

## 1 Timothy 2:1-7

### Introduction

1. In chapter 1, Paul's primary focus was instructing Timothy in regard to the false teachers
2. He will come back to that topic on and off throughout the rest of his letter, but he now turns his attention in chapters 2-3 to life within the local church
  - a. In chapter 2 he addresses two ways in which Christians should conduct themselves as members of the body of Christ and a local church
  - b. In chapter 3 he addresses church leadership within the local church (elders and deacons)
3. Today, we're going to focus on the first 7 verses of chapter 2:
  - a. Paul urges the Ephesian Christians to pray for all people for their own sake as believers (1-2)
  - b. Paul urges the Ephesian Christians to pray for all people for the sake of the unsaved (3-7)

### A. Paul urges us the Ephesians to for all people for their own sake as believers (READ 2:1-2)

1. He uses four different words here that are basically synonyms for prayer, but there are slight differences that are worth noting:
  - a. "**petitions**": generally, refers to begging or pleading for something based on presumed need; we do this every Sunday when we share our needs and then pray for them
  - b. "**prayers**": fairly general word for prayers
  - c. "**requests**": the verb form of this word refers to interceding for someone on their behalf
  - d. "**thanksgiving**": rather self-explanatory in that it refers to expressing gratitude or thanksgiving
  - e. Paul's use of four different words here suggests a thoroughness to how the Ephesians were to pray
2. These prayers were to "**be made on behalf of all men**":
  - a. There are over 150 references to prayer or praying in the NT—we are told to pray for ourselves, pray for other believers, even pray for those who persecute us
  - b. Here, Paul calls on his readers to pray "**on behalf of all men**"
    - 1) "**all men**" is to be understood in a universal sense as "**everyone**" or "**all people**" and this is how most English translations treat it; the context of the passage also makes this clear
    - 2) However, Paul does place special emphasis on praying for governing authorities and those in positions of authority: "**for kings and all who are in authority**"
3. Paul doesn't specifically mention the content of what they are to pray for, but does provide the purpose for why they should pray and you will notice how it has to do with our sake:
  - a. So that "**we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity**" (2):
    - 1) "**tranquil**" and "**quiet**" are essentially synonyms, but the word for tranquil suggests freedom from external disturbances while the word for quiet suggests a peace or calm that comes from within
    - 2) "**godliness**" and "**dignity**" also go hand in hand, with godliness referring to a devotion to behavior that honors God and dignity referring to behavior befitting for a Christian

- b. So the goal, Paul wrote, was a life with as little external strife and internal turmoil as possible, and a life characterized by Christian faith and behavior
  - c. Elsewhere, Paul says that this should be our ambition, not just amongst fellow believers but unbelievers as well (READ 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12)
  - d. In fact, he wrote in Romans that we are to seek to be at peace with all men, as much as it depends on us (READ Romans 12:18; repeated in Hebrews 12:14)
4. Takeaway: this one's an easy one—if we're not already praying for the unsaved world around us, especially our governing authorities, we should be for our own sake:
- a. I don't have to tell you that our rights to live out our Christian faith and speak openly about our convictions are under attack not just here in the U.S. but around the world like never before
  - b. These attacks are coming from our own governments (federal, state, and local), schools, businesses, social media, and the general public who is growing increasingly hostile to the Truth
  - c. Our reaction is often to fight back legally and politically, and while we should do these things, we ought to first and foremost be praying for these people as Paul says
  - d. There's something God commanded Israel to do when He sent them into exile and I believe there might be some value in it for us (Jeremiah 29:7): **"Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to Yahweh on it's behalf; for in its peace you will have peace."**
    - 1) I've often heard this verse mis-quoted or used in support of the social gospel and belief that Christians can redeem culture and society, but that was neither the purpose nor point of the passage
    - 2) Rather, Israel was being sent off to Exile and would have to live among the pagans and God told them to go about life and in essence be good citizens—immediately before this verse God told them to build houses, plant crops, get married and have families
    - 3) He also told them to pray to God on behalf of the Babylonians and seek the welfare of the city where He was sending them, because if Babylon remained peaceful then the Israelites would be able to live a tranquil and quite life of faith
  - e. So, we should pray for our country, our governing officials, political leaders, and the unsaved all around us for our own sake, so that we may be able to continue to live a tranquil and quite life of faithful obedience to Jesus Christ

