



September 27 — Pray for Everyone

Weekly Reading: 2 Thessalonians 1–3; 1 Timothy 1–2

Life Group Passage: 1 Timothy 2:1–7

Main Point

Because God desires people to be saved through the one Mediator, Jesus Christ, the church should pray broadly and live missionally.

Key Verse

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.”

1 Timothy 2:5

Life Group — The Flow

- 15 minutes — Conversation and relationship-building
- 5 minutes — Looking Back
- 5 minutes — Introduction, Background, and Christ Connection
- 30 minutes — Study and Apply
- 5–7 minutes — Application Exercise
- 10 minutes — Pray Through the Passage and Prayer Requests
- 5 minutes — Conclusion

If Time Is Limited...

Focus on:

- Main Point and Key Verse
- Background and Christ Connection
- Read 1 Timothy 2:1–4
- Passage 1 questions 1 and 3
- Read 1 Timothy 2:5–7

- Passage 2 questions 1 and 4
- Application Exercise
- Pray Through the Passage
- Final Takeaway

Looking Back — 5 Minutes

Last week we studied the hope Christians have in grief because Jesus died, rose, and will return. This week Paul turns the church outward: the gospel hope we treasure should widen the range of people for whom we pray.

Discuss one or more:

- Did a truth from 1 Thessalonians 4 help you respond differently to grief or fear this week?
- Were you able to encourage someone with resurrection hope?
- What did you notice about the difference between giving a cliché and giving patient, biblical comfort?

Transition to Introduction

“If the gospel is good news for every kind of person, then our prayer lives should begin to reflect the breadth of God’s mission.”

Introduction — 5 Minutes

Ask

Who tends to make it onto your prayer list naturally—and who rarely does?

Keep this nonpartisan. The point is not to evaluate particular leaders but to examine whether our prayers extend beyond people we naturally like.

Follow-Up

What makes it difficult to pray sincerely for a public leader or another person you strongly disagree with?

Say

Prayer can easily become narrow. We pray for our family, our health, our church, and people whose needs are close enough for us to feel.

Paul begins 1 Timothy 2 by deliberately widening the church's field of vision: prayers are to be made for everyone, including kings and all those in authority. He then connects that broad prayer to the heart of the gospel. God desires people to be saved, and there is one Mediator who can bring sinners to God: Jesus Christ.

Transition to Background

"Paul's command is especially striking when we remember who held political power when he wrote."

Background

Paul wrote 1 Timothy to a younger ministry partner serving in Ephesus, where false teaching threatened the church's doctrine and mission. After addressing the need to protect the gospel in chapter 1, Paul turns immediately to the praying life of the church.

The Roman world was not governed by leaders who shared Christian convictions. Nero reigned during this general period, and Christians could not assume that authorities would be sympathetic to their faith. Yet Paul does not tell believers only to criticize, fear, or ignore rulers. He tells the church to pray for them.

The goal includes a tranquil and quiet life marked by godliness and dignity—not because comfort is the church's ultimate mission, but because peaceful conditions can create space for faithful Christian witness. Paul then moves from public prayer to God's saving purpose and Christ's unique mediation.

Transition to Christ Connection

"The reason our prayers can be broad is that the gospel itself crosses every human boundary while remaining centered on one Savior."

Christ Connection

Humanity's deepest problem is not lack of political stability but separation from God through sin. No government, moral effort, religious system, or spiritual sincerity can bridge that divide.

Paul says there is one God and one Mediator between God and humanity: the man Christ Jesus. Because Jesus is truly God and truly human, He uniquely stands between holy God and sinful people. He gave Himself as a ransom, paying the price required to set captives free.

The word “all” in this passage emphasizes the breadth of the gospel invitation and the church’s mission. God’s saving concern is not restricted to one ethnicity, class, nation, or social group. Yet the passage does not teach universalism. Salvation comes through the one Mediator, and the gospel must be received in faith.

Prayer and mission therefore belong together. As we pray for all kinds of people, God reshapes our hearts to desire their salvation and to participate in making Christ known.

Transition to Study and Apply

“Paul begins not with a narrow prayer strategy but with a sweeping command: bring all kinds of people before God.”

Study and Apply — 30 Minutes

Unpack the biblical text to discover what Scripture says and how we can apply it in our lives this week.

Passage 1 — 1 Timothy 2:1–4

Pray Wide

Read the Passage — Have a volunteer read 1 Timothy 2:1–4.

