



# 1 Timothy

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**...for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 1 Timothy 2:2**

Paul now especially identifies those who are to be included in “supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks.” In the previous verse, he said, “for all men.” It is an all-inclusive statement, but now he continues by making special note. It is “for kings and all who are in authority.” Paul understood that in praying for those in authority, he was praying for those who would be able to protect and bring peace to those under them.

This doesn't mean that prayers for salvation for such people were more important than for those who were commoners. Rather, high positions could affect commoners, whether they were held by believers or not. In praying for them, there would be a natural, positive result if the prayers were responded to. That is then stated in his words, “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.”

It is certainly preferable that those in high positions be saved believers, but whether they are or not, if they are favorably disposed towards believers, then it would naturally follow that a quiet and peaceable life was possible. And if this was available, then it would be a life lived “in all godliness and reverence.” The older KJV uses the term “honesty.” What that meant in 1611 is completely different than what it means today. Reading such an outdated version leaves a wholly wrong impression of what is intended.

The word *semnotés* gives the sense of gravity and dignity, not in honesty or fair dealings. It refers to that which is august. It beckons for reverence from others, and it is intended to exalt what is noble and morally refined. Achieving “godliness and reverence” is the anticipated

benefit of leading a quiet and peaceful life. This then is the purpose of praying for “kings and all who are in authority.”

Life application: Better to read multiple translations of the Bible, looking for differences which will then highlight where inaccuracy lies. From there, one can go to the original and determine which is correct. When captivated by a single version, a complete misunderstanding of what is being said is the expected result. Don't allow this narrow mindset to affect your study of Scripture.

**For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 1 Timothy 2:3**

“For this is good and acceptable” ties the verse to what was just stated –

“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, <sup>2</sup>for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.”

It is “good and acceptable” to pray as stated, including “for all men.” This included “kings and all who are in authority.” What is apparent from these words of Paul is that God desires that all would be saved, and that our prayers are a part of that process. Otherwise, Paul could not write these things. In fact, he would simply say, “Don't bother with prayer. God has sovereignly chosen those who will be saved, and has predetermined all that will occur. Your prayers are a waste of time.” This is never hinted at in the Bible. Instead, we are given the high honor of praying for others, and for receiving what God offers. That is great stuff. And the reason why it is great stuff is because it isn't just good and acceptable in a general sense, but that it is “good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.”

God is well pleased when we pray for others in the ways he described. And it is good and acceptable that these are given “for all men” including “for kings and all who are in authority.” God looks at our prayers in these situations and finds them acceptable because we are not just praying for ourselves and our own needs, but we are praying for others, even some who may not currently be favorably disposed towards us. This is a truly noble thing.

Life application: Let us do our best to follow through with the words of this verse, even if those appointed over us are really crummy people. They too need Jesus, and so we should do our utmost to pray for them in hopes that they will come to God through Christ and be saved.

**...who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

1 Timothy 2:4

Paul's words of this verse continue to be based on what he said in verse 1. There he exhorted Timothy to pray "for all men." It is this which is on his mind. The fact that prayers are to be made immediately excludes the doctrine of universal salvation. Some will use this verse, torn out of its full context, and state that if "God our Savior" of verse 3 "desires all men to be saved," and if nothing can thwart His will, then all must be saved. That is an abuse of the immediate context, and it completely denies numerous passages in Scripture which clearly refute such a false claim.

There is a difference between God actually saving all men and Him potentially saving all men. God's desire is that all be saved, but His nature demands that all must be saved in a certain way. Even God cannot violate one of His own intrinsic traits. God is merciful, but He cannot violate His righteousness in order to grant mercy, or He would then be unrighteous. The plan of redemption includes (in fact it necessitates) the free will of man. The fact that God sent His Son into the world to die as a payment for man's sin shows that He desires that all be saved. However, if man does not accept the payment, he remains unsaved. Therefore, Jesus died potentially for all, but He actually only died for those who receive the offer of His atoning death.

Jesus' work is fully sufficient to pay for every sin ever committed, but not every sin will be paid for because the payment is not received. Thus the doctrine of "universal salvation" is false. On the other side of the same coin, the doctrine of "regeneration in order to believe," which is taught by Calvinism, is also false. It excludes free-will as well, but instead of claiming that all are saved, it instead claims that only those God predestines, and then regenerates in order to believe, will be saved – the doctrine of "limited atonement."

In this, the claim is that God regenerates a person in order that they may believe, they then believe, and they are then saved. In other words, they are saved before they are saved. There are several logical arguments against this, chief among them is that the Bible never teaches this. It is convoluted and denies the unlimited scope of God's atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus – something implied in Paul's words here, and in Peter's words of 2 Peter 3:9 (and elsewhere). Again, one must look at what is potential and what is actual. Christ's death can potentially save all; it does not actually save all.

The salvation of man is then tied up in Paul's final words of the verse, "and come to the knowledge of the truth." In order to be saved, one must "come to the knowledge" which will allow this to happen. Like praying for "all men," it is the responsibility of believers to share the gospel to all men as well. Paul's implication is that one cannot be saved unless they come to the knowledge of how to be saved. This statement dispels both universalism (all are saved) and Calvinism (God regenerates a person in order to believe/limited atonement). Logically, without the knowledge of the truth, salvation will not occur, and logically if God actively does

something to change the heart of man before he receives God's offer, then there is actually no need to evangelize anyone. Instead, He would simply instill in the one He has chosen this knowledge and be done with it. But even Paul said that he could have resisted the truth. In Acts 26:19, he stated that he was "not disobedient to the heavenly vision" that was given to him. This implies that he could have rejected it. He was not regenerated in order to believe, and neither is anyone else. It is a false doctrine.

Albert Barnes gives three points on this matter – 1) That salvation is provided for all; 2) That salvation should be offered to all people; 3) That people are to blame if they are not saved. Score 1 for right thinking. Albert Barnes is correct.

Life application: It is too bad that people feel the need to rip verses out of their intended context in order to justify bad doctrine. Even when shown to be wrong, they will allow pride to step in and override what is painfully obvious. May we never presume to do this. Instead, let us search the Scriptures with a desire to teach what God has submitted in this magnificent book of clear doctrine, right thinking, and in accord with the offer of salvation to all who will but come.