

LESSON 7



DAILY PRAYER HABITS

Scripture Text: 1 Timothy 2:1-8

All Christians should pray from pure, holy hearts for all people. We were all saved through prayer. Others will be saved through the prayers of the saints.

We are commanded to pray for all that are in authority over us. This applies equally to good and to bad leaders. Saints have a responsibility for the quality of their government. Their prayers actually influence and change its quality. Prayer changes things. Can anyone live and serve acceptably without daily prayer? Praying hands are helping hands. Where can one meet God more intimately than in the secret place of prayer? Here is where we learn things beyond the limits of learning and logic.

MEMORY VERSE: *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*
— Matthew 7:7

Giving Thanks in Prayer

First Timothy 2:1. **I exhort therefore . . . first of all, supplications, prayers . . .** Humble and earnest entreaties for one's own needs, spiritual and material. **Intercessions:** asking on behalf of others. **Giving of thanks:** thanks for all that God is and for all He does. True prayer rises from the depth of genuine feeling, not from set forms. As long as man feels that he is self-made and is what he is by self-effort, he can never give God genuine thanks; it will be cold and formal. **Therefore** always refers back to something before as the reason for the statement now made. In Chapter 1, Paul had urged Timothy to hold true to the faith of Christ. Some had **made shipwreck** by putting away this faith. To avoid such disaster, Paul exhorted to prayer **first of all**—most important. Prayer deserves a time and a place that have been set apart in an atmosphere and posture that shows reverence to God. The Bible yokes good living with right praying. Earnest prayer calls for the best we have to offer. Clean hands and a pure heart go together. Slovenliness and prayer never mix. Prayer should **be made for all men.**

All Need Our Prayers

First Timothy 2:2-4. **For kings, and for all that are in authority . . .** A mighty big order! Yet here it is in black and white, inspired of God, written in His word. The church from earliest times has prayed for those whom they depended upon for their government. We should ask God to guide rulers and leaders, give them wisdom, incline their hearts and minds toward Him, prosper their good acts, and guard them from wrong ones. The result from such prayers will be better government for all of us. Should we pray for grafters, chiselers, and political cheaters who would rob us of our national heritage? Yes, the dishonest ones need God's chastening and forgiveness. We must pray for ALL in authority, at home and abroad. However cleverly we may twist the word, we cannot make a-l-l spell s-o-m-e.

Praying for all men and for rulers is **good and acceptable in the sight of God.** Prayers of the saints have held back the wrath of God and prevented our nation from being destroyed and cast into hell. It was the prayers of the saints that brought victory in past wars, not just military might. God wants these prayers because He desires **all men to be saved.** Prayers of saints are cooperation with God. Praying releases the power of God to save souls and to work all kinds of good. Jesus laid down the rule by which saints are to give their allegiance to civil government: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's" (Luke 20:24-25). Pennies to Caesar—prayers to God.

In Jesus' Name

First Timothy 2:5-7. **One mediator . . . Jesus; Who gave himself.** We are to make our prayers in Jesus' name. Paul expressed this truth in other words. **One mediator** who is **a ransom for all**—only one, but enough to save every person. When the saint prays, he calls upon the mediating humanity of the Savior to bring him to the throne of grace. All true prayer is in the name of Jesus.

Before Jesus began His ministry and before He brought it to a climax at Calvary, He turned to the Heavenly Father in prayer. Like us, He knew the inward striving of obedience against the human nature to run or compromise. In the garden, He sweat blood, felt agony and disappointment and loneliness, and drew back before tasting the bitter cup of death. Then He prayed, ". . . thy will be done" (Matthew 26:42). Such praying rises from the depths of one's genuine feelings. These cannot be written down for us or others to read formally to God. Prayer comes out because it is in us, the spontaneous, urgent seeking of the soul after God. Let me hear a saint's fumbling prayer anytime, rather than a prayer that is perfect in grammar, spoken by one who knows God only as one far out in space instead of a Person to be known, adored, and worshiped. Jesus understands even our most fumbling prayer. But when we pray to Him and through Him and in His name, seeking the will of the Heavenly Father, we feel ourselves in the presence of God.

Christ gave Himself a ransom **to be testified**—to be a testimony or witness—**in due time**. Since the gift is for all, all must be told. God wills that all men **come unto the knowledge of the truth**. It cannot be taken to them without prayer having its proper place in our missionary work. Paul was sure of his calling and task—**I speak the truth . . . lie not**. God has a definite work for each one of us now. Only through fervent prayer will we be able to be sure of ours and to complete it.

Pray With Holy Hands

First Timothy 2:8. **I will therefore that men pray every where.** Why? (1) That we may live peaceably and godly, (2) that all men be saved, and (3) that all people be told of Christ's payment of ransom for them. **Lifting up holy hands**—free from sin (see Psalm 24:3-4). **Without wrath**—hearts free from grudges or ill feelings against others—and doubting—God's promises are to those who believe. Doubt and unbelief limit God and cut one off from His blessings (see James 1:6-7; Mark 11:23).

JUST A THOUGHT

**Untold wealth is not the wealth which
does not appear on income tax forms.**

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