

Introduction

When I was playing professional golf, we used to travel all across the country, going from tournament to tournament. We were members of AAA, and one of the best benefits for us was their maps. I had a large box full of AAA maps. I had regional maps, state maps, and city maps. Before each trip, I looked at what maps we would be needing and pulled them from the box. If I was missing any, I would go to the AAA office and pick them up. When smart phones came out, and in particular, Google Maps came out, we put away our maps. Google Maps would find the best route to take us anywhere we needed to go. Wherever I go anywhere, the first thing that I do is type in the destination. I think Google Maps is one of the greatest apps ever developed.

Our passage today is 2 Thessalonians 2:16-3:3, and it is about prayer. Paul, Silas, and Timothy offer up a prayer for the Thessalonians. Then, they ask the Thessalonians to pray for them. Woven into these prayers we discover the motivation behind the prayers. Third, we learn about the attitude that Paul, Silas, and Timothy had when they prayed. The title of the message is a Prayer MAP. I am using the acronym MAP today. The MAP that we have today is a Prayer MAP. Like Google Maps, it is a tool designed to help us reach our destination in prayer. It is going to help us find the best way to go to God with our prayers and needs. What does MAP stand for? The M is for our motivation. The A is for our Attitude, and the P is for our petitions.

Prayer Map (2 Th 2:16-3:3)

Instructions on Using the Prayer MAP

1. Motivation
2. Attitude
3. Petitions

(2 Th 2:16–3:3) “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, {17} comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word. {1} Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just *as it* did also with you; {2} and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. {3} But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil *one*.”

Instructions on Using the Prayer MAP

Before using the Prayer MAP, I want to take a minute to go over some basic instructions. As with the Google Maps app, we must start with an address. We always address our prayers to God. God is the One who our prayers are directed to. God is the One who hears our prayers. God is the One that can answer and give us the things that we petition Him for. Our Prayer Map is just a tool to help us take our prayers to Him.

In this prayer passage, Paul starts with “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.” He is asking Jesus and the Father to comfort and strengthen the Thessalonians. He has addressed his prayers to them.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He began by saying, “Our Father...” Our prayers are always addressed to the Father.

(Lk 11:1–2) “It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.” {2} And He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.’”

Because we have been adopted into God’s family, He is our Father, and we can go to the Father at any time, anywhere, and ask Him about anything. How did we gain access to the Father? It was Jesus who paid the price for our sins and declared us forgiven and righteous. We gained access to the Father by the blood of Christ. While we address our prayers to the Father, we pray in the name of Jesus.

In John 16:23-24, Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.” When Jesus spoke that to His disciples, He had not yet gone to the cross and paid for our sins, so they had not asked for anything in His name. But now that He has paid for our sins and forgiven us, we go to the Father in the name of Jesus.

(Jn 16:23–24) “In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. {24} “Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”

Earlier in John 14, Jesus had taught them, “whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.” Praying and asking in Jesus’ name is not just a phrase to add at the end of our prayers. Praying in the name of Jesus means that we are praying on behalf of Jesus. We are praying His will and His work to be done. When I managed Murchison Drilling Schools (MDS), I had the authority to write checks and do business for the good of the company. The checks that I signed were not for me personally, but for the company. I did business in the name of MDS. It is the same in our prayers. When we pray in the name of Jesus, we are doing kingdom business on behalf of Jesus; we are His representatives. When we declare, “I pray this in Jesus’ name,” we are saying that we believe that this is God’s will and desire to do this. We address our prayers to God and we pray in the name of Jesus.

(Jn 14:13–14) “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. {14} “If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*.”

1. Motivation

Now, let’s take a look at the MAP, and we start with the M, which is for motivation. What is the motivation behind the prayer? Our motives are very important to look at. James said that we do not have because we do not ask, and we ask and do not receive because we ask with wrong motives, so that we can spend it on our own pleasures. God is obviously very concerned with our motives, not just the requests. When we go to God with our prayer requests, we need to examine our motives and make sure that they are pure.

(Jas 4:2–3) “You lust and do not have; *so* you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; *so* you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. {3} You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.”

Let's take a look at the motives behind Paul, Silas, and Timothy's prayers. Their first prayer was for God to comfort and strengthen the hearts of the Thessalonians in every good work and word. This was not a selfish motive; they sincerely wanted the Thessalonians to be comforted and strengthened. They were seeking the welfare of their brethren. When we pray, we need to pray unselfishly. We should seek the advancement of the kingdom of God and the welfare of others.

