

Bible Studies for Life: August 7

Pray for Your Neighbor • 1 Timothy 2:1-8

By Clay Anthony



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As you reread those statements or hear them said aloud, can you see where we might be doing something wrong? Too often we flippantly approach the ministry of prayer. This is an attitude that would have been foreign to the Apostle Paul. We can tell by his reminder to his helper Timothy regarding prayer.

The number one thing that should be on your list is of utmost importance: Paul was never one to pray “real quick” or to even give two thoughts to the question of whether he should pray. You get the sense of urgency in Paul’s prayer life from his own words. He urges/exhorts that all types of prayers be offered.

Verse One lists four varieties of prayers to be given. Paul knew that there is a difference between being afraid of what an x-ray might find, versus being thankful for what it did not reveal. Indeed, there is a great difference in praying for a lost soul versus saying the blessing prior to a meal.

Both are prayers. Both are needed, yet the content and focus are different. Paul teaches Timothy here that regardless of what is going on in our lives, prayer is the first line of defense and the first move of offense.

We are to never take the gift of communicating with God lightly, nor should we rush through the process in order to close out a meeting and get on to the fried chicken and green beans.

Along with the varied types of prayer, Paul shows Timothy there is an element of testimony that laces our prayers. When

prayers are varied and cover every need on our prayer list, this pleases God (v.3).

The main reason our varied prayer life pleases God is that the number one item on *His* list is the salvation of souls (v.4). You cannot name one person who cannot come to know Christ as Savior; you cannot think of a proper reason not to include that person on your prayer list.

Do they have health issues? Is their family life in trouble? Are they living life outside the church's influence?

All these items are important for you to pray over, but of first importance is their eternal salvation. This is what we share with the lost. This is what Jesus left as His testimony (v.6).

This is the time of year that kids and teachers alike have been dreading for two straight months – the return to school. God bless our teachers. They have such a task ahead of them to get those young minds to think and understand the curriculum set before them. Paul here shows Timothy that he too has a set curriculum to understand.

Paul's heart and focus is to get this information into the hearts and minds of all believers. Ephesus was full of educated people. The Greek learning system was the gold standard for its day. Many of the people under Timothy's influence were well read and tutored in the ways of the then known world.

Paul unites his voice into the chorus of educators as one that proclaims faith and truth to the world (v.7).

Wrapping up this section, Paul returns to the idea of desire. He has already mentioned that He knows God's preeminent desire is for the salvation of souls and that we are to pray for that end. He now brings up a desire of his own. God desires people to be saved, and Paul desires for those saved people to pray

(v.8).

It goes without saying that there is great power when believing women pray. My mother's prayers petrified hell. My wife's prayers sound as if she is singing. Yet we cannot pass by the reference here that Paul is specifically calling on men to pray.

No, I don't think at all that Paul was attempting to offend women. I think he understood what many of us have forgotten: when God-fearing men spend time in heartfelt, tear-soaked prayer time, things happen. Godly things happen.

Something to consider – is your church family better known for “quarreling” (v.8) or praying?

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