

HINDRANCES TO PRAYER HANDOUT

The aim of prayer is communication with God. In prayer we praise God for His goodness and righteousness, and thank Him for blessings received. Also we make requests for needs to be supplied. God then meets our needs and gives us direction and instructions. The Bible lists a number of conditions for answered prayer. When God does not listen to us we must find the reason why. What is in our lives that is preventing God from answering our prayers? God delights in answering prayers, so why are they not answered? Following are a number of the reasons why God does not answer our prayers.

1 SIN: God does not answer those who regard or cherish sin in their heart. To cherish sin in your heart means there is a sin which you love so much that you will not give it up. If you conceal your sins your prayers are not answered, but if you confess your sins in repentance you will find mercy and your prayers will be answered. Confession of sin means you agree with God that what you have done or are doing is wrong by His standards. Failure to confess your sins and make things right with God and man is a major cause of unanswered prayer. **" If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear. " Psalm 66:18.**

"Behold, Yahweh's hand is not shortened, that it can't save; neither his ear heavy, that it can't hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." Isaiah 59:1,2.

2. UNFORGIVING SPIRIT: The forgiveness of our sins is dependent upon how we forgive the sins of those who have sinned against us. The measure we use for others is the measure God uses for us. An unforgiving and judgmental attitude is a major cause of unanswered prayer. **"Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors."**

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don't forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:12,14,15.

"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God also in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32.

3. WRONG MOTIVES: At times our requests are not answered because the wrong motives are behind our asking. God does not hear when we ask to satisfy our own selfish pleasures or our own interests. Asking with the wrong motives, is asking beyond our need. God promises to supply our needs whether great or small. But requesting beyond our needs is a prayer God usually does not answer.

"You ask, and don't receive, because you ask amiss, so that you may spend it for your pleasures." James 4:3.

"When you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Most assuredly, I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your inner chamber, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly." Matthew 6:5,6.

The motive behind your asking should be to bring glory to God and to express your love to Him. Since all you receive comes from God, how can you boast as though you had not received it from Him? **(1 Corinthians 4:7).**

"Whatever you will ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you will ask anything in my name, I will do it. If you love me, keep my commandments." John 14:13-15.

"Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." 1Corinthians.10:31.

4. FAILURE TO RESIST SATAN: God wants you to pray, therefore Satan does not want you to. He will do all in his power to hinder your prayers. He knows that you can accomplish more through your prayers than through your work. Satan would rather have you do anything else than pray. Your battle is against the kingdom of darkness and the spiritual forces of evil. These forces are in the unseen realms of the spirit world. Too often Christians fight against the results of Satan's work than against Satan himself. To fight this battle you must wear the armor of God and use the offensive weapons God has given you. These weapons are the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, and praying in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

Jesus prayed, "I pray not that you would take them from the world, but that you would keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in your truth. Your word is truth." John 17:15-17.

"Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand." Eph.6:10-13.

"Be sober and self-controlled. Be watchful. Your adversary the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Withstand him steadfast in your faith, knowing that your brothers who are in the world are undergoing the same sufferings." 1 Peter 5:8,9

5. STINGINESS IN GIVING: One of God's principles is that you do not receive until first you have given. The measure you use in giving to others is the measure God uses in giving to you. If you sow nothing, you reap nothing, and if you sow much you will reap a bountiful harvest. Also, if you do not listen to the cry of the poor, God will not listen to your prayers.

"Whoever stops his ears at the cry of the poor, he will also cry out, but shall not be heard." Prov. 21:13

"Honor Yahweh with your substance, With the first fruits of all your increase: So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine." Proverbs 3:9,10.

" Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be given to you. For with the same measure you measure it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:38.

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." Gal 6:7

6. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS: God has revealed to us, in the Bible, what He expects of the family unit and the relationships between its members. In God's sight the family unit is holy and He hates anything that destroys that unit. Therefore, Satan will attempt to destroy all strong family ties. When we fail to abide by God's rules in family relationships our prayers are hindered.

"You husbands, in like manner, live with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor to the woman, as to the weaker vessel, as being also joint heirs of the grace of life; that your prayers may not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7.

"Don't be unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion has light with darkness? What agreement has Christ with Belial? Or what portion has a believer with an unbeliever? What agreement has a temple of God with idols? For you are a temple of the living God. Even as God said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they will be my people." Therefore, "'Come out from among them, And be separate,' says the Lord, 'Touch no unclean thing. I will receive you. I will be to you a Father. You will be to me sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.