

**The Who, Why, And How Of Prayer (Part 4)**  
**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 “first 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. We’ve already answered the first two, and this week we will continue to answer the question, “How should I pray?”

**We are to pray with a pure heart.**

1. Our previous point dealt with our outward manner of life. God wants us to pray with “*holy hands.*”
2. But then Paul names two things that we can do **without** when we are praying and talking to God.
3. The first is to pray “*without wrath.*”
  - The word “*wrath*” is translated in other places in the Bible as “*anger*” and “*vengeance.*”
4. Can a person be full of wrath and cover it up to where others do not see it? Have you ever had somebody mad at you or bitter at you, and you never knew it? You finally found out, and you were shocked?
5. A person can hide anger and bitterness from others, but not from the Lord. The Bible says that man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.
  - God can look right down into our innermost being and see what attitudes and thoughts are there. The Bible says to pray without wrath.

6. Wrath has to do with the believer's attitude toward others. It speaks of bitterness towards others. Resentment is anger turned inward (it seethes and boils). It can be a response toward someone who has wronged you or an unjust situation that hurt you or a loved one.
  - There are people who have never outwardly lost their temper, yet they are very angry people.
7. Wrath is said to be a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-20). Why is this? Because it reveals a lack of forgiveness and is a sin of the heart. It is the opposite of the fruit that the Holy Spirit desires to produce in a believer's life. Galatians 5:22-23
8. Therefore, when you give place to wrath (Romans 12:19), you grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30-32), which will naturally hinder you greatly in your prayer life.
9. Bitterness destroys! Bitterness begins as a seed, then takes root and spreads like cancer throughout our entire being. We can ultimately infect others with it. Hebrews 12:15
  - Inner resentment can be very dangerous. Anger turned inward is like a time bomb waiting to explode. **Illustration:** Keep blowing into a balloon and eventually it is going to pop. Resentment can keep growing and growing until a person snaps.
10. If we are going to pray with a pure heart, we must pray without wrath. Deal with it immediately. Face the cross (in a figurative way) and make a decision to forgive and extend mercy and grace to others. God forgave me (for Christ's sake). I can forgive them.
  - Make a decision that you will not harbor wrath or bitterness in your heart.

### **We are to pray with faith.**

1. There is another thing that God says we can do without when we pray, and that is doubt.
2. Hebrews 11:6 is very clear that without faith it is impossible to please God. *"For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*
3. If you pray doubting that God hears you, doubting that God cares, doubting that God is able to answer your prayer, doubting God's promises to you, then prayer becomes a rather ineffectual waste of time.
4. On the other hand, when we pray believing verses like Ephesians 3:20, we are on our way to a fruitful and meaningful prayer life.
5. I believe one of the areas we struggle with the most is believing that God **hears** our prayers. Religion teaches people that you have to be good enough to warrant God's ear. You have to do certain things to gain an audience with God.
6. Many times we subconsciously think, "I sinned, I failed today, I messed up, I didn't do this or that. God will never hear me." So we don't pray. This can go on, day after day until finally we find ourselves not walking with God at all, but walking in the flesh.
7. The Bible says to pray without doubt. How do I know God hears me? Not because of my works, but because of His grace!

8. The Bible teaches that, as a believer who is in Christ, the blood of Christ has given you open access to talk to God in prayer 24/7. Ephesians 2:18, 3:12; Hebrews 10:19
9. So to pray in faith means that when you make a conscious choice to talk to God in prayer, you do so with total dependence upon Christ and His finished work. You aren't trusting in your goodness and your merit, but in Christ's merits. vs. 5-6
10. Paul was a teacher of the Gentiles (vs. 7). He taught them that they could enter into God's presence any time, and they didn't have to go through Israel, the Old Testament Law, any rite, or religious ceremony. They had access through Christ!
11. If you are saved today, you are not an outsider looking in at God. You are part of His family, you belong to Him, and you are His child. He longs to have you talk to Him and lay your heart, your requests, and your burdens at His feet. Ephesians 2:12-13, 18-19

### **In Conclusion:**

1. Today we learned from our text that there are two things we don't need when we pray. We can definitely do without them. They are:
  - Wrath
  - Doubting
2. Both of these will absolutely destroy your prayer life. If you are harboring wrath and doubt, you won't **want** to pray. They will rob you of your joy and take away that desire to talk to God.
3. Both of these are sins of the heart. You can have a heart of bitterness and doubt, and nobody might ever know. But God knows, and God sees the heart. And... **you** know!
4. Let's make decisions in our hearts today that will glorify God and that will enhance our prayer lives!