

The Pressing Need to Pray
Praying for those who oppose the work, especially for their salvation

Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.

- Let's begin with our own observations. Was there a moment where God spoke to you, showed you something new, or reminded you of a familiar truth through the message this week?

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- Through the years we've learned that none of us can change another person's heart. When we pray for others, we're tapping into the power of God to do in someone else what we are incapable of doing. Remember, God is in the heart change business! Timothy was encouraged to pray four specific kinds of prayers: supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings. How do these kinds of prayers bless those whom we pray for, and how does God use prayers like these to change us as we pray?
- It's really difficult to hate someone when you're praying for them. What happens in a Christian's heart when they hold a grudge, refuse to forgive, and stay offended with others? Does the scripture say anything else in other texts about unforgiveness and its nasty side effects?
- Although Timothy was on the battlefield and was definitely engaged in spiritual battle at Ephesus, the church was to pursue peace and tranquility...to live a quiet life in all godliness and reverence. What would you say to someone who always seemed to stir up the hornet's nest, or who always seemed to be involved in conflict with others?
- Paul wrote that there was only one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ. Yet, some of Timothy's opponents at Ephesus were trusting in rule keeping, law, and self-righteousness. Why does legalism fail to produce righteousness, even if a person believes in Jesus? What is the difference between believing in Jesus and trusting Him completely for salvation?

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- Proverbs 6:16-19
- Hebrews 13:15
- Matthew 18:21-35

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

- Paul instructed Timothy to pray for all men, for kings, and all who are in authority. Do you have a prayer list, and are there specific people whose names should be on that list? Can you share your thoughts with the group?
- Lessons like these provide good opportunities for us to examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith. Are you confident that your trust is appropriately placed in Christ alone? Have you renounced dead works and self-righteousness to trust fully in the finished work of Jesus?