

HINDRANCES TO EFFECTIVE PRAYER

...In "*Partners in Prayer*", Christian leader John Maxwell shares ten things that act as "prayer killers." I recommend this to all those called to Intercession and Prayer Partnerships, as a tool to discuss what may be "Hindrances to effective prayer"

INTRO: Hindrances to prayer/unanswered prayer can sometimes be the most difficult obstacle a person must face and overcome. Hindrances must be alleviated so that people may touch the heart of God and God can touch theirs, in prayer.

It is impossible that no hindrances, the bible calls them "stumbling blocks", should come, it's not a question of opportunity, but it's what your response will be. The opportunity to be hindered (or stumbled) is everywhere, at home, at work, at church, mother, father, sister, brother, children, spouse or friend.

We must recognize that these hindrances not only exist in the people that we are praying for but also in ourselves, in our personal prayer lives and as we pray for others. We are overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony.

The hindrances that will be discussed, are believed to be those most commonly encountered (both mentally and emotionally) by people and "prayer partners" everywhere, either in an official capacity or in our everyday lives.

Understanding our role: As intercessors and prayer partners it is our duty to be mindful of these common hindrances, in order to sharpen our discernment, and be equipped for battle-ready prayer encounters. Our roles in every prayer encounter are...

Evangelism To share the Gospel with and lead people to a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD

Understanding To listen actively to concerns and thus communicate that God understands because we understand

Comfort To enable people to feel that God cares for them because we care for them

Encouragement To lift up and encourage them to rejoice in the Lord despite their circumstances

Instruction To point the people to the precepts and principles of the Word of God as the answer to their problem or need

Inspiration To exhort believers to live faithfully for Christ and to seek the fellowship of other believers in church

Intercession To bring people and their needs before God in prayer expecting His power to work mightily for them and in them

HINDRANCES TO EFFECTIVE PRAYER

- A. **UNCONFESSSED SIN** (confession)
- B. **UNBELIEF** (believe & receive)
- C. **DISOBEDIENCE** (obedience)
- D. **CONDEMNATION** (acquitted, atonement, redeemed)
 - a. **Self-criticism, Guilt & Shame & Regret** (honor/self respect/gratitude)
Hurt (comforted) **Anger & Bitterness** (joy & contentment) **Resentment** (loving-kindness) **Envy & Jealousy** (confidence or content) **Strife** (harmony) **Rebellion** (compliant) **Grief** (delight) **Lust** (integrity, restraint, virtue) **Fear & Doubt & Worry** (faith/trust) **Denial** (admission) **Offense & Grudges** (choose forgiving)
- E. **UNFORGIVENESS** (forgiveness)
- F. **DIVIDED LOYALTIES** (unity/loyalty)
- G. **IDOLATRY** (honesty)
- H. **SELFISHNESS** (selfless)
- I. **REBELLION** (compliant, reconciled)
- J. **PRIDE** (humility)

The good news is that when we confess sin, God forgives it, and it's gone. The slate is clean and we are no longer held accountable. Jeremiah 31:34 says, "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." Not only are we forgiven, but God chooses to truly forget our sins of the past. At that point our relationship is restored, and our prayers regain their power. Our past actions may still have consequences, but the sin itself is forgiven.

I. Unconfessed Sin: *Unconfessed sin is probably the most common prayer killer. Psalms 66:18 says, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (NASB). When the Scripture talks about regarding wickedness, it's referring to unconfessed sin. God is perfect and can not abide with sin in us. If we knowingly tolerate sin in our lives, it pushes God away from us. As a result, it makes our prayers powerless.*


II . UNBELIEF-Lack of Faith *Lack of faith has an incredibly negative impact on a Christian's life. Without faith, prayer has no power. Even Jesus was powerless to perform any miracles in Nazareth because of the people's lack of faith (Mark 6:1-6)... James calls one who doubts "like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does" (James 1:6-8) ...The word double-minded speaks of a*

condition where a person is emotionally divided, almost as if he had two souls. That condition makes a person unstable and incapable of hearing from God or receiving His gifts.

III. DISOBEDIENCE ...*If we are to grow in our relationship with God and become strong people of prayer, we must learn to obey. Keeping free from sin is not enough. Neither is faith. If our mouths say that we believe, but our actions don't back up that belief with a strong display of obedience, it shows the weakness of our belief. Obedience should be a natural outgrowth of faith in God. He that obeys God, trusts Him; he that trusts Him, obeys Him.*

IV. CONDEMNATION-Lack of transparency with God and with others James 5:16 says, *"Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed"* (NASB). James is sharing a truth about God: When we confess our sins to one another, which requires us to be absolutely transparent.

