

## Three Barriers to Answered Prayer

By Allen Webster

Sometimes we wonder why God seems far away. Is He paying attention? David asked, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken me? Why are You so far from helping Me?” (Psalm 22:1). Deep down, perhaps, David understood, “The Lord is near to all who call upon Him in truth” (Psalm 145:18) but at that moment He seemed distant.

First Timothy 2:8 gives three reasons God can be far away from answering a Christian’s prayers: 1. An Unholy Lifestyle, 2. Anger, 3. Doubt.

### 1: An Unholy Lifestyle

The first requirement for answered prayer is a clean, obedient life. God’s ears are open to the righteous (1 Peter 3:12). The prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16). “Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight” (1 John 3:22). When “the righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles . . . Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all” (Psalm 34:17,19; cf. 18:20;26:6;73:13; Proverbs 21:27;Jeremiah 7:9-10; Hebrews 10:22).

Paul told those who lead prayer to lift up “holy hands” (1 Timothy 2:8). This is not used in the sense that some charismatic churches lift hands into the air and sway. To those familiar with the Old Testament, it reminded them that it was customary for Jewish men to pray with arms extended and hands open to heaven (Deuteronomy 21:6-7;Job 9:30-31;16:17; Lamentations 2:19;3:41). “Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and bless the LORD” (Psalm 134:2;26:6;28:2;63:4;141:2).

- Several prayer postures are found in the Bible:
- falling on the ground (Genesis 17:3);
- bowing the head (Genesis 24:26);
- sitting (2 Samuel 7:18);
- standing with outstretched hands (1 Kings 8:22);
- kneeling (Daniel 6:10);
- standing (Luke 18:11);
- lifting the eyes (John 17:1).

Tertullian said of the practice of early Christians: “We Christians, looking up to heaven with outspread hands, because they are free from stain; with uncovered heads, because there is nothing to make us blush; without a prompter, because we pray from our hearts . . .” (his apology).

Holy hands (or “clean”) was symbolic of a blameless life (2 Samuel 22:21;Psalm 24:4). “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:8). Pilate borrowed from this idea at Jesus’ trial when he took water, washed his hands before the multitude, and said, “I am inno-

# Prayers and Concerns

- ◆ Aleta Collins has a fractured vertebrae due to a fall. She has been moved to 2nd floor rehab in Baxter hospital. (417-372-0137)
- ◆ Harold Reynolds needs continued prayers for his treatments.
- ◆ Larry Butler’s sister Elaine has to endure another mastectomy due to bad surgery the first time that didn’t get all of the cancer.
- ◆ Rene Blackburn is having some kidney issues.
- ◆ B. A. Owens, cousin of the Reynolds and Jones families has been diagnosed with prostate cancer.
- ◆ Remember those with health issues—Karen Langston, Barbara White, Faye Flaughers, Ruth Strain, Norma Jones, Steve Siebels, Aleta Collins.
- ◆ All those battling cancer—Harold Reynolds, Elaine Hunter (Larry’s sister), Dawn (Chris Lemburg’s sister), Lionel Daugherty, Jana Crisp, Richard Blackburn, Cindy Gibson, Leroy Collins, Fred Strain.
- ◆ Those in GHCC: Bonnie Ebrite, Delphia Holmes, Wilbern Uchtman. Jim Hambelton at Thayer. Bonnie Luna at Ava. Clifford Lansdown at River Lodge, Mtn. Home.



cent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it” (Matthew 27:24).

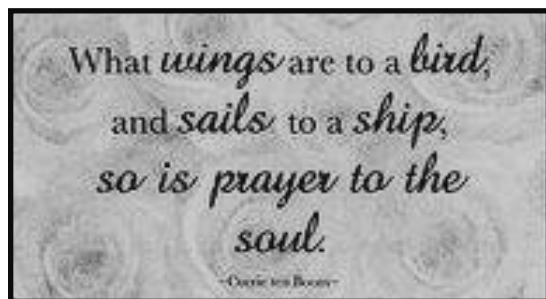
The stream of prayer rises no higher than the fountain of living. As preachers used to be told to preach by their lives, or not at all, so Christians ought to pray by their lives, or not at all. Praying cannot be divorced from conduct. Solomon said, “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight” (Proverbs 15:8). “One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination” (Proverbs 28:9). David said, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (Psalm 66:18).

(continued next week)

Birthdays		Anniversaries	
12-6	Don Luna	12-9	Bill & Lana Cockrum
12-9	Pat Kirkland	12-27	Matt & April Lynne
12-9	Jim Lane		
12-10	David Stevens	Birthdays	
12-13	Dale Strong	12-21	Kim Anderson
12-14	Joe Walrath	12-25	Jessica Smith
12-14	Heath Maddox	12-27	Ranger Stevens
12-15	Dana Crisp	12-27	Alyssa Walski

Date	Event	Details
Wed. Dec. 20th	Christmas Program	Kids will have program instead of classes.

Dorlene Butler will be cooking something delicious for Wednesday night fellowship supper before Bible classes.



### December Worship Assignments

<u>Welcome &amp; Prayer</u>		<u>Communion</u>	<u>Shepherd's Prayer</u>
12-3	Dana Crisp	Tinker Langston	Don Luna
12-10	Spencer Wade	Paul Wade	John Abraham
12-17	Andrew Hambelton	D. E. Pleasant	Mark Lane
12-24	Ryan Stevens	Larry Butler	David Stevens
12-31	Jim Kirkland	R. J. Moyers	Don Luna

**Song Leader: Titus Smith**  
**Greeters: Mark & Nichole Lane**

## The Family News

December 10, 2023

### Gainesville Church of Christ

PO Box 7, 23550 US Hwy. 160, Gainesville, MO 65655

[www.gainesvillechurchofchrist.org](http://www.gainesvillechurchofchrist.org)

### A Place to Call Home

*We welcome you and are so glad you could worship with us today.*

### Schedule of Services

#### Sunday

9:30 a.m. Bible Classes for All Ages

10:30 a.m. Worship Service Topic: **Effective Prayer**

#### Wednesday

6 p.m. Fellowship Supper

7 p.m. Bible Classes for All Ages

#### Sunday Worship Outline

Welcome and Prayer

Kids Singing up Front

#595, *I Come to the Garden Alone*; #266, *Majesty*

#853, *When We All Get to Heaven*

#344, *Low in the Grave He Lay*; Communion Service

#800, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*

Scripture Reading by Dylan Abraham, James 5:13-16

Sermon and Invitation

#944, *What Shall It Be*; #429, *Oh to Be Like Thee*

Shepherd's Prayer

Offering baskets are at the back.

#### Elders

Mark Lane 417-679-4835

Don Luna 417-712-1945

David Stevens 417-679-4700

John Abraham 870-421-5632

#### Deacons

Larry Butler 817-504-1604

Dana Crisp 417-331-5090

James Langston 870-315-4355

#### Preacher

Halbert Smith 417-257-3880

**Ministers:** Every Member—Each One of Us