



GOOD NEWS GUIDE

REMEMBER: **GOD LOVES YOU!**

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Would you like to receive an extra copy of the "Good News Guide" each month to share with a friend, neighbor, or family member? Let me know.

Praying Thankfully

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. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all ... (1 Timothy 2:1-6 ESV)



These are Paul's instructions for his trainee, his young helper, Timothy, for ministry in the church in Ephesus. These are also God's instructions for us, those of us who desire to serve Him, wherever we are; those of us who mean it when we pray, "Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven."

"*First of all ...*" Here God is telling us that praying is of primary importance. If we work at the soup kitchen and give money to the poor, those are good things to do, but "First of all" comes prayer. Then he adds what we are to pray for.

The first thing on the list is a general prayer — for "all people." How can we pray for everyone, with all of their different situations and needs? I think the best way is to pray, "Father, Thy will be done." What is God's will for all people? That they "be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" — the truth about God and the Savior, Jesus. So we certainly can pray for all people, and earnestly ask, "Thy will be done." Then we can extend that by praying, with heartfelt longing, for our family members and friends who are not saved; the ones who do not know, or who refuse to acknowledge, the truth about God and Jesus.

We are also instructed to pray for "kings and all who are in high positions," or "kings and rulers," in other Bible translations. In our country, this refers to those who are in elected or appointed positions

of power in all levels of government. In a real sense, they are our "rulers" because they make and enforce our laws, the rules by which we all are required to live in a civil society.

God is telling us to pray for these people with "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings." I tend to lump supplications, prayers, and intercessions together into, "Lord, bless them, especially with wisdom and humility. Help them 'get it right' and serve the people in accordance with Your will."

Considering the demands on them, the responsibilities of their offices, and the vagaries of their individual personalities and private agendas, it is obvious that these people need all of the prayer support they can get. If we really want them to do what God wants them to do, we need to pray that His hand will be firmly upon them at all times, to give them the abilities and the willingness to do what God wills for them to do. Our ability to "lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way" does depend largely on how they perform their official duties.

Now, as for thanksgivings, I find it very hard to feel thankful for some of our current leaders and the politicians who are running for office. But God's Word doesn't say, "Be thankful for them if you like them and agree with them;" it says we are to pray for them with thanksgivings.

In order to do this, we have to remember a very important fact: the One to whom we are praying is God. We can be very thankful that He is not lacking in either wisdom or power. *A king's heart is like channeled water in the Lord's hand: He directs it wherever he chooses. (Proverbs 21:1 CSB)* God will not take away their free will, but He can inform and influence it, and channel their hearts to the point that they truly want to obey Him, for the benefit of the people whose servants they are supposed to be. We do not need to be concerned

about being thankful for who or what these people are; but we can be thankful for what God can do in them and with them and through them.

I especially want to mention here the men and women in law enforcement. There are a few wrong-headed individuals in law enforcement who shouldn't be, and their misdeeds have been widely publicized in recent years. This has caused some foolish people to believe, or at least to promote the idea, that all police are like that. The cry, "Defund the Police," is not just foolish, it is insane. There is a horrific amount of crime in our country, especially in our large cities. Should we willingly make it a hundred times worse? Of course not!

Praying thankfully for those in authority, especially for those who enforce our laws, may not always be easy, but it is right, and obedient to the will of God.

Of course, praying thankfully applies to more than praying for those in authority. There is an acronym, **ACTS**, that promotes a good approach to all of our praying:

A - Adoration. We start by adoring, praising, and worshiping God; appreciating and proclaiming His goodness, His power, His mercy, and His love. We do this not to flatter God, or curry His favor; we do this because it is truth that we need to speak forth, and shout about, and remind ourselves about. No amount of praising God is too much.

C – Confession. In order to maintain and grow our relationship with God, repentance is essential. This involves, first, confessing our sins to Him and asking for, and receiving; His forgiveness; and then, repenting — being determined and committed to stop doing the wrong things that we just confessed. We won't always get it right, but if we are serious about it we can always come back to Him and try again.

T – Thanksgiving. What are we? Insignificant and foolish creatures of the Creator, the Most High God. Yet He loves us, and wants us to share His eternal joy in Heaven. How can we not thank Him for life and every blessing? Do we have difficulties and pains? Yes, of course. But, *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present*

time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:16-18) Any time we come into the Lord's presence, thanksgiving should be automatic.

S – Supplication. And finally we come to asking God for what we need and what we want — salvation for our loved ones; healing of diseases and wounds; provision for every physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual need; and on and on. We have the promise of Jesus that if what we ask for agrees with God's (perfect, all-wise) will, He will give it to us. (Please note, however, that this is not a matter for bargaining. We don't "give in order to get." God knows what we need, and He will provide it all for us — we must "*seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to [us].*" (Matthew 6:33)

Now a word about Thanksgiving Day, which is observed in our county each November. It is really sad that there is so little real thankfulness to God on that day. You would think, if we set aside a day to do something, we would do it. But instead, we eat a big meal and watch football games and plan for our "Black Friday" shopping expedition the next day. Most Christians seem lukewarm about giving thanks to God on Thanksgiving Day, and those who are not Christians, with few exceptions, are stone cold.

Here's my request of each one of you who reads this: Pray every day that God would call us to account for our thanklessness; that He would move the US people to repentance, and heal the damages to our land from Satan's schemes and his willing human accomplices. God declares, ... *if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)*

Blessings to you, brothers and sisters in the LORD.

Brother Roland

If you have a question about Bible truth or the Christian life, I will gladly share my thoughts with you, and maybe also with the other readers of the "Good News Guide." Write to me. Please note: I do not have Bibles or study materials to send to you.

