

Our Christian Duty to Our Government's Leaders (Part 1)

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[0 : 00] Thank you, Mainline. Good job. It's been a tough week for conservative Americans and Bible-believing Christians.

How have you responded? How will you respond? Today I want us to look at one of the ways that God wants us as His people to respond to our government's leaders regardless of who they are. And as we look at this, I want us to note this is not a suggestion. It's not an option.

It is a responsibility. It's a part of our Christian duty. We're going to look at one thing today from 1 Timothy chapter 2. It is our Christian duty to pray for our government's leaders.

I want you to look with me. 1 Timothy chapter 2 verses 1 through 5. Paul is writing to Timothy who is the leader of the church in Ephesus. He says, 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.

[1 : 42] For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus. As we go through this passage, I want us to think in terms of what's going on in our country today.

I want us to try to see how this might apply to our prayers for our current and future leaders.

First thing I want us to note is very, very simple. We are to pray for our government's leaders. Now Paul begins with a real general statement about prayer.

Look at this. First of all, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people. He uses four different words to describe prayer.

Sort of an unusual thing for him to do. The first three, supplications, prayers, and intercessions, are talking about making requests generally. The third one, or the fourth one, real obvious, thanksgiving, giving thanks to God.

[2 : 52] Why would he do that? Why would he sort of lump together four words? Well, evidently, he's emphasizing that we need to make prayer a priority.

All kinds of prayers. Prayer ought to be a priority for every Christian, period. And by using these different words, he would be emphasizing that we need to make all kinds of prayers.

We do need to ask God for things. We do need to intercede on behalf of other people, making specific requests, as we're going to see in a minute, government leaders.

He also says we should pray for all people. Do you do that? You pray for everybody in the world? You pray for everybody you know?

Well, no one. You couldn't. That would be impossible. That helps us to understand that Paul is speaking generally here. No one can pray for all people, even all people that we know.

[3 : 54] So he's telling us generally. We need to be people who pray. We need to pray all kinds of prayers. And we need to pray for all kinds of people, not just ourselves and our immediate family, or maybe even our church family.

But we need to pray for all kinds of leaders, or all kinds of people. And he goes on in verse 2 to talk about government leaders. Note that we're specifically called to pray for our government leaders.

He says, for kings and all who are in high positions. Now in Paul's day, most people lived under the authority of the Roman emperor.

And that was not good. Paul is a Christian, writing to Christians. And when he was writing those words, he knew Nero, the Roman emperor, was a persecutor of Christians, responsible for Christians being put to death because of their faith.

It was not easy to write something like that. But also in that day, there were still kings under the emperor. Some should come to your mind, as a Christian, King Herod, King Agrippa.

[5 : 20] Paul appeared before him in Acts chapter 25, we read about. Paul is calling attention to Christians. Pray.

Pray for all kinds of people. And pray for those who are our leaders, our kings, for all who are in, or any kind of authority over us. Today, the highest position of leadership in our government is the president of the United States.

So we need to pray for our president. We need to pray for others in high positions, for congressmen, for governors, for all of our local and state leaders, all kinds of leaders.

We should make it a matter of prayer, a part of our regular prayer lives to lift up these people. Now, let's be more specific.

It appears that Joe Biden has been elected our next president. Now, I know that lawsuits have been filed and will continue to be filed challenging the legitimacy of this election in some states.

[6 : 32] But as it stands right now, Joe Biden is our president-elect because he has unofficially over 270 electoral college votes.

There are the leading conservative news organization in this country, Fox News, they're already calling him president-elect. one of President Trump's most staunchest evangelical supporters, Robert Jeffries, the pastor at First Baptist Church of Dallas.

He's called Biden president-elect. Now, the Supreme Court may intervene in some way. There may be things that happen in states where ballots are thrown out, invalidated, or more ballots are counted.

Things could change. We do not know for a fact today. But it looks like Joe Biden will be our nation's 46th president.

And we've got to start praying for him if that's true. And if we are wise, we will pray that he will turn out to be a great president for our country, for all people, including those of us who did not vote for him.

[8 : 11] Now, I remember when Obama was elected, I made a statement on Wednesday night similar to that, citing this passage and some others. And it was a smaller group, but I could see the obvious eye rolls and the size and the anger that I would even say something like that.

But doesn't it make sense that if whoever is our president, we would want him to be successful for our good, I'm talking about?

That's biblical. Remember how God told the people of Israel, think about this. They had been captured by the Babylonians, taken into exile, taken from their land to Babylon, forced to live there, a foreign land, foreign culture, foreign pagan leaders.

