

Pray for the USA



Let's Show Our Gratitude (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as I continue to share with you on our special theme for this week, "Let's Show Our Gratitude."

In my two previous talks this week, I gave a brief overview of the historical background of Thanksgiving and I also shared with you some of the reasons why I personally am grateful to the United States.

Today, and for the rest of this week, I'm going to share with you ways in which all of us, as Christians, can show our gratitude for the United States of America. It's not enough just to have one day in each year in which we eat and enjoy ourselves—that's not the real spirit of Thanksgiving. If we are truly thankful, we need to do something practical about it, something which doesn't merely last for one day out of each year. With this in mind, I'm going to share with you some important practical ways in which we can show our gratitude to the United States.

The first way that I'm going to speak about today is to pray for our nation. And, particularly, to pray for our governmental leaders, both national and in the local scene. There's one passage of Scripture the Lord has impressed upon me and particularly so when I first came to the United States in 1963. The passage is the first epistle of Timothy, chapter 2, verses 1–4 and I want to share those verses and their lesson again with all of you today. Paul writes this:

> "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

Paul is writing about the conduct of a Christian church, that's the theme of the first epistle to Timothy, and here at the opening of the second chapter, he comes to the first responsibility and obligation of Christians meeting regularly in public assembly and that is, in one word, prayer. Paul speaks about various forms of prayer. He speaks about requests,

prayers (or petitions), intercession, and thanksgiving. And he says that comes first, before anything else, when Christians meet together in public, as Christians, in assembly, their first obligation is prayer.

And he says prayer should be made for everyone. The King James Version says, "...for all men." We need to enlarge our hearts when we pray. We need to have a heart that takes in all that God cares for. We need to remember that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." So many Christians pray such narrow, self-centered prayers. I heard somebody once quote this as the example of the average church member's prayer. It goes like this: "God bless me and my wife, my son, John, and his wife. Us four, no more. Amen." Well, that's not what Paul is speaking about. He says intercession, thanksgiving should be made for all men, for everyone. Then he goes on to specify one particular group. He says, "...for kings and [for] all those in authority." We can just say there, government, leadership.

What are we to pray for when we pray for the government? He says, "...that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." Let's ask ourselves this question: Does the government we live under affect the way we live? Obviously, it does. So if we want to live good lives, we're under an obligation to pray for the government. If we pray for the government it will affect the way the government governs and that will affect the way we live.

And then Paul goes on to say, in connection with living in godliness and holiness, quiet and peaceful lives: "This is good, and pleases God our Savior." It's very important to understand that. Good government is pleasing to God. It's what God wants. But God, in a sense, challenges us as His believing people and says, "I want good government but I want you to pray for the government that it may govern aright. I'm not going to do it automatically. You have a responsibility in your nation. You are the ones who should show the way. You are the ones who should be the first to pray for your leaders."

And then, in the next verse, Paul gives one great basic reason why God likes good government. It says that "...[God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." So God wants the message of the truth of the gospel proclaimed to all men. This is very clear from many, many Scriptures. We are under an obligation to do that.

In that connection we need to ask ourselves: Which makes it easier to proclaim the message of the gospel, good government or bad government? I think any thinking person would answer: "Good government," in many ways which I do not have time to analyze.

So God wants all men to hear the truth of the gospel, He wants the kind of governmental situation which will make that possible, which is good government (that's His will), but He wants us, as His believing committed people, to pray for good government.

So that's one way in which we can show our gratitude to the United States for the blessings, the material prosperity, the freedom, the endless special blessings that we enjoy as Christians in this nation. Let's enjoy the blessings, but let's remember they place an obligation upon us and the obligation is, first and foremost, to be faithful to pray for our government, for its leaders.

When I first came to the United States in 1963, God laid this on my heart and for some time I struggled against it because I wasn't an American citizen at that time. But God just impressed upon me I was to preach this message. And I would ask people in quite large congregations, "How many of you have prayed intelligently and seriously for your President or your government this week?" And the response was usually about 2 percent out of a big congregation and I saw how terribly delinquent American Christians have been so many times in this respect.

I want to thank God that today there's a great change; a new sense of obligation and responsibility has come upon multitudes of God's people and we see that one of our duties toward our nation and its government is to be faithful and regular and fervent in our prayers for them. So let's rededicate ourselves to that at this time of Thanksgiving.

I want to affirm, as I continue today, that praying for the government is no mere abstract theory for me. I have proved it in forty years of Christian living that praying for the government pays results. I have seen many national and international situations dramatically changed for the better when God's people seriously prayed about them.

In the book which I am sharing this week as my gift to those of you who write in, Shaping History Through Prayer and Fasting, I share a number of examples from my own experience or observation in which the course of history was changed by intelligent, believing prayer on the part of God's people. I cannot go into them in detail but I'll just mention briefly.

The critical battle of El Alamein in North Africa was changed and won because of prayer.

The birth of the state of Israel came about in a large measure through prayer, and I was there to watch it.

Many major political developments in Africa have come about through prayer. New nations have been born and shaped through the prayers of God's people.

So, let's bear in mind that it pays to pray—to pray believing, to pray with Scriptural basis and emphasis for our government. Let's make a determination this Thanksgiving season that for this year that lies ahead, from Thanksgiving onwards, we will try to be faithful in praying for our nation and for its government. That this will be one way we'll express to God our gratitude for the blessings that we enjoy.

I'm going to ask you to pray with me right now, as I close.

Father, we come to You now as Your believing people, on the basis of Your Word, which says that we are to pray for those in authority and that You want good government and so we bless You and thank You for those in authority over us right at this season. We ask you to guide, to direct and to overrule in their counsels and decisions in such a way that the course of government will be the expression of Your highest will for our nation. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Radio Program

Transcript: TS-R091-103-ENG
Last Updated: 12 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

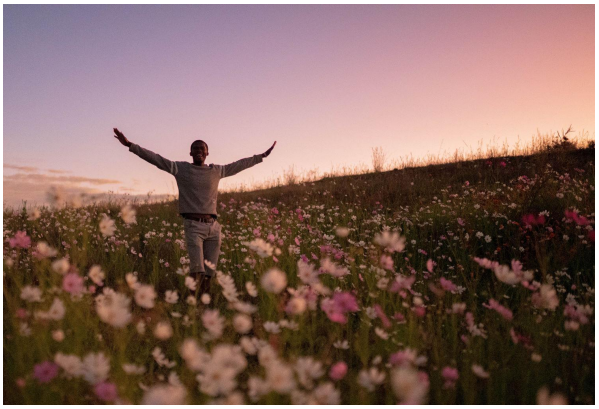


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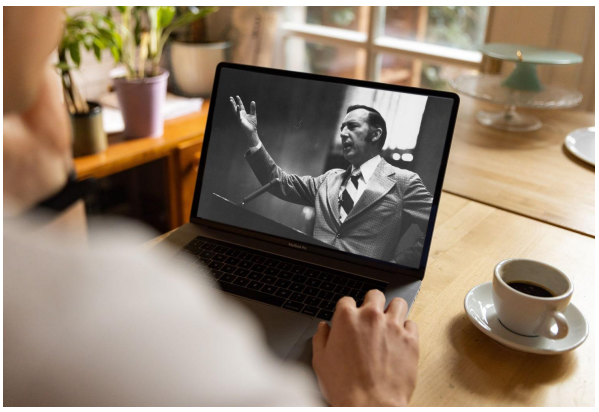
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