

# 1 TIMOTHY 2–3

## Peaceable Prayer, Education, and Leadership

Paul's appeal<sup>1</sup> in 2:1 (**therefore**) alludes to an "order" to Timothy in chapter 1 (1:18).<sup>2</sup> Paul's appeal in chapter 2 has to do with the nature and consequent purpose of God. God is a savior God "who wants all humans to be saved and to come into knowledge of truth" (2:3–4). If chapter 1 (as regards the church) mainly deals with what they are *not* to do (teach different doctrine), chapters 2–3 mainly deal with what they are to do. In order that all may be saved and come to knowledge of the truth, Paul promotes prayer that results in peace, peaceable prayer lifestyles, peaceable learning, and godly leaders who promote peace with outsiders (2:1—3:16).

### GODLY PEACEFUL LIVES (2:1–15)

Paul has Timothy begin this process of leading people to salvation by appealing to Timothy and the believers at Ephesus to pray: **Therefore, I am encouraging you, first of all, to make prayers for needs, reverent prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings on behalf of all humans, on behalf of rulers and all of the ones in a place of prominence, in order that we may live a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and holiness** (2:1–2).

**Prayer** is **first** in terms of importance and priority in time (2:1). The Savior God must be active and present for salvation to occur. **Prayer** is described in four of its aspects in a pleonasm.<sup>3</sup> The noun *dēesis* and verb *deomai* principally refer to petitionary prayer or a forceful urging in regard to some **need**.<sup>4</sup> They can be used for humans communicating to

1. See Titus 2:15 on "appeal" (*parakaleō*).

2. See 1:18 internal summary.

3. "Pleonasm" is the repetition of synonyms for "prayer" for emphasis (Spencer 1998b: 203).

4. See Spencer 1990b: 112–15.

humans and humans communicating to God.<sup>5</sup> *Proseuchē* is a prayer addressed to God.<sup>6</sup> Being limited to God (or the gods), it emphasizes the sacred nature of the act (**reverent**), as in Jesus' lesson to *pray*: "Our Father, the One in the heavens, hallowed be your name" (Matt 6:9). These two prayers (*dēesis*, *proseuchē*) summarize the types of prayers of the widow, whose hope is only in God (1 Tim 5:5). Her prayers include her need and her reverence toward God. In summary, *dēesis* "gives prominence to the expression of personal need, *proseuchē* to the element of devotion."<sup>7</sup>

The third aspect of **prayer** is *enteuxis* (**intercession**). Outside the New Testament, *enteuxis* and *entugchanō* refer to "lighting upon, meeting with" someone and, thereby, obtaining an audience and conversing with them.<sup>8</sup> In the New Testament, it includes the idea of an audience with someone, but even more purposeful, as in petitioning against someone (as in a complaint)<sup>9</sup> or petitioning for someone, as in an intercession. The Holy Spirit and Jesus **intercede** or advocate for believers.<sup>10</sup> Believers can follow their example and intercede to God for other people or other needs (1 Tim 2:1; 4:5).

**Thanksgiving** (*eucharistia*, *eucharisteō*) is an important word family for Paul. Out of a total 53 New Testament references, 35 are used in Paul's letters (66%).

The word family (*eucharistia*) is a reminder that Jesus, when on earth, gave thanks for food before distributing and eating it, including at the "Eucharist."<sup>11</sup> Jesus appreciated the Samaritan who thanked him after being healed (Luke 17:12–19).<sup>12</sup> This attitude of appreciation was one Paul wanted to encourage in other Christians, which he himself modeled (1 Tim 1:12–14). The Lord's Prayer follows the sequence of adoration followed by petition for need (Matt 6:9–13). In 1 Timothy 2:1, the suppliant begins with need, then moves to a more reverent attitude, then continues with a focus on others, and concludes with a positive attitude.<sup>13</sup> For when

5. E.g., a man covered with leprosy, "falling upon his face, *begged*" Jesus to make him clean (Luke 5:12). See also 8: 28, 38; 9:38.

6. *Pros* ("to") limits *euchē* ("vow" or "prayer") (Spencer 1990b: 131–39).

7. Thayer, 126.

8. LSJ, 576–78.

9. E.g., Acts 25:24; Rom 11:2.

10. Rom 8:27, 34; Heb 7:25.

11. E.g., Matt 15:36; 26:27; Mark 8:6; 14:23; Luke 22:17, 19; John 6:11, 23.

12. See also Spencer 1990b: 126–31.

13. Cf. Phil 4:6.

we thank God, our thanks are an acknowledgement or confession of belief in God's work in the world and in our lives.

