

## 1 Timothy 2:1-2 Instructions on Prayer Part Two

A sermon delivered at Calvary Chapel DC Metro  
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We're looking at the issue of prayer right now, based on Paul's instruction to Timothy that it was the most important thing he and others should be doing.

Now, last week I may have caused some confusion because I said praying isn't hard, it isn't complex, and then later I said it was hard. So to clear that up, what I meant was actually praying to God isn't hard, it's just talking to someone who says to call Him Dad. But actually getting around to it can be *very* hard, for some reasons that we will discuss this morning.

So let's go ahead and review:

**1** Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, **2** for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. **3** For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, **4** who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. **5** For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, **7** for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ *and* not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

**8** I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

Now remember, this all follows after Paul's instruction to Timothy in Chapter One – he had sent Timothy down to Ephesus to straighten out a problem there – some people were teaching false doctrine, “fables and endless genealogies” he called it. And it was all leading to “disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith.” In other words, people weren't getting along, they were arguing about stuff.

So Paul says, tell 'em to knock it off – and instead of spending all this time arguing about trivial matters or outright lies, here's what everyone ought to do: they ought to pray because that's the most important thing, it's “first of all.”

“First of all?” Yeah. Because prayer is what makes everything else possible.

We need to share our faith with friends, family, and coworkers, but “first of all” we need to pray for them, and for ourselves. We need to take action, to do things that will be pleasing to God and a blessing to others, but “first of all” we need to pray for them. We need to work on our projects, to start grinding away on our to-do list, but “first of all” we need to pray.

Why? Because in prayer we find perspective, power, and direction to name a few.

**Perspective** – seeing things God’s way; prayer cleans our lenses and recalibrates us, it helps us to see things rightly and value them the right way

**Power** – God please help me to do what You command

**Direction** - In the Bible God speaks to you, gives you direction and clear guidance. And then in prayer, you speak back to Him. And sometimes, in prayer, He also speaks to you – to give you specific guidance for your situation.

For example, the Bible says, “Husbands, love your wives” that’s clear cut and simple guidance, but as you pray “God, what do I need to do to show my wife love?” He may tell you, bring her some chocolate and offer to do the laundry on Saturday so she can go to Target just once without the kids. Or whatever.

Now the important thing to remember though is that whatever you think God is guiding you to subjectively – that “leading” or “conviction” or whatever you want to call it that you experience sometimes in prayer – *it needs to line up with what God has objectively revealed to you in the Bible*. Nothing that God ever says to you personally will diverge from what He has already said to everyone. So, no one can ever pull this “well, God told me” trump card. There is a check and balance in the system.

So, we should be bringing our lives, our opportunities, and our challenges to God in prayer, discussing them with Him and asking for guidance and power as well as just thanking Him for what He has already done.

**Let’s take a few minutes this morning to look at two hindrances to prayer what keeps us from getting started in prayer:**

1. We don’t have time or lack focus because our lives are too cluttered with the pursuit or maintenance of other things.
  - Prayer is a sacrifice – time you could spend doing other things – sleeping, reading, checking FB, etc. is given to God. But that sacrifice is pleasing to God.
  - The only thing that I know of that is guaranteed to drive you to spontaneous prayer is pain – and you don’t want that. If you are going to have time for prayer, it is going to have to be because you consciously choose to value it over other things. You have to choose – time with God, or time to do my day? Am I going to live just like everybody else around me, or am I going to be different?
2. Another hindrance to prayer is that we think it won’t work because we don’t see answers to prayer. Now this really only relates to prayers in which we are asking for stuff,

and there is more to prayer than that. But I want to take a look at some reasons why those types of prayer seem to go unanswered at times.