(2 Th 2:16–17) “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, {17} comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.”

In their request for prayer, they asked that the word of the Lord would spread rapidly and be glorified. They were not seeking their own glory, but the glory of the Lord. They wanted the word of the Lord to be glorified. Their motives were pure and unselfish.

(2 Th 3:1) “Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just *as it* did also with you;”

2. Attitude

The second letter in MAP is A, which stands for attitude. Let's take a look at the attitude that Paul, Silas, and Timothy had in their prayers. There are at least three identifiable attitude traits that they exhibited in their prayers.

a. Reverence and Thankfulness

The first traits of their attitude were reverence and thankfulness. In verse sixteen, they stated that God has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace. They were reverent, honoring, and grateful in their address to the Father. Then, in chapter three, verse three, they stated, “But the Lord is faithful...” Again, they are declaring God's faithfulness and that because of His faithfulness, they could be assured that He will strengthen and protect them.

(2 Th 2:16) “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace,”

(2 Th 3:3) “But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil *one*.”

When Jesus taught the disciples to pray, He said, “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.’” We should begin our prayers by addressing our Father, and hallowing His name. The word hallow means holy. We should praise His name because He is a holy God. I believe that this is just a prayer outline. I think we should find many other things to praise and thank God for. Paul, Silas, and Timothy declared His goodness, His love, His comfort, His grace, and His faithfulness.

(Mt 6:9) “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.’”

In Psalm 100, we are encouraged to enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. We are to give thanks to Him, and bless His name. The psalmist gives some examples, saying, “for the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.”

We can all find things to thank God for. We can all reflect on God's character, His names, His works, and hallow His name.

(Ps 100:4–5) “Enter His gates with thanksgiving *And* His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. {5} For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting *And* His faithfulness to all generations.”

When Paul wrote to the Colossians, he exhorted them to devote themselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. An attitude of reverence and thanksgiving is important to maintain in our prayers. Paul exhibited it in all his prayers, and he everywhere he went, he taught them to pray with an attitude of thanksgiving.

(Col 4:2) “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of* thanksgiving;”

Some of us like to compartmentalize things more than others. In the model prayer, the first part was hallowing his name. Then, Jesus taught them to offer up petitions. So, I would begin with thanksgivings and praises, and then move into my petitions. Others do not compartmentalize as much and they interweave their praises, thanksgivings, and petitions. In our text, they are praising God for His goodness and grace and in the same breath they ask God to comfort and strengthen the Thessalonians. Then, they ask for prayers to be rescued from perverse and evil men, and then immediately declare His faithfulness. They seemed to flow between thanksgiving, praises, and prayers. Whether you do more compartmentalizing or interweaving, it does not matter, God is honored when we take time to thank and praise Him. The first attitude that Paul, Silas and Timothy exhibited was a reverent one.

b. Confidence.

The second attitude trait that stands out is confidence. In verse sixteen, they declared that God gives eternal comfort. Then, they prayed that God would comfort the Thessalonians. They were confident that the God who gives eternal comfort would also comfort and strengthen them. Their confidence would also inspire confidence in the Thessalonians.

(2 Th 2:16–17) “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, {17} comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.”

The Greek word for confidence is *peitho* (Strong's G3982), which means to agree, believe, obey, trust, or have confidence. In Hebrews 11:1, we read that “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” The Greek word for faith is *pistis* (G4102), which means to have assurance, belief, or faith. The root word is *peitho*. Confidence in God is really what faith is. It is the assurance that God will do what He promises.

(Heb 11:1) “Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

In Romans 4:20, we read, “yet, with respect to the promise of God, he (Abraham) did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.” Abraham did not waver in unbelief; he was confident in God. Not only was he confident, he grew strong in faith. As we see God's faithfulness, particularly in our own lives, we grow more confident.

(Ro 4:20–21) “yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, {21} and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.”

When Paul, Silas, and Timothy asked the Thessalonians to pray that they would be rescued from perverse and evil men, they followed the request with a statement. “But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.” They were not only confident that the Lord would rescue them, but that God would also strengthen and protect the Thessalonians.

(2 Th 3:2-3) “and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. {3} But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil *one*.”

In looking at the passage, I originally included verses four and five in this message. After much meditation and study, I decided that those verses really go with the verses after them. So, I did not include them, but I want to take a quick look at verse four. They wrote, “We have confidence in the Lord concerning you...” Paul, Silas, and Timothy had confidence in the Lord, and they prayed with confidence.