Timothy and the other believers should pray for everyone (2:1). Paul begins with a more specific term (**rulers**, *basileus*) and then continues with a more general or abstract phrase: **everyone currently (“being”) in a position of prominence** (*hyperochē*). Paul wants them to pray for such rulers as Emperor Nero and King Agrippa II (Acts 25:13; 26:2), the proconsul in Ephesus, and any kings or queens in Asia Minor. A **ruler** would be someone wealthy and powerful with a staff and an army over a country or city-state.<sup>14</sup> Paul also wants them to pray for anyone having authority or **prominence**, such as, the provincial Roman consul or governor, the local political and religious leaders, and the local Jewish and Christian leaders.

In Titus 3:1–2 and Romans 13:1, Paul exhorts the Christians to be subject to those in positions of authority.<sup>15</sup> In 1 Timothy, he explains that the advantage of praying for those in leadership is that they can help Christians to live in tranquility.<sup>16</sup> Both *ēremos* and *hēsychios* include the idea of **quiet**, stillness, and rest.<sup>17</sup> *Hēsychios* (adj.) in 2:2 is the same word family as *hēsychia* (noun) in 2:11–12<sup>18</sup> showing that what Paul wants for women, he also wants for all Christians: a state of calm and rest. This life was to be lived out in **godliness** (*eusebeia*) and **holiness** (*semnotēs*). Godly living is an important trait for Christians, especially as they live in a secular world.<sup>19</sup>

People living in tranquility furthers God's purposes: **This is good and acceptable before our Savior God, who wants all humans to be saved and to come into knowledge of truth** (2:3–4). Living a “quiet life” “in all godliness and holiness” is **good** because it helps God to reach God's desire of salvation for all humans. Jesus explained that not many will remain faithful,<sup>20</sup> nevertheless, God wants all people to believe in

14. E.g., Matt 11:8; 18:23; 22:2–7; Luke 14:31.

15. See Titus 3:1.

16. Keener (1992: 102, 121–22) reminds us that Jews also prayed for the emperor.

17. LSJ, 777–79.

18. See 1 Tim 2:11.

19. Titus 1:1; 2:12. *Eusebeia* was also a secular concept referring to a “right relationship” to the god/dess that blessed the city (Strelan 1996: 28–29). For Paul, a right relationship to God would also bless the secular people. On *semnos*, see Titus 2:2.

20. Matt 7:14; Luke 18:8. Sider (2005) similarly notes that few Americans take seriously the Christian worldview (e.g., 126–130).

God and to persevere in their faith and thus to be saved.<sup>21</sup> To be **saved** is to be forgiven one's sins (1:13–15) and, thus, be purified, made acceptable to a holy **God**.<sup>22</sup> A believer is purified by God, but must work on being pure in practice. In the process of being saved, a believer should come to a thorough **knowledge**<sup>23</sup> of the **truth**. Otherwise, false knowledge can mislead a believer away from truth<sup>24</sup> and, eventually, away from salvation, as in the case of Hymenaeus and Alexander (1:20). The importance of truth is a continual theme for Paul.<sup>25</sup> Paul is adamant that as an apostle he is telling the truth (2:7). The church also should be founded on the truth (3:15). Truth is durable, dependable, real, and an essential aspect of God's nature.<sup>26</sup>

One aspect of truth is to know **God** (e.g., Eph 1:17) and God's nature which is apparent in the next sentence: **For God is one, one is also a mediator between God and humans, human Christ Jesus, the One having given himself as a ransom on behalf of all, the witness to his own times, for which I myself was appointed a preacher and apostle (I speak truth, I do not lie), a teacher of Gentiles in faith and truth** (2:5–7). A Jew would heartily affirm the first clause (2:5), as Moses summarizes: "Hear Israel, the Lord our God (*elohim*), the Lord is one" (Deut 6:4). In Deuteronomy, as a result, believers are to love the Lord with their whole being (vv. 5–6). Jews were renowned in ancient times for their belief in one God, symbolized, for example, by Judith's proclamation to the Gentile magistrates: We "acknowledge no god but the Lord" (Jdt 8:20 REB). The Roman historian Tacitus describes the Jews as despising the gods, having "a purely spiritual monotheism . . . for them, the Most High and Eternal cannot be portrayed by human hands and will never pass away" (*Hist.* 5.5). Why did Paul include the clause **God is one** in this chapter? He appears to imply that God is unique in that God genuinely wants people to be saved (2:4). God also is the only being capable of saving people and the only deity before whom a human needs approval. The Godhead is also able to accomplish salvation completely. The One

21. See Titus 1:3; 2:13; 1 Tim 1:1; 4:10.

22. See Titus 3:5.

23. *Epiginōskō*, see Titus 1:1.

