

## Effective Prayer and Quiet Time 201-1

Let's begin with a story about a lady named Janelle Guzman-McMillan.

She worked at the World Trade Center buildings, and she had asked her boss for the day off on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, but she was told no because the Lord had other plans for her.

Janelle was the last person to be pulled from the rubble alive on September 11 from the twin towers in New York City, which, for her, was a new beginning.

As she lay there trapped in the dark after the building collapsed, she was rethinking her life. She ended up doing what her mom, who had recently died of cancer, would have done.

**She began to pray.**

Janelle began to pray. She later said this about that prayer, *“Well, it was more like pleading, screaming, promising, asking for some sort of miracle.*

*Then I heard a male voice say the 4 sweetest words I have ever heard: ‘I’ve got you, Janelle.’”*

I clung to his reassuring voice as much as I clung to his strong hand.

*“‘My name is Paul,’ he said. ‘You’re going to be okay. They’re going to get you out soon.’”*

The ache in my right leg and the throbbing in my head faded as I held his hand and listened.

*“Don’t worry, I’ve got you,” Paul said. ‘They’re almost here. Hang on.’”*

Finally, I saw a glimmer of light and heard other voices and sirens.

Two volunteers, Brian and Rick, found me with the help of a police officer from Canada and his search-and-rescue dog.

*“They’re here,” Paul said.*

*‘You’re in good hands now. I’m going to go and let them do their jobs and get you out.’”*

Soon, I was holding a firefighter’s hand and talking to my rescuers.

They painstakingly removed twisted steel and chunks of concrete from around me and lifted me out.

During that prayer, there were three things I promised God I would do as soon as I got out of the hospital:

I would get baptized, marry my boyfriend, Roger, and find Paul.

On November 7, after six weeks in the hospital, four surgeries, and hours of physical therapy and rehabilitation, I kept the first two promises.

Roger and I got married at City Hall in Manhattan, and that same evening, I was baptized at The Brooklyn Tabernacle.”

*But what about Paul?*

Janelle said, “*I never found this man who had known my name before I even said a word, so who was he?*”

She never found out, but what she did discover is that **prayer works!**

The main point of the text we are going to read is the command to pray.

Imagine being Timothy for a moment. Paul was giving him a pattern for prayer in worship.

### **I. *I exhort, "First of all, to pray!"***

Read *1 Timothy 2:1-8*

Prayer is the most important task we do in times of worship.

Many times, Christians think that every other ritual or function we do is more **vital** than prayer, but Paul disagrees.

First, let's focus on the importance of the command to pray:

***Therefore, I exhort (encourage or urge) you***

The word “***therefore***” tells us that Paul's command to pray is a follow-up thought to something he has already said.

Read *1 Timothy 1:18-20*

Paul charged Timothy to "*wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience.*"

A good conscience is a conscience that does not **condemn** you for the things you do or don't do.

And, therefore, what Paul is saying is that for your **ship of faith** to stay afloat, you need to see to it that you don't do the things your conscience **condemns you for**.

We can all understand the connection between a clear conscience and a vibrant faith. Think about our own experiences.

If I fall into a habit that my conscience condemns, what eventually happens is that my conscience will say,

*"All the talk about trusting Christ can't be true, because if you really trusted him, you wouldn't continue in that behavior or attitude."*

So, a bad conscience begins to drill little holes into the ship of faith until one of two things happens: Either

- a. We confirm the **genuineness** of our faith by allowing the Holy Spirit to change our ways. (This will plug up the holes of a bad conscience), or
- b. A bad conscience shows that our faith was never **seaworthy**, and it will sink into unbelief.

Since a good conscience is needed to prevent our faith from becoming shipwrecked, Paul says, “*Therefore I urge you first of all to pray for all men.*”

All of the LORD's instructions in the Bible are summed up in two commandments: ‘*Love God with your whole being*’ and ‘*love your neighbor as yourself.*’

With those as a foundation, we can start to see why prayer for other people is at the top of Paul's list of things we must do to keep a clear conscience.

In *Vs. 1*, Paul mentions 4 different varieties of prayer.

In the Greek language, there are seven different nouns for the word prayer, and Paul uses four of those Greek Nouns here.

### **1. Supplications.**

This is simply a request for a specific need.

So, as we pray for all men, we are asking God to meet a specific need for them.

### **2. Prayers.**

The word Paul used here, “*prayers,*” is interpreted as a reverent, sacred act of worship.

