

5 Things that Hinder the Presence of Christ

Read Time: 4 Minutes 25 Seconds

Note: Watch the sermon here, where this article originated.

Most believers understand that God is everywhere, but the Bible is also clear that the power and presence of Christ can fill the heart of the believer who completely surrenders to Him.

His presence changes everything! So it's no secret why the enemy of our soul wants to hinder His presence and power in our life.

Here are five things that will hinder the presence of Christ in your life and what you can do to get back on track:

1. Secret sin: Hidden sin deeply affects and quenches our relationship with our Savior. "When there's no communion with God, our lives are spent in the darkness. We see nothing. We hear nothing. We have no answers. Spiritual death sets in" (Gene Easley).

Most of us can relate to spiritual death, but be encouraged: Repentance opens the door for His presence to be restored.

Begin by acknowledging and turning from the sin that is pulling you down and you'll find rest for your soul.

Acts 3:19 says, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

Although the context of this verse is about those laying their sin at the foot of the cross and being "born-again" for the first time, believers can also experience times of renewal

when repentance is genuine.

We must begin here.

2. The fullness of the flesh: Matthew 6:24 reminds us that, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other...” It’s impossible to be full of the world and full of Christ. We can’t be consumed with worldly pursuits as our main focus and be consumed with pursuing Christ—one or the other will prevail.

One huge benefit of prayer and fasting is that it empties us in order to be filled. It weakens the flesh in order to be strengthened by the Spirit.

The presence of Christ is attracted to weakness, and the practice of moderation strengthens spiritual discipline. This leads to the fullness of the Spirit. Andrew Murray once said, “Only in a life of moderation and self-denial will there be sufficient heart and strength to pray much.” I’m not promoting legalism, but I am promoting moderation.

In 1 Cor. 9:27, Paul said that he disciplined his body and brought it under control so that his work would not be hindered. In his Bible commentary, Matthew Henry wrote about the danger of yielding to fleshly desires, pampering the body and its lusts and appetites.

Commit today to deny something that the flesh is always craving. In essence, you’re saying, “I’m so desperate to hear from God and to know Him that I’m willing to make this sacrifice.” This leads to the next point:

3. A lack of desperation: When we lack desperation about pursuing God, we are demonstrating that the pursuit is not important enough to make it a priority.

When Isaiah cried, “Oh, that You would rend the heavens!” He was desperate. When Ezra and Esther fasted and cried out to

God, they were desperate. When Joel called a sacred assembly, he was desperate. When the early disciples waited in the upper room, they were desperate.

The sad reality is that the average Christian gets by with just enough to keep them lukewarm but not on fire.

4. A lack of fervency: Let's be clear here: "The spiritual battle in which the Christian is engaged is fierce. Satan is intent upon destroying the presence of Christ from our lives. There are no vacations from spiritual warfare. That is why the fire must be kept burning" ("Fire Upon the Altar" by Gene Easley).

Once God lights the fire of the Spirit in our hearts, we must do our part to keep Him burning through fervent prayer: "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16).

William Gurnall once said, "Cold praying is no more prayer than a painting of fire is fire." How can prayers that do not burden your heart move God's hand?

Without desperation and fervency, prayer is like sitting in front of a picture of a fire. You see it but you don't feel it! "He is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6), and diligence takes work.

5. Busyness: If you're too busy to wait, too preoccupied to pursue God, and too wrapped up to worship Him, your relationship with Him will be hindered. "He acts for the one who waits for Him" (Isa. 64:4), and waiting can't be rushed.

Waiting is a great way to measure importance. We wait for things that are important to us. Jesus often waited to hear from the Father and went to places of solitude to wait.

Yes, waiting is difficult, but we can also rest in the fact that God is in control. Andrew Murray offers a great

perspective here: “Once faith has taken its stand on God’s Word and the name of Jesus, and has yielded itself to the leading of the Spirit to seek only God’s will and honor it in prayer, you need not be discouraged by delay.”

Just because God is delaying something doesn’t necessarily mean that He is denying it.

Feelings Can’t Be Trusted

We must come to the point where we say, “Jesus, you’re a priority and I’m going to pursue You regardless of how I ‘feel’.” But always remember: “Pursuing” His presence doesn’t always mean “feeling” His presence.

Are you standing on God’s Word with a humble, broken, repentant heart?

Are you willing to yield to the direction of the Spirit?

Are you actively engaged in dealing with the things that hinder His presence in your life?

Then don’t be discouraged by “feelings” when things get tough. Rest in God’s sovereignty. He is our stability in unstable times.

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