God is able to heal and cleanse us. We experience a spiritual, physical, and emotional restoration. In addition, our transparency helps others, because it shows them that they are not alone in their difficulties.

V. UNFORGIVENESS ...*Why is forgiveness so important? The answer is found in Matthew 6:14-15 , "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." Forgiving and being forgiven are inseparable twins. When a person refuses to forgive another, he is hurting himself, because his lack of forgiveness can take hold of him and make him bitter. And a person cannot enter prayer with bitterness and come out with blessings. Forgiveness allows your heart to be made not only right, but light.*

VI. DIVIDED LOYALTIES-Wrong motives *When our motives are not right in prayer, our prayers have no power. James 4:3 says, “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives.” Sometimes even knowing our own motives can be difficult. In my experience, I’ve observed two things that quickly expose wrong motives: (1) a project greater than ourselves and (2) prayer.*

VII. IDOLATRY- Idols in our lives ...Ezekiel 14:3 clearly shows the negative effect of anything that comes between a person and God. It says, “Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all?” God does not even want an idol worshiper to talk to Him. On the other hand, when we remove idols from our lives, we become ripe for a personal revival. ...One way to know that something in your life is an idol is to ask yourself, “Would I be willing to give this thing up if God asked me to?” Look honestly at your career, possessions, and family. If there are things you wouldn’t release to God, then they’re blocking access to Him.

VIII. SELFISHNESS-Disregard for others ...Scripture is full of verses supporting God’s desire for unity among all believers—between Christian brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, laypeople and pastors. For example, in John 13:34, Jesus said, “A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”... One of the added benefits of prayer is that it helps you learn to love others. It’s impossible to pray for a person to hate or criticize someone they’re praying for. Prayer breeds compassion, not competition.

IX. REBELLION-Disregard for God’s Sovereignty ...When Jesus showed the disciples how to pray, the first thing He did was teach them to honor God for who He is, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:9-10). That is a clear acknowledgement that God is in charge, that He is sovereign. And it establishes our relationship to Him: that of

a child under the authority of his Father. Anytime we disregard the divine order of things, we're out of order, and we hinder our relationship with our heavenly Father.

X. PRIDE-Unsurrendered will...*A person whose will is surrendered to God has a relationship with Him similar to the one described in the parable of the vine and the branches. It says, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you" (John 15:7🔗). The branch depends on the vine and lives in one accord with it. In return, the vine provides it with everything it needs, and the result is great fruitfulness. There are great benefits of surrendering your will to God. One is that God promises to answer your prayers and grant your requests. Another is that we get to receive the power of Christ through the Holy Spirit. Just as with the vine and the branches, He flows through us, gives us power, and produces fruit*

CASTING & WORSHIP

Prayer Partners have to effectively guide individuals to "Cast their cares on Christ"

- HOW do they do that?
 - Admission (acknowledge the facts and the truth)
 - Casting (don't dwell on the past)
 - Receive (walk in receiving)
 - Gratitude (live in the present and in the presence)

Prayer Partners have to effectively lead people into a mindset and posture of "Worship", in order to redirect focus.

- HOW do we do that?
 - Meditation on God's Word
 - Meditate on GOD Himself
 - Focus on the FATHER not the facts
 - Believe that God IS, and that He's able
 - Human beings (be the thing we want to see) and Humans believing (just believe God.

ISAIAH 43:19; HEB 6:1; Romans 8:31-39; 2 PETER 1:3; Gal 5:22-23; Matt 6:15

Remind people of who God is....and of whose' they are. Guide them into claiming their personal relationship with God. Remind them of the faithfulness of God...

Sometimes we get stuck, on what God said, or what God did, instead of focusing on who He is, and what He's trying to do for you, in you, through you. Don't look for it to look like what it used to look like, or feel like what it used to feel like, no new wine in old wine skins. God doesn't want us to be more focused on the how than we are on the Who. He is a way maker, that is what He does. God will reveal himself as the God of all possibilities (if he did it before, he'll do it again)

When it comes to prayer, Intercessors and Prayer Partners must sharpen their discernment or perception (in the absence of judgement or condemnation) by being equipped to uncover the "unspoken", subtle hindrances that are always lurking behind the scenes of a prayer encounter. Hindrances to answered prayers are real, therefore the ability to be empathetic (share the emotion) and compassionate (desire to alleviate) are important.

THE PRAYER PUSH is to get from In to through: from Pain to Power: from Shame to Praise: from Strife to Strength: from Weary to Worship.