

WEEKS FIVE AND SIX DEVOTIONAL*Title: A Dignified Life*

January 29 – February 4 and February 5 – 11

Introduction

This devotional is drawn from 1 Timothy, a letter written by the Apostle Paul during one of the most challenging periods in Christian history. Paul's message about praying for those in authority takes on a radical significance, especially when we consider that he wrote these words under the oppressive rule of Nero, one of the most ruthless emperors.

This week, we will explore the powerful role believers have in interceding for leaders, particularly in areas where they might not have others praying for their well-being. We have the honor and responsibility to pray for the spiritual and leadership development of those in authority, lifting them up in areas where they need guidance, strength, and wisdom. Through our prayers, we partner with God's will for their growth, leadership, and salvation.

Objectives

1. Explore the Bible's perspective on the importance of praying for those in authority.
2. Craft a list of intentional prayers for leaders, focusing on their needs to lead effectively.

Key Scripture***1 Timothy 2:1-4***

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Key Concepts

Pray for everyone. In 1 Timothy 2:1–4, the apostle Paul encourages Christians to pray for all people, without exception. Paul urges Christians to pray for those in authority to help bring about peace and stability in society. He stresses that these prayers aren't just about keeping the peace, but about helping believers live godly lives in line with God's desire for all people to be saved.

There are benefits to praying for others. Paul encourages prayer for all people, even those in power, regardless of whether they share our faith. By praying for leaders, we create conditions that allow Christians to live in peace and worship freely, without fear of disruption or persecution. Paul also highlights that these prayers lead to a life of integrity and holiness, where believers honor God in all they do. Essentially, Paul is calling for prayers that help maintain both outward peace and inner godliness, so Christians can live out their faith in dignity and be a positive influence in the world.

Pray, even if you don't agree. When Paul wrote this letter, he was living under Emperor Nero, one of the most ruthless rulers in history. Nero's reign was full of cruelty, namely towards Christians. Despite this, Paul still urged believers to pray for their leaders—even for leaders like Nero, who were evil and oppressive. Paul's point is that prayer for leaders isn't just for times when rulers are good or when we agree with them. This is powerful reminder that, even in the most difficult situations, believers are called to pray for leaders, trusting that God can work through all circumstances to fulfill His will.

Four types of prayer. Paul mentions four distinct types of prayer in the passage that we as believers should be practicing when blessing leaders through prayer:

1. **Supplications** – These are specific requests for help, focusing on needs for ourselves or others, like praying for wisdom for leaders.
2. **Prayers** – This refers to general communication with God, where we honor His sovereignty, submit to His will, and cultivate a relationship with Him, not just ask for things.
3. **Intercessions** – Praying on behalf of others, asking God to intervene in their lives, like praying for leaders' salvation and guidance.
4. **Thanksgivings** – Expressing gratitude to God for His goodness, provision, and faithfulness, helping us stay thankful even during challenges.

Reflection: Laying Down Offense

1. **Reflect on the actions, words, or decisions of your current government leader(s).** Have they said or done anything that has been hurtful, harmful, or careless? Take some time to write down any instances that come to mind. These moments will serve as specific prayer points for this week's activation.

2. **Choose at least one of these instances to release through forgiveness.** This process may take time, as emotions can run deep. However, forgiveness is essential—it releases you from the weight of anger and resentment and empowers you to pray with a clear and open heart. Forgiveness allows you to step into alignment with God's will, freeing you to partner with Him more fully in prayer.
3. **If you're uncertain about how to pray for forgiveness, here's a sample prayer,** “Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for the grace and authority you’ve given me to forgive, just as you have forgiven me. I forgive [insert leader’s name] for [insert action, behavior, or decision]. It deeply hurts that [insert your thoughts or feelings]. Please help me process this pain and release it, so I can come to you in prayer with a unified heart, free from offense. Help me to pray for my leaders with love and sincerity. In Jesus' name, amen.”

Activation: Stand in the Gap

1. **Reflect on the character traits, fruit of the Spirit, and heart postures** that would help your leader(s) avoid repeating the mistakes you identified in Reflection #1. Consider qualities such as wisdom, humility, patience, and integrity—traits that would guide them to lead with righteousness and understanding. These qualities will serve as your specific prayer points for the week.
2. **Create a list of daily 1-minute prayers** for the next two weeks, focusing on interceding for the specific needs of your leader(s). These prayers should address areas where they need God’s guidance to lead effectively, grow in character, and overcome past failures.
3. **Here are some specific prayer points to guide you:**
 - **Wisdom:** Ask God to give your leaders wisdom to make decisions that promote peace, justice, and godliness in their communities.
 - **Peace and Stability:** Pray that your leaders will work towards creating an environment where citizens can live peaceful and quiet lives.
 - **Salvation:** Lift up your leaders, asking that they would come to the knowledge of the truth and experience God’s salvation through Jesus Christ.
 - **Integrity:** Pray for your leaders to act with honesty, integrity, and moral earnestness, upholding godliness and righteousness in their roles.
 - **Protection:** Pray for the protection of your leaders from corruption, harm, and influences that would lead them astray from God’s will.
 - **Compassion:** Pray that your leaders would be touched by God’s compassion where they secretly need love and acceptance, influencing them to show compassion in their behavior, decisions, and interactions with others.
 - **Health:** Pray that your leaders would be blessed with physical, psychological, relational, spiritual, and emotional health to lead others well.

Don't Forget

1 Timothy 2:1 mentions thanksgiving as a form of prayer. Remember to include thankfulness in your prayers and blessings over the next two weeks.

Closing Prayer

Dear Father,

Thank you for the privilege of praying for my government leaders. I acknowledge as it says in Romans 13:1 that all authority comes from you. I honor you as the ultimate authority in heaven and on earth, and choose to do your will and bless my leaders as you instruct in 1 Timothy 1:1-4. Help me as I work through forgiveness and blessing my leaders each day. Help me and other believers in my nation and around the globe to pray fervently for our leaders, knowing that it pleases you and helps to create an environment where we can live godly and dignified lives. In Jesus' name, Amen!