

# 1 Timothy Lesson 5

## 1 Timothy 2:1-8 – Believer’s Relation to the World

### INTRODUCTION / REVIEW

Paul is writing to Timothy, left in Ephesus to confront the turmoil stirred by false teachers. It’s around AD 62-67, after Paul’s release from Roman imprisonment, and he pens a letter rich in guidance for church order and conduct; a letter preserved to help us discover God’s desires for a local church.

Paul’s greeting is warm and intentional. He affirms his apostleship of Jesus Christ and calls Timothy his true child in the faith, extending grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (1:1-2). This is a reminder to embrace identity in Christ, resting on the foundation of God’s grace.

Reflecting on Timothy’s mission, Paul urges him to challenge those who teach strange doctrines: speculative myths and endless genealogies that distract rather than increase and sharpen faith. The true aim of instruction is love: love that is developed from a pure heart (clean thoughts free of corruption), a good conscience (godly evaluation), and sincere faith (unfeigned, objective belief in God's truths).

Paul then clarifies the purpose of the Law. Used rightly, it exposes sin, not to condemn the righteous, but to awaken the unbeliever to their need for salvation. This perspective aligns seamlessly with sound doctrine and the radiant gospel (1:8-11).

Inviting us into his story, Paul expresses humble gratitude for Christ’s empowering mercy. Despite his past as a blasphemer and persecutor, God’s grace overflowed, allowing Paul to serve in God’s administration, an example of perfect patience, showing that anyone, no matter what, is granted an opportunity in God’s administration of the Gospel and Truth (1:12-14,16).

At the heart of this chapter is a simple “message that is faithful”: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” words Paul claims personally as he calls himself the foremost of them all (1:15). This leads naturally into a doxology, a statement of praise to the eternal, immortal, invisible, only God (1:17).

Paul’s instructions to Timothy are practical and urgent: “Fight the good fight.” Keep the faith (maintain the sound doctrine of God) and maintain a good conscience (a life of love and purity that reflects that doctrine). Timothy was instructed to live in alignment with God’s will and fulfill the prophecies spoken over him. Some have rejected these principles, suffering shipwreck in their faith (morality is not mentioned here) like Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom Paul delivered to Satan for discipline as an act of Apostolic judgment (1:18-20).

### BELIEVER’S RELATION TO THE WORLD (2:1-8)

#### General Observations

This passage provides one of the most fundamental sections about what God expects from the Believer and how to function as a body in relation to the world.

Verse 1 has a “therefore” (translated “then”), so we must view this passage in light of the previous information. This section is a logical progression from Chapter 1 to Chapter 2. How?

The exhortation flows directly from Paul's prior instructions, transitioning from doctrinal defense to practical conduct in the assembly. This aligns with the letter's overall purpose: equipping Timothy to combat false teaching while establishing order in "the household of God" (3:14-15), the church as the pillar of truth.

Chapter 1 builds this foundation by addressing the urgent charge against deviant doctrines, myths, and speculative genealogies that distract from the Truth and concludes with Timothy to fight the good fight of faith and godliness, emphasizing maintaining sound doctrine amid disruption and living in accordance with God’s will.

The "therefore" in 2:1 builds on those instructions and leads into this assembly's first thing to address (first of all). In this section, Paul states that their responsibility is to comprehensive prayer for all people, including authorities. This promotes a "tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity" (2:2), enabling the church to function peacefully and advance the gospel without hindrance from or internal division.

Verse 8 also has a “therefore,” this instruction is based upon the previous information (verses 4-7). This section is rich in theological understanding but is given to promote one concept here: to live in the world with a positive, godly outlook upon those whom God loves and wishes to be saved.

#### Exposition of 1 Timothy 2:1-8

##### Verses 1-2: The Exhortation to Pray for All People

Paul urges (παρακαλῶ parakalō) calls them alongside, this word is used to encourage them while also doing the action. Paul is actively “praying” for all men and is giving Timothy the charge to lead the rest into this activity.

Verse one has four words that together indicate a comprehensive prayer practice: supplications for needs, general prayers, intercessions for others, and thanksgivings.

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This is "first of all" (πρῶτος πᾶς - *prōtos pas*), prioritizing it as a function in the instruction for the church in their situation.

The four words for prayer are

δέησις (*deēsis*) – translated entreaties, this word means “an urgent request to meet a need, exclusively addressed to God” (entreaty, appeal, supplication). This is asking God to help those in need, whether that be physical, for mercy (e.g., Father, forgive them), understanding that they (and all of us) have a need. This word indicates a desperation; there is an urgency that Paul is emphasizing.

προσευχή (*proseuchē*) – this is the general word for prayer - Broad, reverent communication with God, encompassing adoration, alignment, and petitions. The use of the word here stresses mindful communication and devotion to God while focusing on others.

ἔντευξις (*enteuxis*) – translated petitions, this is defined as a formal request put to a high official or official body, intercession. This is bold yet formal interventions for others, like breaking into a conversation on someone's behalf. Implies confidence and urgency, aligning with God's will.

