

Truths the Enemy Uses to Stop Us From Praying

The forces of hell will do anything to keep us from praying. Satan tells lies to keep us from praying. He uses pleasures, misinformation and our laziness to keep us from praying. He uses false teachers, busy schedules and great television to keep us from praying.

He also has been known to use truth.

As odd as it seems, the dark prince does not hesitate to speak the truth if it will make us think we shouldn't pray.

Here are eight true statements Satan uses to put a stop to the most powerful force in the world, the prayers of God's people:

1. God already knows what you need. No point in asking.
2. You are unworthy.
3. You are weak.
4. Your faith is small.
5. You have no idea whether God will answer your prayers or not.
6. You're only one person; what good will your prayers be?
7. You don't know how to pray.
8. Your sins can block your prayers.

He's right, of course. But those statements—although completely accurate—don't tell the whole story.

“God already knows what you need.” In Matthew 6:8b, Jesus said, “For your Father knows what thing you have need of before you ask Him.” And what did He do then? Proceeded to give us the Lord's Prayer. The fact that God already knows my

need is no excuse to get out of prayer; it's motivation to pray.

"You are unworthy." Boy, is that ever true. But fortunately, that's beside the point. Psalm 130:3 tells us if the Lord should keep track of iniquities, no one would stand. God is not dealing with perfect people. All have sinned; there is none righteous, no, not one (Rom. 3:10, 23). The wonderful old hymn says, "Christ receiveth sinful men, even me with all my sin." That means being unworthy is no excuse.

"You are weak." Yes, I am. However, there's good news. "But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' ... when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9a, 10c). Being weak is no excuse.

"Your faith is small." It is. But in Luke 17:6, Jesus says even faith as small as a mustard seed can achieve miracles. So the question becomes not how big my faith is, but whether or not I use it. Jesus asked the panicked disciples, "'Why are you so fearful? How is that you have no faith?'" (Mark 4:40b).

Having a small faith is no excuse. Faith is like radioactivity: a little goes a long way.

"You do not know whether the Lord will answer your prayers." That's true, because He is all-wise and I'm not. I see through a glass darkly and pray about as poorly. But ultimately, I say, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." (Matt. 26:39c).

I'm content to send up my prayers and leave the answers to the Lord. What I must not do is announce presumptuously that the Lord "will" or "must" grant my prayer since His integrity is at stake. Psalm 115:3 says, "But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases." And knowing His wonderful character, that's what I want. So not knowing how He will answer is no reason not to pray. I trust Him.

“You’re only one person; what good will your prayers do?” I smile at this one. This was my response when the Lord once asked me if I prayed for Billy Graham (who was sitting in the chair to my right at the time). I said, “Lord, people all over the world pray for Billy Graham, and I’m only one person.” Then the utter ridiculousness of that statement hit me, and I almost laughed out loud. Do you know anyone who is two people? Three people? A crowd? Anyone praying is one person. Everything that gets done by prayer occurs because of this one person praying, and that one and the next one. The fact that I’m just one person—I’m smiling—is no reason not to pray. Otherwise, no one would.

“You don’t know how to pray.” That’s frequently the case. However, we have Romans 8:26. “Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

Since the Lord takes my feeble attempts at prayer and turns them into something powerful in heaven, my lack of knowledge about how to pray is no excuse. Believers can take special satisfaction in the truths of Romans 8:26 (the Spirit intercedes for us) and Romans 8:34 (Jesus intercedes for us). Wow. How good is that?

“Your sins can block your prayers.” That’s exactly what Isaiah 59:2 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.”

However—and we delight in this—“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). So there is no excuse for any of us to go forward one more minute with sins weighing us down (Heb. 12:1) and blocking our prayers.

There is no reason not to pray. And every reason to do so.

Jesus told the unbelieving Sadducees they were guilty of two mistakes—the same two, incidentally that many non-praying (so-called) disciples of Jesus practice: 1. You do not know the Scriptures, 2. Nor do you know the power of God (Matt. 22:29).

If we knew the Word, we would have an answer to these attacks from the enemy.

And if we trusted the Lord, we would believe His Word and get on with the business of praying!

Beloved, let us pray.

Nothing tells the story on our faith like prayer. “... when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8) {eoa}

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