

1 Timothy 2:1-7

Issues for Discussion

1. **“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people...” (2:1-7)** – Before Paul gives Timothy specific instructions for how people ought to conduct themselves in church, he elevates and emphasizes the PRIORITY of prayer, captured in the fourfold petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving, which capture the action (petition - asking), focus (prayer – humble submission to God), spirit (intercession – on behalf of others), and attitude (thanksgiving – gratitude toward God) with which we should approach God’s throne of grace. We often make prayer the last thing, but in urging Timothy to follow through on his instructions, he tells Timothy to make prayer the FIRST thing. Jesus is our example. He often prayed very early in the morning (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16).

“For all people – for kings and all those in authority” may suggest all manner of people with a focus on influential leaders (e.g. pastors, presidents, congressmen, judges). These rulers have been given power to create the atmosphere for life, whether it be filled with religious persecution or freedom, whether Christians can “live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” or else they must always be guarded, hiding, and suffering for their faith.

“This is good, and pleases God our Savior...” – God approves of this kind of praying, namely, the kind that asks God for Christians to be able to trust and obey Christ without restriction, obstruction or persecution.

“Who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth” – God wants all people to be saved (the will of desire/command) but not all will be saved (the will of decree/purpose). God’s will of command/desire is known, but His sovereign will of decree and purpose is often hidden. In the former we understand God desires all kinds of people, even the wicked to be saved (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9, and Ezekiel 18:23,32; 33:11), but in the latter we recognize that God decrees that only the elect, those chosen in Christ will be saved (Romans 9:6-23). Jesus put it this way: “Many are called but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:14). A free booklet by John Piper treats this matter of God’s two-fold will very well. Read it here: <https://document.desiringgod.org/does-god-desire-all-to-be-saved-en.pdf?ts=1446647103>.

“One God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus” – This verse affirms several important theological truths. Christianity is a monotheistic faith – there is only one God. Our belief in the Trinity, namely, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, which the ancient councils have defined as “one Essence, three Persons,” does not necessitate polytheism but a mystery that our finite minds can only acknowledge without the ability to comprehensively explain: There are three unique Personalities in the Godhead but only one God. The verse also affirms the one and only way salvation in Christ (John 14:6). Jesus is the only way for anyone to come to God for salvation. Finally, the verse affirms the genuine humanity of Christ: “the man Christ Jesus.” It is in His humanity that Jesus identifies with people in order to be their substitute on the cross (Hebrews 10:4-10; Romans 8:3-4).

“Who gave Himself as a ransom for all people” – As I mentioned before, the word “all” here may not be all in number but all in kind, so all kinds of people. For example Matthew 3:5 says “all Judea” went out to Jesus. This expression does not need to mean “every single person” but

rather all kinds of people, men, women, and children, the rich, the poor, etc. Otherwise, we would have to understand Jesus's death on the cross as potential atonement (forgiveness) rather than actual atonement (forgiveness), for many are not actually saved.

"I was appointed a herald and an apostle...and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles" – Paul was appointed an apostle by Christ Himself (1 Timothy 1:1, 12). This affirmation of his credentials underlie his instructions to Timothy to shut down the false teachers in the Ephesian church. **"I am telling the truth, I am not lying"** – Paul uses variations of this elsewhere (Romans 9:1; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Galatians 1:20). He seems to use it to make a point, kind of like the way we use the expression, "I'm serious!" or the way Jesus often said, "Very truly I tell you" (e.g. John 5:24). The expression draws our attention to what is being said. In the 1 Timothy context, his "I am telling the truth, I am not lying" stands in contrast to the "false" teaching of men like Hymenaeus and Alexander.