

Things That Hinder Our Prayers

Introduction.

I. **Years ago young boy went to the local store with his mother.** The kind shop owner passed him a large jar of suckers and invited him to help himself to a handful. Uncharacteristically, the boy held back. So the shop owner pulled out a handful for him. When outside, the boy's mother asked why he had suddenly been so shy and wouldn't take a handful of suckers when offered. The boy replied, "Because his hand is much bigger than mine!" That, my friends is true of God. His hand is much bigger than ours!

A. **He will then bless us more than we can imagine.** (Eph. 3:20; Jas. 5:16).

B. **Prayer is indeed a source of great power and blessings.**

1. We have the privilege of praying to the all-powerful God of heaven.
2. It is imperative that stay in constant communication with God and do nothing to lose this communication and forfeit all the blessings of prayer.

II. **Once I read about a man who was in a severe storm producing winds 70 to 80 miles per hour.** The man tried to call his brother and warn him and his family that a possible tornado was headed their way. His brother answered the phone, but the line became static and then it went dead. That was a very scary time because he lost all communication to warn his loved ones of a possible tornado.

A. It would be terrible to lose communication with your family, but let me tell you something that is 100 times worse than not being able to communicate with you family when the phone lines are down. It is not being able to get through to God in prayer.

B. When we pray to God, we want Him to hear our prayers without static and without the line going dead.

C. We want Him to clearly hear our every word and respond to us with His love, power, and mercy.

III. Today, I want to share with you **"Seven Things That Hinder Our Prayers To God."**

A. It is vital that we pray every day and avoid these hindrances to prayer..

B. **Edwin Harvey** said, "A day without prayer is a day without blessing, and a life without prayer is a life without power."

I. **Praying To Be Seen Of Men** - Praying to be seen of men hinders our prayers. (Matt. 6:5, 6).

A. **Jesus here talks about some who prayed to be seen of men.** They would stand on the street corners and the synagogues so men could see them pray. They wanted others to be impressed with their righteousness. They wanted others to know how good and how religious they were. Jesus said they had their reward. They received the praise of men, but not the praise of God. As far as God was concerned their prayers were useless.

B. **Today we must be careful that we pray with sincerely of heart.**

1. Prayers that are uttered to impress others go no higher than the ceiling.
2. Prayers uttered to please God are very effectual and have great power. (Jas. 5:16).

II. **Failure To Ask** - Failure to ask is a hindrance to prayer.

- A. Some never ask because of wickedness or indifference.
- B. Others never ask because of a misunderstanding of **Matthew 6:8**. Some reason, "If God knows what I need, why should I ask?"
 1. It is true that God knows all our needs, but it is also true that God wants us to ask.
 2. The scriptures put great emphasis on the importance of asking. (Matt. 7:7-11; Phil. 4:6; Heb. 4:16).
 3. James put it this way. (Jas. 4:2).

III. **An Unforgiving Spirit** - An unforgiving spirit can hinder our prayers to God. (Mk. 11:25).

- A. Jesus is telling us that God will not forgive us of our sins unless we forgive others when they sin against us.
 1. So in other words, our prayer for forgiveness can be denied if we are holding grudges against others.
 2. An unforgiving spirit can hinder our prayers to God.
- B. I sometimes hear people say, "**I never forgive.**" My reply to this comment is, "I hope you never sin."
 1. If we want our sins forgiven and our prayers to reach God without any hindrances, we must have a forgiving spirit. We must forgive even when someone does not deserve it. We certainly did not deserve our forgiveness.
 2. **Jesus said.** (Matt. 6:9, 14, 15).
 3. **Paul** put it this way. (Eph. 4:32).
 - a. Paul reminds us that God has forgiven us in Christ, and that we must be forgiving of others.
 - b. Forgiveness is not an option for those who desire heaven.

IV. **Improper Husband-Wife Relationship Can Hinder Our Prayers** - An improper husband-wife relationship can hinder our prayers to God. (1 Pet. 3:7).

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

- A. This verse teaches that if a man is not considerate and respectful towards his wife that his prayers will be hindered. If a husband does not treat his wife with love, honor, and respect, which she deserves, that his prayers will not be answered.
- B. An improper husband-wife relationship hinders prayer because to have a good relationship with God depends on right relationships with others.

1. **Sometime back there was a story about a minister on TV** who had a productive church and supposedly a successful man of God. During the program, he confess that for years he would come home from a hard day's work and take out his frustrations on his wife. He not only verbally abused her, but he physically beat her and on several occasions almost killed her.
2. If you were God, would you want to hear and answer this man's prayers. Absolutely not.
3. Neither will God answer our prayers if we are not considerate of our wives.
4. The Bible teaches just how much a man is to love his wife.
 - a. It teaches that a man is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and as his own body. (Eph. 5:25, 28).
 - b. Wives must love and respect their husbands. (Tit. 2:4).

