



## WEEK 3

### Ready for Strategic Prayer

Before any major military operation, commanders develop a communication strategy. They need to stay in contact with headquarters, coordinate with allies, and gather intelligence. Paul tells Timothy that prayer is the church's communication system in spiritual warfare. But this isn't just asking God for help when things get tough - it's strategic, organized prayer that covers everyone from government leaders to everyday people. Paul explains that prayer comes "first of all" because without it, the church fights blind and alone. When Christians pray together with the right heart and clear purpose, they're tapping into the power of the God who wants everyone to be saved. Being "fight ready" means being prayer ready.

### THE SCRIPTURE: 1 TIMOTHY 2:1-15

<sup>1</sup> First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. <sup>8</sup> I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; <sup>9</sup> likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, <sup>10</sup> but with what is proper for women who profess godliness-- with good works. <sup>11</sup> Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. <sup>12</sup> I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. <sup>13</sup> For Adam was formed first, then Eve; <sup>14</sup> and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. <sup>15</sup> Yet she will be saved<sup>3</sup> through childbearing-- if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

<sup>2</sup> **I do not permit a woman to teach...** - Regarding verses 12-13, Christians have held different views about Paul's instructions concerning women in teaching roles. Some believe Paul is establishing a universal principle for all churches based on the order of creation mentioned in verse 13. Others argue that Paul is addressing a specific situation in Ephesus where women were disrupting worship or spreading false teaching, particularly since the Greek word "authentēin" (often translated "exercise authority") appears nowhere else in the New Testament and may indicate abusive or domineering behavior rather than normal authority. Given that Ephesus struggled with false teachers throughout Paul's ministry there, and considering that women elsewhere in Paul's letters clearly taught and led (like Priscilla instructing Apollos), a strong case can be made that Paul is correcting a particular abuse happening in the Ephesian church rather than prohibiting all women in the global church from ever teaching. Regardless of one's interpretation, all of scripture must be considered for the final evaluation and in the case of this passage the emphasis lay on the importance of proper order and respectful relationships in worship as essential elements of being spiritually ready for battle.

<sup>3</sup> **saved through childbearing** - Remembering that the Bible speaks of salvation in different tenses ("I have been saved," "I am being saved," and "I will be saved"), this is clearly referring to sanctification. In other words, some women have the unique opportunity to grow in godliness through the experience of raising children.

## LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 3

### OPENING QUESTIONS

1. When facing a difficult situation, what is typically your first response? Where does prayer usually fall in your problem-solving process?
2. How do you typically pray for people in authority over you (bosses, government leaders, etc.)?

### DIVING DEEPER

3. Paul says “first of all” we should pray (v1). Why do you think prayer comes before everything else in spiritual warfare? What does this teach us about being spiritually ready?
4. What are some things you are inclined to worry about first instead of praying about?
5. Verses 1-2 list four types of prayer and specify praying for “all people” and those “in high positions.” In the space below, create a chart listing these prayer types and give practical examples of how you could pray each way.
6. According to verses 3-4, what is God’s desire regarding salvation? How should this truth shape our prayers for others, including those we might consider enemies? Can you think of one or two people who might fit that category for you today?
7. Verse 5 emphasizes there is “one mediator between God and men.” How does this truth affect our approach to prayer? If this were not the case, would that have any effect upon your prayer life?

8. In verses 8-10, Paul gives instructions for men and women in worship. What attitudes and actions does he emphasize? Consider the two listed below. Are these cultural examples (as in not for today's churches) or transcultural, or both? If they are cultural, use the second column to describe what a modern-equivalent encouragement might be.

Men: "lifting holy hands	
Women: "not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire"	

9. The controversial passage in verses 11-15 has been interpreted various ways. Regardless of your interpretation, what principles about order, submission, and spiritual readiness can we draw from this text?
10. How does corporate worship and prayer prepare the church for spiritual battle? What happens when a church neglects this kind of "strategic prayer"?