

Prayers for Those in Authority

Commentary for May 1, 2017 — **Pray for Peace and Not War**

The second chapter of First Timothy begins with Paul admonishing young Timothy:

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for ALL MEN; For kings, and for all that are in authority; [why?] that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have ALL MEN to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

• **1 Timothy 2:1-4**

I usually quote this passage focusing on verse 4, but here I want to emphasize verse 2 (the shaded portion). Paul mentions "all men" in verse 1 and uses the same phrase in verse 4. We are to pray generally "for all men" because it is God's will to save "all men," and pray specifically "for all that are in authority" so a quiet, peaceable life can be lived with godliness. Those people referred to between the double use of the phrase "all men" (the kings and those in authority) are also saved, so they will be glorified in the future, as we will be.

This First Timothy passage relates directly to Dr. Martin's article for this month, "Why Does God Allow War?" (Read it after the "[May 2017 Newsletter](#)"). The "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks ... for all that are in authority" are important. They are encouraged for the sake of those doing those things — for their benefit. God desires for believers to lead quiet lives in peace where they live (but He does not guarantee that peace).

The apostle Paul writes in the Epistle to the Romans that we are to be obedient to authorities for the same reason given in 1 Timothy 2:1-4: that we may live in peace and be left alone by those in power. In fact, the authorities God set up have a beneficial purpose to society and for believers (Romans 13:1-7).

The apostle Peter says something similar:

"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him [1] for the punishment of evildoers, and [2] for the praise of them that do well.

For so is the will of God, [why?] that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke [a cover] of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."

• **1 Peter 2:13-17**

Changing God's Mind?

Our "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks" to God (1 Timothy 2:1) on behalf of others can perhaps affect a response from Him to change His intended actions toward individuals or groups of people. If this was not so, why would the apostle Paul "exhort" Timothy to encourage others to do so? God can be influenced. God can change His

mind. God can alter His intended actions if we ask Him to do so, and our request is in accord with His will.¹ His ability to change His mind is part of His sovereign will.

Why would God ever change His mind? He would do so because of His **“children.”**

“And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

• **Matthew 18:2–3**

See also Matthew 19:13–14; Mark 10:14; and Luke 18:16 in the Gospels, as well as 1 John 2:1, 12–13, 18, 28, 3:1–2, 7, 18, 4:4, and 5:21 where the apostle John calls them **“little children.”** The apostle Paul tells us:

“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. ...

Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

• **Romans 8:16–17, 21**

We are not mature compared to God our Father and Christ our elder brother. We are younger and more immature than two year old children bumping into walls, falling on our butts, and crying when we are tired, hungry, or cranky (which, in God’s sight, is much of the time).

Yet God likes to be asked by His **“little children”** when they want something, and He likes to give us what we ask for when it is in accord with His will:

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

• **1 John 5:14–15**

Even if we **“little children”** are wise enough to ask according to His will, we may have to be patient until God sees fit to give us what we ask for, and accept when He does not.

One thing He wants to give us now is **“peace,”** if it suits His purpose to do so. A significant passage by Paul is expressed better (than in the King James Version) by the Concordant Literal Version. It aligns with what Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:1–4:

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

• **Philippians 4:6–7, Concordant Literal Version**

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¹ As referenced in this month’s article, “Why Does God Allow War?” see two of Dr. Martin’s articles, [“The Repentance of God in the Bible”](#) (August 1995) and [“How You Can Influence God”](#) (June 1998).