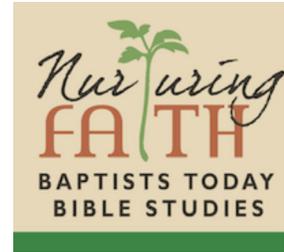


Adult Teaching Resources

September 18, 2016



Faith Matters: Lessons From Hebrews (August 7-28)

Jeremiah 18:1-11 – “Getting Into Shape”

An Apostle’s Apprentice – Lessons from Timothy (Sept. 11-Oct 23)

1 Timothy 1:12-17 – “Bad Starts Can Be Redeemed”

1 Timothy 2:1-7 – “It’s Not About You”

1 Timothy 6:6-19 – “Find Contentment Where You Are”

www.nurturingfaith.net

Subscribe to *Nurturing Faith* to access the core Bible content for this lesson. Find links and videos related to this lesson.

It's Not About You

Timothy 2:1-7

FIT Teaching Guide

by Rick Jordan

This adult teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Before the Lesson: Make copies of your church's prayer list for the Transformational Exercise. Have blank paper and pen for each class member for the Transformational Exercise.

Fellowship Question

(Use *one* of these to break the ice, to begin some discussion and lead into the study):

What do you think was the first prayer you prayed? (a bedtime prayer, a meal blessing, etc.)

What is one thing you would pray for our President, regardless of their political affiliation?

Information

[Note to the teacher: You will be writing two different lists on the board for this lesson. I would suggest headlining one side of the board "prayers" and the other side "inclusivity".]

"There are two sides to every story," we say. Sometimes, there are even more. Often, we are asked or forced to choose a side. We rely on which side we trust or support. We rely on our own opinions, knowledge, and prejudices. Whether it is a political campaign, a family break-up, or a spat between children, we take sides. However, we cannot take *all* sides. But, could we *pray* for all sides? That is an issue we will discuss today.

Today's text is from I Timothy, a letter written to an early Church leader. The culture, political system, and influence of Christian faith were much different in Roman society 2000 years or so ago. Yet, there are lessons that we may learn from this text.

Paul was a mentor to Timothy. What would a mature religious leader have to say to a relatively new leader of a faith congregation? We get the inside scoop with this letter.

[Most modern scholars doubt that Paul wrote this letter because of its style, language, and the teachings of Paul in other undisputed letters. However, it was attributed to Paul and was found helpful to the early Church, so was incorporated in the canon. I will refer to the author of this letter as "the author."]

One of the striking features of this letter is its emphasis on inclusivity. For these seven verses, I will ask us to identify the word or phrase that points to the inclusivity of God and the Church.

Information *continued*

[Have a class member read I Timothy 2:1.]

According to our printed lesson writer, “Paul stressed the importance of prayer by introducing it with the word *proton*, which can mean either first in order or in importance.”

Prayer is earliest of spiritual disciplines most of us learn. If we were raised in a Christian home, we may have grown up with prayers before meals and bedtime prayers. When we “became a Christian”, we did that through prayer – asking God to forgive us our sins and committing our life to follow Jesus. Who taught you how to pray your first prayers? What do you remember (or think you remember) of those first teachings?

The author lists four synonyms for prayer. There are some distinctions between these words, although the author’s emphasis is not on the differences between these forms of prayer, but to make prayer of prime importance. One thing we can be reminded of by this list is that prayer is appropriate regardless of the circumstance. So, we will touch on each of these words. Take a look at your Bibles, so we can see the words translators used to help us understand these words.

Many prayers are stimulated by want or need. The Greek word used for the first kind of prayer, *deesis*, is commonly used for requests made to people or to a god. This request can be as simple as the cry, “help!” What words do your translations have for this first kind of prayer?

[Write these on the board.]

What words do your translations have for the second kind of prayer?

[Write these on the board.]

The second type of prayer is also a request, but this is the word that is only used for requests made to a god, *proseuche*.

“There are certain needs which only God can satisfy. There is a strength which [God] alone can give; a forgiveness which [God] alone can grant; a certainty which [God] alone can grant.” [William Barclay. *The Letters of Timothy, Titus, and Philemon: Revised Edition*. The Daily Study Bible Series. Philadelphia: Westminster. 1975. p. 57.]

What words do your translations have for the third kind of prayer?

[Write these on the board.]

Enteuxis, “petition” (NRSV), is a word used for approaching a king with a request. Of course, this would be quite intimidating. What type of requests do you imagine you have before you would request an audience with a king?

What words do your translations have for the fourth kind of prayer?

[Write these on the board.]