εὐχαριστία (*eucharistia*) – this means the joyful recognition of unearned favor; the quality of being grateful; the expression or content of gratitude. Gratitude expressed for blessings received, physical and/or spiritual. Recognizing that God has graced all men, the instruction is to be thankful on their behalf.

The scope is universal—“on behalf of all men” (ὑπὲρ πᾶς ἄνθρωπος - *hyper pas anthrōpos*), in this context, this would be inclusive “mankind.” The specific is kings and authorities. In Ephesus' Roman context, this meant praying for Nero, governors, magistrates, and others, whose rule brought instability and early persecution.

As this is a priority for them, this indicates that the weight of pressure from the authorities, opposing them for their belief in Jesus Christ, and resisting the culture of that day, was getting to them. They may have been despondent or become aggressive.

The purpose (ἵνα *hina*): to lead a "tranquil and quiet life," not isolated from the world, but in the world, having a peaceful existence. It is marked by "godliness" (εὐσέβεια *eusebeia*, reverence toward God) and "dignity" (σεμνότης *semnotēti*, a manner or mode of behavior that indicates one is above what is ordinary and therefore worthy of special respect), countering the speculation and division from false teachers (1:4-7) and the frustration that can come from being overwhelmed by oppression.

### **Verses 3-4: The Goodness of a Prayerful Attitude and God's Desire**

This prayerful activity is "good and acceptable" before "God our Savior," emphasizing that this is an approved and sanctioned good work.

God's title as Savior underscores salvation's source (1 Timothy 1:1; Titus 3:4-6).

Now we have a very important theological statement. He "desires" (θέλω *thelō*) all to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth. This is a desire, this is not universalism but God's genuine offer to all through the Gospel (John 3:16; Acts 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9).

"The knowledge of the truth" is that salvation comes by believing the truth about Christ (His identity; His death, burial, and resurrection; His promise of eternal life as a gift).

The reason for this section here is to demonstrate the reason for the previous instruction of praying for all men, because God loves all and desires all to be saved. If that is what He desires (even Nero), then they should desire the same thing and exemplify that desire by praying for them.

### **Verses 5-6: The Theological Basis - One God, One Mediator**

The theological basis for the instruction continues—there is "one God" and "one mediator," "the man Christ Jesus." Calling Jesus (ἄνθρωπος *anthrōpos*) emphasizes His humanity for representation (Hebrews 2:17).

In several texts, we have seen the defense that it was through a man, one born in the flesh, that salvation is granted. God had to become man for salvation to be effective because humanity's sin required a perfect human representative to atone for Himself. God's plan was to send Himself for the atonement for mankind. "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14), where λόγος (*logos*), as divine takes σὰρξ (*sarx*, humanity) without ceasing divinity.

He "gave Himself as a ransom," substitutionary payment, "for all" (*hyper pas*). Once again, if Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all, then the instruction is substantiated. The believers must see all men as God does, and the expression of that desire is praying for all men.

The atonement for all men is testified "at the proper time," fulfilled at the perfect time according to God's plan (Galatians 4:4). No other mediators suffice (no pagan gods, rituals, or other men).

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In the context of Timothy and Ephesus, this addresses the syncretism that was prevalent in that multicultural port city.

### **Verse 7: Paul's Role in This Testimony**

Paul affirms his appointment as preacher, apostle, and teacher of Gentiles. He then parenthetically insists on truthfulness: "I speak the truth, I do not lie."

Paul's mission was not only to the Gentiles but for the Gentiles to be part of the mission of the Gospel. The Church in Ephesus needs to be reminded that they "too were all formerly lived in the lusts of their flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest ~ Ephesians 2:3" (Titus 3:1-3).

### **Verse 8: The Application to Men's Prayer**

"Therefore" applies: Paul wants men in every place to pray, "lifting up holy hands." The lifting up holy hands is not to God but toward fellow men in service as they pray for men everywhere and authorities.

"Without wrath and dissension." In Ephesus, this addressed potential anger from persecution; men were to be an example in prayer, promoting unity.

### **Theological Impact**

For original readers in Ephesus: Amid false teaching and Roman pressure, this reinforced the need of believers to be patient, temperate, loving so as to foster godliness, countering division, and advancing the gospel behaviorally as well as in testimony. In context, Paul is discussing with Timothy the mental attitude of the flock, that they should be loving toward their enemies. God desires all men to be saved, even those who are seemingly evil and persecuting believers. This section also affirmed the Gospel's universal call, negating elitism and arrogance.

For today, we live in a polarized world, we have become tribal, and the philosophical divide is intense. It is easy to fall into the temptation to lose sight of the love of God for all people, and that we should have the same attitude. Believers should pray for all people, especially the leaders and authorities, even adversaries. This mental attitude will help us live peacefully, demonstrating grace, not just proclaiming it.