



**Prayer Wk. 3**  
**"Praying for the Right Reasons"**  
**By Pastor Jody May 01/23/2022**

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**2 Thessalonians 1:5-12 ESV**

**The Judgment at Christ's Coming**

<sup>5</sup>This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—<sup>6</sup>since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, <sup>7</sup>and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels <sup>8</sup>in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup>They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, <sup>10</sup>when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. <sup>11</sup>To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, <sup>12</sup>so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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**[CONNECT/INTRO]**

This is week 3 of our **Prayer** series, as we were all wanting to get started off on the right foot this year with developing a sense of **gratitude**. As we said last week it is hard to be grateful unless one sees God at work. Prayer is the means, by which God has chosen to work to display His goodness, righteousness, and justice for the world to see. To pray and see prayers answered is how we develop a sense of Gratitude.

This is why in this series we are going to be discussing three different topics on three different weeks: Praying for the Right Things, Praying for the Right Reason, and Praying in the Right Way.

**Week one, starting off on the right foot-right things, we started off with:**

**2 Thess. 1:11 ESV**



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"To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you **worthy** of his **calling** and may **fulfill** every resolve for **good** and every **work** of faith by his **power**,

Praying for the **Right things** is to be **worthy** of the **calling** to living for Him, that you would be **fulfilled/equipped** for every good work, experiencing the **power** of God in your lives; worthiness, fulfilled, and powerful.

Then last week happened, and we took a detour. We partnered with thousands of other churches across North America and preached on God's design for sexuality and family.<sup>1</sup> We did this in response to the Canadian government's move to censor churches in Canada with new legislation.<sup>2</sup> Legislation whereby they determined Christianity to be a 'myth' and that traditional teaching on sexuality and marriage was hate speech.

At the end of that sermon, we brought it back to the focus of prayer with this passage from the Apostle Paul:

**1 Peter 3:7 ESV**

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, **so that your prayers may not be hindered.**

The way in which **we help** the cause to preach truth on Biblical Sexuality in our culture was to **obey God's Word** as we see in Ephesians 5 with wives submitting to husbands and men loving their wives sacrificially. Both hard things but it is in this way we begin to tackle bringing glory to God. When the world sees the church become worthy of its' calling, when they see us fulfilled with joyful content pursuing an Ephesians 5:21-33 lifestyle, when they see God's power at work strengthening our homes, building up disciples, THEN we will see our prayers begin to get answered.

That brings us to our second topic on prayer today, Praying for the **RIGHT REASONS**. God is all about answering prayers that align with His will and Paul.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.libertycoalitioncanada.com/biblical-sexuality-sermon-sunday>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/columns/ad-fontes/were-not-in-kansas-anymore-reflections-on-the-passage-of-bill-c-4/>



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today in verse 12, is going to share with us the secret to getting prayers answered for he knows the right reason as to why one should pray.

**2 Thes. 1:11a-12 ESV**

<sup>11</sup>To this end we always pray for you, (**worthiness, fulfilled, and power**)...<sup>12</sup>so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be **glorified** in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Main Idea:**

**The singular goal of prayer is that Jesus would be GLORIFIED.**

What does glorified mean? The most direct definition of the word **1901** ἐνδοξάζομαι (*endoxazomai*): vb.; ≡ Str 1740; TDNT 2.254–LN 87.9 is to **be honored**, be glorified (2Th 1:10, 12+)<sup>3</sup>

Honor – When I think of honored, I think of a public display (My Father's display case of the Flag, our Family Crest on the wall of my home *Fortis et Fidelis* "Strong and Faithful"). To honor/glorify a thing is a term that covers multiple actions, thoughts, and feelings: magnified, recognize, respect, to give props, displayed, bragged on, elevated, and shared. To honor a thing to glorify it, is to share it, tell of its' significance, and let others know how it is something that has shaped your reality, changing how you live.

You all read about this past week in your reading plan two people that glorified God in their lives in such a way that it made their stories stand out in stark contrast to others in God's Word. Both the prophet Elijah and King Jehu of Israel slew hundreds of people because the Holiness of God's name demanded it. God used both a righteous man and an unrighteous man to bring about His purposes and the fulfillment of God's will glorifies Himself among His people. These men had a calling to glorify God in such a manner that those that heard would not forget.

Friends that is no different for everyone in this world that calls themselves a Christian. To be a Christian is to literally **bear the name of Christ**. And as an image bearer of Christ there is no excuse for not bearing His image, or glorifying/honoring Christ. **Our sole purpose in all of life is to elevate His**

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<sup>3</sup> Swanson, J. (1997). [Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek \(New Testament\)](#) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.



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**importance**, to display whom we follow after, to establish what we have left all for.

**Jesus prayed this for you**, you heard Mike read it today:

**John 17:22-23 ESV**

<sup>22</sup>The **glory** that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, <sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the **world may know that you sent me** and loved them even as you loved me.

