

# God Wants Sinners Saved

1 Timothy 2:1–6

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Rev Joe Sanders

First Baptist Church Coshocton, Ohio

I had an uncle who could talk to anybody about Jesus. He talked about Jesus with everyone that He met. Didn't matter the person or the situation, Jesus came up in the conversation. He believed deep in his soul and spirit that anyone who didn't know Jesus was outside of God's will, God's desires, God's wants. He believed he was called by God to not only plant the seed of the Good News of Jesus Christ, but to also water and harvest that seed. He was determined to make sure everyone knew about Jesus. I don't know about the intimacies of my uncle's prayer life. Whether or not he prayed for every person that meet, I don't know. I heard him pray publicly and he always prayed for each person present and people everywhere to be saved by Jesus.

You and I may not be called to talk about Jesus to every person we meet. But, as a Bible-believing, praying church of Jesus, as His disciples we can be engaged in prayer. We can accept God's calling to do His will by praying for everyone to be saved.

*I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time. 1 Timothy 2:1–6 (NIV)*

**There are no excuses for not praying for family, neighbors, or co-workers.** Do you think those who first read this were praying for everybody? I'm certain they weren't, I'm not certain that we pray for everybody. Who is included when we say everybody? Are we talking about every individual? That might be overwhelming. Are we praying for every person that we know? That could still be a lot of people. Are we praying for every person we know who doesn't know Jesus? Wow, we're still talking about a lot of time in prayer. Are we able to pray for those people who might be hostile to us and Jesus? This certainly changes how we look at our world and our time of prayer.

The apostle Paul had been mentoring, discipling Timothy, to be a disciple maker. Now, he's telling him and his church to pray for everyone. They are to pray all kinds of prayers from thanks to intercession. Timothy is to tell the people to pray for kings and authorities. The rulers in nearly every city were opposed to Jesus and His followers. Whether they were Jews or Greeks many leaders were fearful of losing their power and authority. They were afraid the Christians would bring trouble from the rulers in Rome. There wasn't a Caesar at that time who would want to hear about a king named Jesus.

There was opposition in every direction for Timothy and his church. It seems ridiculous to pray for these individuals. Maybe someone might pray for curses upon their sinful souls. But, human nature the way that it is, who would pray for those who want to eliminate you? This request for prayer was from Paul who faced persecution, prosecution, beatings, and imprisonment. He understood the pain and suffering of being faithful to Jesus in the face of discrimination. Yet he urges Timothy and the church to pray, pray, pray, and pray for everyone.

There is no group of people who are beyond the reach of God's salvation. Even though they are surrounded by sinners, they were urged to pray for sinners. The church was dramatically outnumbered in every community. The church found itself on the short end of privileges, opportunities, and favors.

Paul saw their community the way God sees every community. A community of slaves and free, workers and wealthy, sick and healthy who need to be saved. Their community was filled with people who had no power and those who were powerful that needed Jesus as their Savior and Lord. As long as there was one person without Jesus, there was one person who needed prayer. From the heights of power and authority that could bring hardship and pain to the peasants who could cry for freedom they needed to be redeemed from the power of sin. Everyone needed Jesus. Everyone needs Jesus.

No matter who we know, rub shoulders with, invite into our homes, there are many more who don't know Jesus. They need Jesus. They need us to pray for them. We need to pray for them because God wants them to be saved as much as He wants us to be saved.

***I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone. 1 Timothy 2:1 (NIV)***

**We may not find ourselves praying for everyone.** We all need to be urged, challenged, pushed to pray. I'm a very independent person. I don't like being told what to do. You may have noticed this after thirteen years. You tell me what to do and I feel me heels digging in. You keep telling me what to do and I will start to get defensive. Just try telling me one more time what to do and I might just ignore you. You haven't noticed this? But, I know that I need to be urged, challenged and pushed. I even pray for God to push me. I need God to push me out of my recliner. I need God to motivate me to do certain projects. I know that if I don't pray for the Holy Spirit to challenge me, I'll just keep doing what I want.

We are all challenged in different ways. Some of you are like me. There are those who see someone else climb the mountain and they're ready to go find their own mountain. Then there are folks who search for and do things that just fulfill their artistic, musical, skills and abilities. That might include some athletic sport, or academic area, or vocation. All the while there are people who will do whatever it takes to put and keep a roof over their heads.

But on their own not all disciples of Jesus are motivated to pray. They're not motivated to pray for sinners to be saved. We need the nudge, the prompt, the still small voice, or the kick in the pants to get us going. It doesn't do any good to moan and groan and whine to God about it. He's heard it all before, and what He wants is our willingness to be faithful.

Praying for others starts after confession and repentance with thanksgiving. Give thanks for the good and bad people in your life and God will empower you. That is just the opposite of what we might think would happen. But, we're wrong. Whenever we seek God's will, to glorify God, to honor God, we are empowered. God's power starts in our hearts, our spirits, our souls. That's the place God touches, that God interacts with us. God is spirit, so He communicates to our spirits. He moves within us to change us from within. Your soul, your spirit are eternal. God wants to be with your soul, your spirit forever. There has not be a person born that is beyond God's desire to love. There is not a soul that Jesus would turn away. There is not spirit that the Holy Spirit can't touch.

We can give thanks for the good and the bad people in our lives. We give thanks that Jesus lived, died, and rose again to save them. We give thanks that the Holy Spirit can call them out of their sins. We give thanks that God the Father will welcome them into His Kingdom.