24. E.g., 1 Tim 4:1–3; 6:5; Titus 1:14.

25. *Alētheia*, *alētheuō*, *alēthēs*, *alēthōs*, *alēthinōs* occur 55 times in letters attributed to Paul (Rom - 9; 1, 2 Cor - 11; Gal - 4; Eph - 7; Phil - 2; Col - 2; 1, 2 Thess - 5), 15 times in the Pastoral Letters.

26. *TLNT* 1: 67–68; *BDAG*, 42–44.

who requires purity from humans and the One who can accomplish that purity are the same. Later in 1 Timothy, monogamous marriage or a *one-flesh* union will reflect humans being created in the image of *one* God.<sup>27</sup>

The pagan Gentiles might find several offensive aspects in Paul's statement. First, many would believe in a variety of gods for a variety of purposes and people. As Artemidorus explained, "What the gods signify for men, goddesses signify for women. Gods are more auspicious for men than goddesses; goddesses are more auspicious for women than gods" (*Onir.* 4.75). At Ephesus, many would place gods in a hierarchy with Artemis at the top. The temple of Artemis at Ephesus (Artemision) was also renowned as an asylum for the innocent yet simultaneously Artemis could be a slaughterer.<sup>28</sup> Some would think she should be the **mediator** (2:5). Others would conclude she would not save **all** (v. 4). In addition, Ephesus had shrines sacred to Zeus, Cybele and Demeter (mother of the gods), Apollo (Artemis' brother), Asclepius (god of healing), Aphrodite, Dionysus, Hygeia, Pan, Isis, Hecate, Marnas (river god), Leto (Artemis' mother), Athena, Serapis, Eros, and deified emperors, such as Augustus.<sup>29</sup> Paul, in contrast, asserts that there is only one God who can serve all needs, including salvation, for all people.<sup>30</sup>

The pivotal teaching in Deuteronomy 6:4 also contains within itself the allusion to plurality within the one God. **One** can refer, for example, to two people united in marriage (Gen 2:24) or to all humans when they have one language (Gen 11:1, 6). *Elohim* is an abstract plural word for **God**, but it has a singular verb when referring to the unique living God (e.g., Gen 1:26–28). The Lord has *one* "name" but three persons ("the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit").<sup>31</sup> Thus, after God's revelation to Paul<sup>32</sup> and his own reflection, he can assert that God is one but yet that one God has three persons.<sup>33</sup>

Christ Jesus is the only **mediator** between God and humans. Paul places in juxtaposition the term **human** (*anthrōpos*): **humans, human**

27. E.g., 1 Tim 3:2, 12; 5:9. See also Spencer 2009: 28–30.

28. See Acts 19:27 and Introduction. Setting. Ephesus and Artemis.

29. Scherrer 2000: 58–61, 70, 80, 86–87, 92–94, 134–35, 151, 170–71, 188, 198–201, 209–13. Mitchell (1993: 2:19, 28) groups indigenous cults in ancient Anatolia as four: for Zeus, mother goddesses, *Mēn*, and champions of divine justice and vengeance.

30. See also Spencer 1995.

31. Matt 28:19. See Spencer 2009: 28–29.

32. Acts 9:4–5; Gal 1:11–12, 16–17; 1 Thess 2:13.

33. See also, e.g., 2 Cor 13:13.

(2:5). Even though Jesus was born a male, Jesus only uses the generic self-description **human**<sup>34</sup> because if Jesus is to represent humans (male and female) he himself must be “human” first of all. He is the counterpart to “the *Adam*,” “humanity” (made of male and female) (Gen 1:26–28). A **mediator** (*mesitēs*) is in a middle (*mesos*)<sup>35</sup> position between several parties (Gal 3:20), in this case two: God and humans. Job cried out to God the dilemma: “If I wash myself with soap and cleanse my hands with lye, yet you will plunge me into filth, and my own clothes will abhor me. For [God] is not a mortal, as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together. There is no *umpire* (*mesitēs*) between us, who might lay his hand on us both” (Job 9:30–33 NRSV). But, Jesus is this unique “umpire” or **mediator** (God *and* human). As Paul also explains to the Corinthians, God is “the one reconciling [humans] to himself through Christ” (2 Cor 5:18). Humans did not obey God’s first covenant. Jesus set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant so that they could become heirs under a new covenant.<sup>36</sup>

