

Hindrances to Answered Prayer

I. Prayer Defined

A. Prayer: Communion with God

B. Two-way Communication

1. Believer speaks to God

2. God speaks to believer

C. Prayer is only for believers

D. God hears the prayer of salvation from the sinner

E. Prayer is addressed to the Father in Jesus' name

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Ephesians 3:14: For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Types of Prayer

A. Petitions: asking God for things

1. Healing

2. Family needs

3. Jobs, etc.

B. Consecration: asking for God's will to be done in our lives

C. Prayers of Thanksgiving and Worship

1. Thanksgiving: thanking God for what He has done for us

2. Worship: worshipping God for Who He is

D. Prayers of Intercession: praying for others

Ephesians 3:18: *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto will all perseverance and supplication for all saints:*

E. Praying in the Spirit

I Corinthians 14:4: *He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.*

Jude 20: *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost.*

1. Tongues is the only type of prayer that comes from our spirit

2. All other types of prayer come from our souls

a. Prayer demands thought

b. Prayer demands concentration

I Corinthians 14:14-15: *For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

3. Praying in the Spirit is not a prayer that you formulate with your mind

III. Growing in Prayer

A. When newly born-again, God answers prayer in spite of our ignorance of the Word

B. As prayer matures, it becomes more accurate and effective

C. Prayer becomes an expression of our faith

D. Prayers should be filled with the Word of God

E. Through Word-filled prayers, we can make accurate and demanding prayers of God to meet the needs of people

IV. Unanswered Prayers

A. Related to carnality/sin

1. If sin is in a believer's life, he can pray according to the Word of God but the prayer will be ineffective because of sin

2. The Holy Spirit is the agent of answered prayer, but sin grieves the Holy Spirit resulting in unanswered prayer

Ephesians 4:30: *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

3. Human good quenches the Holy Spirit resulting in unanswered prayer

I Thessalonians 5:19: *Quench not the Spirit.*

V. Answered Prayer is a Result of Faith

Matthew 21:22: *And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

Mark 11:24: *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

A. Faith is simply believing what God said is true

Pisteuo (Greek): the English words *faith* and *believe* both come from this Greek word

Faith: is a noun

Believe: is a verb; this is faith in action

B. Faith is developed through use, like a muscle

C. Believing is the use of faith

Ephesians 2:8-9: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God:*

Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Acts 16:31: *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

Mark 11:24: *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

VI. Two Ways to Know the Will of God

A. The Word of God in our hearts reveals to us the will of God

John 15:7: *If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

1. *If you abide in me...*; this is being in fellowship with God

2. *...and my words abide in you*; this is knowledge of the Word

Matthew 21:22: *And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

Mark 11:24: *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when you pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

3. *ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

a. Cannot pray contrary to another's will (ie-claiming someone as a husband/wife)

b. Cannot force our faith on others; if we could, everyone would be saved

4. When filled with the Word, our desires become the same as God's desires

5. God can trust us when His Word is on the inside of us because our desires line up with His desires

John 15:7: *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

I John 5:14: *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*

B. By the direction of the Holy Spirit

1. It is vital to pray in tongues

2. The Bible reveals the general will of God, but the Holy Spirit reveals the specific will of God

3. After receiving the revelation of the Holy Spirit, we can approach the throne of God with confidence in prayer

4. Praying in tongues, as directed by the Holy Spirit, is necessary when praying over specific areas affecting your own personal life

I John 5:14: *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:*

And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Psalm 145:18: *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.*

...in truth: the Word of God

VII. Hindrances to Answered Prayer

A. Unbelief/a lack of faith

B. Ignorance of the will of God

I John 3:22: *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

C. Lack of obedience to the Word

1. We need to KNOW the Word

2. We need to DO the Word

3. Most counseling is not a result of people lacking knowledge of the Word; rather, a result of lack of obedience to the Word

D. Unforgiveness

1. Is in the heart

Mark 11:25-26: *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.*

But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 6:14-15: *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:*

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

2. God does not hear our prayers when there is iniquity in our heart

Psalm 66:17-20: I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

E. Worry

Philippians 4:6: Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

Be careful for nothing.....: Don't worry about anything

1. Worry will eventually cause prayer not to be answered

2. Worry is the imagination getting out of control

3. Worry is thinking that the Word of God will not work

4. Worry is thinking "what if?"

I Peter 5:7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

5. Worry is always in the future

6. You cannot improve yourself or your situation by worrying

Matthew 6:27: Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

F. Marriage Problems

I Peter 5:7: *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

1. Prayers are hindered when there is strife in marriage
2. It is difficult to concentrate when strife is in the home
3. The mind cannot be on the things of God when discord is in the home

G. Selfishness

James 4:2-3: *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Ye lust...: to desire

Ye fight and war: internal struggles

1. "Lust" is referring to greeds and desires outside the Word of God
2. Believer's prayer should be from the inward man, not from the lusts of the flesh
3. Gain is not godliness

I Timothy 6:5: *...supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.*

- a. "Things" (ie-what you drive, where you live, etc.) do not determine person's spiritual level
- b. "Things" are not an indicator that you are in the will of God

c. God says not to be jealous of the prosperity of the wicked

d. The blessings of the Lord make rich and add no sorrow

Proverbs 10:22: *The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.*

H. Doubt

Mark 11:23: *For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*

James 1:5: *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth (wavers) not; and it shall be given him...*

If any of you lack wisdom...: this is wisdom in the midst of calamity, controversy, tests and trials

wavering: this is doubt

1. Faith

a. Says "yes" to the promises of God

b. Faith has made a decision to believe

c. Decides that the Word of God is greater than circumstances

2. Unbelief

a. Unbelief is the opposite of faith

b. Unbelief says "no" to the promises of God

c. Unbelief has made the decision not to believe

d. Decides that circumstances are greater than God's Word

3. Doubt

a. Doubt is not the opposite of faith

b. Fluctuates between faith and unbelief

c. Looks at the promises of God but then focuses on the circumstances of life

d. Hinders and stops us from receiving the promises of God and answers to prayer

VIII. "Growing Up" in Prayer

Hebrews 4:16: *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

A. Prayer is a great privilege and God wants us to come boldly to Him in prayer

B. God wants our prayers to become effective

C. The more knowledgeable we are of the Word of God, the shorter and more effective our prayers should become

D. Paul's prayer for the saints were short but highly effective

E. Prayers do not have to be long for God to hear us

F. God delights in hearing His Word in prayer

G. Longer prayers in the life of a believer may be necessary for:

1. Personal prayer

2. Meditation

3. Personal sacrifice in prayer

4. Fellowship with God

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