

# Why Pray For All Men, part 1

This week I stumbled upon a website that said the most common way Christians worship God is through singing. The author listed four ways believers can worship while singing. The first way was to raise one's hands. The author cited 1 Timothy 2:8 and some other passages as proof that this is a good thing to do while singing. He failed to notice the verse urges men to lift their hands while praying and not while singing. The second way to worship God while singing is to bow down on the ground. A third way is to clap our hands, and the fourth way to worship while singing is to dance. Then the author of the article urged believers to use "some of these ways to worship God."

He did not mention any other way to worship God.

As I reflected on his suggested ways to worship God, I had three reactions. My first reaction was that the worship of God does not begin with my hands, feet, or my head bowed

to the ground. It does not even start with some words in my mouth. Remember that Jesus told us in John 4:23-24 that worship begins in our spirit. He said,

**But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:23-24 (NASB)**

Jesus said that God the Father is not looking for people who

are filled with emotion in reaction to pleasant music. God the Father is not looking for someone who is clapping, dancing, bowing, or lifting up their hands. God the Father is not looking for believers who are planning what they want to do for the rest of the day after the service ends. God is not looking for people who are not interested in being taught the Word of God.

Instead, God is looking for believers who worship Him from their spirits. That is, they come together with other believers to glorify God. They come because they are the church, the body of Christ. The church is not located on some street or

on the Internet. The church is the body of Christ. Some believers seem to have forgotten that God asked us to gather together to worship one day a week (Hebrews 10:23-25). That involves all of the body of Christ praising God, adoring God,

speaking to God, singing to God, and being taught the words He wrote. Worship is not rooted in music. The article I read on the Internet missed the concept of true worship. So, my first reaction was that the worship of God must occur in one's spirit and in the truth.

My second reaction to the website's article was that it focused on the individual's experience. Worship is not about us having an emotional experience, but about God Himself. We worship God in spirit when He is our focus and we desire to honor Him. Worship is a response to God, and not about



feeling good.

My third reaction was that the article said that “the most common way Christians worship God is through singing.” Sadly, the author missed the point that worship is a gift to God Himself. It is something believers offer to God. When Jesus said, “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth,” we must not miss the word “truth.” The only way we can worship in truth is through the reading and study of truth. Scripture calls the Bible the Word of Truth. As we learn what He wrote to us, understand His message, and our hearts respond to His message, then we bring Him glory. That is worship. The author of the article also missed the fact that worship includes prayer.

It is amazing to realize that the book of 1 Timothy was written about how the church should function. In the book the apostle Paul never mentions music. Chapter one is almost completely devoted to telling Timothy to not allow false teachers to teach. That is, Timothy’s most important task was to protect the truth of the Scriptures. He was to ensure that it was taught accurately. He was to prevent false teachers from teaching in the church. Paul called that fighting the good fight. That is, Paul urged Timothy to fight the good fight. That is why in the opening chapter Timothy was urged to protect the truth. That makes sense, because true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. Later in chapter 4, Timothy will be told to read and teach the Word to the congregation.

In chapter 2 Paul gave Timothy instructions about how to pray, including praying during the worship service. Also, he gave instructions about how women were to conduct themselves during the worship service. You see what you do during the worship service is important too!

It is interesting that Paul never gave Timothy instructions about music—bowing down, lifting hands or clapping. Music or musical instruments are never mentioned in the entire book of 1 Timothy. That illustrates how important music is in worship. Now do not miss my point. I am NOT saying that music should be excluded from a worship service. My point is that prayer and the teaching of Scripture have a much greater priority. They are the heart of worship.

**TYPES OF PRAYERS WE SHOULD OFFER (VERSE 1A).** Our study today comes from 1 Timothy 2:1-8 and it is about

prayer, later we will talk about the teaching of the Word. Our study has five sections. The first section is verse 1a. I have titled it, “Prayers We Should Offer.” The next four sections are: For Whom Should We Pray? (v. 1b-2a), Purpose of Prayer (v. 2b), Reason for Prayer (v. 3-7), and Our Attitude in Prayer (v. 8). Here is the first part of verse 1.

**First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings . . . 1 Timothy 2:1a (NASB)**

1) *Entreaties*. Here Paul urged Timothy, the pastor of the church in Ephesus, to offer entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings. Now these words may appear to be synonyms for the same thing. But actually, they are not synonyms. The Greek word that is translated as “entreaties” in the NASB is *deesis*. The word basically means “to lack,” or “to need.” As a result, the word refers to prayer about personal needs. A very good illustration of praying for personal needs is the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13. It says,

**Pray, then, in this way:**

**Our Father who is in heaven,**

**Hallowed be Your name.**

**Your kingdom come.**

**Your will be done,**

**On earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.**

**Amen.**

**Matthew 6:9-13 (NASB)**

Notice that Jesus told us to pray first for God the Father. Then He told us to pray for our needs: our daily needs, forgiveness of our sins, and protection from testing. Another example of entreaties is found in Luke 1:13 where we are told that Zacharius had prayed for a son. There *deesis* is translated as “petition” in the NASB.