B. Paul urges the Ephesian Christians to pray for all people <u>for the sake of the unsaved</u> (2:3-7)
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\*\*Paul provides three reasons to pray for all people here and they are all related to the Gospel

- 1. We are to pray for all people because God desires all people to be saved (3-4):
  - a. READ v. 3: **"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior":**
    - 1) **"This"** refers to praying for all people and **"good"** refers to that which is morally good
    - 2) **"acceptable"** means that it's pleasing to God
    - 3) So, praying for all people, and for our governing leaders, is the moral thing to do and pleases God
    - 4) The reason for this is found in the next verse
  - b. READ v. 4: **"...who desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth":**

- 1) In Ezekiel 18:32 God said, **“For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,’ declares the Lord GOD. ‘Therefore, repent and live.’”**
  - 2) We see this throughout the Bible—God is merciful, gracious, and patient with mankind and their sin because He doesn’t want any to perish; He takes no pleasure in that
  - 3) Rather, He wants as many as are willing to turn to Him and be saved (Isaiah 45:22): **“Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.”**
  - 4) We talked about this before but one of the reasons Jesus hasn’t returned yet is because when He does, God’s judgment of this world begins, and God is patient and doesn’t want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9): **“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”**
- c. So, one of our motivations for praying for all men is because God desires as many to be saved as are willing to turn to Him and be saved
2. We are to pray for all people because Jesus died for all people (READ 5-6):
    - a. There is but one way for people to be saved and that is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, because He is the only mediator between a holy and righteous God and us; there is no other way
    - b. We all know this in our head (e.g. theologically), but sometimes that doesn’t always translate to our hearts when it comes to how we view the unsaved world around us—those who hate God, promote their wicked agendas, and persecute us
    - c. But, look back at v. 6: Jesus **“gave Himself as a ransom FOR ALL...”**
    - d. Jesus didn’t just die for us; He died for them as well
    - e. This is precisely why Jesus said we are to follow the example of our Heavenly Father and love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Matthew 5:44); we have two great examples of this in the Bible:
      - 1) Jesus (Luke 23:33): **“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”**
      - 2) Stephen (Acts 7:60): **“Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them!’ Having said this, he fell asleep.”**
    - f. We should pray for the world around us as Jesus and Stephen did because Jesus died for them just as He did for us
  3. The final reason we are to pray for all people is because it helped further the spread and acceptance of the Gospel (READ 7):
    - a. Paul was a **“herald”** (lit.) and an apostle, sent out by Jesus to teach the Gospel specifically to to gentiles
    - b. Paul knew that praying for those who need to be saved is vital to the successful spread and acceptance of the Gospel
    - c. Listen to what he asked of the Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2): **“Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you; 2 and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.”**
    - d. So, like the Ephesians, we should pray for all men so that the Gospel will spread rapidly around the world until the Lord sends Jesus back

4. Takeaway:
- a. Our first take away was that if we are not already praying for those around us, especially governing authorities, for our own sake, we need to start
  - b. Our second takeaway is that if we are not already praying for the unsaved for their sake, we need to start:
    - 1) God desires for ALL to come to saving faith in Jesus Christ
    - 2) Jesus died for ALL people
    - 3) When we pray for them it helps further the spread and acceptance of the Gospel
  - c. The Bible makes it clear that as God's people, we are all called to pray:
    - 1) Paul's charge to pray for all men in verses 1-7 was addressed to the Ephesian church as a whole; they were all expected to pray
    - 2) In 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:17 it says that we are all to pray without ceasing
    - 3) In Colossians 4:2 it says that we are all to devote ourselves to prayer
    - 4) We pray for a lot of things: our health, wellbeing, finances, trials and struggles
    - 5) However, something we often overlooks is praying as Paul instructs here