



## “Everyone...”

by Pastor Tim Dodson  
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*1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all*

*godliness and reverence. 3 For 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 between God and men, [the] Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, 7 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ [and] not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. 8 I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;*

### 2:1

Paul the apostle was a man of prayer. It didn't matter what the situation, where he was, or what was occurring, *He still prayed*. In fact, often his prayers were offered up in the “heat of the battle”...in adverse conditions and critical situations. Even this specific letter and the prayers that were given alongside it were happening from a prison cell! Paul understood the critical aspect of consistent, faithful, and *successful* living in Christ was communication with his God. He prioritized the practice of prayer here in this letter and in the instruction to his young student Timothy by stating “I *urge* you, *first of all*, to pray for *all* people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them.”

*Supplications* is a word that signifies requests for particular issues. The word “*prayers*” used here speaks of special times of prayer that we set aside for devotion and worship. *Intercessions* suggests a closer and more intimate communion with God on the part of the one praying. It speaks of drawing near to God, of entering into free, familiar speech with him. “*Giving of thanks*” means that we thank God for hearing and answering. We are to thank Him for what He has done and is going to do for all men and in all situations.

One of the things that jump out at us in this passage is the emphatic and all-inclusive directive and impact of prayer, as well as the gospel in general.

Paul wasn't playing a guessing game regarding his ministry direction. He wasn't flipping a coin or throwing darts at a map to figure out where to go and how to minister! He seemed to be in constant communication with “the general.” And because of such, there was always something happening *in* his life, *through* his life, and *with* his life!

Paul began this scriptural section with the word “therefore.” Starting this chapter out this way connects it back to the previous directives in Chapter 1. In other words, he says “*because of what I said in chapter 1, it’s absolutely critical that you do what I am now going to direct you to do in chapter 2.*”

He says he “*exhorts*” Timothy. That’s not a word we use in normal everyday conversation today. But it paints a very vivid picture of Paul’s relationship with Timothy, as well as Paul’s view of the subject at hand. Exhort means “to instruct...to teach,” yet its use encompasses a great passion behind that instruction.

So then because of the prevalence of false teachers and false doctrine...because of the weak and fleshly tendencies of mankind...*even Paul himself*, ...because of those who have abandoned the faith and returned to the world, Paul says that he was “*exhorting*” Timothy...*and us, to pray!*

Paul “*exhorts*” Timothy to pray for “*all men.*” That would, therefore, include both those who were a blessing, as well as those who were denying Christ and persecuting the church, such as Hymenaeus and Alexander. It would encompass everyone.

Now I have no intention today to teach a lesson on the reformed church...the extreme Calvinists out there. However, we also must acknowledge that this passage of scripture...though there are many such scriptural nullifiers, is a “smoking gun” of rebuke and denial of one of the doctrines...that which says Jesus came to die for only those who will at some point come to him in salvation, that some people have been “chosen” to come to Him and furthermore have no choice but to do so, and some people have been made to be lost by God Himself...never getting the opportunity for salvation and cannot come even if they want to, and are essentially forced to hell by God Himself who gives them no alternative. This concept is denominational in nature, overtly and repeatedly contrary to scripture, and presents a false picture of Jehovah...one wherein scripture says He is literally the EMBODIEMENT of love? Can anyone honestly believe that such a doctrine is love?

Now for the record...I am not throwing out the “baby with the bathwater” herein. SOME of the beliefs of the reformed movement are indeed scriptural. The foreknowledge of God...the sovereignty of God, and others. But to paint a picture that God literally made some people to burn in hell without any possibility of redemption is blasphemous and, quite frankly, a different God than I know, as well as the historical understanding of God for nearly 2000 years. The extreme positions of many reformed Calvinists today is a fairly new interpretation.

The problem for us in this is that when one takes a purely biblical position...one outside of any predetermined denominational positions, we find ourselves in no mans land. Not Calvinist, because of some of their extreme beliefs, but not Arminian either, especially in the aspect of security of one’s salvation. (An Arminian believes one can lose their salvation after having it, which is also not a Biblical precept.) Until recently there was no label or category for such people, which may have been a good thing, but inevitably forced a lengthy positional discussion every time you had a spiritual conversation with someone.

The terms Provisionism and Provisionist are new by the standards of Christian theology. These labels have only been formally defined and used in the past few years. In broad terms, a Provisionist—someone who holds to Provisionism—holds a generally Arminian view of free will and salvation, with notable differences such as positive belief in eternal security. The main gist of Provisionism is the idea that the gospel is the Word of God, which is sufficient in itself, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to enable a response in all who hear God’s appeal to be reconciled to Him (John 6:63; Hebrews 4:12).