2) *Prayers*. The Greek word for “prayers” is *proseuche*. It is the most common Greek word for prayer in the New Testa-

ment. The word “prayer” is usually used in reference to talking with God. So, when we talk with God, we are praying.

3) *Petitions*. The Greek word for “petitions” is *enteuxis*. This word means “to fall in with someone.” It also has the sense of empathy and sympathy. That is, to offer petitions refers to praying for people with emotional or physical needs. If the person is in a hospital, has an illness, or is mourning for someone who has died, and we have empathy for them and pray for them, we are offering petitions to God. We pray with a petition.

4) *Thanksgivings*. The Greek word for thanksgivings is *eucharistia*. It simply means that we give thanks to God for someone. This raises an interesting point. Have you ever wondered if it is okay to thank God for someone? If so, then this verse answers your question. Here we are urged to thank God for what He has done for us. The last part of this verse urges us to thank God for other people.

**FOR WHOM SHOULD WE PRAY?** (v. 1b-2a). Paul says that we are to offer entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings. But for whom are we to offer these things? Paul tells us in the last part of verse 1 and the first part of verse 2. Remember that chapter and verse divisions were not added until about A.D. 1500. While the chapter and verse divisions help us find different locations in the Scriptures, the verse division here is poor. Here Paul’s thought flows from verse 1 into verse 2.

... be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority ... 1 Timothy 2:1b-2a (NASB)

First, Paul says believers are to offer entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings for all men. Now Paul did not mean that we had to pray for every person around the world, name by name. That would be impossible! There are not enough hours in the day to do that. But we can pray for groups of people. We are to pray for people from every race. We are to pray for people from different political parties and those who are our enemies. That was Jesus’ command in Matthew 5:43-45. He said,

You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your

enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 5:43-45 (NASB)

Notice Jesus’ reason for praying for our enemies is that God provides for them too! In theology this is called God’s common grace.

In verse 3 we are also told to pray for the president, premier or the dictator of our nation, whatever the case may be. We are to pray for all who are in authority. Why? The answer is that God put him or her in that position according to Romans 13:1-2. But that does not mean we must agree with our politicians.

This reminds me of the time that I was invited by the PIMA County Board of Supervisors to pray at the opening of one of their regularly scheduled meetings. After the meeting was called to order, I was asked to pray. Here are just a few of the things I said,

- Our Father we pray to You because you are the God who is in heaven.
- We ask that your name be regarded as holy, holy, holy – because You are the righteous & holy God.
- We ask that Jesus Christ return quickly and set up His kingdom.
- We ask that Your will be done here on earth as it is in heaven.
- And since You are the One who establishes governments and have caused these men and women to be elected to their positions, we ask that:
  - a. Your Holy Spirit will guide them in their deliberations today.
  - b. That you give them great wisdom to make just decisions.
  - c. That you motivate and guide them to accomplish Your will.
  - d. That you grant them Your favor.
- We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

After I finished, a man followed me out the door and expressed

his appreciation for my prayer. He was surprised at the boldness of my prayer. Now I do not know if any of those board members were believers, but I prayed as I did for them because God had placed them in authority.

**PURPOSE OF PRAYER (v. 2b).** Next, Paul tells us why we are to offer entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings for all men, kings, and all in authority. He tells us in the last part of verse 2.

... so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. 1 Timothy 2:2b (NASB)

The reason we are asked to pray for 1) their personal needs to be met, 2) for compassion and healing for their bodies, and 3) to thank God for them is so that we can live a tranquil and quiet life. The Greek words that are translated as “tranquil” and “quiet” have the idea of external peace and internal peace. The purpose is so we can live in godliness and dignity. That is so we can worship without interference, train our children in the faith, practice our faith, and have our physical needs met so that we can in turn share the gospel and rescue sinners from hell.

We should also remember that after we became a believer, there was no reason to leave us here, except to share the gospel about Jesus Christ with other people. That includes our family, friends, and strangers.

**REASON FOR PRAYER (v. 3-7).** In verses 3 through 7, Paul now gives us five reasons why we should pray this way. Paul’s reason for praying this way is so that evangelism will not be hindered. Paul is emphasizing evangelism.