What kind of **mediator** is Jesus? He is **the One having given himself as a ransom on behalf of all, the witness to his own times** (2:6). *Antilytron*<sup>37</sup> hearkens back to Jesus’ words to his disciples: “the Son of Humanity did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a **ransom** for many.”<sup>38</sup> In that context, Jesus uses his own example as a model for servant as opposed to tyrant leadership (Matt 20:25–27). In 1 Timothy 2, Paul uses the concept as an explanation of the means by which God saves all people. It has already been done willingly by Jesus. Jesus has given his life in exchange for<sup>39</sup> his function as a **ransom** was displayed in Jesus’ lifetime, the “lamb” who was sacrificed.<sup>40</sup>

As a witness to Jesus (the One who mediates between God and humans by having been a ransom), Paul was appointed: **for which I myself was appointed a herald and an apostle** (2:7). A *kēryx* in ancient

34. Not the usual term for “male,” *anēr*, though even it sometimes is used for groups including women. “Son of Man” may be rendered “the Human One” (CEB) or the Son of Humanity (e.g., Luke 9:58). Spencer 1995: 99–101. See also Strauss 1998: 246–47.

35. Thayer, 401.

36. Heb 8:6–9:15; 12:24.

37. See Titus 2:14.

38. Matt 20:28 [*lytron anti*]. See also Mark 10:45.

39. Thayer, 50.

40. E.g., 1 Cor 5:7. See also Titus 1:3.

times was a **herald**. As Philo explains: the herald's staff is "an emblem of covenants of reconciliation, for wars come to be suspended or ended through heralds establishing peace; wars where no heralds are admitted create endless calamities both for the assailants and the defenders."<sup>41</sup> An **apostle**, as an eyewitness of the resurrected Jesus, is a messenger sent off by Jesus to represent Jesus, proclaiming God's reign.<sup>42</sup>

Paul reiterates the truth of his calling and message: (**I speak truth, I do not lie**)<sup>43</sup> and adds a third role to **herald** and **apostle: a teacher of Gentiles in faith and truth** (2:7). **Teacher** and "apostle" are two primary spiritual gifts Paul uses for self-description.<sup>44</sup> Although he baptizes a few people, he does not define himself as an evangelist (in contrast to Timothy).<sup>45</sup> As a teacher (*didaskalos*), Paul instructs persons or causes them to learn. The primary effect of the *didaskalos* is on "the intellect, and someone qualified exercises the influence."<sup>46</sup> A *didaskalos* "teaches definite skills."<sup>47</sup> Jesus, when on earth, taught, preached, and healed (e.g., Matt 4:23). The twelve apostles also taught because teaching was one of the ways in which the reign of God is furthered (Mark 6:30). According to Jesus, the greatest person in God's kingdom both obeys and teaches others Jesus' commands (Matt 5:19). Teaching is one aspect of making disciples (Matt 28:19–20). Of course, true and false teaching is a major problem at Ephesus<sup>48</sup> that Paul can address by being a teacher of truth (2:7).

Paul's primary focus is teaching **Gentiles**, as Ananias was told by the Lord: Paul was his "chosen vessel . . . to bring his name before Gentiles and also rulers and people of Israel."<sup>49</sup> The church at Ephesus most likely had Gentiles and Jews. Even though Paul had to leave the synagogue at Ephesus, he was heard by Jews and Gentiles throughout the area.<sup>50</sup>

41. *Embassy* 13 [100]. See also 2 Tim 1:11; Rom 10:14–15; 2 Cor 5:18–20.

42. Acts 26:16–18; Gal 1:11–12; 1 Cor 9:1; 15:5–8. Spencer 2004: 137–38.

43. See 1 Tim 1:4; Titus 1:2.

44. 2 Tim 1:11; 1 Cor 12:28–29. **Herald** (*kēryx*) is never listed as a spiritual gift. See also Acts 11:26; 15:35; 18:11; 20:20; 28:31.

45. 1 Cor 1:14. See 2 Tim 4:5. Paul also speaks in tongues (1 Cor 14:18; 12:28–30).