The clearest differences between Provisionist doctrine and classical Reformed (Calvinist) theology are seen in the concepts of total depravity and limited atonement. The doctrine of total depravity suggests all people are

inherently sinful, such that they could not even want to be saved without a direct, predestined act of God. Provisionism counters that all people are sinful and responsible for their sin, but they are also responsible for answering God's universal call for men to be saved (Titus 2:11). Limited atonement is a doctrine teaching that Christ only died for those God had designated as the elect. A Provisionist would reject this, saying that the Bible teaches that Christ died for all people (1 John 2:2), which is why God promises to save any who come to Him in faith (Romans 10:11–13; Revelation 22:17). The Provisionist holds that Christ genuinely desires all of humanity to be saved (Luke 5:32; 19:10; 1 Timothy 2:4–6; ). In effect, this means a Provisionist would also reject other Reformed doctrines such as irresistible grace. (*the belief that you are compelled or forced to come to God*) Provisionism can be summarized with the acrostic PROVIDE...you can read more about this if you like at <https://www.gotquestions.org/Provisionism-Provisionist.html>

Our focus today...as it relates to Calvinism and all of what I have been addressing, is the belief in Calvinism that salvation is not offered to *all* men...just the elect. That Christ did not die on the cross for *all* men, just the elect. That *all men* cannot be saved, just the elect. That *all men* cannot come to Christ at will, just the “elect.” For this passage rejects such beliefs and does so clearly, by repeatedly using the clear and simply language of “all”...or a the NLT presents it, “*everyone*.”

One may say that we just don't understand and begin to speak in circular and obtuse language that may tempt you to acquiesce to what appears to be really smart stuff. Yet the bible...especially the New Testament is not written in such a manner, but rather in just the opposite. It was written in KOINE GREEK (KOY-nay).. “street Greek”...common Greek, not even in classic or “high” Greek... in a clear attempt by God to make His Word available to every man... the “common” man. So any attempt to present to me the great and fundamental truths of God and the gospel via deep and learned theological terms and secret new enlightened aspects are immediately rejected. That's not how Christ gave it, and thus I will not receive it thus.

## 2:2

Paul goes on to instruct Timothy and us today, to pray for “*kings and all that are in authority*.” This is actually to be the primary political position and activity for the believing Christian today: *to pray for those who rule over us!* We can scream, protest, threaten and petition, or we could *pray*.

The decision must be made on this point: who can get more done with an unbelieving world? You with your placards and your march on Washington, or the Creator of the universe...the one who holds our next breath in His hands? That does not mean we do not vote, or engage the world around us. But let us remember our task and mission: it is not to fundamentally change this world, but to call and help prepare individuals not only to live different in it but even more so to eventually leave it.

Our purpose is to bring people to Jesus to be changed, not to build a government that can force them to change. (*...and it can't! It can mandate behavior with a moderate success, but it can never change people or their hearts! Only Jesus can do that.*) Paul clearly gave us such an example, and if that's not enough for you, there is always the overt example of Jesus Christ Himself!

“*that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life...*” This should be the motivation of our prayers in the context of verse 2, as well as the point of any and all of our political involvement. As believers, we must remember that this world is not our home, and Christ did not come to set up an earthly government, nor did He *even correct* the political realm in which he found himself living.

When asked, he dealt with such issues based upon the plan and will of the Father and His love for mankind,

but...and this is an important doctrinal point... He never advocated political activism! He spent His life instead seeking and promoting *spiritual* activism! I don't know that he expressly prohibited political activism, but one should honestly ask himself or herself if such pursuits are a good use of our very limited time on this planet to further the kingdom of God. We are to "seek first the *kingdom of God*."

The Bible speaks of the end days and how man will grow worse, **not better**. 2Timothy 3:13 "*But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*" So to live life with a belief that we can build a country and a government that can rescue society from the ravages of evil and decay is not only naive... it's flat-out biblically false. This fact is a very hard truth for a lot of folks that are waving the American flag with one hand and their bible with the other!

Certainly there is no reason...historically or biblically, to have any long-term faith in the institutions of secular man! We pray for them so we can simply live quietly and peaceably in Christ. That we may worship, grow, disciple, and evangelize for Christ. We pray for the freedom to continue those things. When we become Christians, we become citizens of a "new country." And therefore, from that point forward, we are merely sojourners and ambassadors.

### 2:3

Paul points out that our primary involvement with government is to pray for them. And in case you are not convinced about all of this, Paul pounds it home a little more saying "this is good and acceptable behavior in sight of God."

### 2:4

Why would Paul feel the necessity to direct us to pray? Why would that be something he felt he needed to take time to promote? I can only see this as a "practice-of-life" directive. Our goal should be the same as that of Christ. And note that **his** point...**His** "desire" is for **ALL** men to be born again. Not an elect select few. But everyone. This is the clear words of scripture over and over again and the words of Christ Himself (John 3:16)

We often are guilty of seeking rather for "behavior modification." To legislate or force in some manner, through some vehicle, to simply change behavior. But what God wants is to change a man's heart, knowing then that the behavior will follow! After all, simply changing a person's behavior does not change his heart or his eternity.