***That we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 1 Timothy 2:2 (NIV)***

**When we are praying according to God's desires there is hope, peace, joy, and power.** Through the Holy Spirit we receive every blessing we need. When we gave our lives to Jesus we received forgiveness and eternal life in heaven. But, God's blessings didn't end, they have continued and will continue as we stay in the will of God. We received hope, not wishful thinking. Hope is this overwhelming awareness that God is always working for good. I've said this before, God defines what is good, not any of us. How would the lives of family, neighbors, and co-workers be changed if they had hope? Why would we not want them to have hope?

We received peace, not something that comes from force or rules or military action. God's peace is more than can be expressed by human language. His peace comforts our soul and spirit. His peace takes away and overcomes worry and anxiety. His peace wipes away all fear. How would the lives of family, neighbors, and co-workers be changed if they had peace? Why would we not want them to have peace, to be at peace?

We received from Jesus through the Holy Spirit joy. We know that the joy of the Lord is more than happiness. What many experience as happiness is only for a moment. The joy of the Lord is within in my soul, my spirit. The Lord's joy is with me when I am discouraged and gets me going again. The joy of Lord moves me with lighter steps. When I recognize the joy of the Lord with me I am encouraged. What family member, neighbor, or co-workers would benefit if they had the joy of the Lord? Do you not want them to have the Lord's joy? God wants to give them joy and so much more. We can pray for what God wants.

We have received power from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This power raised the dead, cast out demons, and healed the sick. This power overcomes every enemy. This power works against spiritual forces in our world, the devil. This power changes our thoughts, our words, and our actions. Don't you have a family member, neighbor, or co-workers who needs God's power? Don't you want them to overcome all the forces and powers of sin and evil? God wants to empower everyone against sin. God will give this power to all who believe in His Son Jesus Christ. We can pray for everyone to receive His power over sin and the devil.

By the work of the Holy Spirit every sinner is convicted of their sin, challenged to turn away from it, and drawn to Jesus. To receive hope, peace, joy, power and forgiveness every person on their own needs to confess that they are a sinner. Each person must say that they have ignored, turned away, and rebelled against God. They must acknowledge from their soul and spirit their desire to leave behind their sin and follow Jesus. If you think you can do this all by yourself, you are wrong. If you think that it's all up to God, then you are wrong. We need to pray for people to see their sin. We need to pray for the seed of the Good News of Jesus to be planted in their soul and spirit. We need to pray for that seed of the Good News of Jesus to be watered. We need to pray for the seed of the Good News of Jesus to be harvested. We need to pray that they would receive God's hope, peace, joy, and power. We need to pray for what God wants.

***This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV)***

**Make it your daily ritual to fulfill God's desire by praying for sinners to be saved.** Every one of us wants to please God. As disciples of Jesus we want everyone to believe that Jesus died and rose again to be forgiven. Jesus wants people to be saved. When sinners are saved God is pleased. God is not pleased with sin. God is not blessed by our sins. God is burdened by our selfishness. God is grieved by our rejection. I'm afraid that I believe that too often as Christians we aren't burdened and grieved by the sin of the world. As Christians we are too quick to turn away from sinful co-workers, neighbors, and even family. I'm guilty of doing this. So, I know that being just like you, that you are guilty also.

Some sinners are hard to be around, we don't want that influence in our lives. We know how easy it can be to fall back into an old sin, so we stay away from sinners. So, we don't want to sin and we don't want to have God displeased with us.

However, the opposite reaction, the opposite behavior, the opposite attitude is needed. Jesus did everything that pleased God. Everything Jesus did was pleasing to God. Jesus spent time with sinners. Jesus prayed with and prayed for sinners. We can and we will please God, honor God, bring glory to God by praying for sinners to see their sin, for the seed to be planted and watered, and that others give their lives to Jesus.

Above all sinners need to be saved from eternal life in Hell. This is the most negative way to express what will happen when a sinner dies. They will face one question, "Did you believe in Jesus while you were living?" The one answer that will keep you out of eternal life in Hell, "Yes, I believe in Jesus." Nothing else will matter.

The thief on the cross beside Jesus suddenly became aware that he was bound for Hell. He asked Jesus to save Him. But, we don't want people to wait for the last minute. No one should want to go to Hell. No one needs to go to Hell. No one needs to suffer for eternity in Hell. Jesus is the One who will take away your sin, forgive your sins, and give you hope, peace, joy, and power.

Jesus chose to take away your sin by sacrificing His life for your life. Jesus rose from the dead so that you could not only avoid Hell, but live forever in Heaven. Jesus gives life and abundant life. The life He gives starts the moment you give your life to Him and that life never ends. In every moment you can find hope. In each situation you can be at peace. No matter the circumstance you can be filled with joy. Regardless of the battle you will have His power.

Has your sin become apparent to you? Are you aware that you have ignored, disobeyed, or rejected the God who gave you life? Are you ready to be forgiven, to leave behind you all the sins of your past? Are you willing to invite Jesus to save your soul, your spirit and become Lord of your life?

Jesus has open ears. His mercy, grace, and love will overcome your sins. All you need to do is ask. Jesus is ready to forgive your sins, take away your desire to sin. Jesus is ready to bless you with His hope, peace, joy, and power. Let me help you ask Him into your life.