Pray for All People

[1] First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people,
[2] for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.
[3] This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,
[4] who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
(ESV)

Commentary

Use the following commentary to prepare ahead of time. As you lead, summarize the key insights rather than reading everything word-for-word.

Verse 1 piles up several words for prayer: petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings. Paul may not intend rigid technical distinctions between each term. Taken together, they emphasize a rich, comprehensive prayer life.

The repeated emphasis is breadth: these prayers are to be made “for everyone.” The church must resist praying only for people who are familiar, agreeable, or already part of its community.

Verse 2 specifically includes kings and all those in authority. Praying for leaders does not require endorsing every decision they make. We can ask God to give leaders wisdom, restrain evil, promote justice, preserve peace, and ultimately bring them to saving knowledge of Christ.

Paul connects such prayer with a tranquil and quiet life in godliness and dignity. The Christian desire for peace is not mere self-protection. Stable conditions can allow believers to worship, work, raise families, serve neighbors, and share the gospel without unnecessary disruption.

Verses 3–4 take us to God’s saving heart. Prayer for people beyond our circle is “good” and pleasing to God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

This statement does not mean every person will finally be saved regardless of response to Christ. Scripture consistently calls people to repent and believe. Paul’s point is that God’s saving concern is not confined to a favored category of people. The church’s prayers should be as wide as the mission God has given it.

Guide Discussion

You do not need to cover every question. Use those that best help your group engage with the passage.

1. **Good for Students.** What people or groups does Paul specifically tell the church to include in prayer?
2. **Discuss.** How can Christians pray faithfully for leaders they disagree with without confusing prayer with political endorsement?

3. Deeper Dive. What does the connection between verses 1–2 and verses 3–4 teach us about the relationship between prayer, public life, and evangelism?

4. Reflective — Index Card. What person or category of people is usually outside the normal boundaries of your prayers? Why?

Teaching Insight

Say

“A gospel-shaped prayer life gets wider. The more clearly we see God’s saving concern for all kinds of people, the harder it becomes to pray only for our own comfort and circle.”

Transition to Passage 2

“Paul now explains why this expansive prayer makes sense: every person has the same fundamental need, and God has provided one sufficient Mediator.”

Passage 2 — 1 Timothy 2:5–7

One Mediator for All

Read the Passage – Have a volunteer read 1 Timothy 2:5–7.

[5] For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

[6] who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

[7] For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (ESV)

Commentary

Verse 5 begins with the confession that there is one God. In a world filled with religious options, Paul does not treat every path as equally valid. The one true God has provided one Mediator between Himself and humanity.

That Mediator is “the man Christ Jesus.” Paul’s wording highlights Jesus’ genuine humanity without denying His deity. The eternal Son took on human nature so that He could represent us, obey in our place, die for sinners, and bring us to God.

Verse 6 says Jesus “gave himself as a ransom for all.” A ransom is a price paid for release. Sin enslaves and condemns; Jesus voluntarily gives Himself to secure freedom. The cross shows both the seriousness of sin and the breadth of God’s saving invitation.

The uniqueness of Christ does not shrink the church’s mission; it intensifies it. If there is one Mediator, people everywhere need to hear about Him.

Verse 7 points to Paul’s own calling as a herald, apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles. Prayer for all peoples naturally moves toward proclamation to all peoples. We do not pray instead of sharing the gospel, nor do we share as though prayer were unnecessary. The church does both because salvation belongs to God and the message has been entrusted to us.

Consider This — Widening the Prayer List

Imagine a church prayer list that contains hundreds of names but almost every request concerns people already inside the church: illnesses, surgeries, travel, jobs, and family needs. Those prayers matter, and God invites us to bring them to Him.

But if the list never includes neighbors far from Christ, public leaders, unreached peoples, missionaries, difficult coworkers, or people the church is tempted to avoid, the prayer list may reveal that the church’s field of vision has become smaller than God’s mission.

Prayer does not become less personal when it becomes more missional; it becomes more like the expansive concern revealed in the gospel.

Guide Discussion

1. **Good for Students.** What does Paul say is unique about Jesus in verses 5–6?
2. **Discuss.** Why does the truth that there is one Mediator create urgency rather than arrogance in Christian mission?
3. **Deeper Dive.** How might praying regularly for people who are far from Christ change the way we speak to them and serve them?
4. **Reflective — Index Card.** Who is one person you can begin praying for by name—not merely that life gets easier for them, but that they come to know Christ?

Teaching Insight

Say

“The church prays broadly because the need is universal and the Savior is sufficient. Every kind of person needs the one Mediator, Jesus Christ.”