It is God's desire that "*all men*" be saved. Lets read it together...God "*desires ALL men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" Remember that John 3:16 says that "For God so loved the *world*..." It doesn't read "For God so loved the *saved*," or "those who are *elected*."

(Note 1John 2:1-2, 2Peter 3:9) The desire here is two-fold: One, that men find salvation, and two, that they find truth. That they 'come to the knowledge' of the truth. In this we have both redemption as well as discipleship. A birth and then a growing up...

### 2:5-6

Christianity and Christians are forever being criticized and even attacked over the assumption that they are elitist and condemning of others. The statements leveled against us revolve around a central idea or belief that Christians are saying that all adherents to other faiths are eternally damned to hell. But please note that this is not primarily or firstly Christians saying such. No...**CHRIST** says such, and Paul the apostle follows suit! Jesus says in John 14:6 "*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*"

But this is so unpalatable to much of the world today. Our modern world is trying to paint a picture of a blessed ecumenicalism, where all roads lead to God, and all “religions” are equally valid as long as we are committed. Look, either He IS the bridge to God, or He is NOT. He cannot be *a* bridge, or, in light of what He has claimed, he would be rather a rotten liar...not our redeemer and protector!

He also tells us that his way is not broad but narrow and few will find it. Please make note that there is ONE mediator only between us and God, and that mediator is *Jesus Christ*. Not Mary, not Buddha, not Mohammed, and not a church or pastor. Jesus Christ, and Him alone!

The loss of souls to the world or false religion is not our Lord’s desire. Note that it says clearly that He died as the ransom for **ALL** men...He died for **all** men...He gave His life to pay for the sin of **all** mankind. Not a few. Not the “elect.” This all may make you bristle but your argument is not with me, but with the simple...albeit *clear* language of the Bible, the foundation of our Christianity!

## 2:7

It was for all of this...all of this great truth, that Paul was called and “put into the ministry.” (1:12) Paul was “made” by God to declare the gospel message: that Jesus is the only way to God, and that he paid the price to get you out of sinners’ eternal debt prison. Everyone. All of us.

Paul’s ministry was made up of three elements:

He was a “*preacher*”- one who openly proclaims the gospel with passion and authority.

He was an “*apostle*”- one ‘sent forth with orders.’ This speaks of those specifically sent out by Christ Himself.

He was a “*teacher*”- one who interprets the Word, and gives meaning and application.

The Old King James says he was “ordained” a preacher to proclaim this message. This is where we get our idea of being ‘ordained into the ministry.’ “*ordained*” (gr) means to “*appoint, establish, set in place.*” Jesus used this term in the placement of His followers into service, and we use it today to also recognize the human aspect of the same.

## 2:8

In closing, let us acknowledge that Paul was a man who understood the importance of prayer communication in the life of the believer. He understood it, and therefore practiced such. It was prayer that no doubt made him extremely usable to God, if only for the fact that he had his spiritual ears open and therefore God could actually speak to him and be heard!

*“lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”* We are to come to God in prayer and worship with *holy* hands. Holiness is a must in communication with the Father. Scripture tells us that *“if I regard (hold on to) sin in my heart, He will not hear me.”* Therefore there are many things that can hinder our prayers before God; *disobedience, secret sin, indifference, neglect of mercy, despising the law, blood-guiltiness, iniquity, stubbornness, instability, and self-indulgence.*

Ps 24:3-5 *“Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, And righteousness from the God of his salvation.”*

This passage tells us we must come before Him with a “pure heart.” Mt 5:24 speaks to this and instructs us to *“leave (our) gift there before the altar, and go (our) way. First be reconciled to (our) brother, and then come*

*and offer (our) gift...*” We are apt to think that we can get all casual and come to God with a flippant “good-buddy” kind of attitude. But I would highly suggest you remember who you are talking to.

Remember, there was one clown who showed up at the wedding banquet and was not dressed properly and was “tossed out where there is weeping and gnashing teeth.” Don’t disrespect the creator of the universe...we owe him that! We are to lift up “holy hands.”

What does this mean? Our holiness should be readily seen and witnessed by everyone! We are to approach our God free of bitterness and anger. Oh, how many of us and how often do we disobey this directive! It’s a strange thing when we are all mad at someone for something or another, and then we come to God and try to pray and WE are the ones sinning...not the person we are mad at! And then ...to make matters worse, we know God says that when we allow sin to remain in our hearts, He doesn’t hear us anyway! Oh how some of us need to go to God and repent for how we have dealt with our communication with Him or the lack of it!