Prayer #1
Prayer may be thought most important part of service, but often shortest
Prayer is probably the spiritual duty that most people struggle greatest with
I. First, We See the Importance of Prayer
A. First see it in Paul's verb in verse 1 - "I urge" - "Parakaleo" - "exhort"
B. Then see it in the phrase "First of all" - Above all- before all things
C. This is one of many times that Paul exhorts people to pray
   1. I Thessalonians 5:17 - pray without ceasing- then v. 25- Pray for us
      a. Rom. 15:30 - 32; Ephesians 6:18-20; Hebrews 13:18, 19
   2. Since all scriptures are God-breathed- this is Spirit exhorting us
   3. We need many exhortations because prayer is hard work
D. Separates Christian from unbeliever-Only Christians mourn lack of prayer
E. Prayer is important because it sanctifies all other things- I Tim. 4:4, 5
II. How Does Paul Tell us to Pray?
A. In verse 1 Paul uses four different words to describe Paul
   1. Thanksgiving is the easiest one to differentiate- to give thanks
   2. Other three words difficult to define the difference between them
      a. Supplication simply means to make a request for someone
      b. Prayer is simple word that means to ask of God
   3. Third word- Intercessions - Only found here and 4:15 in NT
      a. But verb form is found in Romans 8:34; Heb. 7:25 of Christ
      b. Also found of Spirit in Romans 8:26, 27 - "for us"
      c. Found two places of men- both in bad sense- Rom. 11:2; Acts 25:24
   4. General Idea would be to speak to God on behalf of someone else
      a. Prayer can be discovered by natural or general revelation
      b. But idea of intercessory prayer only comes by special revelation
      c. Found two places of men- both in bad sense- Rom. 11:2; Acts 25:24
      d. Prayer is one thing that we can do on behalf of others-Jam. 5:16
III. Who are We to Pray For
A. In this scripture we are told specifically to pray for those in authority
   1. But it also says that we should pray for all people
B. Two main groups we are told to pray for - saved and unsaved
   1. Main reason we pray for unsaved is for them to be saved- Rom. 10:1
   2. In praying for saved- we are more able to know God's will
C. Also commanded to pray for enemies to be perfect- Matt. 5:44, 45
IV. Why are We to Pray?
A. For quiet and peaceful life- idea is that we pray for results - 2 reasons
   1. We pray because we have love and concern for someone
   2. We pray because we expect results from prayer- Heb. 11:6; I Jn 5:14, 15
   3. When convinced of own inability- then we pray-(Jn 15:5 with Ph. 4:13)
      a. 2 Cor. 1:10, 11; Isaiah 37:21; Philippians 1:18, 19
B. We acknowledge that there is a sovereignty of God in prayer
   1. But also know that we should pray for blessing- 2 Chron. 7:14
C. True Calvinist is one who has the only real reason for praying
   1. Because God uses this as means to bring about sovereign will
Conclusion: Would we be happier if God didn't command us to pray?
A. We should have same attitude as Samuel- I Samuel 12:23