



First Timothy

Pray For...

The Godly Way of Living

I Timothy 2:1, 2

Lesson Seven



First Timothy

A Study of the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to His Son in the Faith

Pray For...

In verse one of the second chapter of I Timothy, Paul uses the word then, which refers us back to what he has just said. He has encouraged Timothy to “fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience.” He continues his instructions in living by encouraging Timothy to pray. Read I Timothy 1, 2.

He said that the very first thing is that Timothy should pray for everyone. Actually he uses four words to describe this kind of praying. First, he says that there should be **requests**. Behind this word is the idea that the person requesting has a specific need. Prayer begins with our knowing that we need something that we alone can't provide. When we pray, we are admitting that we must have someone outside ourselves to assist us. When we admit this to ourselves we are in the best position to pray. Some would call this humility.

The second word is **prayers**. Where the word requests is used to describe asking something of humans or God, this word is used to describe asking something of God alone. This is admitting that only God can meet our need. There are many things we can ask other humans to help us with, but there are some things we can take only to God and be sure that He can help. We should be careful to whom we take our concerns and needs...who we ask for help.

The third word is **intercession**. This word, in Greek, was first used to speak of falling in beside a person...say walking to the park...and talking to that person. It came to mean having a very personal conversation with someone...taking about something you would not discuss with just anybody. Later it was used to describe a request taken into the presence of the king, expecting him to grant your request. What a fantastic thought: We can approach the greatest of kings, God Himself, with our very personal requests, and know that He will hear them and will grant our requests from His great storehouse of grace and goodness.

The fourth word is **thanksgiving**. Prayer is not just about asking for things. Prayer should be about thanking God for things. Speaking to God when we pray means that we recognize Him as being God. That should make us humble, considering how far we are from being God...how very small we are compared to God. When that dawns on us, we realize how much we need to thank God for being who He is and for loving us in spite of who we are. Also, we can thank God on behalf of others and what He is doing in their lives, and what they do in our lives.

And, Paul says that we should be requesting, praying, interceding and giving thanks to God for everyone. The title of our lesson today, “Pray for...” can be finished “everyone.” God expects us to be concerned about, caring for, interested in and praying for everyone.

Paul is very specific about some of those for whom we should be praying. He lists kings and all those in authority. When Paul wrote these words, very likely the terrible Roman king, Nero, was in power. So when Paul urges Timothy and anyone else reading this letter to pray for the

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king, he is talking about Nero. It was probably Nero who condemned Paul to death a few years later. But, Paul said that we were to lift up to God all those who have places of authority. Now, he probably wasn't speaking only about those in government positions. Anyone who has responsibility for leadership in our life deserves our prayer.

The early Christians believed this very strongly. Paul spoke of it, and Peter also spoke of it. He said, "Show proper respect for everyone, Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king." (I Peter 2:17) Tertullian, an early Christian writer (lived around AD 200) said that, when praying for the king, Christians should pray for "long life, secure dominion, a safe home, a faithful senate, a righteous people and a world at peace." Clement of Alexandria, who lived about the same time as Tertullian, prayed, "You, Lord and Master, have given our rulers and governors the power of sovereignty through your excellent and unspeakable might, that we, knowing the glory and honor which you have given them, may submit ourselves to them, in nothing resisting your will. Grant unto them, therefore, O Lord, health, peace, concord, stability, that they may administer the government which you have given them without failure."

Though the early church was persecuted by government leaders, they understood that it was their duty to pray for their leaders. This is a lesson that many Christians need to learn today. In the very hostile area of politics, we too often criticize unfairly, even use bad language about our leaders, but are not inclined to follow Scriptural teaching about praying for our leaders. This is a sin, just as bad as any other refusal to do God's will.

Paul said that following this prayerful kind of living would assure Christians that they could live peaceful and quiet lives. Think about Jesus; what kind of life do you think of when you think of His life? He was a man of peace. He raised His voice very seldom, and even though there were usually many, many people who followed Him around, we don't get the idea that they were uncontrolled mobs and that they caused trouble. Living a prayerful life, honoring those who are in authority and living peaceful lives lets us be sure that we are like Jesus in Godliness and holiness.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the *Student Worksheet*.

Lesson Goal: To assist students to learn to pray, and for whom we should pray.

Scripture Memory: "I urge you then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving to be made for everyone." I Timothy 2:1

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Student Worksheet—Following Through

Pray For...

>What did Paul say was the first thing that Timothy should know about praying?

>What are the four words Paul used to describe prayer?

1.

2.

3.

4.

>Intercession means that we can approach the greatest of kings, _____ Himself, with our very personal requests, and know that He will _____ them and will grant our _____ from His great storehouse of _____ and _____.

>Who does Paul say we should be praying for?

>Paul said that following this prayerful kind of living would assure Christians:

For Memory: “I urge you then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving to be made for everyone.” | Timothy 2:1

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God’s Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus’ name. Jesus’ death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.