

# What Hinders Our Prayers

## Lesson for Sunday, October 6, 2024

**NOTE TO TEACHERS FROM JEFF:** I know what I said on the video about this being the last lesson in this series. Since I recorded that video, we decided to add one more! So, next week will be the last lesson in this series. 😊

### INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ For an icebreaker, ask class member to share with one another what they have learned in this series.
- ⇒ Throughout, we have tried to motivate you to pray, and then to teach you how to pray. In this final lesson, we want to prepare for potential obstacles that can keep us from praying as we should in the future.
- ⇒ The Christian who determines to pray will face opposition aimed at keeping them from praying. Often, the key to success is how well we plan for and anticipate potential problems.

### BIBLE STUDY:

#### 1. **BUSYNESS**

- a. Someone has said, “If the Devil cannot make you bad, he will try to make you busy.”
- b. We are all too busy! We all have plenty to do, our schedules are full, and there are things we would like to do that we simply don’t have the time for.
- c. TEXT: Luke 10:38-42 – Describe the scene...
  - i. What did Jesus say? Vs. 41, “Martha, you are too busy!” There is something that is more important than what you are doing!
  - ii. What was that one thing? Spending time with Jesus.
- d. When we pray we are spending time with the Creator of the universe. What could possibly be more important? ILL: A visit from the president...
- e. If you are too busy to pray, then you are too busy.
- f. TIP: Make prayer (& daily time with God) your top priority.

#### 2. **DISOBEDIENCE**

- a. Scripture consistently teaches that God blesses obedience and punishes disobedience.
- b. In 1 John 3:22, John reminds us that God blesses our obedience by answering our prayers. There is a direct connection between “ask and receive” and “keep His commands.”
- c. ILL: When you sin against another person, the next time you see them it is awkward at best. The same is true in prayer. When we come to God with unconfessed sin in our lives prayer can be awkward.
- d. Read (if time) Isaiah 1:15; Proverbs 28:9
- e. TIP: When you sin, immediately confess it to the Lord. “Keep short accounts with God”

#### 3. **LAZINESS**

- a. We are a culture that wastes time. We spend almost 11 hours a day staring at a screen.
- b. Sometimes we fail to pray simply because we are lazy and undisciplined.
- c. Read 1 Peter 4:7b; James 4:2 – Fervent (not lethargic); 1 Timothy 4:7 – We must discipline ourselves to pray effectively!
- d. TIP: Turn off your phone and all media when you are praying.
- e. TIP: Find a place of solitude where you can pray. A place where you will not be distracted.

#### 4. **IDOLATRY**

- a. Exodus 20:3-4a – The first two commandments.

- b. What is an idol? We are guilty of idolatry anytime something or someone becomes more important and more influential in our lives than God Himself.
  - c. Examples: Many Christians overemphasize money and material possessions. For others, sports are an idol. People will skip church if their team is playing...
  - d. In the Bible idolatry is referred to as spiritual adultery. We are showing love and reverence to an undeserving object in an inappropriate manner.
  - e. Throughout the Bible we are warned about spiritual adultery (1 John 5:21).
  - f. ILL: If you are married, remember when you fell in love?
    - i. All you wanted to do was spend time with that person, and talking with them was easy!
    - ii. When we are in love with God, we will want to spend time with Him, and talking with Him will be easy.
  - g. If you are having a hard time praying you should ask yourself, "Is the Lord my first love?"
5. **UNFORGIVENESS**
- a. When we allow bitterness and unforgiveness to become part of our lives, the Lord will not hear our prayers.
  - b. Consider these texts: Matthew 6:14-15; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60
  - c. Sometimes we refuse to forgive another person. Sometimes we refuse to "forgive" the Lord.
  - d. When you refuse to forgive, the Lord turns a deaf ear to our prayers. Who do you need to forgive?
6. **UNCONFESED SIN**
- a. Psalm 66:18 – If we hold onto sin, God will not answer our prayers.
    - i. God is omnipresent. God does hear our prayers because He hears everything!
    - ii. The verse is saying that God doesn't listen to our prayers the same way.
    - iii. When we hold onto our sin, He hears them but He doesn't listen with the intention to answer them.
  - b. ILL: Think of a clogged drain in your sink or bathtub. At times things build up in the drain and clog it up not allowing the water to pass through effectively.
  - c. The same is true in our prayer life. When we hold onto sin it clogs up our line of communication between us and the Lord and makes it difficult to work like it should.
  - d. When you pray, slow down and pray Psalm 139:23-24. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the sin in your life.
  - e. When you find something, confess it to God (agree with Him), repent of it (the intention to not repeat it), and ask God to forgive you.
  - f. Then claim verses like 1 John 1:9 and Psalm 32:1-2, 5.
7. **FAMILY STRIFE**
- a. You cannot be right with God when you have wrong relationships with your family.
  - b. Look at 1 Peter 3:7 – When our marriage is not right our prayers are not right.
  - c. Ephesians 5-6 talk extensively about the family and how we are to function.
    - i. Children are to be obedient.
    - ii. Husbands are to love their wives.
    - iii. Wives are to respect their husbands.
    - iv. Parents are not to provoke their children.
  - d. God takes family seriously. When we allow problems to continue at the home our prayer life will not be what it should be.
8. **LACK OF FAITH**
- a. God wants us to pray in faith. See Hebrews 11:6, without faith it is impossible...
  - b. Jesus would often heal people and would say "it will be done according to your faith" (Matthew 9:29).
  - c. James 1:5-8 tells us that if we lack wisdom we should ask of God but we must ask in faith. Prayer and faith go together.
  - d. Does prayer change things, or has God already determined what He is going to do?

- i. 2 Kings 20:5 – The account of King Hezekiah being healed by God as a result of his prayer to God.
  - ii. James 5:17-18 – Elijah prayed to God and the windows of Heaven were shut and it did not rain for an extended time. He prayed again and they were opened.
- e. Faith is a key component in the Christian's life.
  - i. We are saved through faith (Ephesians 2:8).
  - ii. We are to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).
  - iii. Anything we do that is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23).
  - iv. We cannot please Him without faith (Hebrews 11:6).
  - v. And we are to pray in faith (Mark 11:22-24).
- f. Learn to pray in faith – believing that (1) God is able to do whatever He wants, (2) as long as our request is within His will for our lives.

### CONCLUSION:

What is hindering your prayer life?

- Are you too busy? Are you living in disobedience? Are you simply lazy and undisciplined?
- Do you love something or someone more than you love the Lord?
- Are you refusing to forgive someone who has sinned against you?
- Are you refusing to confess your sin to God?
- Do you have family strife that you need to deal with?
- Do you have a lack of faith?

When these things are present in your life, it will be difficult to pray.

- Deal with these quickly and see your prayer life come alive.

The key: Stay in the Word.

- We have encouraged you to incorporate the Scripture into your prayer life. This requires staying in your Bible.
- As you get comfortable praying the Bible, you will begin to see the Bible differently. You will read a verse and think, "I can pray that!"
- By incorporating verses into your prayer time, you will keep your prayer life fresh and will have a better chance of avoiding some of these hindrances!