V. Doubt Can Hinder Our Prayers To God - Doubt can hinder our prayers to God. (Heb. 11:6; Jas. 1:5-7).

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

A. James affirms God will not answer our prayers if we pray with doubt.

1. Doubt means, "to be undecided or skeptical about something." It is a lack of certainty and a lack of trust.
 2. As Christians, doubt is an enemy to our faith because we are to believe what God has said will happen. If we doubt God's ability to answer our prayers, then He will not answer them.
 3. **In Luke the 1st chapter we are told about Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth.** They were both godly people who served the Lord. However, there was one thing that was lacking in their lives. They wanted a child. Elizabeth was, however barren and they were both well along in years. Over a course of time, they prayed earnestly for a child and God heard their prayers and sent an angel to them to announce the good news that He was going to grant them a child. The Bible states, however, that Zechariah doubted and did not believe the news that the angel brought from God. Because he doubted God's promise, he was taught a lesson. He was not able to speak until the day the child was born.
 4. **An old story of a lady who lived next to a landfill,** and behind her was this huge hump of garbage. She read in the Bible of how faith, even the size of a grain 'of a mustard seed, could move mountains. She thought surely my prayer life can move that hill of garbage. So one night she stayed up all night by her bed praying that the hill of garbage would move. At dawn she rushed to the window in eagerness, and she looked out to see the sun rising, and still that huge mound. She said, "Huh...I knew it wouldn't work."
 5. Now, I'm not arguing whether or not there was any validity in the nature of her request. But you see the point. She never really believed it was going to accomplish anything in the first place
- B. When we ask God for something, but deep down in our hearts we doubt that we will receive it, He teaches us a lesson by not granting our prayer requests. Doubt hinders our prayers.**

1. Let us strive to have the kind of faith that Jesus commissions us to have. (Mk. 11:22-24).

22 And Jesus answered saying to them, "Have faith in God. 23 "Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. 24 "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you.

2. When we pray, let us pray with mountain moving faith.

- a. We must believe that we will receive what we ask for.
- b. Doubt kills prayer, but faith brings prayer to life and brings great blessings to our lives.

VI. According To God's Will - Failure to pray according to God's will hinders prayers.

- A. We must not pray for our will to be done, but we must always pray for God's will to be done. (Matt. 6:10).

B. Much of what we pray for is not the will of God.

1. A little boy once prayed, "Dear Lord, bless mother, and daddy, and bless our home, and make El Paso the capital of Texas." The father inquired as to why he prayed for El Paso to be made the capital of Texas. He said, "Because that's what I put on my test paper at school today."
2. God will not change the capital of Texas because we put the wrong answer on a test paper. God will not make 10 x 10 = 99 because we want it to be so. God will not break the laws of nature and make it snow in July because we want it to be so.

- C. Neither will God answer our prayers when we ask for foolish things or selfish things or wicked things that will cause us to stray from God.

D. God hears and answers our prayers that are according to His will. (1 Jn. 5:14, 15).

1. John assures us that God answers our prayers that are according to His will.
2. **It has been rightfully said**, "Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God.

VII Disobedience Can Hinder Our Prayers To God - Disobedience hinders our prayers to God.

- A. The Bible teaches disobedience separates us from God and keeps Him from answering our prayers. (Isa. 59: 1, 2).

1 Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short That it cannot save; Neither is His ear so dull That it cannot hear.

2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear.

1. The Bible teaches that prayer must be preceded by obedience. (1 Sam. 15:22, 23).

2. Listen to the words of the psalmist. (Psa. 66:18).

3. God spoke these words in the book of Jeremiah. (Jere. 14:10-12).

10 Thus says the Lord to this people, "Even so they have loved to wander; they have not kept their feet in check.

Therefore the Lord does not accept them; now He will remember their iniquity and call their sins to account."

11 So the Lord said to me, "Do not pray for the welfare of this people. 12 "When they fast, I am not going to

listen to their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I am not going to accept them. Rather

I am going to make an end of them by the sword, famine and pestilence."

4. **Solomon** said. (Prov. 15:29; 28:9).

5. **Peter** wrote. (1 Pet. 3:12).

B. Christians sometimes wonder why their prayers are not being answered. **The answer is often very simple.**

1. It is called disobedience. If we reject God and ignore His commandment, God will not answer our prayers. Our prayers are then an abomination to Him.

2. If we want God to delight in our prayers, if we want Him to listen to them and answer them, we must delight in Him.

Conclusion.

I. Indeed prayer is one of the great blessings we have as Christians.

A. We need to be living in such a way that our prayers are going directly to the throne room of God without any interferences. This means we must avoid the these things that hinder and kill our prayers.

B. It is vital that we keep the lines of communication with God smooth and static free.

II. It is also vital that a person be a child of God by spiritual birth.

A. God will bless and save those who come to Him and submit to Son in faith and baptism.

B. He will answer the prayers of those who live for Him and seek to do His will.

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