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The Song that Silenced the Cappuccino Machine

It was chilly in Manhattan but warm inside the Starbucks shop on 51st Street and Broadway, just a skip up from Times Square . Early November weather in New York City holds only the slightest hint of the bitter chill of late December and January, but it's enough to send the masses crowding indoors to vie for available space and warmth. For a musician, it's the most lucrative Starbucks location in the world, I'm told, and consequently, the tips can be substantial if you play your tunes right.

Apparently, we were striking all the right chords that night, because our basket was almost overflowing. It was a fun, low-pressure gig — I was playing keyboard and singing backup for my friend who also added rhythm with an arsenal of percussion instruments. We mostly did pop songs from the '40s to the '90s with a few original tunes thrown in. During our emotional rendition of the classic, "If You Don't Know Me by Now," I noticed a lady sitting in one of the lounge chairs across from me. She was swaying to the beat and singing along.

After the tune was over, she approached me. "I apologize for singing along on that song. Did it bother you?" she asked.

"No," I replied. "We love it when the audience joins in. Would you like to sing up front on the next selection?" To my delight, she accepted my invitation. "You choose," I said. "What are you in the mood to sing?"

"Well. ... do you know any hymns?" Hymns? This woman didn't know who she was dealing with. I cut my teeth on hymns. Before I was even born, I was going to church.. I gave our guest singer a knowing look. "Name one."

"Oh, I don't know. There are so many good ones. You pick one."

"Okay," I replied. "How about 'His Eye is on the Sparrow'?"

My new friend was silent, her eyes averted. Then she fixed her eyes on mine again and said, "Yeah. Let's do that one." She slowly nodded her head, put down her purse, straightened her jacket and faced the center of the shop. With my two-bar setup, she began to sing,

"Why should I be discouraged? Why should the shadows come?"

The audience of coffee drinkers was transfixed. Even the gurgling noises of the cappuccino machine ceased as the employees stopped what they were doing to listen. The song rose to its conclusion.

"I sing because I'm happy; I sing because I'm free. For His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me."

When the last note was sung, the applause crescendoed to a deafening roar that would have rivaled a sold-out crowd at Carnegie Hall. Embarrassed, the woman tried to shout over the din, "Oh, y'all go back to your coffee! I didn't come in here to do a concert! I just came in here to get somethin' to drink, just like you!"

But the ovation continued... I embraced my new friend. "You, my dear, have made my whole year! That was beautiful!"

"Well, it's funny that you picked that particular hymn," she said.

"Why is that?"

"Well ..." she hesitated again, "that was my daughter's favorite song."

"Really!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," she said, and then grabbed my hands. By this time, the applause had subsided and it was business as usual.. "She was 16. She died of a brain tumor last week."

I said the first thing that found its way through my stunned silence. "Are you going to be okay?"

She smiled through tear-filled eyes and squeezed my hands. "I'm gonna be okay. I've just got to keep trusting the Lord and singing his songs, and everything's gonna be just fine." She picked up her bag, gave me her card, and then she was gone.

Was it just a coincidence that we happened to be singing in that particular coffee shop on that particular November night? Coincidence that this wonderful lady just happened to walk into that particular shop? Coincidence that of all the hymns to choose from, I just happened to pick the very hymn that was the favorite of her daughter, who had died just the week before? I refuse to believe it. God has been arranging encounters in human history since the beginning of time, and it's no stretch for me to imagine that he could reach into a coffee shop in midtown Manhattan and turn an ordinary gig into a revival. It was a great reminder that if we keep trusting him and singing his songs, everything's gonna be okay.

Praying Thankfully

When we pray, let's be sure to thank God before we ask Him anything!

Puzzle:

Y E P T G B O P W B R C T V P Q Z J H L X W S L R F E D W W K N U G H T
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F G O Z F S D N A H Y L O H G N I T F I L B L U J A L F X R L B N D S P
I N S V H T U R T E H T F O U Q T V S P C R I M S X D O A P A N D F I L
R I I L I E K N E M D N A D O G N E E W T E B N T C P E R N O R O D H E
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G E D H L W J K G F K S E C N E S E R P S I H O T N I E M O C G V X M B

Words:

* 1 Timothy 2:1-6

FIRST OF ALL
SUPPLICATIONS
PRAYERS
INTERCESSIONS
THANKSGIVINGS
FOR ALL PEOPLE
KINGS
PRESIDENTS
ALL IN AUTHORITY
SO WE MAY HAVE
PEACEFUL QUIET LIFE
GODLY AND DIGNIFIED
IN EVERY WAY
IT PLEASES GOD
WHO DESIRES ALL
PEOPLE BE SAVED

COME TO KNOWLEDGE
OF THE TRUTH
THERE IS ONE GOD
ONE MEDIATOR
BETWEEN GOD AND MEN
THE MAN CHRIST JESUS
WHO GAVE HIMSELF
AS RANSOM FOR ALL
IN EVERY PLACE
MEN SHOULD PRAY
LIFTING HOLY HANDS

* Psalm 100

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE
TO THE LORD
ALL THE EARTH
SERVE THE LORD
WITH GLADNESS

COME INTO HIS PRESENCE
WITH SINGING
KNOW THE LORD IS GOD
IT IS HE WHO MADE US
AND WE ARE HIS
WE ARE HIS PEOPLE
SHEEP OF HIS PASTURE
ENTER HIS GATES
WITH THANKSGIVING
ENTER HIS COURTS
WITH PRAISE
GIVE THANKS TO HIM
BLESS HIS NAME
FOR THE LORD IS GOOD
HIS STEADFAST LOVE
ENDURES FOREVER
HIS FAITHFULNESS
TO ALL GENERATIONS