Information *continued*

This Greek word is *eucharistia*. Some Church traditions call the Lord's Supper the Eucharist. The word means, "thanksgiving." Sometimes, our prayers are as simple as "thank you."

We have this list of many kinds of prayers. Yet, this is not a complete list. Can you think of other types of prayers that are not included in these four categories? [lament, contemplation, meditation, submission, etc.]

Again, although we have spent some time reminding ourselves about many prompts for prayer, the author's point is – pray! It is the first priority. Prayer is not to be the last resort, but the *proton*, the first action.

All these prayers are to be made for whom, according to this verse? [everyone]

So, we have our first verse and our first statement of inclusivity.

[Write on the board, "pray for everyone."]

Now, let's write everyone's names up on our board – just kidding. We can't do that, and the author did not attempt to itemize everyone we should have in our prayers. But he did give us one illustration.

[Have a class member read I Timothy 1:2.]

What do you think about his commandment to pray for our national leaders?

Does this relate at all to the concept of "the separation of Church and State"? [prayers are non-partisan; the institutions should remain separate, but Christians should pray for political leaders; publicly offered partisan prayers are divisive, etc.]

"It is extraordinary to trace how all through its early days, those days of bitter persecution, the Church regarded it as an absolute duty to pray for the Emperor and his subordinate kings and governors. 'Fear God,' said Peter. 'Honor the Emperor.' (I Peter 2:17), and we must remember that that Emperor was none other than Nero, that monster of cruelty. Tertullian insists that for the Emperor the Christian pray for 'long life, secure dominion, a safe home, a faithful senate, a righteous people, and a world of peace.' (*Apology*, 30)" [Barclay, 58.]

Our printed lesson writer says, "Americans may take religious freedom for granted, but others struggle under dictatorial regimes that deny free expression; should we not pray for them – and for their leaders?" How would you answer his question?

What is a by-product of prayers for national leaders, according to our text? (if the political system is stable, we can live without fear of enemy; if political leaders offer citizens freedom, we can live with options as responsible members of society; etc.)

Political leaders are but one group of persons included within the "everyone" we are to pray for. How might prayer for other groups eventually benefit us, as well as the subjects of our prayer? (For example, prayers for enemies, prayers for non-Christians, prayers for educators and researchers, prayers for the needy and the 1%, etc.)

Information *continued*

[Have a class member read I Timothy 2:3-4.]

What is it that is “right and acceptable in the sight of God”? (leading “a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity”, 1:2)

We are given another statement of inclusivity in this passage. What is it? (God desire everyone to be saved; God wants everyone to live in the truth)

[Write answers on the board.]

This next passage takes us back to the idea of prayer, because it seems to be a part of a litany or hymn used for worship.

[Have a class member read I Timothy 2:5-6.]

We are given another statement of inclusivity in this passage. What is it? [Christ gave himself as a ransom for all.]

Worship is another form of prayer that the author does not mention in verse 1, but obviously he includes it in this passage. How does prayer in worship affect a Christian community?

[Have a class member read I Timothy 1:7.]

Although the author does not use an inclusive word such as everyone or all, he is making a statement of inclusivity. Who are the Gentiles? (anyone who is not a Jew)

Let’s hear three additional passages that point to God’s desire that all the world be saved.

[Have class members read II Corinthians 5:19, John 3:16-17, and John 12:32,]

Transformational Exercise

In today’s lesson, we’ve read that we are to make prayer a priority. Do you think of prayer as “doing something”, or is prayer a cop-out releasing us from taking “real” action?

Let’s consider the inclusivity of prayer.

[Distribute your church’s prayer list, your class prayer list, or recall requests for prayer made prior to today’s lesson.]

How inclusive are we in our prayers? Who is missing? How does not praying for everyone affect our faith and our community of faith?

[Distribute a blank sheet of paper and pen for each class member.]

Take a minute to consider all the persons you expect to have interaction with tomorrow. Walk through your day, but stop when you get to ten persons. Jot their names or their roles, if you don’t know their names (for example, the grocery cashier).

Transformational Exercise *continued*

[Allow a minute to think and jot down names/roles.]

Now, let's take a couple of minutes to pray for these persons. It might be a prayer of petition, it might be a prayer of thanksgiving.

[Allow time for silent prayer.]

Tomorrow, as you interact with this person, say another word of silent prayer for them.

