

Do Yourself a Favor and Pray for the President

“Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace” (Jer. 29:7).

The above words to the captive Jews in Babylon must have been a hard pill to swallow. God instructs them to pray for the peace of the city that is home to the people who have slaughtered their fellow Israelites, burned their city and carried them away captive. The Hebrew word for “peace” in this passage is *shalom* and it carried meanings of peace, prosperity and general well-being.

God, however, makes it clear that, in giving this command, He is concerned for their own well-being. They will do themselves a favor by praying for the *shalom* of Babylon; for if there is peace in Babylon, they will share in that peace. If, however, there is war, bloodshed and famine, they will also share in the suffering.

In a similar way, we will do ourselves and our families a favor when we pray for President Trump and for the *shalom* of America. If he is successful in his goal to “make America great again,” every American will benefit. If, however, the nation is plunged into a recession and societal chaos—or even a civil war—we will all suffer.

Paul made a similar appeal to Timothy who was in the pagan city of Ephesus at the time of writing. He wrote:

“Therefore I exhort first of all that you make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings for everyone, for kings and for all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who

desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

The Greek word for king, *basileus*, was used for the emperor in Rome as well as for lesser rulers. When Paul wrote this letter to Timothy in the pagan, idolatrous city of Ephesus, the wicked Nero was ruling in Rome.

This shows that we are to pray for civil leaders even if we vehemently disagree with them and their policies. It also shows the potential power that can be unleashed when Christians pray proactive prayers for government leaders.

The phrase in this passage, "quiet and peaceful," is translated from the Greek phrase *heremon kai hesuchion*. In his *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Marvin Vincent says that *heremon* "denotes quiet arising from the absence of outward disturbance" and that *hesuchion* is "tranquility arising from within." Together, they express the same idea as the Old Testament *shalom*.

Timothy and the believers in Ephesus are to pray for kings and all who are in authority for the same reason the captive Jews were to pray for the city of Babylon. They will be doing themselves a favor. If there is peace and prosperity in Ephesus and the Empire, Timothy and the believers in Ephesus share in that peace and prosperity.

Paul then delineates another great benefit as a result of praying for civil leaders, and it has to do with the freedom to spread the good news of Jesus. This is expressed in the phrase, "for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

When a society is at peace and experiencing the *shalom* of heaven, roads and communication systems are maintained. Hostility toward Christians tends to subside because of God's favor, and this opens the way for the free flow of the gospel

to all the world. This is good and acceptable in God's sight.

What we have here is a biblical principle that is to be applied no matter who is in office. So, whether you identify as a Republican, Democrat or Independent, do yourself a favor and pray for President Trump. {eoa}

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