When the Gospel falls on fertile ground, when a person experiences a true conversion, people will display the glory of Christ and the world will know that the Father sent the Son. The Gospel also comes with more good news because with the death of Jesus **He stops the necessity** of having to **drive out** the wicked by **fear of death** because now the wicked are changed by believing in the death of the Christ. The Gospel changes the heart of men with the sacrifice of love knowing that Jesus' death was meant for us, and now wrath has been absorbed and we are free.

This truth of the Gospel is what points us to the primary reason for prayer, that we must, we cannot refuse, to ask God for the most singular and most important reason for prayer: that **Jesus would be glorified, He would be honored, declaring to the world they must do the same!**

In 2 Thes. Paul has summarized this, he has told us why He prays, He has enlightened us to what has changed Him. On a road to Damascus Paul was confronted with a living and glorified Jesus and Paul was changed (Acts 9:1-22). Now, Paul prays nonstop that all people like Him (the church) will display Jesus to the world, because for a Christian nothing else in your life matters but to display to the world WHO has changed you.

In our text today we are going to look at three different ways in which to pray that helps us to pray and practice praying for the **right reason** and that is the **singular reason of bringing glory to Christ**. To glorify Jesus, we will go over 3 things in which to pray for: we pray to **endure suffering**, to have a **future focus** and to receive **continual grace**. By praying these things, we are working and pleading that our God will accomplish His will in our lives and



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family, and Jesus said that which is asked in His name He will give it (John 16:23).

**1. To glorify Jesus, we Pray to Endure our Suffering (v.5).**

<sup>5</sup>This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are **also suffering**—

The Thessalonians were suffering at the time of this letter, and the truth of the matter is that now the Thessalonians were resolute not to run from it but to push in (they stayed in the world but they didn't become a part of it)! Christianity is about a bunch of people that are resolute that when **things get tough God's people get tougher**, and they **reflect the strength** of their **Savior**. Let's see that reflection and go back a few verses to the beginning of the chapter:

<sup>3</sup>We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. <sup>4</sup>Therefore we ourselves **boast** about you in the churches of God for your **steadfastness and faith** in all your **persecutions** and in the **afflictions** that you are enduring.

The Thessalonians are being boasted over to other churches, Paul is letting other people know that their faith and steadfastness was growing BECAUSE of their afflictions because they **endured their sufferings**. These persecutions were also bonding them together, it was increasing their love for one another. **One of the things we have to thank God for family is that the last two years should have increased your faith and grown your love for one another**. What we see happening is the way that Jesus is glorified in your life is that our growth during a time of suffering IS what glorifies Jesus. If your main focus in your prayers is to alleviate your suffering and your discomfort all the time family, then according to Paul, you are not praying for the **right reasons**...

One more thing here verse 5: *This is evidence of the **righteous judgment** of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are **also suffering***—'Right' judgment of God, part of that, is that He is ok with what you are going through (we're not saying He's sadistic). As Christians I



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have heard one too many times, that God does not want people to go through suffering, yet am I to believe that God was ok that His Son would suffer and not me?

The act of sacrifice by the Father and the Son demonstrates, it glorifies, the love and dedication of God to his family. It also purifies and perfects the one that goes through it. Scripture says Jesus grew in His perfection "*And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*" Luke 2:53. The path of glorification for Jesus so that the Father would be known was through a life of pain. The reward was joy and the elevation of being established as the right hand of God.

Praying for the right reasons sometime means we are going to have to pray not for the removal of hardships but the grace and strength to endure them so that what we want most happens - His glorification.

Now getting through your rough days there is a way to do it. I am not just suggesting you be stoic, keep a stiff upper lip, although that definitely helps, but I want to show you what Paul is offering as motivation for enduring suffering:

**2. To glorify Jesus, we Pray to have a Future Focus (vs.6-10).**

<sup>5</sup>This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, ...for which you are **also suffering**—<sup>6</sup>since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, <sup>7</sup>and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels

Paul has already taught the Thessalonians in their first letter that the dead in Christ are brought back to life, that the saints are the first to be resurrected, to not fear that. But now Paul wants them to know that no one is going to get away with treating them unrightly, unfairly, with contempt. No Christian is left without justice distributed by God.

**Isaiah 66:4 ESV**

I also will choose harsh treatment for them  
and bring their fears upon them,  
because when I called, no one answered,





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when I spoke, they did not listen;  
but they did what was evil in my eyes  
and chose that in which I did not delight."

**Romans 12:9-11 ESV**

<sup>9</sup>There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, <sup>10</sup>but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. <sup>11</sup>For God shows no partiality.

God let's no wrong go unaddressed and there is nothing left undisclosed that is hidden (<sup>2</sup>*Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known*, Lk. 12:2). Paul is changing the focus of the believer in Thessalonica while they have every right to demand justice, to want wrongs righted, he instead gives them an '**eschatological perspective**' that will enable them to perceive their situation in the right light. This life is not for bringing all things and persons to justice that is still to come. <sup>4</sup>

In the future people that mistreat God's people will not only receive payback but look at the extent of it –

<sup>8</sup>in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. <sup>9</sup>They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

Perhaps as Christians we need not focus so much on revenge, retribution, and resolution for what those who intended evil will be condemned to hell.

