

# SOUL FOOD

APRIL 13, 2017

## **I TIMOTHY 2:1-7      GOOD AND PLEASING TO GOD**

A wonderful aspect of being born again through the Spirit of God is that we are given new hearts that long to bring pleasure and honor to God. What does it look like to pursue God's pleasure in our daily lives? The Apostle Paul lets us know at least one major aspect of what this looks like.

Paul focuses here on prayer. He teaches that we must pray for all people. This includes making requests of God on their behalf but it also includes expressing thanksgivings for them. This is very pleasing to the Father. Thanksgiving is the atmosphere of effective, fruitful prayer. In Philippians Paul teaches that we are to pray to God in all circumstances and make our requests to God with thanksgiving. We are to pray with thanksgiving even before we receive God's answers to our prayers. We are thankful because we are rolling our burdens on the Father and entrusting the cares of our hearts to Him. This is a place of rest and comfort. In our passage today Paul says that we should offer up thanksgivings for all people. Too often we see people as burdens rather than blessings. Let us often take the time to think about the impact that people have upon our lives and how we are stimulated to grow through even our most challenging relationships.

We also learn here that we are to especially pray with thanksgiving for those who are in positions of authority over us. Why should we pray for these people? So that we can lead quiet and peaceful lives with dignity. Our God is a God of order. He is not the author of confusion. Chaos and confusion are the result of living independently of God rather than in submission to His authority and wisdom. As Jesus reminded Pilate, all authority comes from God. This is the ultimate reason as to why we must honor all in authority over us. As Paul teaches in Romans 13 people in authority, including governing authorities, are ministers of God who are supposed to ultimately pursue the protection of those under their charge. Authority is not an end in itself; it is a means to the end of serving and leading in a way that promotes the well-being of others.

God is a very generous God who abundantly gives and shares with His creatures. His greatness, grace, and mercy are shown by the fact that He desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. When a society reflects God's order and public righteousness the gospel is given hospitality, which leads to all people being blessed in many different ways. What a blessing to know that God uses our prayers to this end.