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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

1 Timothy 2:1-7
Lesson #6
Prayer Priorities
05/28/2023

1

(context of 1 Timothy)

✓ **Ephesus was a multiracial, commercial center with a culturally diverse church.**

Ephesians 2

“¹¹ Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands—¹² remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now **in Christ Jesus** you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

✓ **Diversity usually creates tension.**

2

1 Timothy 2

“¹ First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and **prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.** ³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. ⁷ And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”

3

Interpretive Paraphrase

1 Timothy 2

“In addressing conflicts, I recommend that your ministry **start with prayer, both petitions and gratitude for all people, especially those in authority. God’s will is that we be able to live in peace, showing and telling** of the one God who is Lord of all and one mediator between God and humanity, the Messiah, Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for both Jew and Gentile, as made clear in these later days. Trust me, I am telling the truth because I am the most unlikely person to preach grace and faith to the Gentiles given the fact that I formerly persecuted them.”

4


General reflections

- ✓ **Note that prayer is a priority in ministry.**
- ✓ **Prayer should include both petitions and gratitude for all involved, especially those who have authority to shape the setting.**
- ✓ **Petitions for civil peace is God’s pathway for the Gospel to be presented and heard.**
- ✓ **Our agenda for the state is that it allows us to quietly show and tell our story.**
- ✓ **We leave the results to God. Our focus is on Our responsibility not God’s.**

5

“There are three essential prayers - **Help, Thanks, and Wow.**”

Anne Lamott



6

John 14:14
 “If you ask Me **anything** in My name, I will do it.”

Luke 11:9
 “ask and **it will be given** to you;”

Does the promise grant **ANY** request?
 Do we only need a **promise** from Scripture and **faith**?




7

John 14:14
 “If you ask Me **anything** in My name, I will do it.”


“One of the differences between you and God is that God never thinks He is **you.**”

An ambassador has authority to speak for the President **but only insofar as it reflects the President’s policy.**



Anne Lamott

8



Most common prayer requests

Physical circumstances
 Vocational success
 Changed behavior
 Salvation of friends
 Spiritual revival

Seldom mentioned issues


Spiritual posture
 Thankfulness
 Insight and wisdom
 Knowing Christ
 Faith and power to face life

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Why do so many prayers seem to go unanswered?

James 4
 “2 . . . You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with **wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.**”

It is possible to have a Scriptural promise and strong faith **canceled by a selfish motive.**



10

Our petitions may reflect the desires of our heart
but do they reflect the desires of God’s heart?




11

1 John 5
 “14 And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

Does “His will” refer to

- circumstances,
- pray style,
- **or our inner spirit?**



12

Romans 8

“²⁶ And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for **we do not know how to pray as we should**, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints **according to the will of God.**”

The “will of God” / “mind of the Spirit” may not be circumstances (O.C.), so much as our response to them (N.C.)!




13

1 Peter 5

“⁶ Therefore **humble** yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ having **cast all your anxiety on Him**, because He cares about you.”

We are not to petition God to change our circumstances but rather to alter our “anxiety” in response to them?




14


- Too often, we link peace with worldly circumstances,
- and petition God to change worldly circumstances to bring us peace,
- suggesting that God is simply an altar boy in the temple of worldliness.

1 Peter 5:7

“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; **not as the world gives, do I give to you.** Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”



15



Paul’s prayers

1 Thess.3:9-13
2 Thess.1:1-12
Phil.1:9-11
Eph.1:15-23
Eph.3:14-21
Eph.6:18-20
Col.1:9-14

16

Ephesians

Our wealth in Christ ch. 1-3	Our walk in Christ ch. 4-6
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1:18-19

“¹⁸ I pray that the **eyes of your heart may be enlightened**, so that you may know what is the **hope** of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His **inheritance** in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His **power** toward us who believe. . . .”

17

Ephesians

Our wealth in Christ ch. 1-3	Our walk in Christ ch. 4-6
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3:14-19

“¹⁴ For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every **family** in heaven and on earth derives its name, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man**; ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in **love**, ¹⁸ may be able to **comprehend** with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to **know the love of Christ** which surpasses knowledge, that you may be **filled up to all the fulness of God.**”

18

Ephesians

Our wealth in Christ
ch. 1-3

Our walk in Christ
ch. 4-6

6:18-20

“18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times **in the Spirit**, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, 19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to **make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel**, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.”

19

Knowing of God's will.

Colossians 1

“9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to **pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**,

10 so that you may (in order to) **walk** in a manner worthy of the Lord, to **please Him** in all respects, **bearing fruit** in every good work and **increasing in the knowledge of God**; 11 **strengthened** with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 **giving thanks** to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.”

What we need to know is the love, power, and Spirit of Christ, more than specific decisions and directions.

20

What do Paul's prayers emphasize?

1. **Thankfulness**
2. **Renewed inner life**
3. **Godly living**

Conspicuously absent

- physical circumstances
- bodily comfort
- detailed guidance
- changing other people
- spiritual drama
- cultural revival

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Ephesians

Our wealth in Christ
ch. 1-3

Our walk in Christ
ch. 4-6

He is first concerned that we see our

INHERITANCE and HOPE.

He prays that we will “get it”

He is then concerned that we see our

FAMILY and LOVE.

He is finally concerned that we encourage

PERSEVERANCE and WITNESS.

He prays that we will “give it”

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Paul's agenda in prayer

Text	Thanks	Wisdom	Walk	Faith	Love	Courage
1 Thess.						
2 Thess.						
Phil.1						
Eph.1						
Eph.3						
Col.1						
Eph.6						

Outer circumstances are not on the list.

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“PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT”

Paul is concerned that disciples are:

- **enlightened in heavenly hope.**
- **grounded in loving relationships.**
- **persevering in life's struggles.**
- **courageous in faithful witness.**

This is “God's will”.

24

Note what is not on Paul's prayer list

- Hopes that are **centered in this life**.
- Agendas that are **"self centered"**.
- Escape from **physical suffering**.
- Escape from **spiritual struggle**.
- Things that are **only God's business**.

25

What about praying for PHYSICAL healing?

- This is not a pastoral solution but an **evangelistic SIGN of spiritual authority**.
- Remember that the priority is not physical but **SPIRITUAL healing**.
 - As a special gift of the Spirit, healing was **not normally an agenda for common prayer**.
 - If our hope is in physical healing in this life, **Satan wins**.



26

Two unanswered petitions

2 Corinthians 12:8

"8 Concerning this (thorn in the flesh) I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

Luke 22:42

"Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done."

27

How to pray for others when you don't know what to "petition God for".

- That they would **see** the inheritance, hope, and power they have in Christ.
- That they would **know** and **display** God's love for His family.
- That they would **persevere** through the trials of life.
- That they would be **faithful** ambassadors for Christ.

28

Two things that have changed in my walk with God as I have grown older.

My expectations -

- from my priorities to **God's priorities**.
- from a need for circumstances to change to my **"inner response to" life's issues**.

My petitions -

- from outer control to **inner peace & power**.
- from "more self discipline" to **"more faith"**.
- from changing outer circumstances and others to **changing my inner heart**,

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1 Timothy

Next week
1 Timothy
2:8-15

Gender & Ministry Roles?



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