

Talmid Shorts

Dr. Eddie Idefonso, Pastor

Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

“Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.” [1 John 2:6 \(NIV\)](#)

Mathētēs μαθητής a Greek word for disciple.

Is there any scriptural basis for praying on behalf of the unsaved

Christians are people of prayer ([1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)), and some of our prayer requests are in regards to the spiritual condition of our unsaved friends and relatives. We want them to be saved, and we pray to that end. In this we agree with **Charles Spurgeon**, who said, “**If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.**”

We should be praying for the unsaved. Our Savior came to seek and to save the lost ([Luke 19:10](#)), and a principal theme of [Luke’s gospel](#) is Christ’s compassion for those often regarded as outcasts in Israel. Our Savior “**wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth**” ([1 Timothy 2:4](#)), so when we pray for the salvation of an unsaved person, we are simply sharing in the stated desire of Jesus.

We should pray for the unsaved because, the truth is, it’s not possible for us mere mortals to know who [God’s elect](#) are before they become saved (think of Saul of Tarsus). **Spurgeon** once quipped that it would be nice if the elect had a big *E* stamped on their back, but, of course, they do not. We do know that all of God’s elect will indeed be saved at some time during their earthly sojourn (see [John 6:37, 39](#)), but that may not happen until the day they’re called home to be with the Lord (e.g., the thief on the cross). It is through people with “beautiful feet” who bring the gospel that God uses as the means of reaching His elect ([Isaiah 52:7](#)).

We all have people in our sphere of influence who are unsaved, and we should be praying for them because we care deeply about them and because we know that God cares for them and wants none of them to perish—His desire is for all of them to come to repentance ([2 Peter 3:9](#)). It is natural to pray for those we care about. Consider the compassion the young servant girl showed to her Syrian captor: “**If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy!**” ([2 Kings 5:3](#)). Her prayer was for the unsaved. Consider the compassion Paul felt for his lost Jewish brothers: “**I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people**” ([Romans 9:2–3](#)). Another devout servant of God’s—Moses—was, like Paul, ready to give his life for the sake of his people (see [Exodus 32:32](#)).

Jesus instructed us to pray for the unsaved in this manner: “**Ask the Lord of the harvest . . . to send out workers into his harvest field**” ([Luke 10:2](#)). This prayer concerns the “**harvest field**” of evangelism in the world. It is a prayer that people will be saved and God will be

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glorified.

We have another biblical command to pray for the unsaved: **“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people. . . . This is good, and pleases God our Savior” (1 Timothy 2:1, 3)**. The Ephesian church (where **Timothy** pastored) had apparently stopped praying for the unsaved, and Paul was encouraging Timothy to make it a priority again. His desire was for the Ephesian Christians to have compassion for the lost. Once again, we have no way of knowing who the elect are until they respond. And as John MacArthur aptly points out, **“The scope of God’s evangelistic efforts is broader than election” (Matthew 22:14)**.

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16), and **“the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer” (1 Peter 3:12; cf. Psalm 34:15)**. God indeed hears the cries of His children. We know what happens to those who die in their sins, and that knowledge alone should prompt us to pray incessantly for our unsaved acquaintances in the hope that they, too, will respond to God’s call and join us in heaven.