

Rom. 14:19
"So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another."

John 8:32
"And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

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JUST WHAT ARE YOU PRAYING FOR?

By Jim Stauffer

Paul teaches Timothy about the objects and purposes of prayer. *First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

(1 Timothy 2:1-4)

We almost surely need to refocus our minds when we pray to God. There is a question in my mind whether we are truly praying for the things God would have us to concern ourselves with or not. First he tells us to pray for all men. We are not just to pray for our close friends or brethren, though obviously they are appropriate subject matter for prayer. But beyond those whom we love and see and relate to in daily life, there are folks who need our prayers and who need the providence of God in order to achieve His desire for them. Part of the group of "all men", are the kings and all who are in authority.

I have noticed, even among brethren, some whose loyalty to a certain brand of rule or politics is the motivation behind their prayers. It is true they desire a better, more efficient government (all who are in authority), than currently exists, but there may well be a question as to why? It is very possible we wish better government because we see personal financial security in our future if things continue as they are. While there is nothing inherently wrong with desiring good, efficient government that enables all to prosper, that is not the reason Paul gives for these petitions we are to offer.

Paul says we pray for our leaders in order to have a tranquil and quiet life in godliness and dignity. Let us be sure to differentiate between sound fiscal policy

(which clearly is a good thing) and a government that allows us to conduct our lives of service to the King of Kings with dignity. That means we can fulfill our responsibilities as servants in the Kingdom of His beloved Son and not be intimidated or harassed. That is the first reason Paul gives for praying for our leaders.

Then Paul mentions the reason a tranquil, quiet life in godliness and dignity is something to be prayed for. It is because God wishes all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. Clearly it is easier to communicate the redemption story in a society that allows godliness to be freely pursued. Now, let us be sure to understand godliness is a term used by the Holy Spirit. It is not open to discussion, alteration or any change in meaning by a society. This word godliness is defined with terms such as holiness, piety, etc. Its meaning is directed to the concepts of the gospel. All this comes from God. Godliness in our lives then emanates from His word and cannot be distorted by the world.

We then pray for the rulers of our country and even other countries of the world to allow its citizens to live in godliness and dignity so they can practice the command of God and Christ to evangelize the world in search of the lost Jesus came to seek and save **(Luke 19:10)**.

As we pray, we often question why the worldly influence on our society has infected leadership to such a point they have begun to rule against godliness in the everyday conduct of affairs. Why does this world around us allow such evil to become the normal way of life? This has been the eternal question of God's people. The Psalmist in the 80th Psalm pleads with God to restore His blessings to a people He chose. A people He delivered from Egypt and planted in the

land of Canaan. A people He blessed with abundance in family, crops and animals for food and wealth. Yet, they became a people content and satisfied with pleasure to the point they began to pursue pleasure instead of devotion to the God Who had given them such blessings. Now, they find themselves pleading with Him and promising fidelity to Him if He will restore the blessings.

Is it possible our country and countries around the world are be chastised by the God in heaven we are supposed to worship and revere (**Hebrews 12:4-11**)? Is it possible that chastisement is directed again to His people for their failure to worship and revere God and His word? Could it be that God's people of today are being influenced too much by the world around them and becoming a part of the world instead of being an influence on the world to turn to God? Are we enjoying the blessings of God and using them for our pleasure instead of using them for his purposes, to lead the lost to Him?

In what kingdom do we claim our citizenship? *For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Philippians 3:18-21)*

A TENDER CONSCIENCE

Craig Thomas

In **Psalm 32** David describes an increasingly vanishing breed: a person with a tender conscience. People with a tender conscience are concerned about sin, especially their own sin. A person with a tender conscience may suppress the thought that they have committed sin, but their conscience will not allow them to do so for very long. David describes this in **verses 3 and 4**:

*3 "When I kept silent, my bones grew old
Through my groaning all the day long.*

*4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was turned into the drought of summer."*

Verse 4 points out another aspect of a person with a tender conscience. The first thing their conscience takes stock of is the effect their sin has on God. That was the exact reaction of the prodigal son in **Luke 15**. When he came to his senses and returned home to his father, he said, *"Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight" (Lk. 15:21)*. It is certainly true that when we sin it is often against another person. However, it is always against God! David also recognized this principle and applied it to himself. When the prophet Nathan called out David's sin in the Bathsheba incident, David's reaction was *"I have sinned against the Lord."* (**2 Sam. 12:13**) David knew that he had sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, his own family, etc. However, first and foremost he recognized the most important aspect was *"I have sinned against the Lord."*

