

Three Barriers to Answered Prayer

By Allen Webster

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 (continued from last week)

The disobedient return from prayer empty-handed. They come to God's footstool in tears and leave in sobs. Men ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, and seek only to gratify selfish desires (James 4:1-4). God warned, essentially, "If you stop listening to me, I will stop listening to you" (Proverbs 1:24-28). "When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood" (Isaiah 1:15; cf. 59:8; Jeremiah 11:14). Obedience is "better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22; cf. Deuteronomy 5:29).

Satan knows the power of one righteous person at prayer (James 5:17-18), so he does all he can to hinder prayer. A Dutch proverb goes, "Sinning will make a man leave off praying, or praying will make a man leave off sinning." A crisis or danger may drive sinners to pray. If the crisis passes, they may forget God until the next time they need Him. If the crisis does not pass, they may blame God for not hearing or conclude that God does not exist. Bad living means bad praying and, in the end, no praying at all.

Walking with God proceeds talking with God. Enoch must have maintained unbroken communion with Jehovah, although the Bible does not give any of the patriarch's prayers. Andrew Bonar suggested that God and Enoch were in the habit of walking and talking daily and then one day God said to His companion, "You have come so far each day of our long pilgrimage together, now come all the way home with Me." Thus, "he was not, for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). Noah also "walked with God" (Genesis 6:9). In the earlier books of the Bible, God appears to speak more to man than man does to God. In Genesis 6-9, for instance, God does all the talking and Noah does the obeying.

2: ANGER.

"Without anger" is a second essential to answered prayer. If we are at odds with other Christians, it hinders our prayers (Matthew 5:22-24, 44; 6:12-15). Peacemakers—not troublemakers—get answers from God. "Anger is a short madness." Stated positively, the second attribute is kindness (1 Kings 3:11; Psalms 35:12-13; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60).

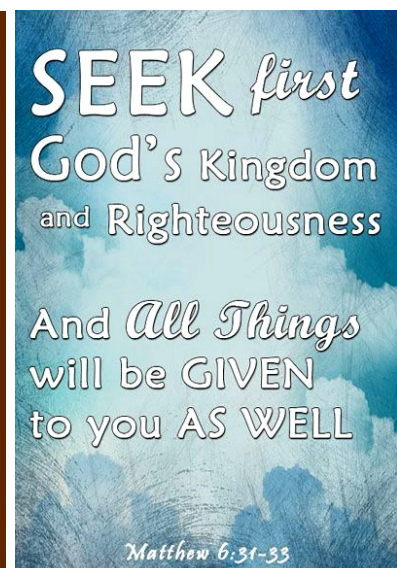
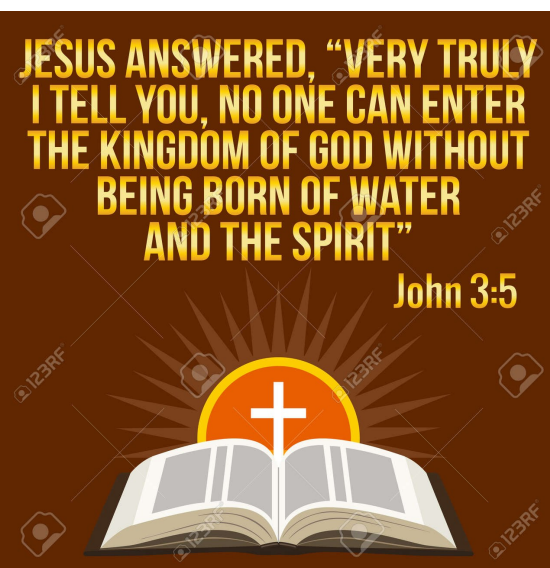
Christian husbands are to treat wives as "heirs together of the grace of life," that their prayers "may not be hindered" (1 Peter 3:7). The word translated "hindered" was used for a road being cut away so that it could not be traveled. If spouses mistreat each other, the path of prayer to God is cut. We must be right with others before we can be right with God (1 John 3:22-23).

(continued next week)

Prayers and Concerns

- ◆ Aleta Collins has been in rehab at Baxter hospital. (417-372-0137)
- ◆ Harold Reynolds had a second five-hour chemo treatment last Monday.
- ◆ Rene Blackburn had an MRI on her kidneys but no results yet.
- ◆ Larry Butler's sister Elaine has to endure another double mastectomy tomorrow due to bad surgery the first time that didn't get all of the cancer.
- ◆ Remember those with health issues—Barbara White, Don Luna, Faye Flaughers, Ruth Strain, Norma Jones, Steve Siebels, Aleta Collins, V. A. Owens.
- ◆ 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.

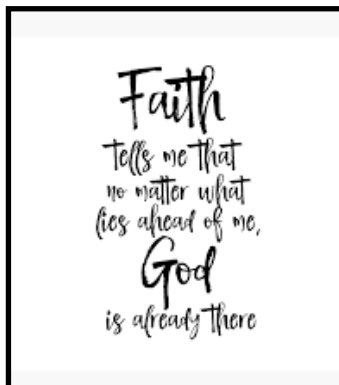
There was rejoicing here and in heaven last Sunday when Sarah Hossman confessed Jesus and was baptized. Sarah is the daughter of Matt and Rose.



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	12-15	Dana Crisp
12-13	Hope Hillhouse	12-21	Kim Anderson
12-14	Corey Hillhouse	12-25	Jessica Smith
12-14	Joe Walrath	12-27	Granger Stevens
12-14	Heath Maddox	12-27	Alyssa Walski

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

Vicki and Jessica will be serving lasagna soup and dessert for Wednesday night fellowship supper before the kids' program.



December Worship Assignments

	<u>Welcome & Prayer</u>	<u>Communion</u>	<u>Shepherd's Prayer</u>
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 17, 2023

Gainesville Church of Christ

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

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: *The King and His Kingdom*

Wednesday

6 p.m. Fellowship Supper

7 p.m. Bible Classes for All Ages

Sunday Worship Outline

Welcome and Prayer

Kids Singing up Front

Blue Skies and Rainbows; #997, *O, Come All Ye Faithful*

#1018, *Joy to the World*; #490, *It Is Well with My Soul*

#997, *Come Share the Lord*; Communion Service

#490, *To God Be the Glory*

Scripture Reading by Derek Lynne, Daniel 4:3

Sermon and Invitation

#574, *O, How I Love Jesus*; #853, *When We All Get to Heaven*

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
 Halbert Smith 417-257-3880

Ministers: Every Member—Each One of Us