(2 Th 3:4) “We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will *continue to* do what we command.”

How do we grow confident in our prayers? Maybe a better question to ask is how do we grow confident in the Lord? If we are confident in the Lord, then we can be confident in our prayers to the Lord. One of the ways that we grow confident is to have answered prayers. In the eighties, God was teaching Karen and I a lot about prayer. We had a seminar at our church about keeping watch for an hour with the Lord. We learned about the Model Prayer, more commonly known as the Lord’s Prayer. We learned about journaling and keeping track of our prayer requests. I began to write down my prayer requests, the date that I began praying, any Scriptures or words that the Lord gave about the prayer request, and then the date that the prayer was answered. I soon discovered that we were having lots and lots of very specific prayer requests answered. We had prayer requests answered about changing our Bahia grass to St. Augustine, trees for the back yard, a cocktail tree in the back, and oak tree in the front, fans in the bedrooms, a screened-in back porch, a fifteen-passenger van, our house paid off, and many others. I think we had about thirty prayers answered in a very short time. There were other prayers that took several years to get answered, but we saw God answering our prayers. God was building our faith and helping us to grow more confident in Him. If you want to increase your confidence, pray more and write down your prayer requests and the date that it gets answered.

Another key to confidence in prayer is found in 1 John 5:14-15. John wrote, “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” When we pray about something, we need to know that it is according to His will. Find the principle, command, or example in Scripture that applies to your situation and make sure that what you are praying lines up with it. Sometimes it helps to ask a pastor or mature believer for their counsel in the matter. They may be aware of a Scripture that pertains to the matter that you are not aware of. The added benefit of that is that when two or three agree upon something, you know that you will receive the answer. The key to that verse is that two or three are agreeing that this is God’s will. They are not all agreeing for you to get something, but for the Lord’s will to be done. When you know that you are praying according to His will, you can pray with confidence.

(1 Jn 5:14–15) “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. {15} And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

(Mt 18:19) “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.”

c. Humility

Even though Paul, Silas, and Timothy were serving in apostolic roles, they exhibited humility. After praying for the Thessalonians, they said, “Finally, brethren, pray for us...”

(2 Th 3:1) “Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just *as it* did also with you;”

In the spring of 2001, I was praying for people at the end of the Sunday service. A man named David came up for prayer, and so I prayed for him. At that time, I was suffering from severe lower back pains. I had been to the orthopedic surgeons and had x-rays taken. I had also been to the chiropractor and had adjustments made. Nobody had been able to help me, and I was in great pain. So, after I got done praying for David, I asked him if he would pray for me. I can't remember what he prayed, but I clearly remember that my back pains left me immediately. David was a channel that God used that day to heal my lower back. If I had not asked him to pray for me, I would have missed that blessing.

In James 4:2, we discover that we do not have because we do not ask. In James 5, we are instructed to confess our sins to one another and pray for one another so that we can be healed. I believe the body should pray for one another. That does not discount the prayers and authority of the pastors, for, in verse fourteen, James said if anyone is sick, he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick.” In addition to the prayers of the elders, the congregation should also be praying for one another.

(Jas 4:2) “You lust and do not have; *so* you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; *so* you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.”

(Jas 5:14–16) “Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; {15} and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. {16} Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

There are many people who are too proud to ask for help. Many leaders do not want to reveal any sign of weakness or vulnerability; they want people to know that they have it all together. They are self-sufficient, self-reliant, and usually self-absorbed. A humble person is dependent on God, and is willing to accept help from others. A humble person takes an interest in others, and will pray and serve them, and welcomes prayers and help from others. Paul, Silas, and Timothy were humble men, who poured into others, and welcomed the prayers and help from others.

A pastor of an established church told me many years ago that he was the pastor of the church, not a member of the church. I do not agree with his theology, as I believe the pastor is a member of the body, and needs the other members of the body. Just because we serve in different capacities and roles, every member of the body is needed and to be valued. While it is true that the pastor of the church cannot share some of his burdens with everyone because it would betray the trust of those that he is ministering to, he is still just another member of the body.

The body of Christ is one body, made up of many parts. The eye cannot say to the hand that it does not need it. We need one another. Paul, Silas, and Timothy were not arrogant, thinking they had no need of the Thessalonians; they valued the prayers of the Thessalonians, and so, they humbly asked them to pray for them.

(1 Co 12:20–21) “But now there are many members, but one body. {21} And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.”

