

## THE SCOPE OF EVANGELISTIC PRAYER

We are to offer those prayers “on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority” ([1 Timothy 2:1–2](#)).

[1 Timothy 2:1-2 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, **be made on behalf of all men,**  
<sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

As we discovered previously, our prayers are all too often narrowly confined to personal needs and wants and rarely extend beyond those of our immediate circle of friends and family. In sharp contrast, however, Paul calls for evangelistic prayer “**on behalf of all men.**” There is no place for selfishness or exclusivity. We are not to try to limit either the Gospel call or our evangelistic prayers to the elect. After all, we have no means of knowing who the elect are *until* they respond to the Gospel call.

Moreover, we are told that God desires all to be saved ([1 Timothy 2:4](#)).

[1 Timothy 2:4 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> **who desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather delights when sinners turn from their evil ways and live ([Ezekiel 33:11](#)).

[Ezekiel 33:11 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, **but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live.** Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'

So prayer for the salvation of the lost is perfectly consistent with the heart of God. He has commanded all men to repent ([Acts 17:30](#)).

[Acts 17:30 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>30</sup> "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,

We must pray that they will do so, and that they will embrace the salvation offered to all ([Titus 2:11](#)).

[Titus 2:11 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

Out of the universal group of “**all men,**” Paul specifically singles out some who might otherwise be neglected in evangelistic prayer: “**kings and all who are in authority.**” Because ancient (and modern) rulers are so often tyrannical, and even disrespectful of the Lord and His people, they are targets of bitterness and animosity. They are also remote, not part of the everyday lives of believers. Hence there is a tendency to be indifferent toward them.

To neglect them is a serious sin because of the authority and responsibility leaders have. Paul’s injunction here calls for the Ephesian assembly to pray for the emperor, who at that time was the cruel and vicious blasphemer, Nero. Although he was a vile, debauched persecutor of the faith, they were still to pray for his redemption. For the sake of their eternal souls, we should pray that all “**kings and all who are in authority**” would repent of their sins and believe the Gospel.

Paul does not command us to pray for the removal from office of evil rulers, or those with whom we disagree politically. We are to be loyal and submissive to our government ([Romans 13:1-5](#); [1 Peter 2:17](#)).

**Romans 13:1-5 (NASB)**

<sup>1</sup> Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

<sup>3</sup> For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

<sup>4</sup> for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

**1 Peter 2:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

If the church today took the effort it spends on political maneuvering and lobbying and poured that energy into intercessory prayer, we might see a profound impact on our nation. We all too often forget that “**the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses**” ([2 Corinthians 10:4](#)). The key to changing a nation is the salvation of sinners, and that calls for faithful prayer.