- **Take another look at verse 4. What did Paul say God desires for all people?**

- **Do you devote as much time to evangelistic prayer as you would like? If not, what are obstacles that prevent you from doing so?**

- **How does prayer change our hearts toward those for whom we pray?**

> Read 1 Timothy 2:5-8.

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.

⁸ Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.

2:5. In verses 5-6 Paul reiterated the contents of the truth, the gospel. He affirmed the Old Testament declaration that there is one God (see Deut. 6:4). However, the apostle also added that there is only one mediator between God and people. Jesus is that mediator. The term mediator refers to an arbiter or negotiator between two sides in dispute. Paul knew that only through Christ, both fully God and fully man, can sinful human beings come to God. Thus the apostle emphasized not only that all people need salvation but also there is only one way for sinful human beings to come to God. These verses provide the theological basis for the preceding statement that God wants people to be saved.

2:6. Jesus brought God and humanity together by offering Himself a ransom for all people. The term “ransom” refers to a price paid to release captives taken in war or to free slaves from their masters. Sin held people captive and separated them from God. Jesus voluntarily gave His own life—He paid the price—to set us free. The phrase a testimony at the proper time shows that Christ’s death, occurring at the perfect time in God’s timetable, is testimony and proof that God wants everyone to experience salvation (v. 4).

2:7. Paul’s appointment as a herald, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles gave him the opportunity to spread the gospel. The church in Ephesus was in danger of losing its evangelistic zeal. Paul urged believers then and now to move back to the basics—that Jesus died for sinners and wants all people to be saved.

2:8. The word “therefore” resumes the call to prayer from verse 1. Lifting up hands was a typical posture for prayer in the Bible (Ex 9:29; 1Ki 8:22; Ps 28:2; 63:4; Isa 1:15; Lk 24:50).

- **Why did Paul mention that there is one God and one Mediator? Who is the Mediator?**

- **What does John 14:6 tell us about the often-quoted phrase, “there are many paths to God”?**

- **How might this passage instruct us in ways to pray for those who are lost?**

> **Read John 17:20-26.**

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

²⁵ *“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

17:20–21. If we had any doubt that this prayer applies to believers today, it is erased by verse 20. The heart of this final paragraph of the chapter focuses on unity—the ultimate demonstration of God’s work through his people in the world. We learn here that body unity is patterned after divine unity. The absolute oneness of the Father and the Son will now be spiritually transferred to believers for a specific purpose—spiritual unity.

The union of the church is not patterned after some earthly organization or any well-meaning intentions of humanity. God joins our spirits through the Holy Spirit because Jesus’ blood is “thicker than water” and thicker than human bonds.

Some interpreters consider this verse to be a pivotal point separating those words specifically related to the disciples from words now spoken to the universal church. Certainly the implication of the verse goes beyond its actual words.

Perhaps there is no verse in all of Scripture which has been more frequently quoted to support ecclesiastical church union than John 17:21. However, the emphasis of the prayer centers in spiritual unity, not organizational unity. It must be understood in the light of John 10:30, “I and my Father are one.” If we are to understand the unity of the church, we must first understand unity between the Son and the Father.

17:22. Christian unity is facilitated by “glory,” first given to Christ and then in turn to the disciples.

Glory (doxa) in this context is not an absolute attribute of God but a relative possession that can be reassigned to believers. Some interpreters see heaven here, but there would be no point in such a futuristic view with respect to the mission statement of verse 23: “to let the world know that you sent me.” Peter wrote that the divine nature was already in us as a result of regeneration, so we already have a measure of the glory of Jesus himself.

A former ministry companion of mine, now in the ultimate glory of heaven, once wrote, “Child of God, don’t you know only you share the glow. It’s a light from within, when the blood covers sin. It’s the wonderful glory of God.”

17:23. We also learn in this passage that body unity is a witness to the world. Like a set of matched mixing bowls, we are the smaller one that fits into Christ who fits into the Father. Purpose? “To let the world know that you sent me.” Mixing bowls may provide too mundane a metaphor here, but Jesus’ teaching about the vine and the branches in chapter 15 is affirmed by this prayer of chapter 17.

The unity of believers calls forth a recognition of God’s hand by observers in the world even while the church is on earth. Just a few hours before this prayer, Jesus told the disciples, “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (13:35).