This is not just for our needs and desires, but this is a time of being in awe of who God is and telling Him how much it means to us as worship.

### **3. Intercessions.**

The basic idea here is to draw near to a person and confidently speak with Him. This is fellowship, communion, like-mindedness, and friendship

Since we have a mediator who has granted us full access to the Father, we are confident when we go to Him in prayer.

***Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.***

***Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.***

***Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. NKJV***

We can be confident because we enjoy direct fellowship with God.

We are also called a friend of God, and so I feel very safe and confident talking to Him.

***Jesus said in John 15:15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. NKJV***

***James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. NKJV***

#### **4. Giving of Thanks.**

Giving thanks is a must for any true worship to occur. We are saved by the undeserved Grace of God, and for that fact alone, we should offer thanks.

But we should also be thankful for the answered prayers, the unanswered prayers, and for all that the LORD has done and is going to do, as well.

We should also be thankful because we serve a loving Father who works out trials and situations in our lives for our good and His Glory, all the time.

***Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. NKJV***

In *Psalm 103*, David blessed the Lord without asking Him for a single thing.

***Psalm 103:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name!***

***Psalm 103:2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: NKJV***

And now listen to how David ended that same *Psalm*...

***Psalm 103:21 Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, you ministers of His, who do His pleasure.***

***Psalm 103:22 Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul! NKJV***

Again, giving thanks is a must for any true worship to occur.

## **II. The objects of our prayer.**

Read *1 Timothy 2:1*

***"Supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.***

A cool thought is that no one, no matter how influential, on the whole planet, is outside the influence of believing prayer.

People who are near or far away, enemies or friends, saved or unsaved, can have their lives affected by prayer!

Paul told Timothy that there is no category of people for whom it can be said, "You should not pray for them."

May it be said of us, "Look how they love, not only their members, but people in general!"

Look how they do good to those who hate them, and bless those who curse them, and pray for those who abuse them!

Look at how they pray for people; the saved and the lost as well.

Jesus said in *Matthew 5:43*, "***You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'***"

***Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,***

***Matthew 5:45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” NKJV***

And then people will see that there is a God of grace in heaven.

***Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. NKJV***

Paul said, “*Pray for all men, especially kings and all in high positions.*”

Remember, as Paul wrote these letters to Timothy, he was in jail, and Cesar Nero was in power at the time.

Even if we disagree with some authority figure in a certain office, we are told to **pray for them**.

Paul also wrote the book of ***Romans***, and listen to what he said:

***Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.***

***Romans 13:2 Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. NKJV***

Part of our witness as Christians is that we respect the office of all authorities, even if we cannot accept their decisions. *Why?*

### **III. The Reason for our Prayer.**

Read *1 Timothy 2:3-4*

Paul emphasized that nobody should be **excluded** from our prayers, because nobody is beyond the grace of God.

*2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. NKJV*

*John 3:16* says, “*For God so loved the whole world...*”

Notice Paul said in *1 Timothy 2:4*, *who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. NKJV*

Of course, we know that not all men will come, but if it is the LORD’s desire to see people saved, it should be our desire as well.

Our prayers are good and acceptable, **beautiful** unto the Lord.

Pharisees prayed to impress others and to get praise from men.

*Matthew 6:5 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

*Matthew 6:6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

*Matthew 6:7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.” NKJV*

Our desire as Christ-followers should be to please God with our prayers.

*1 John 5:14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.*

*1 John 5:15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. NKJV*

When Jesus was teaching His disciples how to pray, He said to the Father, “*Your will be done on earth.*”

The purpose of our prayer is not to get our will done, but to see God’s will done, here on Earth. Our prayer prepares our hearts and aligns our will with the Father’s will.

Daddy knows best, and we need Him to change our thinking to see that His ways are higher than our ways!

Our Prayers don’t change God’s mind; they **transform** our minds.

#### **IV. The Basis of our Prayer.**

Read *1 Timothy 2:5-7*

We come to realize that the power behind our prayer is the fact that Jesus is not only our Savior, but He is also our mediator.

There was a **massive chasm** between God with His perfect holiness and man with his sinfulness, but Jesus bridged the gap of that canyon on the Cross at Calvary.

Apart from Jesus' work of salvation and Him standing in the gap, we have no right to approach God with any form of communication.

As the only unique God-man, Jesus Christ is the perfect **mediator** between the holy God and sinful man.