We live in a world that is sick and dying from sin. Most people ignore their sin and by doing so sear their conscience *"with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:2)*. Continuing this practice ruins our conscience, rendering it useless by making it insensitive and unfeeling. Such behavior inevitably leads to one of two things. First, as one sears his/her conscience, their conscience, even though suppressed, will begin eating at their soul like a cancer. That is what David described in **verses 3 and 4** above. In **Psalm 31** David describes this awful burden in **verses 9 and 10** like this:

*9 "My eye wastes away with grief,
Yes, my soul and my body!*

*10 For my life is spent with grief,
And my years with sighing;
My strength fails because of my iniquity,
And my bones waste away."*

When we sear our conscience, life becomes a misery. Our conscience constantly torments us. That leads to all manner of problems. People in that situation come to loathe themselves. And, they will be a source of misery for any other human being they meet. Second, if we continue to sear our conscience we become completely numb to sin. We ultimately lose all control because we no longer care about proper behavior. At that point we become more dangerous than a wild animal. We will abandon all limits on our behavior. We will lash out at others with no care for the devastation and destruction we cause. We saw a lot in the riots that wrecked American cities and the lives of decent, law-abiding citizens in the summer of 2020.

David aptly describes this person in **verse 9 of Psalm 32:**

*"Do not be like the horse or like the mule,
Which have no understanding,
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle,
Else they will not come near you."*

The prescription to avoid all this self-inflicted heartache and the devastation it reeks on ourselves and others is quite simple. First, we need to properly train our conscience and always strive not to sear it *"with a hot iron."* Instead of suppressing our conscience let us constantly renew it by turning to God's Word (**v. 8**) and training it in the path of righteousness. Second, when we fail and commit sin let us recognize the most important person we have offended is the Lord. Hence, let us pray to Him confessing our sin (**vv. 5, 6; cf. 1 Jn. 1:9**). If we have sinned against others, let us also do our best to make it up to them (**Jas. 5:16; Matt. 18:15ff**). We can only enjoy true peace of mind if we maintain a tender conscience and deal with our sin in God's way.

10 *"Many sorrows shall be to the wicked;
But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him*

11 *Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous;
And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!"*

GAMBLING

... Love Thy Neighbor

Bible teaching about justice, fairness, and concern for others, repeatedly called for strong judgment on Israel, as the leaders, religious and political, perverted justice, took bribes, and oppressed the widow and orphan—those who had little standing in society and little recourse to for equitable. **Micah 6:8** says: *"He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"*

Gambling violates several Bible principles. Many people today want something for nothing. The Bible says: *"Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need"* (**Ephesians 4:28**). The Lord commands that we *"labor with our hands."* In exchange for that labor, we can take

care of ourselves and those in our charge. There are different kinds of work; the Lord expects this of us. *"The lazy man says, "There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!"* (**Proverbs 22:13**). The lazy man finds a way to justify his laziness; he seeks something for nothing. *"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law"* (**Romans 13:8-10**). Do you truly love your neighbor when you want him to lose his money to you? You both cannot win. Someone must lose. Would you rather lose or would you rather your neighbor lose? You do not covet your neighbor's wife; you do not covet your neighbor's riches.

The role of the defender is prominent in the Bible. **Proverbs 23:11** says: *"For their Redeemer is mighty; He will plead their case against you."* The defender, or kinsman or redeemer, is integral to the story of Ruth. In this case, the relative in need was helped by a near kinsman. In times of death, the redeemer would help those left behind (**Deuteronomy 25:5-10**). He would buy back land that a poor relative had sold to someone outside the family (**Leviticus 25:25-28**); he would buy back a relative that had been sold into slavery (**Leviticus 25:47-49**). What does this have to do with gambling? Just this: If behavior is to change, the heart must first change. The only way the heart can change for the good is to correctly consider and apply God's word. To insist on a direct "thou shall not" misses the principle of love for God and love for one's neighbor.

Randy Harshbarger

Are you interested in studying the Bible? Maybe there are things in life you feel you do not have answers for and have not been able to find satisfaction in the usual places people in society seek.

If you believe in Jesus or even if you are interested in investigating what He has offered for our comfort and relief of the problems we have in our daily lives, contact me at :

913-620-0563 or jim.stauffer71@gmail.com

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

- Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study
- Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
- Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
- Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

OUR ADDRESS IS:

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Bible Classes: Sunday Morning
Prayer - Ron Peck

Wednesday Evening - **Minor Prophets - Jim Stauffer**

Sunday Sermon: **Saved by Grace Through Faith**



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- ▶ **Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17
- ▶ **Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6
- ▶ **Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30
- ▶ **Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10
- ▶ **Be Baptized** for remission of sins - Acts 2:38
- ▶ **Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10