This was not unique to their relationship with the Thessalonians. In Colossians 4:2-4, Paul asked the Colossians to pray for him about an open door for the gospel, and that God would make it clear in the way

(Col 4:2–4) “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of thanksgiving*; {3} praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; {4} that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.”

Many leaders have a worldly perception of leadership. They see leadership like a pyramid, and they are at the top, and everyone is under them. While it is true that they are responsible for those that God allots to their care, that was not the leadership model that Jesus taught. He warned against lording over people like the Gentiles. He taught that leaders should be like the least, and humbly serve others.

(Mt 20:25–28) “But Jesus called them to Himself and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. {26} “It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, {27} and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; {28} just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

In 1 Corinthians, Paul asked a rhetorical question, “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul?” He answered, “Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one.” He did not see himself in a lofty role, but in a servant role. Later in the passage, he said, “Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” The Greek words for servants are different in these verses. In the first verse, it is diakonos, which literally means a waiter or attendant. In the latter verse the Greek word is hyperetes, which means an under oarsman. That was generally a slave who was given a choice of death or to serve on a ship as an underoarsmen. Paul, Silas, and Timothy had this kind of view and attitude, and they welcomed, embraced, and humbly asked the Thessalonians to pray for them.

(1 Co 3:5-4:1) “What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants (diakonos, Strong’s G1249) through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave *opportunity* to each one.... {4:1}

Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants (hyperetes, Strong's G5257) of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”

3. Petitions

Paul, Silas, and Timothy had the right motivation, to please and honor God. Their prayers were not selfishly motivated, but were for the benefit of others and the kingdom of God. They approached God with the right attitude, being reverent and humble. The third letter in MAP is Petitions. We will now look at the petitions that they offered up for the Thessalonians, and the specific prayer requests they sent to the Thessalonians.

a. Petitions for the Thessalonians

They prayed that God would comfort and strengthen the hearts of the Thessalonians in every good work and word. The Thessalonians had received a false message or prophecy, and a fake letter from Paul. They had been shaken like a stormy wave. What they needed now is to be comforted and strengthened, so the prayer is very apropos. The corrective teaching that Paul, Silas, and Timothy sent about the coming of the Lord would relieve and comfort them that they had not missed it. It would also strengthen them because they now know the truth, and truth protects from deception.

(2 Th 2:16–17) “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, {17} comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.”

The prayer for comfort and strengthening is a great prayer for anyone. People go through storms in life. They get sick, lose jobs, lose loved ones, go through relational storms, persecution, and many other things. Paul wrote in his second letter to Timothy that all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Godly, upright, believers who are solid in their faith need prayer for comfort and strengthening, because they are probably facing persecution.

(2 Ti 3:12) “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Every believer needs to be strengthened. We may need physical strengthening. We may need mental or emotional strengthening. We may need our faith to be strengthened. Whether someone is a new believer, or a mature believer, or anywhere in between, we all need to be strengthened, so this is an excellent prayer to pray for people.

b. Their Prayer Requests

After praying for the Thessalonians, they asked the Thessalonians to pray for them. If I was in the place of the Thessalonians, and the great apostle, Paul, just asked me to pray for him, I would feel honored. When the Billy Graham Crusade went to Cincinnati, they asked Karen's father to pray. That was a great honor for him to do that. When someone asks you to pray for them, it is an honor for you. Seize the opportunities you get to pray for people and petition the Lord.

(2 Th 3:1–2) “Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just *as it* did also with you; {2} and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.”

What was their prayer request? First, they asked that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you. The Thessalonians understood that, because when Paul, Silas, and Timothy preached the gospel in Thessalonica, the word of the Lord had spread rapidly. They experienced quick growth as a church, and God was glorified.

This is a great prayer for everyone and for every church. We want the word of the Lord to spread rapidly and for God to be glorified. We want doors of opportunity to be opened, which is what Paul asked the Colossians to pray for him about. We want to make the most of those opportunities. We want God to extend His hand and that signs, wonders, and healings would take place so that people turn to the Lord. We want prophetic messages for people, which will open them up to the word of the Lord. Praying for the word of the Lord to spread rapidly is an excellent prayer.

(Col 4:3) “praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;”

I have had chapters in my life where the word of the Lord did not spread rapidly, and I have had chapters where it spread very rapidly. When the fields are white for harvest and you have the opportunity to harvest in that field, it is pretty exciting. When the word does not spread rapidly, you may be in a season of plowing and sowing. These can be tough seasons and you need some encouragement along the way. However, when the word of the Lord spreads rapidly, it can be pretty exciting, and exhausting. Lots of new believers means lots of discipleship that is needed. When I served in prison ministry, it was pretty normal to lead several men to Christ each week. My list of pods to go to and the men to see in different pods kept increasing. When I think of the word of the Lord spreading rapidly, I invariably think of my time at Cobb County Adult Detention Center.