- Sometimes sin will keep us from seeing prayer answered. Paul says in verse 8, they should be praying “without wrath.”
  - o Ps 66:18 “If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”
  - o Isaiah 59: [1](#) Behold, the LORD’s hand is not shortened,  
That it cannot save;  
Nor His ear heavy,  
That it cannot hear.  
[2](#) But your iniquities have separated you from your God;  
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you,  
So that He will not hear.  
[3](#) For your hands are defiled with blood,  
And your fingers with iniquity;  
Your lips have spoken lies,  
Your tongue has muttered perversity.

The first part of the gospel is the call to “repent,” to turn from our wicked, selfish ways, and turn to God. The Lord’s Prayer says, “Hallowed be Thy name” and “Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done” you can’t be seeking your own way in life and simultaneously asking God for stuff. He’s not going to help you as you move in the wrong direction.

- Because you “doubt” vs 8
  - o James 1:[5](#) If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. [6](#) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. [7](#) For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; [8](#) *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.
  - o This is where my problem is – I’m still trying to figure out the difference between believing that God can and believing that God will.
    - Part of the answer – is your faith based on God’s testimony, something He has promised to do, or is it just something you are asking for? I know He will give wisdom, but I don’t have a Scripture that says He will give us a building.
- Because we don’t wait long enough – there is value in persistence.
  - o Ask, Seek, Knock – Matt 7:7-8
    - [7](#) “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. [8](#) For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

- in the present, continual tense.
- William Booth – “Pray as if everything depended on your prayer.”
- Well then, why does God make me wait?
  - Because God is organizing the details
  - Because you’re not ready to receive it yet – my sons can ask me for a car all they want but they won’t be ready to drive it until they’re 16. So why should they get frustrated if I don’t give it to them tomorrow?
  - Because God is developing patience in you
    - Walking out in Wal-Mart – do the time conversion – how much time will it really take me to shop, stand in line, get frustrated, walk out, drive to another store, shop again, stand in line, and finally drive home?
    - There is value in learning patience and trust that God is really working all things together for good.
- Maybe you got the answer, but it wasn’t what you expected.
- Because we ask for the wrong things – James 4: [1](#) Where do wars and fights *come* from **among you**? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure that war in your members? [2](#) You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. [3](#) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

This is why I said last week that one of the best things you can do to build momentum in prayer is to turn to Scripture – find things in Bible that God has promised to do, or that He has promised to give, and then ask for that. Look at the prayers you find in the Bible and learn from them. You don’t need to memorize and repeat, God isn’t impressed by that, but you can take the gist of it and make it your own.

**We’ve talked about how we should pray and what keeps us from praying, now let’s look at what we should be praying about.**

“I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.”

At first I thought, wow, lets dig into each one of these and explore what they mean, but then I started studying and realized – there’s not this unique, stand-alone kind of meaning to each of them. Instead, Paul is just trying to make the point – pray about everything.

Paul is speaking of prayer like a diamond, a jewel cut with many facets, and each of these terms is a single facet of the same jewel. We just turn it and turn it and appreciate it from different angles.

So, we can't make a real big deal about each term on it's own, but we can understand their meaning a little bit so we grasp what they all mean when put together.

- Supplications (Gr. Deesis) primarily "a wanting, a need"; to ask for something
  - o As we've said before, it is OK to ask God for stuff, especially stuff you need, even the Lord's prayer says "give us this day our daily bread." God knows you need stuff, and it doesn't bother Him that you ask.
  
  - o Now, I know some people who don't like to ask God for anything, they think they should just tell him thank you all the time. That's a good to heart to have, but God says we should ask Him for things too. Especially things for others. Notice what Paul says in verse 3 about praying for others. He says, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior."
  
- Prayers – a general term meaning "prayer to God"
  
- giving of thanks – eucharistia
  - o This is something we typically fall short on. We pray and pray and pray for something to come our way, then we don't give equal play to our thanks.
  
- Intercessions – asking for things for other people. We should also be praying not just for ourselves, but also for others. That is Paul's specific point here as he is encouraging Timothy and the church in Ephesus to be praying for "all men" and especially "kings and all who are in authority."
  