But God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah, you know this, we've looked at it before, and told them, look at this, Jeremiah 29, 7, but seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

I want our country to prosper. I want whoever is in the White House, whoever is in Congress, whoever is in Columbia, whoever is the mayor of Pickens, I want them to be good leaders.

[10 : 05] I want them to help us as people in this country, in this state, in this town, to make life better for us. We should pray that way.

That's how God told His people, His conquered people, living in exile, to pray for in its welfare, the city you're living in, the place you're living, with the leaders that you have, that you did not choose, you will find your welfare.

Now that's basically what Paul says next about how we should pray for our leaders in this passage. Look at this. We are to pray for our leaders to lead in such a way that we are able to live a peaceable and godly life.

Look at it specifically. The last part of verse 2 and 3. 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. We need to pray for our leaders to lead wisely and justly. And that includes Joe Biden if he becomes president on January the 20th.

[11 : 21] We need to pray that he and those who will be in his administration fill his cabinet spots, that they will lead with wisdom for our benefit, that they will lead justly, do the right thing.

We need to ask God to give our leaders on every level of government wisdom and strength to stop the lawlessness, the anarchy even that's taking place all across our country right now in some of our major cities.

We need to ask God to so work through our current leaders and our future leaders to bring an end to this craziness, violence, unrestraint lawlessness that's taking place.

We need to ask God to protect our law enforcement officers, keep them safe as they're trying to keep the peace, trying to keep it as confined as they can in these places.

We also need to pray that God would open people's eyes to the fact that these law enforcement officers are not the enemy. They're not the problem. Rather, they are a valuable friend of law-abiding citizens and they're a force for good in this country.

[12 : 52] They're agents even of the government to enforce the law, to keep us safe. We need to pray that our new leaders will respect religious liberty and not persecute Christians who seek to live in obedience to the truth of God's word.

For an example, right now, many Democrats in places of leadership across this country, governors and mayors in particular, some of them have targeted churches or church gatherings as one of the major spreaders of COVID-19 with no evidence to support this.

Some of these Democratic leaders in some states and cities have either tried to stop in-person worship services altogether or they place such ridiculous limits on the numbers that can gather that the churches really cannot gather.

We need to pray that Joe Biden, if he becomes our president, will not single out churches like this in his attempt to deal with the coronavirus.

He said this is going to be one of his major first initiatives dealing with the coronavirus. We need to pray that God will give him wisdom about what not to do as well as what to do.

[14 : 23] And we need to pray that God will help him to understand that Christians gathering together are an essential part of American life.

It's essential for our spiritual well-being. It's essential for many things that benefit our country. We need to pray for President-elect Biden.

If he truly is going to be our next president, that he will be wise in dealing with this pandemic. We also need to pray that our new leaders will see clearly the failures of socialism every place on this planet that has ever been practiced.

We need to pray that Biden will not be led further left and lead our country to adopt more socialistic programs and policies.

Now, in light of what we know about Joe Biden's positions on such issues and the stated platform of the Democratic Party, we should pray that God would change Biden's mind on these issues of major importance.

[15 : 41] I'm not trying to be, I'm trying to be anti-political. I'm trying to tone things down this morning. I want you to understand that. But I must say, if you've looked at any of the history of Joe Biden, he's changed his mind a lot.

He's flipped a lot more than you flip most hamburgers when you grill. He is not above changing his positions on anything. So, seriously, we as Christians should pray that God will so work in him and put around him people who will influence him to cause him to change his mind and approach to dealing with the lawlessness in this country.

To change his mind on dealing with religious liberty. and to cause him to totally reject socialism. We should also pray that God will work in his mind and heart to cause him to see that life is sacred.

Life is a sacred gift from God that must be protected from the life of the baby in the mother's womb to the life of the elderly Alzheimer's patient in a nursing home or any home.

Life is sacred and must be protected. We need to pray like this now. We need to pray like this if he becomes our actual president.

[17 : 19] And we need to pray like this the whole time he is in office. We should be praying for our president now. Should have been always. But we're looking now at where we are in light of the election this week.

It's important that we understand that one of the major reasons Paul wanted us to pray like this. Paul's not just talking about just having a peaceful and tranquil life.

Look at this. We're to pray for our leaders to lead in such a way that our ability to share the gospel is not hindered. Look again at the scripture. 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.

For there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus. New Testament commentator Tommy Lee. He taught at Southwestern Seminary when I was there.

[18 : 27] He makes an important point about one of the purposes of our prayers for our leaders. Look at what he said. Freedom from anarchy, persecution, and economic hardship can facilitate the spread of the gospel.

