

## Discussion Guide

*Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!*

### Open

As we continue in our series *Creating Margin* which examines the life of Nehemiah, this week Pastor Don shows us how the effectiveness of our public life is a reflection of our private habit of prayer. Whether we want to admit it or not, the truth is that if we're not regularly spending time with God in prayer we're much more likely to find ourselves overwhelmed and frustrated as we face the challenges that arise every day. When Nehemiah became aware of the tremendous challenges facing the exiles in Jerusalem, his response was to turn to God in prayer before he tried tackling the problem on his own - an example that we see Paul encouraging Timothy to follow in our passage for study today. To get your group started, let everyone share about a time when they acted too quickly - what happened, and what do they think might have been different if they had spent more time waiting (and/or praying)?

### BIG THOUGHT

When we make sure to pray first about any problems we're facing, we're inviting God to bring in His perspective and solution.

### Dig

1. Read 1 Timothy 1:1-6. Timothy is one of Paul's younger associates who's pastoring a church in Ephesus. What problems is the church having as Paul writes his letter to Timothy? (v. 3-4, 6) Have you ever had to solve a problem through someone else as your representative because you couldn't be there in person? What happened?
2. Now read v. 18-20. How seriously does Paul describe the situation? (v. 18) How does Paul's tone sound to you - harsh? Appropriate? Necessary? Something else? Why?

3. Continuing reading v. 1-2 of Chapter 2. What priority does Paul give to praying for the the church's current situation? (v. 1) What seems to be happening where the church is located? (v. 2a) And why does Paul want God to intervene in their circumstances (v. 2b) Is praying for an authority figure who's causing you problems something that's easy or difficult for you? Explain, and give examples if you can.
4. Now read v. 3-4. What does Paul see as a potential result if the church will pray for those in authority over them? (v. 4) Would this be your natural expectation of what could happen if you were in this situation? Why or why not?
5. Read v. 5-8. Why do you think Paul reminds the church of the larger truth that all people need Jesus to be made right in their relationship with God? (v. 5-6) What does v. 8 imply about the congregation's *natural* attitudes toward the authority figures Paul mentions in v.1-2?
6. How does this passage demonstrate that prayer should be our first response to the difficult situations we face daily? Explain.

### Take it Further

Talk with God and thank Him that He listens to us when we pray. Then ask Him to give you the wisdom to turn to Him *first* in prayer whenever you face a difficult situation.

### Daily Readings

Day 1: Philippians 4:6

Day 2: 1 Peter 5:7

Day 3: Proverbs 3:5-6

Day 4: Hebrews 4:16

Day 5: Psalm 37:5

Day 6: 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Memory Verse: Nehemiah 1:11



**GATEWAY**  
BAPTIST CHURCH

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