

Three Barriers to Answered Prayer

By Allen Webster (I Timothy 2:8)

1: An Unholy Lifestyle; 2: Anger 3: Doubt

Difficulty in prayer often comes from our not believing strongly in God. For prayer to avail, it must be “in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind . . . let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:5-7; cf. Mark 11:20-26; Hebrews 10:23). Stated positively, prayer requires faith and confidence. Jesus said, “Whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” (Matthew 21:22). Some do not expect enough from prayer. Someone has said, “Pray, believe and receive. Pray, doubt and do without.” Jesus still asks, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” (Matthew 9:28).

Abraham was a man of prayer (Genesis 12:1, 7-8; 13:4). Matthew Henry says, “Wherever he had a tent, God had an altar. Abraham did not leave his religion behind him, as many do, when he traveled.” Still, he got discouraged when the promised child did not come. God promised to give him seed (12:1-3). After twenty-five years passed God told him: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, and your exceedingly great reward” (15:1). He renewed His promise of many descendants. Abraham believed God (15:6). The word for “believed” is “amened.” God’s delays were not denials.

We must not doubt God’s existence. He flies His flag each night in the heavens (Psalms 19:1-3; Isaiah 40:28), so we are without excuse (Romans 1:20). We must “believe that He is” (Hebrews 11:6).

We must not doubt God’s presence. The devotions of the heathen depend upon times, places, or pilgrimages. The Assyrians thought the God of Israel was the God of the hills, and not of the valleys (1 Kings 20:28). When Balaam was baffled in trying to curse Israel, he went to another place to see if his prayers would be more effective (Numbers 23:3). Among the Jews, who were for a time under a theocracy, God chose a place where He might reside, but they could pray to Him from anywhere. Where was Jacob when he said, “This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven”? (Genesis 28:17).

When Paul left his friends “he kneeled down on the shore and prayed” (Acts 20:36-38; 21:5). Where did Jesus pray?

- ◆ A solitary place (Mark 1:35)
- ◆ A deserted place (Luke 4:42)
- ◆ The wilderness (Luke 5:15-16)
- ◆ A mountain (Matthew 14:23)
- ◆ The garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36).

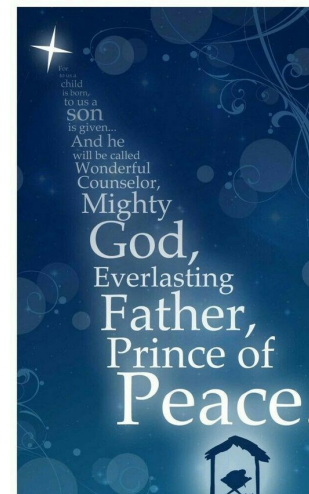
The Bible never mentions Jesus praying indoors, but He must have since He talked about praying in a closet (Matthew 6:6). It never mentions Him praying in the temple. *(continued next week)*

Prayers and Concerns

- ◆ Aleta Collins is now home, but needs continued prayers. She prefers calls on her cell phone she can keep beside her, 417-372-0137.
- ◆ Harold Reynolds has felt better and been eating a little for the past few days. His next treatment is January 2.
- ◆ Lana Cockrum went to the doctor Wednesday for sinus problems.
- ◆ Sympathy is extended to the Reynolds and Jones families after the death of their cousin Jerry Owens Friday morning. Cousin V. A. Owens starts cancer treatments January 10. Their aunt Joella Jarman had some possible skin cancer spots removed.
- ◆ Remember those with health issues—Barbara White, Don Luna, Faye Flaughers, Ruth Strain, Norma Jones, Steve Siebels, Aleta Collins, Rene Blackburn.
- ◆ 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.

Blessings

There was more rejoicing here and in heaven last Sunday when Dylan Abraham put on Jesus Christ in baptism. We are indeed blessed to have three of our teenagers saved in the past two months—Sailor Anderson, Sarah Hossman, and Dylan.



Birthdays		Anniversaries	
12-13	Dale Strong	12-9	Bill & Lana Cockrum
12-13	Hope Hillhouse	12-27	Matt & April Lynne
12-14	Corey Hillhouse		
12-14	Joe Walrath	Birthdays	
12-14	Heath Maddox	12-25	Jessica Smith
12-15	Dana Crisp	12-27	Granger Stevens
12-21	Kim Anderson	12-27	Alyssa Walski

Barbara and Lana will be serving vegetable beef soup, grilled cheese sandwiches, and dessert for Wednesday night fellowship supper before we sing.



A huge thank you to all those who organized and helped with the youth activities this week. Lots of work went into making the Christmas program and the cooky decorating a success. The kids presented a great program enjoyed by many family members and friends. Decorations for the program on Wednesday and the winter wonderland on Thursday were wonderful. Please email me pictures of both activities donbarb.luna@gmail.com so I can put them on the church website.

December Worship Assignments

<u>Welcome & Prayer</u>		<u>Communion</u>	<u>Shepherd's Prayer</u>
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 24, 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: *Jesus, the Son of God*

Wednesday

6 p.m. Fellowship Supper
7 p.m. Bible Classes for All Ages

Sunday Worship Outline

Welcome and Prayer
Kids Singing up Front
#1018, *Joy to the World*; #1005, *Beautiful Star of Bethlehem*
Communion Service
Scripture Reading by Waylon Strong, Luke 1:30-33
Sermon with Songs
#996, *O, Little Town of Bethlehem*; #999, *The First Noel*
#1001, *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*; #1003, *Silent Night*
Invitation #997, *O, Come All Ye Faithful*; #1017, *Away in a Manger*
Shepherd's Prayer
Offering baskets are at the back.

<u>Elders</u>		<u>Deacons</u>	
Mark Lane	417-679-4835	Larry Butler	817-504-1604
Don Luna	417-712-1945	Dana Crisp	417-331-5090
David Stevens	417-679-4700	James Langston	870-315-4355
John Abraham	870-421-5632	<u>Preacher</u>	
		Halbert Smith	417-257-3880