

The Who, Why, And How Of Prayer (Part 1)

1 Timothy 2:1-8

Introduction:

1. Sometimes life can seem like a shipwreck. People can make shipwreck of their own lives. Paul gave an example of some who did this at the end of chapter 1. He even gave their names.
2. Paul opens up chapter 2 by saying, “*I exhort therefore that first of all...*” In other words, “Based on what I just told you about people having been made shipwreck, here is what you need to do first and foremost.”
3. What was that thing that Paul was exhorting Timothy to do? **Pray!** Read verse 1.
4. Paul was exhorting him to pray “*first of all.*” This means “first and foremost; above everything else; top of the priority list.” If you look it up, it means “firstly in time, place, order, and importance.” Prayer was to be a first resource, not a last resort.
5. I’m afraid that most of us don’t view prayer this way. Prayer is something that happens if we can squeeze it into our busy schedules. I’m convinced that prayer is one of the most important, but most often neglected, things in the Christian life.
 - It has been said, “Prayer does not fit us for the greatest work; prayer **is** the greatest work.”
6. Notice in verse 1 how Paul exhorts the believer to exercise a thorough prayer life.
 - *Supplications* – petitions or requests
 - *Prayers* – simply talking to God
 - *Intercessions* – prayers for somebody else who is discouraged, weak, or doesn’t see the need of prayer.
 - *Giving of thanks* – should be included in all of our prayers
7. I think most Christians want to have an effective and fruitful prayer life, but they find themselves asking questions like, “Who should I pray for?”, “Why should I pray?”, “How should I pray?”
8. Our text answers these important questions.

First, who should we pray for?

1. First, Paul says that we are to pray for “*all men.*” This is certainly all-encompassing. It is simply teaching that nobody is beyond praying for. Every person needs prayer and benefits from true heart-felt prayer.
 - Don’t just pray for those who believe in Christ and want prayer. Pray also for those who reject Christ and see no need of prayer. Intercede in prayer for them. Stand in their place before the Lord.
2. But then, in verse 2, Paul gets more specific. He says to pray “*for kings, and for all that are in authority...*” So we have a duty to pray for those that are in authority in our lives.
3. Everything operates on the principle of authority (city, state, country, business world, home, and church). God is a God of authority and structure.

- Satan is the author of lawlessness and confusion. Satan began his career as the adversary of God, opposing God’s authority.
 - What did men like Adam, Achan, Absalom, Saul, and Korah all have in common with Satan? They rebelled against authority in their lives.
4. Without authority, you have chaos and confusion. There must, of necessity, be authority. Somebody has to have the final say-so. The buck has to stop somewhere.
 5. God has established an authority structure in the **home**. He did this when He created Adam and Eve (vs. 13). The Bible teaches that God created the husband to be the leader in the home and in the marital relationship. Ephesians 5:22-25
 - The husband is accountable to Jesus Christ. He should lead his home in a Christ-like fashion. He is the leader, not the bully or dictator. The issue is one of function, not value.
 6. God has established authority in the **local church**.
 - Again, men are to provide godly leadership in the local church. Kids should see the men leading the way to church and taking an active part in the life of the local church. vs. 12
 - Not only this, but God has also established the office of bishop (pastor) to provide leadership to the people in the local church. 3:1, 4-5
 - The word “*rule*” simply means to preside in authority over. cf. 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Acts 20:28
 7. God has established authority in **government**. Romans 13:1-2
 - We may not agree with or have voted for those in governmental positions, but nevertheless we are to pray for them.
 8. There are two principles on this earth: the principle of God’s authority, and the principle of satanic rebellion. Typically, men have a harder time than women with this (vs. 13-14). Eve was tricked. Adam chose to rebel against God’s laws.
 9. What does a person who is operating under God’s principle of authority do?
 - Wherever they are, they immediately look for authority and seek to submit to it.
 - They seek to encourage their leaders.
 - They pray diligently for those in authority and leadership in their life.
 - If we would spend as much time praying for our leaders as we do criticizing them, can you imagine how much more would be accomplished?
 10. Do you diligently pray for those in authority in your life? (Your pastors, your boss at work, your governmental leaders, your teachers and principal at school, your parents, your husband, etc.)

In Conclusion:

1. What if I feel that something is not being done properly or biblically? If people are given authority, what would keep them from abusing that authority?
 - Is it possible for a husband and father to abuse his familial authority in the home?

- Is it possible for a politician or policeman to abuse his or her governmental authority?
 - Is it possible for a pastor to abuse his spiritual authority in the church?
 - In all three cases the answer is, “Absolutely it is possible, and has been done countless times throughout history. But God does not scrap His biblical plan just because human beings can abuse it. Anywhere people are involved, abuse can take place.
2. When Paul lived, the Roman Empire was in full power, and King Nero was in charge. He was a dictator and tyrant.
 3. When leaders abuse their authority, the godly Christian has a powerful and effective recourse – prayer! It is the most powerful and influential weapon in this universe!