

Powerful Prayer Life – July 20, 2022

Some people seem to be prayer warriors. God just hears their prayers! We say - God is always listening and hears us. True. But... answer yes? Child screaming, acting up... get what he wants? Make prayers effective.

8 Things that Hinder Prayers:

- 1 – **Pride & Selfishness.** God opposes the proud.
 - Pride is **Opposite of Christian Spirit** ... this hinders prayer.
 - Last week, “ask and you shall receive”
 - **James 4:3** English Standard Version – “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”
 - **James 4:3** Berean Study Bible – “. . . you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may squander it on your pleasures.”
 - **James 4:3** Cont. English Ver. – “Yet even when you do pray, your prayers are not answered, because you pray just for selfish reasons.”
 - **Lotto Prayers pull us out of God’s will.**
 - **Mark 10:25** – “It’s easier for a camel to go thru the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

- 2 - Prayers are hindered by **unbelief and doubt (the absence of faith).**
 - **Matt. 21:19-20** – “Seeing a fig tree by the road, [Jesus] went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, “May you never bear fruit again!” Immediately the tree withered. When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?” they asked. Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and it will be done.”
 - **James 1:5-8** – “Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith, without doubting, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”
 - **Heb. 11:6** – “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”
 - **If you pray for rain, take an umbrella.** Small faith ok, but no doubt.

3 – Not living to please God.

- **1 John 3:21-22** – “Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and we will receive from Him whatever we ask, because we keep His commandments & do what is pleasing in His sight.”
 - **What does it mean** “if our hearts do not condemn us?”
 - **Rom. 4:21-22** – “It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything to cause your brother to stumble. Keep your belief about such matters between yourself and God. **Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves.**”
 - We condemn ourselves by doing what we know is wrong – or:.
 - New Living Trans – “Blessed are those who don’t feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right.”
- **John 15:7** – “If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”
 - **To be a prayer warrior** – do what you know is right & pleasing God.

4 – Rejecting God’s wisdom

- **Prov. 1:22-30** - BSB – “How long, O simple ones, will you love your simple ways? How long will scoffers delight in their scorn and fools hate knowledge? If you had repented at my rebuke, then surely I would have poured out my spirit on you; I would have made my words known to you. Because you refused my call, and no one took my outstretched hand, because you neglected all my counsel, and wanted none of my correction, in turn I will mock your calamity; I will sneer when terror strikes you, when your dread comes like a storm, and your destruction like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish overwhelm you. Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; they will earnestly seek me, but will not find me. For they hated knowledge and chose not to fear the LORD. They accepted none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof.”
 - We can’t ignore God’s wisdom and expect Him to rescue us.

5 – Spousal Respect

- **1 Peter 3:7** – NLT – “In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God’s gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.”

- Honor & respect spouses. God looks at how we treat each other when we pray to Him.

6 – Unforgiveness/Resentment.

- The Lord’s prayer includes this: “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (**Matt. 6:12**).
- Jesus went on to add: “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” - **Matt. 6:14-15**, English Std Ver.
 - Unforgiveness offends God... and it interferes with our prayers.
 - **Mark 11:25-26** – “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your wrongdoing. But if you don’t forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your wrongdoing.”
 - Get the idea your prayer isn’t working if you’re unforgiving?
 - Forgiveness is big... it’s the reason Jesus came.

7 – Lack of Reconciliation

- We have 2 sides of a coin here. Compare Matt. 6 with Matt. 5:
 - Matt 6 – you were wronged... forgive them.
 - Matt 5 – you wronged another... seek to reconcile
- **Matt. 5:23-24** – “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”
 - As much as is possible w/ you, make things right.
 - Learn to apologize. Say I’m Sorry. Small word. Big implications.

8 – Unconfessed Sin.

- **Psalm 66:18-19** – NLT - “If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer.”
- **Psalm 66:18** – Good News Translation – “If I had ignored my sins, the Lord would not have listened to me.”
 - We can’t ignore what God won’t ignore. Sin matters.
 - Sin distances us from God.

- **Isaiah 59:2** – “It’s your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.”

3 Ways to have Powerful Prayers Become a Prayer Warrior:

1 – Pray for God’s will to be done. It’s the example Jesus gave us:

Matt. 6:9-10 – “So then, this is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.’”

- **1 John 5:14** – “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”

2 – Pray “in the name of Jesus.”

- **John 14:13-14** – “And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”

- **This demonstrates belief ...**

- **John 16:23-24, 26-27** - “Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. . . 26 - In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.”

3 – Pray sincerely, simply, and separated

Jesus spoke against **praying in public – big words – to impress.**

- **Matt. 6:5-8** – “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”
- **Don’t pray to impress, pray for results. Just us & God**
 - Finally – remember to live “**For You, God, in 2022**”

Stay positive. Test negative. Vaccinated. Song/Week: “**Earth to God**” – John Rich