1) *Good & Acceptable To God.* The first of the four reasons is given in verse 3. Paul said,

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior . . . 1 Timothy 2:3 (NASB)

The English translation of “good and acceptable” is not accurate. The meaning of “good” is better translated as intrinsic moral goodness and “acceptable” has the idea of “to receive gladly.” That is, when we pray this way we are being morally good; and Christ receives such prayers gladly. Since Paul uses

the phrase “God our Savior” five more times (1 Timothy 1:1; 4:10; 2 Timothy 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; Jude 25) in the New Testament to refer to God the Father, this helps us understand that this kind of prayer is very pleasing to our Father. Would you like to please God the Father? Then pray this way! Pray so that the gospel will spread and so that people can be saved. God the Father will receive your prayers gladly!

At least seven times in the New Testament, believers are urged to strive to please the Father (2 Corinthians 5:9; Galatians 1:10; Ephesians 5:10; 6:6; Hebrews 11:6; 13:16). Here is Ephesians 5:10. Paul said we should try . . .

... to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Ephesians 5:10 (NASB)

2) *God Desires All Men to be Saved.* The second reason that God wants us to pray this way is that He does not want just some people to be saved, He wants all men to be saved, including those in authority. Verse 4 says,

... who desires all men to be saved . . . 1 Timothy 2:4 (NASB)

Now some claim this passage means that every person will become a believer. That view is referred to as universal salvation. That is, everyone will be saved, but that is completely inconsistent with the rest of Scripture. If everyone will be saved, then the lake of fire will be empty, except for Satan and his demons. This view misses the fact that Revelation 20:11-14 reveals that “the great and the small” will be judged and sent to the lake of fire. Here is Revelation 20:12-13,

And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Revelation 20:12-13 (NASB)

Here we are given a picture of a massive number of people who will be judged. Verse 15 tells us they will be thrown into

the lake of fire.

**And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:15 (NASB)**

Revelation 20:10 tells us the Lake of Fire is a place of fire and brimstone. Whoever is living there will be in constant torment forever. So, this view is rejected.

Another explanation of the statement "who desires all men to be saved" is that it is just referring to groups of people, and not to every individual. That is, God does not literally mean that He wants every single individual to be saved. He just wants all types or groups of people to be saved. This view changes the meaning of "all" to "some." So, that view is rejected too!

A third view says that the word "all" should be understood as all of the elect who were chosen who are in the book of life. When we read Scripture literally and do not twist its meaning, it is clear that God says He has chosen some people for salvation and not all (John 6:37, 44, 65; Acts 13:48; Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:1-2). That is, those who are chosen to be saved are called the elect in Scripture. The Greek word for "elect" means individuals who were selected. They were selected for salvation. So, those who hold this view limit "all" to the elect. So, that view is rejected too! The passage says God desires all men to be saved.

It is important that we understand that God desires all men to be saved. So, how do we understand these apparently contradictory statements that God wants all men to be saved, yet chooses only some to be saved? In theology this is called an antinomy, an apparent contradiction. I think Deuteronomy 29:29 gives us the answer. It says,

**The secret things belong to the LORD our God . . . Deuteronomy 29:29 (NASB)**

The message is that God understands how all of this fits together. I am confident that it is no mystery to Him. Ezekiel 18:23 even says,

**"Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and**

**live?" Ezekiel 18:23 (NASB)**

This verse reveals God's heart. The point is that God wants all men to be saved, but for some reason it is not possible. Therefore, He has chosen only some to be saved. We cannot solve the antinomy.

3) *God Desires All Men Know the Truth.* The third reason that God wants us to pray this way is that He wants all men to know the truth. The last part of verse 4 says,

**. . . who desires all men . . . to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:4 (NASB)**

The message is that God desires all men know what He wrote for them to read. He wrote truth! Why would God go to all the trouble to have the Bible written and then not care if anyone read it? I think the answer is obvious. God wants men and women to read it, to know Him, to know Christ, to know the Holy Spirit, to understand they are sinners, that Christ died and was resurrected. He wants them to become saved, and wants us to know everything else He wrote in the Bible.

**CONCLUSION.** That is as far as we can go in this study. We will conclude this study next time. Before I pray, I want us to remember that God wants us to offer entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings for all men, including those in authority. It should be part of our worship. It should also be part of our daily prayers. When we pray this way it is an act of moral goodness and it pleases God the Father. Would you like to please the Father? Then join me and pray this way. If your prayer is from the heart, then it is an act of worship.

But the main reason for praying in this passage is for the salvation of unbelievers. So, how should a Christian do evangelism? It starts with prayer. It starts by praying this way. You will not be very effective in leading others to Christ if you do not pray this way! If you want to please God, then pray this way. Then we will see more people become believers. Let us pray!