Wise rulers can provide sound, solid leadership to accomplish these goals. Paul benefited by the leadership of Rome.

even the persecuting Emperor Nero. Paul benefited by the freedom he was accorded to travel, to preach, to start churches, to do all the things that he did.

Paul benefited by a government that kept peace and order, didn't allow anarchy, allowed economic flourishing. It benefited the spread of the gospel.

people. We must never lose sight of the fact that we have a responsibility to be witnesses of the Lord's. Understand that. All of us in this room right now who claim to be Christians, we are responsible for how we live in this world.

[19 : 43] We are to be faithful, positive witnesses of the Lord's by the way that we live, and we have the responsibility to share the gospel, to help people to understand that alone, on their own, they are separated from God by their sin, and the penalty for that sin is death.

But the good news of the Bible is that God has provided a way of salvation through Jesus Christ that whoever would turn from their sin and trust him can be forgiven, made children of God, and prepared to live in fellowship with God forever.

forever. That's part of our responsibility as Christians in this world. We need to pray that our new president will not do anything to interfere in our ability to live as faithful followers of Jesus and to actively share the gospel with people who are not Christians, people who don't care even about their relationship with God.

We also need to pray that Joe Biden, if he is elected president, will be convicted to live like a Christian if he is truly a child of God, or that he'll be saved if he is not a Christian.

Now, he claims to be a Christian. He is a member of the Roman Catholic Church. But the real test of a person's faith, Joe Biden, Donald Trump, you and me, the real test of our faith is found in the way that we live.

[21 : 27] Not the church we're a member of or anything like that. Jesus would say it like this from time to time. We're known by the fruit that we bear.

Our fruit give evidence of the root within us. There's one point in this passage we must not miss this morning because it applies to all of us.

I've just alluded to that. It does matter how you and I live. Look at verses two and three again. 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. Now, Paul said something similar to this in his first letter to the Thessalonians.

Look at it. Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life. You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders.

[22 : 31] Thomas Lee made an important point about why Paul would have said this. Talking about why it matters how we live.

Look at what he said. Paul desired that believers live peaceful and quiet lives. He may not have intended that this quiet life be free of all conflict and persecution because Paul said if we truly live the Christian life we will be persecuted at times.

Perhaps strife and discord in the church caused outsiders to scoff at the religion of the Ephesian Christians. Paul wanted his readers to live an orderly life free of strife and discord so as to convince unbelievers that Christianity was worthy of their attention.

Here's how I want to apply this. For the past four years there have been thousands upon thousands of Trump haters in this country who have whined, complained, screamed, shouted, cursed, did everything they could do to show their hatred and displeasure of Donald Trump.

Many of them said things like they refused to acknowledge him as their president. They did everything they could to disrespect the man, to put him down, show him no honor as the president of this country.

[24 : 15] We as God's people cannot, must not, act that way toward a President Biden no matter what.

In fact, it would be better for you to renounce your faith, don't call yourself a Christian, than to become a Biden hater like so many have been Trump haters and lived the opposite life of what God calls us to live as a Christian.

Now, make no mistake, we can disagree with liberal and unbiblical policies all day long. We've got to do it the right way.

We can work for change the right way with all that is within us. But we must as Christians now, and it's, being a Christian is a higher calling than being an American.

Our ultimate and final citizenship is in heaven, not the United States of America. We have the responsibility to show a watching world that Jesus Christ does make a difference in how we live.

[25 : 47] He has an effect on our attitudes, our words, and our actions, whether we win or lose in politics, regardless of who's in the White House.

As I said at the beginning, it's been a tough week for conservative Americans and Bible-believing Christians.

The election did not turn out like we wanted it to, or at least it has not to this point. But what we must never lose sight of, God is still on the throne.

God is still in charge of this world and this country. God is sovereign. And He can be trusted. We can trust Him.

And if we trust Him, we'll obey Him. And what I am emphasizing only this morning, we need to pray for our leaders.

[26 : 53] It's just simple. We need to pray for President Trump because he is still our president and will be for another few months unless the election results are changed.

We need to pray for our leaders. We need to pray for our leaders. We need to pray that he will be a wise leader at this time. That he will do the right things the right way. If Joe Biden is to be our president, we must pray that he will do the same.

That he will surround himself with the right kind of people. We also need to pray for ourselves. We need to pray that we will do the right things, the right ways, for the right reasons.

And I want us to note, when we do things like this, look again at the verse. 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. Bottom line, if we're Christians and God is our Father, our greatest desire should be to please Him.

[28 : 25] And one of the ways we can please Him is by praying for our government leaders. Let's pray together.