Listen to what Job said about an arbitrator; remember this happened before the cross

***Job 9:32 "God is not a mortal like me, so I cannot argue with him or take him to trial.***

***Job 9:33 If only there were a mediator who could bring us together, but there is none." NLT***

Oh, but praise be to God, He sent Jesus, and now I have someone who can bridge the gap, which allows me full access to God the Father!

So here is the open invitation to all who will receive, and Paul is making it clear; that's why we should pray for all men!

## V. The Attitude of Prayer.

Read *1 Timothy 2:8*

First of all, Christian, remember this: the posture of our body is not nearly as important as the posture of our heart.

There are three things that Paul points out for us here:

### 1. Holy Hands.

This is the same thing as clean hands.

*Psalm 24:3 Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place?*

*Psalm 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.*

*NKJV*

In David's Song in *2 Samuel 22:21*, "*The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.*" *NKJV*

*What are clean hands before the Lord?* Someone whose soul belongs to the Lord.

In other words, the LORD has first priority in your life!

So, the first important thing about prayer is to have clean hands, and if they aren't clean, that is the first thing to talk with God about; God, I offer You all of me.

### 2. Without Wrath.

This means without anger.

This is why Jesus said in *Matthew 5:23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,*

*Matthew 5:24 Leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. NKJV*

If you are holding onto bitterness, resentment, or anger, you are building walls up between you and the Lord.

Anger affects our relationship with the Lord. When you go to God in prayer, go to Him without wrath.

And then finally go to God...

### **3. Without Doubt.**

Without doubt, this is talking about the prayer of faith.

Faith is taking God at His Word and trusting Him. We trust what He says, and we place our full confidence in Him.

This means believing God is for us, and that no matter what His decision is, it will end up working out for the best.

The prayer of faith is not insisting that God fulfill my prayer request the way I want, but it is knowing that He will answer us with a yes, no, or wait according to His plan.

The LORD's answer will be the best possible scenario for my life because He loves me. The LORD will hear me, because of His great love for me.

We also believe that nothing is too difficult for the LORD.

This is the attitude of prayer that pleases the LORD!

Just like the story of Janelle Guzman-McMillan that we started with—she was the last person to be pulled from the rubble alive on 9/11, and for her, it was a new beginning.

She discovered that **Prayer Works!** Prayer is the most important thing we do in worship!

## **VI. Quiet times.**

In our lives, we can be **distracted** by so many things and responsibilities. We need specific times of devotion and commitment to the LORD.

Because we are in a relationship with Jesus, spending time with Him is not an obligation but an opportunity to grow closer to Him.

Private devotion involves setting aside time for prayer, reflection, and studying the Bible.

It is often during quiet times with the LORD that our **relationship** is deepened, and we experience the peace of God that passes all human understanding.

***Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;***

***Philippians 4:7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. NKJV***

A quiet time should be a normal part of every Christian's day.

***Psalm 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; NKJV***

Jesus often practiced having alone times with the Father while He was here on Earth, empowered by the Holy Spirit, giving an **example** of how we are to live.

***Luke 5:16 He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. NKJV***

Quiet times help grow our relationship with Christ, as we learn about Him and grow more in His likeness.

We were created to have fellowship with the LORD, so we need to spend time with Him to grow that relationship.

We have looked at prayer at length, so *what else is needed for a quiet time with the LORD?*

Besides prayer time, quiet times with the LORD include **focusing** on the LORD through scripture reading, meditating on His promises, journaling, and reading a devotional.

In prayer, we pour our hearts out to the LORD; while reading and meditating on His Word and promises, we hear from the LORD's heart towards us.

When we hear from the LORD, it is a good practice to journal those things, along with prayer requests, to help us remember and log the LORD's responses to us.

Although, as Christians, we should all serve the LORD in whatever capacity He has called us to, we are also encouraged to spend time at the feet of Jesus.

***Luke 10:38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.***

***Luke 10:39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.***

***Luke 10:40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me."***

***Luke 10:41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.***

***Luke 10:42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." NKJV***

As a busy people group, quiet times can be difficult.

Quiet times with the LORD are a spiritual **discipline**, but like any other spiritual discipline, effort is needed to maintain the discipline, and there are benefits that are gleaned as well.

Since it is a discipline, we must intentionally choose a time that works with our busy schedule and try not to deviate from the habit as much as possible.

We should also determine a place where we can have private, alone time, without interruptions.

After you make having quiet times a habit, you will grow in your relationship with Christ, and you will begin to **desire** those times with Him more and more.