17:24. Furthermore, body unity will be complete only in heaven. If the disciples listened to this prayer (which I believe they did), they may have remembered Jesus’ teaching from chapter 14 as he promised them they would eventually arrive at the place where he was going. He wanted them to see him there. They had seen him scorned and hated on earth. Soon they would see him killed

and buried. But they had never seen the splendor of heaven and his role as the Son of the Father.

We see just a touch of humanity in this verse. Just as we invite our friends home to show them how hard we have worked to make it attractive and comfortable, so Jesus looked forward to the time when all his people would be in his Father's house.

What a reminder that our Lord was always a pilgrim and stranger on earth. Now he prayed for guests to visit his eternal home. Notice also that heaven is heaven because of the presence of the Savior, not because of any other physical or material accoutrements.

The glory of verse 24 seems different than what we saw in verse 22. Here believers observe it but do not partake in it personally, so we focus now on an attribute of deity. The glory and splendor that belong to Christ in heaven are a gift from his Father. This gift was motivated by love that the Father had before the foundation of the world. Before Adam, the Father loved the Son. This love will continue throughout all eternity so that believers may see its effects in the heavenly position afforded the Messiah.

17:25-26. Again we find the contrast between the world and disciples we saw in verses 9, 14, 16. The words "Righteous Father" in reference to God appear only here in the New Testament. They appeal to the justice of God. The world will be excluded from final glory because it has rejected the only means of grace. But the disciples, and all believers, live life with a divine viewpoint because they have known the incarnate God.

The exegesis of the Father that occupied Christ's ministry is both complete and continuous. Complete in the sense that the incarnation demon-

strated what God was like to those who would listen. Continuous in that it will go on as long as the world lasts. The impact of the latter part of the verse suggests that the very person of Christ lives in us. Through that inseparable union, we are recipients of divine love. The church of Jesus Christ dare not let the pagan society preempt its keynote theme of love. The love of God in the Son and consequently in the church marks Christians and enables them to reflect and communicate God's love.

- **What was the central theme of Jesus's prayer in these verses?**

- **What is the result of unity among believers?**

- **How can believers apply the truths from these verses as individuals? As a home group? As a church?**

> Read Ephesians 3:14-21.

For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power,

together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

3:14. Paul resumed the prayer that he began in v. 1. In this prayer, he asked that believers might be blessed with inner strength, insightful understanding, and spiritual excellence.

3:15. This verse involves some difficult translation decisions, but Paul's intent seems to be as follows: the concept and institute of fatherhood (shared with minor variation by all cultures) stems from God's role as Father and Creator of all peoples. It is not only Jews who can "kneel before the Father" (v. 14) and expect to gain an audience, but people from every race and nation.

3:16-19. Paul prayed for inner power, which is the result of God dwelling in the hearts of believers. He asked for believers to be strengthened ... rooted, and filled via the work of the three Persons of the Trinity: Spirit, Christ, and God the Father.

3:20-21. Paul burst into a grand doxology concerning God's majestic abilities. He prayed that God's glory be abundantly manifested in the church and in Christ. Even in the eternal state, the church will bring glory to God forever and ever.

- **What kinds of things might believers be tempted to think they need in order to be spiritually strong?**

- **In contrast, what did Paul indicate that we need in these verses? How is this connected to prayer? How might this also help us know how to pray for others?**

- **How does greater spiritual strength in one's inner being strengthen every aspect of a person?**

- **What do you think are some evidences of spiritual strength? Based on verses 17-19, what do believers receive when they pray for spiritual power?**

- **What did Paul say results when the Spirit strengthens our inner being and Christ takes up permanent residence in our lives?**

- **How are we strengthened to do great things as we grasp the extent of Christ's love? How does realizing you are loved this way strengthen you?**

APPLICATION

- 1 **Practically speaking, how are you abiding in Christ in this season of your life?**

- 2 **Do you need to develop a daily devotion/quiet time?**

- 3 **Are you actively praying for those who are lost? Who do you know who needs to be on your list to pray for evangelistically?**

PRAY

Thank God for the gift of prayer. Ask God to help each group member to develop vibrant prayer lives.