[Close the lesson with a prayer something like this:] *We thank you God for this gift of prayer. We believe that you love everyone and that you want all to know you and to feel free to call on you in prayer. As we pray for those with whom we interact, we pray they will be drawn closer to you, so that your kingdom may come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.*]

Comments or Questions for Rick Jordan? You may send comments to the lesson plan author at rjordan@cbfnc.org. Rick is also available to lead workshops and conferences on Christian Education, with particular emphasis on how best to use the FIT Faith model.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Praying for all — William D. Mounce cites the early church father Chrysostom’s take on this text: “Chrysostom comments, apparently sarcastically, ‘Was Christ then a ransom for the Heathen? Undoubtedly Christ died even for Heathen; and you cannot bear to pray for them’” (“Homily 7”; NPNF 13:431; from Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46 of Word Biblical Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], 78.

Godliness and dignity — Paul hoped that prayers for governing officials would lead to a stable situation in which believers could “lead a quiet and peaceable life” in which they could display “godliness and dignity.” The term for “godliness” or “reverence” (*eusebeia*) appears eight times in 1 Timothy alone. It suggests devotion to a supreme being that results in moral and ethical living. The word translated “dignity” appears in the New Testament only in the Pastoral Epistles (also at 1 Tim. 3:4 and Titus 2:7, cf. the adjective form “dignified” in 1 Tim. 3:8, 11 and Titus 2:2). It carries the sense of moral earnestness that leads to exemplary behavior.

How about you? — When considering the ideal of living in peace and tranquility, with godliness and dignity, how close does that description match your own life? Have you ever considered the relationship between governing authorities and your ability to live in peace and dignity?

Many gods — While the huge temple to Artemis was destroyed in antiquity, the ruins of Ephesus attest to the presence of other gods, including deified emperor Hadrian. Below is a stone carving of the goddess Athena, who was a patron of victory in war and often called “Nike Athena.” Can you find the swoosh that was adopted for Nike shoes?

Men, and persons — The Greek text of v. 5 reflects the practice of using the word for “man” (*anthropos*) in a generic sense, to speak of humankind. The Greek word is the root of English words such as “anthropomorphic,” meaning “human-like,” and “anthropology,” the study of human culture. One could translate v. 5 literally as “For one God there is, and one intermediary between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,” but the author’s concern is clearly not limited to the male gender. Thus, the better translation is to speak of Christ as a human who mediates between God and humankind.

All — Take the time to re-read vv. 1-7. Count the number of times the word “all” appears, and take note of the contexts. If God desires that *all* should be saved, and if Jesus gave Himself for *all*, shouldn’t Christians be willing and motivated to pray for *all*?

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

How should we understand the words for prayer that Paul uses in v. 1?

Paul uses four different words for prayer in 1 Tim. 2:1, urging that “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone.” While minor distinctions can be made, Paul’s purpose is emphasis rather than specificity. His intent is not to catalogue specific types of prayers, but to employ the common Semitic practice of piling up synonyms to add force or urgency to the subject. Still, we can point to some distinctions.

The word translated “supplications” is from *deēsis*, a common Greek term that means “requests.” It and similar cognates appear frequently in Paul’s writings. *Deēsis* indicates awareness of some lack and asks for divine assistance to meet that need, usually with some urgency. It carries the sense of a pleading petitioner who cries for help.

The word “prayers” (*proseuchas*) reflects the generic term for prayer, which appears frequently in the New Testament, always with reference to prayers that address God. It is such a broad term that it could even be used to indicate a place of prayer, as in Acts 16:13 and 16. The noun and verb form together appear 122 times in the New Testament, according to Mounce (see reference below), with 33 of those in Paul’s writings.

The word translated “petition” (*enteuxeis*) is a much less common word, appearing only here and in 1 Tim. 4:5 in the New Testament. In secular usage, it could refer to a petition made to a king or some other high government official. The apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees uses it to say that a priest named Jason bribed Antiochus “by means of a petition” (using this word) to name him high priest (2 Macc. 4:8). A cognate verb is used in the New Testament to mean “intercession” (Rom. 8:27, 34; Heb. 7:25).

The term “thanksgivings” (*eucharistias*) suggests expressions of gratitude. Paul used the word often to express thanksgiving for churches or others (Phil 1:3, Col. 1:3, 1 Thess. 1:2, 2 Thess. 1:3, Phlm. 4), and it was commonly paired with other terms for prayer.

Paul’s terminology suggests that meaningful prayer should include elements of thanksgiving along with petitions, whatever word is used for them: healthy prayer expresses gratitude for God’s present blessings, not just pleas for more of them. We note again, however, that Paul’s primary concern in this text is not just on prayer in general, but that prayers should be offered *for all people*: “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone.”

For more, see William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, vol. 46 of Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 79-80; W. Hulitt Gloer, *1-2 Timothy, Titus*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2010), 137-38; or other good commentaries.