46. Behm, *TDNT* 4:1019.

47. Rengstorf, *TDNT* 2:149.

48. See 1 Tim 1:6–7.

49. Acts 9:15; 13:47; Rom 1:5, 13; 11:13; Gal 2:9; Eph 3:8–9.

50. Acts 19:8–10, 17, 26; 20:21.

Nevertheless, Paul's strategy was first to speak at the synagogue of each city where Jews and Gentile God-fearers could hear him.<sup>51</sup>

After encouraging Timothy to begin with prayer at the larger societal level, Paul wants Timothy to instruct the men and women in peaceable prayer lifestyles (2:8–10). In Greek, Paul begins verse 8 **Therefore, I want to pray the men** placing the infinitive (**to pray**) before the direct object (**the men**) (**Therefore, I want the men to pray in every place, lifting holy hands, without anger and disputing** [2:8]). Here, Paul uses *anēr* to refer to males. Verse 9 begins **likewise women** leaving out (ellipsis) the main verb, the infinitive, and the article (**I want to pray the**). In this way, verses 8 and 9 are connected. Both sections deal with prayer in a congregational setting and appropriate lifestyles in the midst of prayer. Apparently, the men and women had differing problems at Ephesus.

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### Excursus: Lifting Up Hands

**Lifting up one's hands** while standing in prayer was the common ancient way for men and women to pray. Jesus assumes his disciples will stand praying (Mark 11:25). Both the Pharisee and the tax-collector stand praying.<sup>52</sup> Once people stood, normally they would lift their hands toward heaven. The hands represent the human. The lifting of them reach toward and bless God. For example, when the temple was dedicated, Solomon stood before the altar and "spread forth his hands toward heaven."<sup>53</sup> Sometimes the Jews even lifted up their hands while prostrated on their knees (Ezra 9:5). A regular part of the Jewish synagogue service was "The Lifting of the Hands" as a euphemism for prayer. First, benedictions were given including recitation of the *Shema*' ("Hear"),<sup>54</sup> and prayer was initiated by the *archisynagogus* ("ruler of the synagogue") while the congregation stood and affirmed "Amen," then the Scripture was read in Hebrew and translated, followed by an exposition (with the preacher seated), concluding with a blessing (also called "Lifting of the Hands").<sup>55</sup> Justin Martyr's explanation of the second century Christian service in Rome has many similarities to the Jewish ser-

51. Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1–2, 10, 17; 18:4, 19.

52. Luke 18:11, 13. See also 1 Sam 1:26; *m. Taan.* 2:2.

53. 1 Kgs 8:22 KJV. See also Exod 9:29; Job 11:13; Pss 63:4; 88:9; 143:6.

54. Deut 6:4–9; 11:13–21; Num 15:37–41.

55. *M. Meg.* 4:3; Schürer 1979, 2:448–55.



vice. It begins with reading of the Scriptures, then the president gives an exposition, then all stand up and the president offers prayers followed by a congregational “Amen.” The Eucharist is then taken (*1 Apol.* 65–67). The prayers in 1 Timothy 2:8 appear not to be limited to the ruler of the synagogue<sup>56</sup> or the president. Rather, there is a communal aspect to worship, as in 1 Corinthians 14:26 (“whenever you gather, *each* has . . .”).<sup>57</sup>

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The men at Ephesus were using this time allotted to prayer to dispute with one another. *Dialogismos* (**disputing**) refers to the internal conversation (e.g., Matt 15:19; Luke 5:21–22) that then can become external.<sup>58</sup> It can be motivated by desires to attack, challenge (Luke 5:21–22), promote oneself (Luke 9:46; 20:14), and produce feelings of fear or confusion (Luke 24:38; Matt 16:7–8).

*Orgē* (**anger**) also refers to an internal impulse.<sup>59</sup> God’s internal impulse of “wrath” is always just, punishing evil, as Paul explains, “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the *wrath* (“punishment”) of God” (Rom 12:19 NRSV).<sup>60</sup> Rulers’ “wrath” should also serve just punishment (Rom 13:4–5). But *orgē* among humans is more an internal impulse harmful to others (Eph 4:31), as James warns: “Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to *anger* for a man’s *anger* does not produce God’s righteousness” (1:19–20). Thus, the men at Ephesus were using the time of prayer to dispute with one another, impulsively allowing their internal destructive thoughts to harm each other and not promote the very activity they sought—attentive communication to God.

Josephus records a pertinent example where some men began quarrelling during the prayer section of a synagogue service. The ruler of the synagogue challenged Josephus for misusing funds. At the end of their altercation, some men tried to kill Josephus, but, with the assembly in his favor, Josephus escaped (*Life* 57–58 [294–303]). This illustration shows how even if people appear to be involved in a pious activity like prayer it can be misused to create fighting and not peace.

56. Male and female rulers of the synagogue have been found, e.g., Brooten 1982: 5–33.

57. Men and women prayed (and prophesied) in Corinth (1 Cor 11:4–5).

58. E.g., Luke 9:46–47; 20:14; Matt 16:7–8.

59. Thayer, 452.

60. See also Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; Eph 5:6; 1 Thess 1:10; 2:16.