The second prayer request was that they would be rescued from perverse and evil men. Paul, Silas, and Timothy were being persecuted everywhere they went. They were presently in Corinth, planting the churches in Corinth and Cenchrea when they wrote this, and they were facing opposition.

(2 Th 3:2) “and that we will be rescued from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith.”

We can find that account in Acts 18. Paul was in Corinth waiting for Silas and Timothy to come down from Thessalonica, and when they came, he devoted himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. The Jews resisted and blasphemed him, so he turned to the Gentiles. A few verses later, the Jews rose with one accord against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat. Paul, Silas, and Timothy were experiencing opposition in Corinth when they wrote this letter and gave this specific prayer request.

(Ac 18:5–13) “But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul *began* devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. {6} But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood *be* on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.... {12} But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat, {13} saying, “This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

Conclusion and Applications

Paul was a great example to the early churches that he planted. He poured into them with his teaching, evangelism, and many other things. He raised up leaders and set the churches in order. One of the most important things he did was set an example. Paul was a prayer warrior, and he prayed for the churches. He did not pray for buildings, but he prayed for people. His prayers are great examples for us, and templates for us to use in our prayers for people. His prayers are also good for us to study and learn from.

In this passage on prayer, we learn that Paul, Silas, and Timothy had the right motivation in their prayers, and God looks at our motives, not just our prayers. They also had the right attitude. Paul had an attitude of thankfulness throughout his prayers, and he taught others to have an attitude of thankfulness. They also had an attitude of humility. They were constantly praying for others, and were not self-absorbed. Their humility allowed them to value and appreciate others, and freed them up to ask for prayers.

We should use the prayers of Paul as templates and examples of what to pray for people. When we are praying about matters, it is good to examine our motives; we want to pray with pure hearts and motives. We should also incorporate praises and thanksgivings in our prayers. The church has lost much of its reverence for the Lord, and we should endeavor to show reverence and honor to God in all that we do, and in our prayers.

When we have needs in our lives, we should ask others to pray for us. We should humble ourselves and ask those around us to pray for us. God wants the church to pray for one another. There are over thirty “one-another” commands, and praying for one another is one of them. When someone asks you to pray for them, take time right there to pray for them. If you are going to commit to pray for them regularly, find a time that you are going to do that, and be faithful to pray for them. Send emails, texts, or call them to find out how they are doing in that area. They will know that you are praying for them, and it will build trust and appreciation in the relationship. It is also quite likely that you will hear an answer to prayer. Sometimes, you will gain more updated information about the matter, and you can be even more specific in your prayers. Follow up with those that you have committed to pray for.

Closing Prayer

Father God, You have called the church a house of prayer. You have made us to be a kingdom of priests, and we are to be interceding for people and for one another. Thank You for all the instructions and encouragement You give us in Your word about prayer. Help us to be a praying church. Help us to have the right motives in our hearts when we pray, and may You always be honored and glorified in our prayers. Help us to have the right attitudes in our prayers. Help us to be reverent, grateful, humble, and confident. I pray this in Jesus' name, the name above every name. Amen.

Prayer MAP**Introduction** (2 Th 2:16-3:3)**Instructions** (Lk 11:1–2, Jn 16:23-24, Jn 14:13–14)**1. Motivation** (Jas 4:2–3, 2 Th 2:16-17, 3:1)**2. Attitude**

- a. Reverence and Thankfulness (2 Th 2:16, 3:3, Mt 6:9, Ps 100:4–5, Col 4:2)
- b. Confidence (2 Th 2:16–17, Heb 11:1, Ro 4:20-21, 2 Th 3:2-4, 1 Jn 5:14–15, Mt 18:19)
- c. Humility (2 Th 3:1, Jas 4:2, 5:14-16, 1 Co 12:20–21, Col 4:2-4, Mt 20:25–28, 1 Co 3:5-4:1)

3. Petitions

- a. Petitions for the Thessalonians (2 Th 2:16–17, 2 Tim 3:12)
- b. Their Request for Prayer (2 Th 3:1–2, Col 4:3, Ac 18:5–13)

Conclusion and Applications