**Romans 12:19 ESV**

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

That does shed some light on some things for us today for there is a growing movement in the church (universal) where people have become more accustomed to demanding justice **NOW** instead of praying for right reasons. Hear me, I am not saying "**all**" but I am saying "**many**" and by many I define that

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<sup>4</sup> Green, G. L. (2002). [The letters to the Thessalonians](#) (p. 287). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans Pub.; Apollos.



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as **multiple ethnically diverse congregations** usually gathering more in **urban churches** that have an overly strong sense and desire for **"social justice"**. These **'many'** have been influenced by the **Frankfurt School** of thought or what you may have heard as the term **"Critical Theory"**.<sup>5</sup> Those under the sway of that school of thought in their churches call that being **"Woke"**.<sup>6</sup> Here's what I am learning about that "many":

- Many are crying foul in life when they feel slighted, and they are blaming it on racism which only white people can be guilty of (as defined by the Frankfurt School that is set on decimating Christianity by its' creators).
- Many are demanding restitution/redistribution even of Christians when Christians by the gospel have nothing by which to be condemned (Rom. 8:1).
- Many are demanding equity in outcomes instead of asking God to glorify the Son in the midst of their present circumstances (2 Thes. 1:12).

People who cannot be satisfied with their present amount of justice perhaps have lost their **eschatological perspective**, the goal of Christ's return to glorify God and His people on that day, and that goes for every ethnicity in every church.

God will repay every wrong and will wipe every tear from your eye (Rev. 21:4), and it begins when we keep our **focus on:**

<sup>10</sup> when he comes **'on that day'** to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

The singular goal of prayer is to have Jesus glorified and that happens with us repeating and meaning it when we model Jesus' prayer, **"nevertheless, let thy will be done"** (Mat. 26:39). That's a hard thing to say but we still can find help here in this passage from Paul to help us in keeping our **future focus**.

### **3. To glorify Jesus, we Pray for Continual Grace (vs.11-12).**

<sup>12</sup> so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the **grace** of our **God** and the **Lord Jesus Christ**.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://iep.utm.edu/frankfur/>

<sup>6</sup> Session 1: Christianity & Wokeness | Dr. Owen Strachan | What Are the Major Claims of Wokeness?  
<https://youtu.be/7BvWsCnRSxk>





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Nothing happens in our prayer life without the continual Grace of God.

No one becomes worthy of this calling unless God is involved in the process, our efforts, our works are filthy, only when we seek to do things for the glory of God are our efforts accepted. Without the grace of God **first** in our lives granting us faith, we cannot be found worthy.

No one is fulfilled by the goodness they do UNLESS they are filled up **first** by the good work of Christ. As with the woman at the well we must receive the hard truth of our need for Him, and we must respond by telling others come and see. That's not our nature no one does that without grace.

No one is given the power of God UNLESS the grace of God is revealed as it was with Paul on that road to Damascus. If we are not given Grace **first**, then all power given to us is used to give us glory not God. Only God's Grace switches us from being a self-worshipper to a God worshipper.

To bring glory to Jesus, our singular approach to prayer, the right reason for prayer, we must continually ask for, beseech, and plead for God's Grace and then thank Him for what you will receive:

**James 1:5 ESV**

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

**James 4:6 ESV**

But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

You and I need Grace, getting what we don't deserve, because that is the only way we can glorify Jesus is if we have FIRST experienced His grace.

**[CHALLENGE]**

Today maybe you have spent a lot of effort running away from current circumstances instead of praying to God to help you endure them, to bring Him glory. Wherever you are at there is a reason for your trials, and that is so



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you can learn faithfulness and grow in love with other Christians just like the Thessalonians.

Today perhaps you are caught up too much in the now, you want justice now, you get angry too fast when you perceive a slight against you, you feel unvalued when you don't receive the same perceived treatment as everyone else. If that is you, I am going to ask you as Paul did, turn your focus to 'that day', and rely on the truth that God is going to make ALL wrongs right but that comes on the day of Christ's return and that is done so HE may be most glorified and you will receive the most joy.

Today, perhaps you have been thinking you don't need that much help, that doing good and praying well is by the strength of will. I am going to ask you to renew your thoughts today because all God's people need Grace. We need it continually, for our attempts at prayer without the understanding of our need for Grace is usually a sign of a lack of it.

Today, if you are in here and you are lost, you don't know Christ then know humbly praying for His Grace to find you, to save you, to redeem your life from a future in Hell is a prayer that will be answered. Come to Him today and for perhaps the first time ever God is going to hear your prayer for your Salvation is all about Jesus' glorification. That is something the Father wants to do, AND it is the truly RIGHT REASON for our prayers.

**[PRAYER]**

**[COMMUNION]**

**[BENEDICTION]**

Go in the name of the Father, that desires to see Jesus made much of in your lives, go and ask Him to fulfill this request today.

Go in the name of the Son, who's death ensured that our lives, saved by grace, points the world to the Father.

Go in the name and power of the Holy Spirit, that distributes God's grace so that our prayers are heard, suffering is endured, wrongs are recorded, and places our focus on the right future things.