

These 4 Things Will Hinder Your Prayers

In a way, all prayer is actually answered. God answers prayer in three ways: yes, no and wait. When God says no to our prayers, we think He didn't answer them. But actually, He did. He said no. That's an answer.

Sometimes God tells us to wait, because God has his timing. And sometimes God says yes.

So why is it that our prayers are not answered in the affirmative more often? One reason is the promise of answered prayer is not given to every person on earth. We need to have a relationship with God. Sure, anyone can call upon the name of the Lord, but having a prayer life, having fellowship and communion with God, is a privilege of the child of God.

I can't call out to God if I have no relationship with him and expect Him to respond necessarily. I can't walk up to a random stranger and say, "Will you make me lunch?" But I can go to my wife of almost 45 years and say, "Will you make me lunch?" I can ask that of her. And she can ask things of me as well. Those are the privileges of relationship.

If my phone buzzes and I see that it's my wife calling, I answer. If it's my son calling, I answer. If it's one of my grandkids Facetiming me to have a random conversation at the worst time of the day, I answer. Why? Because relationship trumps everything.

In the same way, God answers our calls and hears our prayers because of relationship. When we have a relationship with God and call on Him, He will hear us. And He will answer us.

Another reason our prayers are not answered is that we have unconfessed sin in our lives. The Bible says, "But your

iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He will not hear" (Isa. 59:2). The psalmist wrote, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).

"Regard" means "to cling to or hold on to." If you're practicing sin as a Christian, it will bring your prayer life to a screeching halt. We all sin, and we sin more than we think we do. But there is a difference between a Christian who sins and a Christian who is willfully and habitually sinning without remorse, without any plans to stop.

A true Christian is miserable when he or she is living in sin. But if someone can continue in sin, and even plans to sin more without any remorse or pangs of conscience, this would indicate to me that he or she is not a child of God. The Bible tells us that "Whoever practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. ... Whoever has been born of God does not practice sin, for His seed remains in him. And he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God" (1 John 3:8-9). Unconfessed sin can hinder our prayers.

Selfishness can hinder our prayers as well. Did you know it's possible to pray for the right thing with the wrong motive? For example, *Lord, use me. I want to be used by you. I want to be someone who speaks out for you*, is a good thing to pray for.

But ask yourself why you're praying that. Is it because you want people to notice you and applaud you? Is it to get more followers on social media? Those are not the right reasons to become a leader, if that is what God has called you to be. It isn't easy to be in a position of leadership. There is a great responsibility that comes with it. Sometimes selfishness can hinder our prayers, so we want to pray with the right motives.

Unforgiveness also can hinder our prayers. Jesus said, "And when you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may also forgive your sins" (Mark 11:25).

Is there someone you're bitter toward right now? Is there someone you hate? You literally sit around thinking of ways to get even. If you have that attitude toward someone, it can hinder your prayer life.

They may have done a horrible thing to you. But understand that forgiving someone isn't just for their sake; it's for your sake, too. As I've often said, when you forgive someone you set a prisoner free: yourself. Unforgiveness is hurting you. And it's hurting your relationship with God.

Are you suffering today? Then pray. Are things going well? Are you blessed right now? Then praise God. Do you need healing from the Lord? Then pray, pray, pray. Keep praying. Don't stop praying.

Really, we're in a spiritual battle, and every day in this battle we're either winning or losing. We're either gaining ground or losing ground. The Bible tells in the book of Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God. But before a word is mentioned about putting on the various pieces of spiritual armor, Chapter 6, verse 10 tells us, "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

The idea is that first we stand in our relationship and our fellowship with God. We don't go outside of that. If unconfessed sin or unforgiveness or something else puts a wedge between you and the Lord, then you're not communing with Him. And that makes you more vulnerable. So first stand in the Lord and in the power of his might.

We all have our burdens, we all have our concerns, and we all have things we pray about. As the battle rages on, God will give us the strength that we need. We're safe and we're secure

in the strong arms of the Lord Jesus Christ. {eoa}

Taken from my weekly column at World Net Daily.

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