Transition to Application Exercise

“Let’s turn Paul’s broad command into a prayer rhythm we can actually practice this week.”

Application Exercise — 5–7 Minutes

Pray Wide • Pray High • Pray Gospel

Supplies: Index cards and pens

Use your card to create a short prayer list that stretches beyond your normal circle.

1. Pray Wide

Write the name of one person or group you rarely think to pray for.

- A neighbor or coworker far from Christ
- A different generation or culture
- An unreached people group
- Someone difficult to love

2. Pray High

Write the name or office of one local, state, national, or world leader. What would be a faithful, nonpartisan prayer for that person?

3. Pray Gospel

Write one person’s name and ask specifically that God draw that person to the truth of Christ. What opportunity might you have to serve or speak to them?

Say

“Do not let the card become a one-day exercise. Put it somewhere you will see it and pray through the three names repeatedly this week.”

Transition to Pray Through the Passage

“Paul began this passage by urging the church to pray. So our response should not merely be to talk about prayer—we should pray.”

Pray Through the Passage — 10 Minutes

Led by the Prayer Champion

Read each verse and prayer prompt aloud. Allow a few moments between prompts for personal reflection and prayer.

If time is limited, use one or two prompts rather than all four. The goal is meaningful prayer through the passage, not completing every prompt.

Prompt 1 — Adoration (Who God Is)

God is Savior and His heart is merciful toward the lost.

1 Timothy 2:3–4 — “This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved.”

Praise God for His saving mercy and for a gospel invitation that crosses human boundaries.

Prompt 2 — Confession (Where We Need Him)

Our prayers can become narrow and self-centered.

1 Timothy 2:1 — “I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone.”

Confess where you have prayed almost entirely for your own circle while ignoring people God calls you to love.

Prompt 3 — Gratitude (What He Has Done)

Jesus gave Himself as our ransom.

1 Timothy 2:6 — “Who gave himself as a ransom for all.”

Thank Jesus for paying the price you could not pay and bringing you freedom through His sacrifice.

Prompt 4 — Response / Obedience (How We Will Obey)

We are entrusted with the gospel message.

1 Timothy 2:7 — “For this I was appointed a herald, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

Ask God to make your prayers more missional and to give you courage to participate in making Christ known.

Prayer Requests, Praises, and Follow-Up

- Ask the group for updates from the previous week's prayer requests and celebrate answered prayers.
- Invite members to share honestly at whatever level they are comfortable so the group can support one another through prayer and practical care.
- Pray specifically for public leaders, missionaries, unreached peoples, and people by name who do not yet know Christ.
- Record requests and praises, share them with the group during the week, and follow up at the next gathering.

Transition to Conclusion

"Paul's vision is simple and enormous: a praying church keeps all kinds of people before God because all kinds of people need the one Savior."

Conclusion — 5 Minutes

Final Takeaway

Because there is one God and one Mediator, the church should pray for all kinds of people and live ready to make the gospel of Jesus known.

This Week's Challenge

Respond — *What Will I Do?*

Keep your Pray Wide • Pray High • Pray Gospel card where you will see it throughout the week.

- Pray through all three categories at least three times this week.
- When you pray for a leader, ask God to shape your attitude as well as their decisions.
- Take one appropriate step toward the person you named in your gospel prayer.

Reflect — *What Is God Showing Me?*

Consider:

- Who is missing from my normal prayers?
- Do my prayers for leaders sound more like intercession or complaint?
- How does the uniqueness of Christ shape my urgency for evangelism?

- What happens in my heart when I repeatedly pray for someone difficult to love?

Review — *How Will I Keep God's Word Before Me?*

Review 1 Timothy 2:5 throughout the week:

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.”

Let this verse remind you that Christian mission is both broad in reach and centered on one Savior.

Read — *How Will I Prepare for Next Week?*

Continue with the church's Year of Prayer New Testament Reading Plan.

Next Week's Reading: 1 Timothy 3–6; 2 Timothy 1

As you read, notice the kind of character, discipline, and courage Paul expects from people who belong to God's household.

Closing Prayer

“God our Savior, thank You for hearing the prayers of Your people and for giving us one perfect Mediator, Jesus Christ. Forgive us when our prayers become narrow, self-protective, or shaped more by frustration than by Your mission. Teach us to pray for all kinds of people, including leaders and those far from Christ. Give us peaceful, godly lives and bold, compassionate witness so that others may come to know the truth. Amen.”