- But let me just say one thing here about something we often pray for others. Ask the question, "Does anyone have any prayer requests?", and one of the most common things you will hear is a request for someone who is sick, ill, or injured. And that is OK, Jesus healed all kinds of people from all kinds of things. I pray for my family when they're sick, I ask for prayer when I'm sick, but I have this concern. *What about the underlying character, the attitude involved? What about praying for the soul of the distressed body?*
  
- **We are typically more concerned about prospering in the physical realm than we are about the spiritual.** And yet, the spiritual is where reality is. The spiritual is what endures. So when we pray for the sick, let's also try to see, how is the spiritual being hindered by the physical, or what can be learned from the physical to bless, guide and strengthen the spiritual? If going through an injury or an illness teaches you lessons about God and relying on Him that you would not learn in other ways, do you really want to avoid it?
  - o Maybe we can pray something like, "Dear God, would you please heal my cousin Jimmie's disease? And, until You do, would you please show him that You are able to help him endure this time with peace? Would you please show him that You are able to meet all his needs, even at a time like this?"

## Now, what posture should you assume when you pray?

No rules are anywhere in Scripture laid down for how, when, where, or what to pray. Even the Lord's Prayer is given to us as a model prayer, but not a precise prescription and it doesn't tell you whether you should be kneeling, bowing, standing, or what.

Probably the most common idea of prayer is to have your eyes closed, head bowed, hands clasped,

- Chuck's reason – no distractions
- Elmer Towns – kneeling b/c He is master, hands folded in begging petition
- Found no where in Scripture

So what do we see in Scripture?

- Kneeling
  - Example: Jesus in the Garden, Luke 22: [41](#) And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, [42](#) saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."
  - One of my professors in seminary tells the story of how he used to pray on his knees all time until he got into his sixties and his knees started giving out on him and he couldn't kneel down them without severe pain. It took him years to get to the place where he didn't feel guilty for not kneeling because it had become a sort of legalistic habit for him.
  - I kneel sometimes in prayer, especially by my bed, but I have hard wood floors, so I use a pillow under my knees. God doesn't hear you more because you are in pain.
- Bowing – similar to kneeling.
  - Ps [95:6](#) Oh come, let us worship and bow down;  
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.  
[7](#) For He *is* our God,  
And we *are* the people of His pasture,  
And the sheep of His hand.
- Sitting
  - 2 Sam 7 - After David tries to build a house for God, Nathan returns, tells him he won't do it, but his son will inherit the throne from him and that son will build God a temple and David's line will be established forever. In response:
    - [18](#) Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: "Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?"
  - We do this every week here at church.

- Standing
  - o Prayer walks
  - o I pray while running
  
- Prostration
  - o [1Ch 29:20](#) Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless the LORD your God." So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.

What's most important is that our posture reflects our heart.

**So, God wants to hear from you, you can pray anywhere, at any time, about any thing, you don't have to assume a particular position - prayer should be pretty easy, right?**

Well, yes, and no. As we said earlier, sometimes it is hard to pray - not because of the mechanics, but because we lack of momentum or motivation.

As we said last week, one of the ways that we gain momentum or motivation for prayer is by turning to Scripture, finding a verse or two, or a whole Psalm or chapter that speaks to you and using it as a springboard.

Well, this week, before we close, let me show you two other really cool things about prayer from Scripture:

- o Holy Spirit makes intercessions for us: Romans 8: [26](#) Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. [27](#) Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.
  
- o Jesus makes intercessions for us, Romans 8:[33](#) Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. [34](#) Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

God Himself is praying for us. God has high expectations of you, but He's bending over backwards to help you meet them.

We're going to celebrate communion, and it's a chance for us to do two things – to remember what He has done for us, but also, as the elements are being passed out, it's a chance for you to pray. To talk to your Dad and let Him talk to you. Bring Him your issues, bring Him your requests, and let Him speak to you.